

ART IN RELATION TO INDUSTRIALISM¹

WE must begin at the beginning and endeavour to establish quite elementary notions as to the nature of things. And this is especially necessary to-day because in our civilization we have placed a great gulf between those who work at the thing we call Art and all other workers. I shall endeavour to show that this is one of the fundamental evils of our time, and in order to do this it is necessary to go back to the beginning.

The word "Art" in the dictionary has quite a simple meaning; it means simply "*skill*." Thus we use the word art in common speech when we call a person "*artful*," and when we speak of the "*art*" of cooking, the "*art*" of government or the "*art*" of living. But, it is quite obvious, you cannot be skilful about nothing; you cannot just be skilful. Skill must be applied to something, so by the word "art" we mean first of all skill in *doing*. To get a nail to go into a wall without damaging either the nail or the wall requires considerable skill. So hanging pictures and such-like jobs is, as we say, "quite an art," and therefore a man who makes a good job of it is, as we say, "quite an artist." From this it becomes clear that the word "art" soon takes on a meaning of more than merely skill in *doing* and comes to mean skill in *making*—to do a thing skilfully is to make a good job of it. The deed comes to be regarded as a thing in itself done well or ill. So that although in its primary sense art means simply skill, and therefore first of all skill in doing, it has come to mean chiefly skill in making, and therefore we may say that a work of art is a thing well made, and "the artist is not a special kind of man, but every man is a special kind of artist."²

How then has it come about that, although the word "art" still means skill in making and we still commonly use such phrases as "the art of cooking," when we hear the word "art" by itself we think of something quite different? We

¹ Substance of a Lecture to London County Council School Teachers, November 18, 1935.

² Ananda Coomaraswamy.

ART IN RELATION TO INDUSTRIALISM

think immediately of pictures and sculptures and perhaps music and poetry and fine buildings, and we do not think of any ordinary workman or any ordinary work. How has it come about that the people we call artists to-day are not just all those people who make things, but those special people who make pictures and poems and musical tunes and fine buildings? Why should we say, for instance, that such a building as St. Paul's Cathedral is a work of art, but that the Forth Bridge is not?

Many would no doubt answer that the difference between the two is that the former is beautiful and the latter is not; or perhaps that the Cathedral is *meant* to be beautiful, was made beautiful *on purpose*, whereas the Forth Bridge is only beautiful, if it is beautiful, by accident; and therefore that the difference between "art" and "not art" is the difference between "beautiful" and "not beautiful." Now this is really a very curious phenomenon because, as must be admitted, the word "art" does not in itself mean anything to do with beauty. We have suddenly and gratuitously introduced a notion of beauty; we were not thinking about it at all; we were thinking about doing and making, and skill in doing and making, and we said a work of art was a thing well made, and we agreed about this because that is in accordance with the common use of words. But now we say quite suddenly that a quite well made iron bridge is not a work of art, but a Cathedral about whose making we may be very doubtful, for we have heard stories about great cracks in it, is a work of art. And we say this simply because we do not think the bridge is beautiful, or not particularly so, but we do think the Cathedral is, or we have been taught to think so—at any rate it was put up with that intention.

Have we, then, to reconsider our whole language? Have we to say that the word "art" does not mean skill, skill in doing, skill in making, and that a work of art is not simply a thing well made, and that the artist is not simply a good workman? Have we to say that the word "art" means something to do with beauty? Or have we to admit that the word "art" has two quite distinct and different meanings?

Before going any further it would be a good thing to

BLACKFRIARS

discover what we mean by the word "beauty"; and though it is possible to write long books on the subject and to make the matter extremely complicated, there is no difficulty about the simple meaning of the word. "Beautiful things are those which please when seen." Whatever pleases us we call beautiful. That is simple enough, and to say that the beautiful is that which, being seen, pleases is in accordance with our common speech, provided that we understand the word "seeing" both actually and metaphorically. Thus we may say: beautiful chocolates are those which please when tasted; the smell of the violet is beautiful; swansdown is beautiful to touch; the song of the lark is beautiful to hear. We may say that all these things are seen because they are seen by the inner eye, the mind is pleased; and that is chiefly what we mean by the beautiful, that is to say, a pleasure of the mind. The word "seen" is the best word to use, because it more clearly indicates the action of the mind, so that we say: "O taste and *see* how gracious the Lord is." We do not mean that we must taste the grace of God with the tongue, or see it with the eye, but we must enjoy it with our minds. So although the word "beautiful" is loosely applied to things which please physically, things which we do not think much about, even so the pleasure is a mixed one and not purely physical, and it is as human beings that we are pleased even by chocolates. There are few pleasures enjoyed by human beings, indeed it is doubtful if there are any, which are not chiefly pleasures of the mind. For even eating and drinking are capable of giving much more than mere physical satisfaction, and do give much more, so that we take great pains to make food and drink more than simply nourishing. We have to be reduced to inhuman conditions before the mind ceases to function.

So the word "beautiful" may be said to mean "pleasing to the mind." Perhaps now we shall be able to understand how it has come about that we call Cathedrals works of art, but not factory chimneys; that we call painted pictures works of art, but not plain painted walls; that we call the architect and the painter Artists, but not the bricklayer or the "painter and decorator." For now at once we see before

ART IN RELATION TO INDUSTRIALISM

us our civilization, and whether we think it good or bad, necessary or unnecessary, we see at a glance that this civilization is one in which the idea of the artist as the ordinary workman is absurd. And if anyone says "the artist is not a special kind of man but every man is a special kind of artist" it is clear that he must be talking about an entirely different world from ours.

The ruling power in our world is the financial power. The richest man is the most powerful man. Those who control money and credit control the lives and works of everybody else. As the present Pope has said:³

" . . . it is patent that in our days not [only] is wealth accumulated, but immense power and despotic economic domination is concentrated in the hands of a few . . . and those few are frequently not the owners, but only the trustees and directors of invested funds, who administer them at their good pleasure. This power becomes particularly irresistible when exercised by those who, because they hold and control money, are able to govern credit and determine its allotment, for that reason supplying, so to speak, the life-blood of the entire economic body, and grasping, as it were, in their hands the very soul of production, so that no one dare breathe against their will. . . . This accumulation of power, the characteristic note of the modern economic order, is a natural result of limitless free competition, which permits the survival of those who are strongest, which often means those who fight most relentlessly, who pay least heed to the dictates of conscience."

In such a world all things are made for *sale*. That is their primary purpose. Although we buy things to use them, that is not why they are made, nor is it why they are sold.

Consider, for instance, the fact that an enormous part of modern manufacture is in the hands of joint stock companies, things we call Limited Liability companies, and note in passing what those words signify. Limited liability! What is it that is limited? The liability of the shareholder. He is liable to lose the money he has subscribed and no more. It is entirely a question of money. A joint stock company is one in which a body of people have put their money in the hope that they will share in the profits. Profits are obtained

³ *Quadragesimo Anno*, pp. 46-7 (C.T.S. trans.).

BLACKFRIARS

by selling things at a higher price than they cost to produce. If the things sold cannot be sold at a profit the factory will be shut down. This is obvious, for the lenders or subscribers of money will not lend without payment. And it should be equally obvious therefore that the ruling consideration with the board of directors must be a financial one.

It is true that unless the goods turned out will satisfy the needs of those who buy, the people will not buy them, and therefore a certain attention to the quality of things made is forced upon the manufacturer, and of course he makes the most of this in his advertisements. But it remains equally clear that in rendering this service his one aim is to produce a profit for his shareholders. The majority of small shareholders have not much influence with the directors. The bulk of the shares is usually held by a few big people, and small shareholders seldom attend shareholders' meetings, knowing that their votes count for very little. So that, although on the face of it joint stock companies are run by all those who have shares, in practice they are run by the few chief shareholders, and their object is simply "profits."

The development of joint stock companies is, of course, intimately connected with the development of machine production. Machinery costs a great deal to make and set up, factory buildings cost a great deal of money, immediate returns are not to be looked for, hence the need of capital. It is obvious that there are very few private individuals who have sufficient capital to start a big factory entirely on their own, and very few who are willing to undertake the risk. It is easier to collect money from a large number of people, or from a few big banks, especially if the risks are limited. The impersonal quality of modern manufacture is the result of both these things. That is to say, things made by machinery are impersonal, and the management of business is also impersonal. Thus it has come about that the mark of our industrialism is that things are not made *for use*, but *for sale*.

It is necessary at this point to consider "man" in the present context. What is man? Man is matter and spirit, or, to give the word "spirit" a more definite meaning, let us say, man is matter and mind. And by the word "mind" we

ART IN RELATION TO INDUSTRIALISM

must understand both intellect and will, and we must remember that those faculties are only separable categorically; they are not separable in actuality. The will cannot function without the intelligence (you cannot will what you do not know), and the intelligence cannot function without the will (you cannot know even the smallest thing without a prompting of the will). Matter is what can be measured quantitatively; you can have a pound of tea, or twelve inches of string. But mind is immeasurable. Man, therefore, is matter and mind, both real and both good; and in a discussion of art and the beautiful, and of the relations between art and industrialism, we have to remember that it is as these things concern man that they are important.

In the course of time, then, we have come to use the word "art" specially for those things which, though involving skill in their making, are chiefly notable for the pleasure they give us. These useless works, when we speak carefully, we call works of "*fine*" art, to distinguish them from works of art in general and useful works in particular, and so notorious have works of fine art become that the word "art" now commonly means only "fine" art. Formerly it was said (the phrase is W. R. Lethaby's): "Art is the well making of what needs making." Now it is agreed (the phrase is Oscar Wilde's): "All Art is useless." And so instead of saying: "Art is the well making of what needs making," we may now say: "Art is the well making of what does not need making."

Works of "fine" art may be divided into two kinds. There is, first of all, that kind which exists simply for its own sake. In this class must be included all representations, whether portraits, landscapes, or subject pictures, and also all those things which, though they do not seem to be valuable by reason of their likeness to anything, are, nevertheless, valuable in themselves, as, for instance, the works of some modern painters of the "Post-Impressionist" schools. All these works have for their chief claim to existence the fact that they please. We are pleased to have a portrait of so and so, or a landscape representing such and such a scene, and we are pleased to have a painting by, shall we say, Mr.

BLACKFRIARS

Picasso, not because it reminds us of anything, but because its form and colour are in themselves pleasing to us.

The second kind of fine art is what is called "decorative" art; that is, paintings and sculptures which we have, not simply for their own sakes, but for the good of something else. Thus, for instance, we have decorative painting and decorative sculptures, and both these kinds of fine art exist, not because they perform any physically useful function, but for the pleasure they give us.

We have, then, the notion that art consists of two kinds of things: firstly, useful things; and secondly, pleasing things. These two kinds of art are separated as though they were naturally quite distinct. This is a very grave error, and it is an error largely due to our forgetfulness of the nature of man. It is an error greatly accentuated by our industrial civilization, and that industrialism itself is a development largely due to forgetfulness of man's nature.

Man is matter and mind, both real and both good; and these elements are inseparable. Just as in the mind intellect and will are inseparable, so in man matter and spirit are inseparable. Matter can be conceived to exist without mind; mind can be conceived to exist without matter; but man can only be conceived to exist as a combination of the two. And as man consists of matter and mind and the two are inseparable, so civilization has its material and spiritual components and they also are inseparable. So, also, every work of man is similarly compounded. Nothing that a man can make is purely material or purely spiritual. A table, for instance, is not like a crystal, a fortuitous concourse of atoms, or whatever the latest terms are; the top and legs of a table do not come together as the result of purely physical causes; they do not assemble themselves, and their design is not simply the product of mechanical laws. But the tendency for industrial products is to become more and more mechanical and inhuman. A table made by a man is a product of matter and mind, but a table produced in accordance with the conditions of machine production is one in which the functional necessities outweigh all others. Thus it is that the French architect, le Corbusier, was able to say

ART IN RELATION TO INDUSTRIALISM

that "a house is a machine to live in." And thus it is that the best industrial products are like works of nature, and the beauty of such things is the beauty of bones, of butterfly wings, of crystals. There is a kind of beauty in such things, it is the beauty of functional adaptation. So that of industrial products it is becoming very nearly true to say, and it should eventually become quite true to say, that such things are in fact simply the product of material laws, just as crystals and bones are.

But the alternative to materialism is not simply subjectivism, aestheticism, idealism. A table is not simply an immaterial idea existing in the mind. The idea of a table, a sort of vision of it, exists in the mind, but that idea has to be expressed, manifested or translated into the material, measurable terms of wood or metal. The same applies to any other work of man; even so predominantly mental a thing as poetry is not separable from a material embodiment. Ideas are embodied in words, and sounds are embodied in this or that rhythmical or metrical arrangement, and they are spoken or written or printed. And this embodiment is not solely in order that others may share or use the poet's ideas, the embodiment is also due to the fact that the poet imagines his poem thus embodied and delights in that embodiment for its own sake.

This is as it was in the beginning. "God looked on what He had made *and saw that it was good.*" And as it is written in the Book of Wisdom: "My delight was to *play* before Him all the day," meaning that wisdom's highest activity has the nature of delightfulness rather than utility.

Man is matter and mind, and it is the mind which is the predominant partner. To put in a nutshell what is wrong with industrialism, it is a contrivance or arrangement of things compounded, as everything that man makes must be, of matter and mind, but one in which *matter* is predominant. It is a material rule. The rule of the king is a fiction, the influence of Christian ministers, high and low, established or unestablished, is a very secondary consideration; the ruling power is the power of money, the power of commerce, the power of the material.

BLACKFRIARS

The development of industrialism as we see it before us on all sides, bears this out. The development of machinery is precisely the development which is in conformity with the materialist rule. The whole point of machinery, its reason for existence, is quantitative. Machines do not exist to make things better, but simply to make them in larger quantities, more quickly, and at less cost in human labour. We may, as all children and schoolboys do, like machinery very much. There are few people in the world who are not, to some extent, fascinated and delighted by wheels and contrivances. I appreciate machinery in itself as much as anyone. But nothing I can say, and nothing anyone else can say, could make any difference to the fact that the object of machinery is not to make things better, but simply to make them more and more quickly and more and more cheaply. It is not even as though we were in full control of the matter, and were able to say: "Thus far and no farther"; for we are witnessing nowadays not the control of machines by men, but the control of men by machines. "Machinery has come to stay," people commonly say, and they mean that they cannot conceive of any power on earth that could stop it. Every day fresh improvements are being made, more and more machines are becoming automatic, as they call it, that is to say the human workman is becoming less and less necessary. More and more the human workman is becoming simply a minder or tender of machinery, and less and less is he responsible for the form and quality of what the machine turns out. For that form and quality the designer of the machines is alone responsible, and even he is working at the dictation, not of his own conscience, but of the financial and commercial powers which employ him. For the majority of workers to-day it is as near as possible true to say that the work they do has no spiritual quality whatever. Under industrialism a system has been evolved in which man, the workman, is purely material (that is to say, as nearly as possible, for we cannot completely eradicate his nature), and his spiritual nature must find occupation, satisfaction and assuagement when he is not working. Hence the problem which is called "the problem of the

ART IN RELATION TO INDUSTRIALISM

leisure state," the problem, that is, of how to contrive that man's spiritual needs shall be satisfied in a world in which only his material needs are satisfied by what he works at to earn a living.

But in the last three centuries during which this Industrial System has been developing, other things have been developing also. As in all human affairs no one thing has a complete control. The idea of the totalitarian state is a comparatively new one. The idea that every human being in a community should be, or could be, regarded as a unit, like a bee in a hive, as having no other significance than that of a part of a big machine, did not exist until quite recently. All the while the commercial world has been developing its rule there have gone on many other ancient institutions. There is an old saying: "The necessity of one age is the ornament of the next"; and many things which were necessary parts of pre-industrial life are valued as ornaments in our industrialism. I will not go so far as to argue that the King and Parliament, the Church and the churches, have no other position but that of such ornaments, though I think this might very well be argued. But what is more to the point here is that the thing we call Art, which was simply the business of making whatever was required to be made, has now, in our minds, come to mean simply the provision of *ornaments*. We have separated the idea of use from the idea of beauty, and so we have separated the idea of the workman from the idea of the artist. We have put the artist on a specially high pedestal. Industrialism has not destroyed him, on the contrary it has made him a kind of god, a prophet, a seer, a special person not as other men.

This deplorable state of affairs is the inevitable consequence of our industrial rule. We have denied to most men the spiritual responsibility of human beings, and therefore we have granted to some special men a special spiritual responsibility. It is as if we said: the factory hand shall have no mind (except when he is not working), but the special man, the man whom we call artist, shall have nothing else but mind. The factory hand shall be concerned only with what is useful; the artist shall be concerned only with what

BLACKFRIARS

is useless. And the consequence is obvious. More and more the industrial world is driven to concern itself with the purely functional; more and more the artist is driven to concern himself with the purely psychological.

The best industrial architecture is the plain unadorned utilitarian construction, such as, for instance, the *Daily Express* building in Fleet Street, or the plain brick viaducts of our railways. The best industrial products of all kinds are characterized by the same stark functionalism. The best furniture, the best utensils, are those from which the designer has most carefully and intelligently weeded out all irrelevances, all unnecessary adornment, all sentimentality. These things are the "best" of industrial products because they are the products which industrialism can most successfully produce. They are those which are most in accord with its own nature. Machines may be good things, but they are not spiritual agencies. You cannot ask machines to be exuberant. You cannot expect them to be concerned with holiness, and holiness is the ultimate criterion in the judgment of human works. Holy—that is to say *whole*, all that a thing should be; and of all human works we must say that the ultimate criterion is holiness, because the ultimate criterion for *man* is holiness. The difference between *holiness* and simple *goodness* is this: the good thing is that which is in accord with the nature of things. The holy thing is that which is, in addition, in some way dedicated, so that of holy things we may say that they are not merely good for their immediate purpose, but offered up—a sacrifice of praise.

But this idea that the criterion for the judgment of all human works is holiness, that every work of man should be a sacrifice of praise, is held to be absurd even by men of religion. "Work is a curse," they say, "and therefore," they seem to add, "things made under that curse are unworthy of respect." Therefore they see in machines, so they aver, not so much a means to money as a means to the removal of a curse. Thus I read in a recent book on the subject by Count Serra, a book which has a preface by the present Dean of Canterbury, that "the social rôle" of the

machine is "to lighten the labour of all" and thus "the more machines the community possesses the more this labour will be lightened, and work, whilst remaining a necessity and an obligation, will become no more than one of the functional activities of the individual. The leisure created by the machine will allow the development of the other faculties of the individual, development which, without the machines, was impossible; for, as Plato says, 'there is no greater enemy of the arts and sciences than fatigue and sleep.'" Thus our reformers align themselves with pagan philosophers and our modern artists ally themselves with both. Thus, incidentally, they brush aside unnoticed, not only all our mediæval cathedrals and parish churches, the temples of India and Greece, Egypt and Assyria, but also all the furniture, clothes, pottery and utensils of pre-industrial times—things which, as they were not made by machinery, must have been produced under the curse and under conditions which did not allow the development of "the arts and sciences." Hence, we must suppose, the V. & A. Museum: a place to house not things of beauty, things of worshipfulness, good things, but accursed things—or, at the best, curiosities. . . .

The artist, it was noted above, has been inevitably driven to concern himself more and more with the purely psychological. The word "psychology" means pertaining to the science of the mind. So to talk about psychological art is, of course, very clumsy. If there were such a word, it would be better to say "psychographical." At any rate, my meaning is this: that more and more the artist is compelled to concern himself with the expression of his own personal reactions, and less and less concerned to make things to order, to make things which are useful, to make things which have meaning or use to others, to make things which have any significance but that of exhibiting his personal sensibilities.

Here we are brought up against a very curious phenomenon. Art, which in its own nature is simply the business of making, and is only by accident or in a secondary way an exhibition of the personality of the maker, and is only by

BLACKFRIARS

accident and in a secondary way concerned with the beautiful, pure and simple, has now come to be primarily, and not at all by accident, *personal exhibitionism* and the making of *things of beauty* and nothing else. Grass is green, but grass does not exist in order to be green; greenness is an accident of grass. So, in the same way, any work of man inevitably bears the mark of the man who made it, but it does not exist in order to have that mark; the mark of personality is an accident. Again, every work of man, at least every work that he makes as a human being with care to make it as well as he can, so that when done he looks on it and sees that it is good, every such work has inevitably the quality we call beauty—order, unity, variety, proportion, clarity—but such works are not made in order to exhibit beauty; beauty is an accident of such works.

But now under our industrialism, having divided up the business of making, so that all useful things are objects of commerce and are made by machinery (or under conditions of labour which, in as much as they deprive the workman of responsibility for design and therefore make the workman himself into a kind of machine, are as much machine-made as things made by machinery), and all delightful things are made by persons who have no other reason for working but to make things which are delightful, we have turned accidents into substances. That is to say, to return to our analogy of grass, it is as though we had contrived to turn out fodder for cattle which had no qualities but that of nutriment, and then, feeling the need for the sensation of greenness, we trained a special kind of workman to produce green for our delight.

There are many who make no complaint about this system of industry. They say, in effect, that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. They say that as the result of this system we are in a position to get a great deal more nutriment than before, and we are in a position to get an even brighter and more satisfying green by concentrating our attention upon it. Or, leaving the analogy behind, they say we are able to get a vastly increased number of conveniences, food, clothing, shelter and transport, and at the same time

ART IN RELATION TO INDUSTRIALISM

we are able to get paintings and sculptures, music and poetry, in which an even higher degree of beauty is achieved, more concentrated, more poignant, than ever was obtained in the pre-industrial world.

This position may be considered from several different points of view. We may ask, first of all, simply: Is it true? We may ask: Is it compatible with Christianity? We may ask: Is it compatible with the nature of man? Or we may ask simply: Do we like it? To take the first question first. Is it true? Is it true, that is to say, that we really get more conveniences under our industrialism and more and more poignant beauty? Many people would answer without hesitation that modern conveniences are indeed greatly more than were possessed by the inhabitants of mediæval or even eighteenth century England. And if we consider such things as railway trains and telephones, the sanitary system of London, our highroads from which all highwaymen have been removed, and all such things, we may certainly think that modern life is more convenient than ancient life. But there is another side to the picture. It is true that the highwaymen have gone, but in other respects the roads are even less safe than they were. It is true that London sanitation is a marvel of engineering, but on the other hand it is possible to hold the view that London is extraordinarily unpleasant, noisy and dangerous, a seething whirlpool of competing business men, vulgar beyond words, and in spite of many venerable remains of its past, altogether beastly. It is true that by means of steamships and the exploitation of the vast and virgin lands of America and elsewhere we have been able to bring food in sufficient quantities to England to feed a population at least four times as big as the population two hundred years ago; but it is very doubtful whether we have really improved England as a place to live in. It is doubtful whether the journey from London to Manchester is as pleasant a journey, that is to say as full of things pleasing to man, as the same journey in pre-industrial times.

When we come to what are now called works of art, that is to say those special things which exhibit beauty pure and undiluted, these doubts are even more pressing. In spite of

BLACKFRIARS

all their poignant sensibility, are the works of, for instance, Picasso, Joán Miro, Wyndham Lewis, Henry Moore, Paul Klee or David Jones actually more beautiful, that is to say more pleasing when seen, than the paintings and sculptures on mediæval cathedrals or Indian temples? Are the sculptures on the West Porch at Chartres really inferior to the sculptures of Brancusi? The former are by definition images of kings and queens, accidentally they convey to us the personality of their maker, accidentally they please us. The latter by definition exhibit to us the soul of Mr. Brancusi, and their sole object is to please. Moreover, it is almost impossible to discover in the sculptures of M. Brancusi even an accidental usefulness—though I suppose you could use one of them to bash a burglar on the head with, or, more seriously, it is possible that such things look nice in your drawing-room and therefore have the accident of being a sort of soothing furniture. At any rate it seems to me at least doubtful whether these works of our hyper-sensibility do, in fact, exhibit more beauty, whether they are, in fact, more lovely than those works which were not primarily made in order to be beautiful.

Even in the case of music the same considerations hold good. People talk about music as though it were a purely abstract art having no reason for existence but that of delightfulness. They say that a tune is a tune, and that is all there is to it. But this is a misunderstanding, as we may see very clearly when we think of the different names we give to different kinds of tunes. For instance, there are marches, military and wedding, there are dirges, there are hymn tunes, there are dances of all kinds. Thus it is clear that even music is not divorced from utility. Music does not exist merely as sounds; it exists as *appropriate* sounds or *inappropriate* ones. There is the right kind of music for this or that occasion; and if to-day we think of music as existing simply in the concert hall that proves no more than that we have reduced music to the same position of uselessness as that to which painters and sculptors would reduce painting and sculpture.

As to the other questions: Is modern industrialism com-

ART IN RELATION TO INDUSTRIALISM

patible with Christianity, with the nature of man, with human likes and dislikes? Here we are on altogether less doubtful ground. There can surely be no doubt whatever that our industrial system is contrary to Christianity, is therefore contrary to the nature of man, which it is the object of Christianity to develop and perfect, and is therefore contrary, or must in the long run be contrary, to human likes and dislikes.

Industrialism is contrary to Christianity because it is built upon a denial of human responsibility. The factory workman, as such, is a human being, but the factory workman, as such, is not a wholly responsible human being; he is only responsible for doing what he is told, a hand, a sentient part of the machinery. He is only fully responsible when he is no longer a workman. As for those workers who remain outside industrialism, those artists, those poets, it is contrary to the nature of man that he should be engaged in making things which are by definition useless, which are by definition simply psychological exercises. It is contrary to the nature of man, because man is a social animal; he cannot, if he would, work simply to please himself; nothing that he does can exist in isolation, it must have its social value and its social usefulness. Moreover, even the poet must eat bread and butter, he must exchange his works for food, clothing, shelter, and to pretend that he is not concerned with such material things is the most preposterous untruth and one which lands him straight away into the position of lapdog and parasite.

If it could be said, or if it could be claimed, that our modern artists in the pursuit of pure beauty were like ancient hermits, the position would be entirely different. The ancient hermit said to himself, in effect, "I wish to commune with my God and I wish nothing else; by doing so I shall be of no immediate service to my fellowmen, I will therefore go out from among them so that I shall not be a burden." But this picture of asceticism is a very different one from that of the "art world." One has only to consider the prices of paintings and sculptures by our modern artists to see what a different business it is. Far from not being a burden to their fellows,

BLACKFRIARS

they depend entirely upon the superabundant riches of wealthy connoisseurs, connoisseurs whose superabundant riches are derived, and under industrialism must be derived, from profits obtained by the under-payment of factory hands.

We are now in a position to state the relation between art and industrialism. Man is matter and spirit: industrialism is that system in which man in his material aspect is divorced from man in his spiritual aspect, in which the ideas of use and beauty are divorced from one another, in which all useful things are made in quantity by machinery, in which useful things, as such, are not considered to be beautiful. But as man is a spiritual being as well as a material one, he demands pleasure as well as physical conveniences. Therefore, under industrialism, use having been divorced from beauty, pleasure must be provided by persons specially trained for the purpose. We therefore have the majority of the population engaged as hands in the production of things for use, and a small number of special people engaged in the production of things of beauty. These things are bought by rich connoisseurs whose money comes to them from the profits of industrialism. And the rank and file, not being able to afford to possess these expensive originals, are compelled to satisfy their appetite for beauty by reproductions, gramophone records and radio concerts.

Such is the relation between art and industrialism, or such would be the relationship were industrialism completely pervasive and operative. It is obvious that we have not yet perfected our industrialism; it is still tainted with the dregs of pre-industrial life and thought. Just as we still have kings with crowns, so we still have houses and furniture and utensils which retain many of the superficial characteristics of things made in past times. And the law of the land is still dogged by an ineradicable connection with the Canon law of the Church, just as railway trains are still hindered in their development by the fact that the width of railway lines is the same width as the wheels of the pre-existing stage coach.

Man is matter and spirit, and in man the two are inseparable. Thus when a man dies his spirit is not a man, nor is his

ART IN RELATION TO INDUSTRIALISM

dead body, and while it is a matter of common regret that body and spirit should suffer the separation of death, we, in this industrial civilization, do our utmost to bring about that separation during life. We divide use from "art," and we separate the idea of work from the ideas of beauty and pleasure. Thus it comes about that we think it is not only possible but desirable to divide our lives into two departments. We aim at arranging things so that we shall do all necessary bodily labour by mechanical, that is to say *non-spiritual*, means, and, having reduced that labour to the smallest possible amount, we then hope to enjoy spiritual things in our leisure hours.

It is true that this is no new thing; it is not industrialism which has introduced the dichotomy, the divorce of work from pleasure. But industrialism has enabled us to carry that process to a depth of achievement realized under no previous system. The chattel slavery of the ancients or of the American plantations was childish in its scope. You may tie a man by the ankle and flay his back with whips and yet leave him a responsible workman, a man responsible for the quality and not merely for the amount of what his labour produces. But we are not so crude in our methods. We do not chain our slaves or thrash them. We simply pay them (as little as possible) to mind machines, and what the machine produces is no longer the workman's concern. Then we provide him with amusements for his leisure time. But that is "original sin"—loss of *integrity*, so that what God wishes to be united man tries to put asunder. Original sin is the disintegration of human personality.

The attempt to divorce art from work and use from beauty is not new; it has been made from the beginning and resisted from the beginning. The separation of matter and mind is man's death, and industrialism leads so clearly towards that separation that we may say: *death is the actual aim of industrialism—its diabolical direction.*

ERIC GILL.