

## 9.

But this has a corollary. This type of character must express itself in a corresponding type of social existence within the Church. Just, indeed, as the Church stands for an ideal of character, so it should be in itself an experiment in ideal social life. It was the sense of some such obligation that led to the communistic experiment of the Apostolic Church, and later to the bounty which the Apostolic Churches sent to their distressed brethren in Judæa. Uhlhorn has shown the persistency of this feeling through the early history of Christianity. It was perhaps inevitable that there should be an attempt to give an economic embodiment to this new sense of solidarity; it was, however, foredoomed to failure. Economic insulation is an unworkable programme at any time, and every effort to create economic oases in the desert of our social confusion seems soon or late to come to grief. But what underlay the apostolic experiment, the new spirit of social solidarity, was a priceless permanent possession and a new thing in the world. The possibilities of social life were raised to a new plane, and there was a community of men and women who had learnt how to give themselves to each other in a love and service which had no reserve, in which the withholding of anything was a deadly disloyalty. It was the coming of a new quality and intensity of social demand upon the individual; and the demand in its spiritual aspects was infinitely