

THE FRAMEWORK OF
A CHRISTIAN STATE

Ἐν τῷ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

THE FRAMEWORK OF A CHRISTIAN STATE

An Introduction to Social Science.

BY

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Author of "*Freemasonry and the Anti-Christian Movement*,"
"*Ireland's Peril*," etc.

"When once men recognise, both in private and public life, that Christ is King, society will at last receive the great blessings of real liberty, well-ordered discipline, peace and harmony."—Pius XI in the Encyclical on the Kingship of Jesus Christ.

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Dedication
to
Our Lord Jesus Christ,
King of the World,
and
of every State and Nation.

“ Te nationum Paesides
Honore tollant publico
Colant magistri, iudices,
Leges et artes exprimant.”

“ May rulers in their people's name
Thy Godhead solemnly proclaim,
Judges and teachers homage pay
Arts and the law accept Thy sway!”

(From the *Roman Breviary*—Office of Feast of Jesus Christ the King).

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PREFACE

THE matter of the present book was originally prepared in connection with the writer's duties as Professor of Social Science in Milltown Park, Dublin. The greater part of it has been already published in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* and the *Irish Monthly* between the years 1924 and 1930. The same matter has formed the basis of a series of lectures (of which summaries have appeared weekly in the *Irish Catholic*) which the writer has been giving to the Central Branch of *An Rioghacht* since the foundation of that association in 1926.¹ Grateful acknowledgments are due to the editors of the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* and the *Irish Monthly* for their kind permission to republish in their present form the articles which appeared in these reviews.

The book is intended primarily for students of Social Science who accept the Church's teaching. Its main purpose is to summarise and present in a consecutive and more or less scientific form the main elements of the teachings of the Roman Pontiffs (especially Leo XIII and our present Holy Father Pius XI), the Catholic Bishops and the standard Catholic authors on questions connected with social organisation and public life, including such topics as personal rights and duties, the privileges and position of the family in the social organism, the interrelations of capital and labour, the place of religion in public life, education, the functions of the State, its constitution, laws and administration, the due interrelations of its component parts with one another, its relations with the Church, etc.

Here and there in the book will be found suggestions borrowed mostly from approved Catholic writers, as to practical means of realising Christian principles and ideals in social and civic organisation. The principal non-Catholic

¹ *An Rioghacht* (the League of the Kingship of Christ) was founded in Dublin, October 31, 1926, on the occasion of the first celebration of the Feast of Jesus Christ the King. Its objects are the study and propagation of Catholic social principles and the promotion of Catholic Action.

theories on the subjects discussed, and modern non-Christian tendencies and movements are also dealt with; and the well-being of the people under the Christian régime as illustrated from history is compared with their position in the non-Christian State.

Following the precedent of French, American and English writers on the same subjects, the author has striven to give special prominence to those aspects of the questions dealt with, which seem to have special importance in his own country; and he naturally chooses his illustrations of principles and their application from existing circumstances in Ireland, the country with which he is most familiar. The main portions of the work, however, apply to all countries. Hence the writer hopes that the book may prove useful even to non-Irish readers. On that account he has relegated to Appendices the treatment of certain aspects of the social question which are rooted in historical causes peculiar to Ireland.

The writer wishes to thank very sincerely the kind friends whose invaluable assistance and patient collaboration have enabled him to complete much sooner than he could otherwise have hoped the tedious work of preparing the book for publication. He wishes also to thank those other friends whose helpful advice and friendly criticism have assisted him very much in the work of revision. Finally, he gladly acknowledges the great assistance he has received from the discussions carried on during the past five years at the meetings of *An Rioghacht*. These discussions have served especially to throw light on many practical questions, and have given the writer an insight into certain aspects of his subject with which he would be otherwise unacquainted.

E. C.

Milltown Park, Dublin.

Feast of Jesus Christ the King, 1931.

THE FRAMEWORK OF A CHRISTIAN STATE

(AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL SCIENCE)¹

PRELIMINARY CHAPTER

A CHRISTIAN State is one in which the laws and administration as well as the organised activities and general outlook of the citizens are in accordance with Christian principles. These principles, in so far as they are applicable to social and public life, are practically identical with the dictates of the natural law. It is with these principles and their practical application in the life of the State that Social Science has to do.

Term Sociology or Social Science.²—The term Social Science or Sociology means etymologically the science of Society or the science that deals with man in his social relations. The subject, however, notwithstanding its great importance at the present day, has scarcely yet secured full recognition, at least among non-Catholic writers, as a distinct science; nor are men in agreement as to its complete object and scope.

Although there are chairs of Sociology in very many of the universities of the world, it does not appear that the

¹ Cf. Maritain—*Le Conflit de la Morale et de la Sociologie* (Paris, 1927); Devas—*Political Economy*, 3rd edit. (London, Longmans, 1920), "Epilogue" pp. 633–662; Cronin—*Primer of the Principles of Social Science* (Dublin, 1927); Antoine—*Cours d'Economie Sociale*, pp. 1–5 (6th edit., Paris, 1920); Parkinson—*Primer of Social Science*, "Introductory"; Macksey—*Argumenta Sociologica* (Romæ, 1918), cap. II. See also Gide—*Political Economy*, chap. II, and *History of Economic Doctrines*, book iv, chap. I. (Both books translated from the French, are published by Harrap & Co., London.)

² The Græco-Latin hybrid term *Sociology* which is sometimes used as a synonym for *Social Science* was first brought into currency by the French Positivist Philosopher, Auguste Comte (1789–1857). See Devas, Antoine, Gide, *loc. cit.*

sciences taught under that name in the different universities are always founded on the same principles, or that the subject-matter dealt with is the same in every case. Most Catholic writers, however, now recognise social studies as a distinct science and are in substantial agreement as to its object and scope.

Non-Christian Sociology.—According to Auguste Comte and the writers of the Positivist School of Philosophy, the purpose of Sociology would be to collect and co-ordinate the facts of human history which bear upon the intellectual and social development of the human race, in order to found upon the knowledge thus obtained a complete scheme for the direction of individual and social conduct. Such a view, which would make custom and utility the sole rule of human actions, and eliminate completely God's eternal law, cannot, of course, be admitted by the Christian philosopher.

Herbert Spencer and other writers of the Evolutionist school, who deny human liberty, and reduce all the forces in the universe to the necessary transformation of matter and motion, adopt Comte's view regarding the scope of Sociology, but develop it in accordance with the Evolutionary theory. According to Spencer, the science of Sociology consists in a series of generalisations of the observed facts of social life, which exhibits, he says, a perfect analogy with the life of the individual. The structure of the moral body called Civil Society and the functions of its several parts are said to be quite similar to the organic structure and functions of individuals, including man; and both exhibit alike their periods of growth, maturity and decay. Spencer and the writers of his school make the study of Sociology to consist mainly in the collection and co-ordination of facts to illustrate and prove this peculiar theory.

The Pantheistic philosophers of the Hegelian school of Evolution, who identify man with the Deity, and make all man's thoughts and actions to belong to the one eternal

Being evolving Himself towards a fuller and more perfect reality, regard organised civil society as the highest and most perfect manifestation of the Divinity. With them the scope of Sociology would be to expound and establish by abstract reasoning their theory of the nature of civil society, and to trace its gradual evolution towards the higher and better order to which, they say, it is tending.

With all these dreams and speculations we are not at present concerned. The theories of Positivism, Materialism and Pantheism, completely opposed as they are to common sense, and in flat contradiction of the practical experience of life, are referred to here merely to point out that Sociology or Social Science in the Catholic sense is something completely different from the so-called sciences which non-Christian philosophers designate by that name.

Christian Sociology.—But not even Christian or so-called Christian philosophers are in full accord as to the object and scope of Sociology or Social Science. Many English, especially non-Catholic, writers apply the term to all studies that relate to the social improvement of man. They often use the term Sociology or Social Science merely as a general heading under which to treat such subjects as social reform, ethics, charity, relief-work, statistics, criminology, politics, etc. Besides, with many of these writers, Social Science, or the collection of subjects grouped under that name, would be purely empirical or inductive. Christian teaching on the nature, objects and structure of society obtains little attention : nor are the civic rights and duties of men treated as portion of an immutable moral law.

The Catholic sociologist must reject such a method of treating his subject. He will, of course, utilise experience and induction in social studies. Conclusions drawn from statistics and history, showing the ascertained results upon human well-being of various political theories and economic methods, must form an important portion of the science. But Catholic Sociology rests, to a large extent, upon principles of the natural law, which are as uniform and un-

changing as the essential nature of man. This will become clear from a consideration of the nature of society, which all admit to be, in some sense at least, the subject-matter of Sociology.

Meaning of Society.—Society is a moral unit made up of individuals associated together for a common purpose. A mere collection of persons, who, for instance, happen to be gathered in the same room, would not form a society. The individuals must have a common purpose, some object desirable for all and sought by all; and some kind of intention or obligation of mutually assisting one another in its attainment. The idea of society requires, besides, that there be union of effort on the part of all towards securing for each and every individual of the body a due participation in the common object; for, if each one seeks the object by his own individual efforts or for himself alone, there is no moral union. Again, the union of effort that is required must not be the result of accident or physical necessity or blind instinct. It must come from the deliberate intention on the part of the members to co-operate for the common end; or, at least, there must be a moral obligation to do so. Thus, a hive of bees do not form a society in the strict sense which we are assuming here. For although they are united in co-operating for a common objective, the bees, being devoid of reason and acting from blind instinct, cannot be subject to moral obligation, nor can they consciously aim at a common purpose. Hence, only rational beings such as human persons can form a society. Finally, the notion of society includes the idea of permanence, though not necessarily of perpetuity. A number of women who agree to take a day's outing together, or a dozen men, who form one side in a tug-of-war contest, and then separate, are not commonly called a society.

Hence a society may be described as *a permanent moral union of several persons for the purpose of attaining a common good by mutual co-operation.*

Governing Authority.—For the existence of such a union as is implied in the term *Society*, the element of social authority is essential. There must be some power present to direct the several members in their co-operation for the common good. For, considering the uncertain and fluctuating character of human opinion and human will, it is clear that the *permanent* co-operation of several persons for a special purpose is impossible without a directing and co-ordinating power to harmonise the discordant elements and direct the different forces towards a common end. This co-ordinating influence is nothing else than social authority, without which, therefore, human society is impossible.

Necessary and Conventional Societies.—The definition of Society which we have given includes, not only such great societies as the State and the Church, but numberless other types of social union. Families, municipalities, religious orders, commercial companies, relief committees, sporting clubs, etc., all are societies.

Now, of these different types, it will be observed that some owe their origin solely to the free choice of the individuals that compose them. The founders of the society constitute it after what manner they think well and the members are free to enter the society or not as they please. Such societies are called *free* or *conventional* societies. Examples of this type are religious orders, charitable societies, trading companies, sporting clubs, etc. There are other societies which in no way owe their origin to their members' choice. The Church, for instance, was founded by the direct intervention of God; and its constitution cannot be altered or interfered with by any human authority. Besides the Church, there are two—and only two—other types of human society whose existence and structure are not of mere human origin or liable to essential change. These are the Family and the State or Nation. The Family and the State are a necessary result of man's nature. They come into existence in response to essential

human tendencies and character, and to provide for needs which spring from the very nature of man.

Hence there are three types of human association that form a class apart, namely, the Church, the Family, and the State or Nation. The existence and scope of these, the essential principles of their structure, the fundamental rights and duties of the members are determined by God's law, and cannot be altered by human authority. Of these, the Church differs from the family and the nation in that the two latter are *natural* societies. Their immediate object has to do with man's temporal interests ; and their existence and scope, as well as their fundamental structure, spring from the law of nature which was ordained by God in the very act of creating man. Hence the essential principles that govern their activities can be ascertained by the light of reason. The Church, on the other hand, is supernatural. Its object is to lead men to their supernatural destiny, which is direct union with God ; and its foundation and constitution depend upon God's positive revelation to man.

Perfect and Imperfect Societies.—Again, the Church and the nation differ from all other types of human association in that they are *perfect* societies. They—and only they—have within themselves all that is required for the complete and full realisation of the ends at which they aim. Neither can, within its own sphere, be validly subordinated to any human power outside itself ; while every other human society, even the family, is more or less dependent upon them. It is on this account that the Church and the State are called *Perfect* societies, while all the others, even the Family, are *Imperfect* societies.

Nature and Object of Social Science.—Bearing in mind these preliminary notions, we now come to consider the precise subject-matter and scope of Social Science. Understood literally and in its widest sense, Social Science would have to do with social organisation and social activities of every kind. Since, however, it is, like Ethics, a natural

science, and refers primarily to man's temporal good, the Church's organisation and activities are outside its scope. Neither does it treat of free or conventional societies whether belonging to the natural or the supernatural order. Its scope is restricted by usage to the type of social union, which is natural and universal, namely, to the family and the State. Of these, the family, which, although of fundamental importance in the life of the nation, is not a perfect society, is treated only cursorily, and, as it were, indirectly ; in so far, namely, as is required to indicate its essential functions, its position in the social organism, and the attitude which the State is bound to assume in its regard.

Hence the proper subject-matter of Social Science is Civil Society, usually called the State or the Nation ; that type of society, namely, which is at the same time *universal*, *natural* and *perfect*. The ultimate object of the State is to secure the temporal happiness of its members, which, in practice, is the same thing as the fuller development of their physical, intellectual and moral powers. The proximate and immediate aim of the State's activities is to ensure peace and prosperity for all ; for these are means essential to man's temporal welfare, and can be secured only by the helps which the State affords. Social Science, taken in its widest sense, would include the speculative questions which concern the purpose, origin and constitution of the State, as well as those more practical questions which refer to social activity and the principles that govern the proper functions of the State. As the former class are usually treated at length in Ethics, Social Science, properly so-called, is confined mostly to the latter class. In other words, it is primarily a practical or normative science. Hence it may be defined as a *practical science, directing social co-operation towards the more perfect attainment of the ends and aims of civil society*.¹ In other words, it is the science which directs the different members of the State in the fulfilment of their civic duties.

¹ Garriguet—*Manuel de Sociologie*, chap. i.

From what has been said, it is plain that the science is partly analytical and partly inductive ; that is to say, the principles upon which its conclusions are founded are of two kinds, namely (1) *a priori* principles, founded upon the nature and end of man, and the purposes and essential functions of human society ; and (2) *a posteriori* principles which are generalisations taken from such sources as history and statistics, referring to actual or historical social conditions.

Its Relation with the Church.—Although Social Science is primarily a natural science, and its principles are ascertainable by the light of reason, the student cannot ignore or dispense with the Church's teaching. In the first place some of the principles of Social Science are illustrated and confirmed in the most striking manner by the truths of revelation. Thus the principles connected with the dignity and inalienable rights of the human person are confirmed in the strongest way by the mystery of the Redemption and man's elevation to the supernatural state. Besides, experience proves that social principles, although ascertainable by the light of reason, are in practice denied in large part or lost sight of wherever the Church's authority is rejected.

Furthermore, even when a social system is organised on true principles, its proper working has always to meet obstacles rooted in men's passions and ignorance and sin. These obstacles can be effectually overcome only by the forces of religion. Hence, if we are to look for a social system organised and worked in accordance with true principles, we shall find it only where the guidance of the Church prevails, and a strong sense of religion pervades the community. In other words, Christian civilisation is in practice the only type of civilisation in harmony with the principles of Social Science and the dictates of right reason.

Its Relations with Kindred Sciences.—Social Science, though closely connected with Ethics, Political Science or

Jurisprudence and Political Economy, still differs essentially from all of these. It differs from Ethics, for the principles of Ethics relate to human actions in their moral aspect, distinguishing namely, the good from the bad, and aims at leading men to their last end; besides, Ethics has to do with all the deliberate actions of men. Social Science, on the other hand, relates only to acts that are external, and is concerned merely with the bearing of these acts upon the welfare of other members of the civil body. Social Science is subordinate to Ethics, in so far that its principles must be in conformity with ethical standards. In other words, it cannot, for the sake of a supposed social advantage, suggest a course of action that runs counter to sound moral principles.

Social Science also differs from Jurisprudence. The purpose of the latter is to direct the rulers of the State in framing laws and regulating their administration with a view to the peace and prosperity of the citizens. Social Science directs the citizens as well as the rulers, and includes in its scope principles and conclusions which need not, and should not, become the direct matter of civil law.

Finally, Social Science differs from Political Economy. The latter refers only to the human activity that is employed about the production, distribution and consumption of material goods. Social Science, having for its object the entire temporal welfare of the citizen, includes in its scope not only his material interests, but his intellectual and moral development as well. If, however, Political Economy be treated (as it should by the Christian economist) so as to take full account of the influence upon social well-being of the various methods of production, distribution and consumption, then Political Economy becomes practically identical with one important branch of Social Science.

Its Origin as a Distinct Science.—Catholic Sociology as a separate subject of study is of comparatively recent growth. The *a priori* principles on which it is founded are, indeed, contained in the works of St. Thomas and the great Catholic

authors of the 16th and 17th centuries. The proper application, however, of the general principles to many of our modern problems is not to be found in these writers, who did not foresee the peculiar conditions of present-day society. For in their time the modern social question had not yet arisen. Owing to the evils which have resulted from the disregard of civic duties in modern states (a legacy from the Protestant revolt against the Church in the 16th century), the whole question of social rights and duties has now assumed a position of paramount importance in almost every country.

The poverty and oppression that weigh upon the masses of the people ; the immense wealth and excessive power of the great financiers, mostly non-Christian ; the great trusts and monopolies ; the gambling on the Stock Exchange, productive of so much injustice and misery to the masses of the people ; the tyranny of the bureaucracy, masquerading under the cloak of popular authority ; the general unrest and widespread spirit of revolt ; the antagonism between the rich and poor ; the spread of irreligion among all classes and the general demoralization caused or promoted by the unchristian press and cinema ; the activities of the gambling agencies and numerous other influences more or less peculiar to modern society ; all these are prominent features of the social question, and a clear knowledge of Christian principles is essential for dealing effectually with them. This knowledge is what Social Science professes to offer. Hence, although the science, properly speaking, includes within its scope all kinds of social co-operation, it is usually confined in its practical treatment to the questions which bear more directly upon the social evils of our time.

History of Modern Social Science.—The two great names associated with the foundation of the science of Catholic Sociology and the Catholic movement to which it has given birth are Bishop Von Ketteler¹ of Mainz (1811–1877) and

¹ Cf. Metlake—*The Christian Social Reform of Bishop Ketteler* (Philadelphia, 1912).

Father A. Taperelli (D'Azeglio), S.J. (1793–1862) of Rome. Ketteler's contributions were greater on the practical side and Taperelli's on the doctrinal aspect.

Ketteler may be justly regarded as the founder of the Catholic schools of Social reform. Pope Leo XIII pays tribute to him as his great predecessor in social teaching. Pope Pius XI on the other hand has more than once extolled the work and writings of Taperelli and refers in his recent Encyclical on Christian Education to Taperelli's classical treatise on Natural Right¹ (which may be said to have laid the foundation of modern Social Science) as a "work never sufficiently praised, and never recommended strongly enough to the university student." Both these writers show how the teachings of St. Thomas and the principles of Catholic Philosophy contain the solution of the modern social question.

The great Encyclicals of Leo XIII, promulgated in the last quarter of the 19th century (1878–1901), contain a statement of the main principles of Catholic social philosophy and are generally accepted as the ground-work of Social Science. The teaching which they contain has been confirmed and in some particulars more fully developed in several Papal pronouncements of more recent date. The recent Encyclicals of our present Holy Father Pius XI, especially those on *Christian Education*, on *Marriage*, and on the *Social Order*, are of the first importance in this connection.²

Although several of the more important questions have

¹ *Saggio Teoretico di Diritto Naturale Appoggiato sul Fatto* (Theoretical Essay on Natural Right from a Historical standpoint). See *Catholic Encyclopædia* for an account of Taperelli.

² In the following pages we quote the Papal Encyclicals (except where otherwise specified) from the English translation, entitled *The Pope and the People*, published by the English Catholic Truth Society (Edition, 1929). The page references are the pages of this book. A full collection of all Papal documents bearing on the present subject from those of Pius VII down to the present time (including the original text with French translation, biographical notices, complete indexes, etc.), is published by La Bonne Presse, 5 Rue Bayard, Paris. The volumes referred to, which form a cheap and convenient series are entitled *Actes de Leo XIII* (7 vols.), *Actes de Pius X* (8 vols.).

not yet been adequately studied, and although Catholic authors are not as yet in accord on all points of importance, the science has progressed steadily for the past thirty years owing to the labours of an ever-increasing number of Catholic writers, especially in Italy, France, Germany and Belgium. Writers in the English language, owing to their Protestant environment, have naturally been late in coming into the field. In recent years, however, the Catholic movement is making itself felt more and more, and excellent works on different phases of Catholic Social Science are constantly appearing in English.¹

¹ General Bibliography.—The publications of the Catholic Social Guild, Oxford, established 1909, are worthy of special mention. Of these publications *A Code of Social Principles* (C. S. Guild, Oxford, 1929, price 6d.) is specially important. It is mainly a translation of the *Code Social* ("Edition Spes," 17 Rue Soufflot, Paris, 1927) prepared by the "Union Internationale des Etudes Sociales" (This union, founded 1920 at Malines by Cardinal Mercier, is made up of the leading European specialists in Social Science). The other C. S. G. publications include a small *Handbook for Social Study* (1923, price 1/-), containing a useful bibliography.

Antoine's *Cours d'Economie Sociale* (cf. *supra*, p. 1) is probably the best all round treatise on Social Science that has so far appeared. Among others may be mentioned: A. Belliot, O.F.M., *Manuel de Sociologie Catholique* (3rd edit., Paris, 1925); L. Garriquet—*Manuel de Sociologie et d'Economie Sociale* (Paris, 1924); V. Fallon, S.J.—*Principes d'Economie Sociale* (Bruges, 1923). This last book contains an excellent bibliography.

Of the standard books on the subject the following may be named:—Taperelli, S.J.—*Essai Theorique de Droit Naturel* (the work referred to above), translated from the original Italian, 1857 (3rd edit., Paris, 1883), 2 vols.; also *Cours Elementaire de Droit Naturel* (Paris, 1864); Toniolo—*Trattato de Economia Sociale* (Florence, 1907) and *L'Odierna Problema Sociologica* (Florence, 1905); Devas—*Political Economy*, 3rd edit. (London, 1920); Castelein—*Droit Naturel* (Paris, 1903). Finally, both the *Catholic Encyclopædia* and the *Dictionnaire Apologetique de la Foi Catholique* (Beauchesne, 11 Rue de Rennes, Paris, 1911) contain, scattered under different headings, practically all the available matter on the subject of Catholic Social Science.

Of the English treatises on Catholic Philosophy, the following may be mentioned as specially useful for students of Social Science:—Rickaby, S.J.—*Moral Philosophy* (Longmans, London, 6/6); Coppens, S.J.—*Moral Philosophy* (Herder, London, 5/-); Cronin—*Science of Ethics*, 2 vols. (Dublin, 1917).

Of the Latin works on Catholic Philosophy the following treat social questions with special fulness:—Meyer—*Institutiones Juris Naturalis* (Freiburg, 1900), pars. 2, sectio iii. Macksey—*Argumenta Sociologica* (Rome, 1918); Donat—*Ethica Moralit* (Innsbruck, 1921), sectio iii; Costa-Rosetti—*Philosophia Moralit* (Innsbruck, 1886), par. 3, sectio v; Hickey—*Summa Philosophiæ Scholasticæ* (Gill, Dublin, 1923), vol. iii, pp. 447-517.

Division of the Subject-Matter.—Since modern Social Science has taken shape in reference to the social evils which now prevail more or less in every country inhabited by Europeans, it is necessary to set forth at the outset what these evils are, and how they have arisen. Hence, the First Part of our treatise will be devoted to a summary sketch of the history of social doctrines and social conditions in Europe from pre-Christian times to the present day. In criticising the different phases of doctrine and practice the Catholic teaching will be *indirectly* shown. In the Second Part we shall deal *directly* and explicitly with the fundamental principles of Catholic Social Science and their application to existing conditions.

PART I
HISTORICAL SKETCH

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Bearing of European History on Social Science.—The purpose of civil society is to secure for the people the peaceful enjoyment of their rights ; and to promote morality, enlightenment, and sufficient material prosperity among all classes. Now it can be shown from European history that society as a whole failed to attain these objects before the advent of Christianity ; that they were best realized when the nations were under the influence and guidance of the Catholic Church, and that the masses of the people lost the civic advantages they had previously acquired when the State rejected the Church's authority. These conclusions, which go to show that Christian civilisation is the only civilisation suited to man's nature and that Christian social principles are the only true ones, are thus summarised by Pope Leo XIII.

“ Although the Catholic Church . . . has for her immediate and natural purpose the saving of souls and the securing of our happiness in heaven ; yet in regard to things temporal she is the source of benefits as manifold and great as if the chief end of her existence were to secure the prosperity of our earthly lives. Wherever the Church has set her foot, she has straightway changed the face of things and has attempered the moral tone of the people with a new civilisation and with virtues unknown before. All nations which have yielded to her sway have become eminent for their culture, their sense of justice, and the glory of their high deeds. . . . It is clear that no better mode has been devised for building up and ruling the State than that which is the necessary growth of the teachings of the Gospel.”¹

The same fact is emphasised by Pius X :

“ The Church has been the first inspirer and promoter of civilisation . . . preserving and perfecting whatever was good in pagan civilisation. . . . The civilisation of the world is Christian civilisation. The more frankly Christian it is so much is it the more true, more lasting and more productive of precious fruit ; the more it withdraws from the Christian ideal so much the feebler is it to the great detriment of society.”²

¹ *Immortale Dei* (1885), pp. 45, 46.

² *Il Fermo Proposito* (June, 1905), p. 190.

It is not, of course, claimed that there is an exact and uniform correlation between the Catholic faith of the people and their social welfare. It has been truly said that "not everything on earth went wrong before the Incarnation, nor has everything gone right since." Still truer is it that a Christian régime cannot and in practice does not exclude all defects and abuses; nor does a non-Christian régime necessarily imply the absence of all things that are praiseworthy and desirable. Social welfare is not the aim, but only an ordinary and natural consequence, of true religion; and this consequence may be prevented from becoming actual through a thousand intervening causes. It is only when one considers the whole history of European civilisation that one is persuaded that for all the most precious elements of that civilisation we are indebted to the Catholic Church.¹

Division of the Subject.—To deal adequately with so vast a theme is beyond our scope. It will be sufficient for our purpose to touch only on the main headings. We shall therefore first indicate briefly the principal features of social life in Europe² during each of the following periods:

(a) *The Early Roman Empire*, viz., the first three centuries A.D., when the European nations of the Empire had attained their highest development in non-Christian civilisation; and before the influence of Christianity was yet much felt in public life. (Chap. I.)

(b) *The beginning of the Fifth Century A.D.*, when Christian principles and Christian teaching had largely permeated the laws and institutions as well as the social life of the Roman Empire; and previous to the political and social upheaval caused by the Teutonic invasions. (Chap. II.)

(c) *The Early Middle Ages*, viz., the period from the sixth to the end of the eleventh century, when the Church had to undertake afresh the work of moulding the new

¹ *Letters on Social History* (Catholic Social Guild, Oxford, 1920), pp. 15, 16.

² We confine ourselves mainly to European history, as this exemplifies best the effects of the Church's influence. What we have to say, however, applies *mutatis mutandis* to the inhabitants of North and South America and of Australasia, who are predominantly European in race, and whose civilisation is wholly European. The history of the Philippine Islands also furnishes an excellent example of the elevating effects of Christianity.

barbarian nations to the principles and practice of Christian civilisation. (Chap. III.)

(d) *The period lying between the twelfth and the fifteenth centuries*, which is the golden age of Christian domination in Europe. As this period exemplifies Christian ideals in social life better than any other period of European history, we shall treat it at greater length. (Chaps. IV–VII.)

Next, after dealing with the Protestant Revolt of the 16th century and the changes in social life which resulted directly from it (Chap. VIII), we shall treat of the modern social movements which have sprung indirectly from the same source, namely, Liberalism, unchristian Capitalism, Socialism and Freemasonry. (Chaps. IX–XIII.)

Finally, after outlining the main social problems (commonly called “The Social Question”) to which these movements have given rise, we shall conclude our survey with a brief sketch of the modern Catholic Social Movement. (Chaps. XIV, XV.)

CHAPTER I

PAGAN SOCIETY IN THE EARLY ROMAN EMPIRE¹

The Roman Empire.—In the first centuries of the Christian era, the empire of Rome included most of the known world. It extended from the Euphrates to the Atlantic, from Britain to Northern Africa, and from the Rhine and Danube to the Red Sea. Over all that vast area the institutions, customs, and, at least in the Western half of the Empire, even the language of Rome prevailed. The social customs and the moral views of the people, which were practically the same over the whole Empire, were a fusion of Grecian civilisation and ideals with those of the earlier Roman Republic.

Pagan Social Principles.—From the Christian and Pagan writings of the period, scholars are quite familiar with the main features of social life in the Early Roman Empire. Men centred their whole happiness in selfish gratification and mostly in sensual pleasure. Their moral code, which was founded upon the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, rested upon the same worship of self. Its principles included contempt for the weak and hatred for one's enemies. Human dignity and personality as such were not recognised. It was formally admitted that the weaker members of society, such as women and slaves, were intended by nature for the utility of the strong, just as in the Christian law it is a principle that the lower animals are ordained for the benefit of man.²

¹ Cf. Balmes — *European Civilisation*; Chateaubriand — *Génie du Christianisme* (tom. iii, liv. iii-iv); Ozanam — *La Civilisation au Cinquième Siècle* (tom. i and ii); Schmidt — *Social Results of Early Christianity* (London, 1907); Benevot — *Pagan and Christian Rule* (London, 1924); Devas — *Studies in Family Life*; and *Key to the World's Progress*; Allies — *Formation of Christendom* (Part I); *Catholic Encyclopædia*, art. "Charity"; *Letters on Social History*; Albers — *Manuel de l'Histoire Ecclesiastique*, "Introduction"; Mourret — *Histoire de l'Eglise* (vol. i).

² The high ideals of natural virtue which one finds in many pagan writers, such as Plato, Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Seneca and others; the praises of marital fidelity, patriotism, friendship, kindness, even of virginity, had little relation to actual life, at least in the period referred to here, whatever may be said of the earlier periods when the foundations of Rome's greatness were laid.

These principles had their logical effect in determining the functions and authority of the State, and the social position of women, children, slaves, and the poor.

The State, which in practice meant only the governing classes and included but a small fraction of the actual population, was regarded as an omnipotent power against which no personal or family rights were allowed to prevail. This absolute power of the State assumed concrete expression in the deification of the Emperor, who by law was regarded as a god. The Emperor himself was above all law and his sole will unfettered by any consideration of right and wrong or by any fundamental principle of the constitution, had in itself the force of law.

The Working Class.—The working class in the Roman Empire were slaves. In fact all the Pagan civilisations of Europe before the advent of Christianity reposed on slavery. The Roman slaves, who formed more than half the entire population, were practically deprived in law of all human rights and belonged, like chattels or cattle, to their masters. The slaves working in the fields usually had chains on their feet. Their food consisted of bread, water and salt. At night they were kept in damp underground cells with little or no ventilation. The old or weak were commonly allowed to perish like worthless cattle. If it occurred that a Roman citizen was killed in his own home, all the slaves were, or by a provision of the law might be, executed without enquiry or trial.

The Poor and the Weak.—The weaker members of society, such as women and children, were not allowed the enjoyment of their natural rights as human persons; for human dignity as such was not recognised. "Degraded woman," writes Balmes, "was distinguished by the corruption of her morals, and debased by the tyranny of man; infants were abandoned; the sick and the aged were neglected."¹

The lot of the millions of citizens that lived in abject poverty in all the cities of the Empire was little better than that of slaves. Rome alone had hundreds of thousands of hungry poor, who had come to look upon gifts of money and doles of bread from the State as their birth-right.

¹ *Op. cit.*, chap. xvi, p. 66.

Prevalence of Cruelty and Immorality.—Cicero quotes a contemporary as stating (although apparently with exaggeration) that there were only 2,000 owners of property in the city of Rome in his time,¹ whereas the total population is computed to have been more than 1,200,000. The great majority of the rest were slaves or proletarians.² Poverty was the one unpardonable sin in the eyes of the Roman who recognised nothing excellent in the human person apart from his goods or his power. Charity, love of the poor, even hospitality in the Christian sense and as we understand these virtues, did not exist.³ Immorality of the grossest type was universal in both sexes and among all classes; and cruelty and oppression reached a degree that is now scarcely conceivable.

We read of 400 slaves being put to death in one house in pursuance of the inhuman law that when a citizen was killed in his own house all the slaves were executed; of a hundred free citizens of the poorer classes, many of them married and fathers of families, being mutilated in order to provide a train of eunuchs for a daughter of a noble about to marry; of 3,000 Jews given to wild beasts to devour at a celebration of a feast; of five, six or ten thousand people of all ranks and both sexes slaughtered on a mere suspicion of the Emperor; of eighteen thousand gladiators compelled to slaughter one another as a public spectacle for the amusement of the populace; of hideous scenes of sexual immorality enacted at the banquets of the nobles, which were further varied by the spectacle of gladiators massacring each other for the amusement of the revellers.⁴ In a word, the horrors of life in the pre-Christian Roman Empire are inconceivable even in the neo-pagan immoral world of to-day.

¹ *De Officiis*, ii. 21.

² There was doubtless a small intermediate class of freemen such as shopkeepers, etc., who would not be classed as proletarians. But these did not form a notable element in Roman society.

³ Cf. Lecky, *History of European Morals*, vol. i, pp. 40 ff, for many citations of pagan writers in commendation of universal brotherhood. These sentiments of the philosophers, however, had little or no relation to real life.

⁴ For references and further examples, cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, book i, chap. iii; also Chateaubriand, *loc. cit.*, and Ozanam, *loc. cit.*

CHAPTER II

CHRISTIAN SOCIETY IN THE FIFTH CENTURY¹

Freedom of the Church.—After nearly three centuries of persecution the Church was at last allowed to emerge from the Catacombs. By the Edict of Milan, which was promulgated in 313 A.D. over the names of the joint Emperors, Constantine and Licinius, and the several supplementary edicts issued by Constantine himself when he became sole master of the Roman world, Christianity, which had by that time permeated every class of Roman society, got legal recognition and even official encouragement within the Empire. Nearly another century of varying vicissitudes had to elapse before it was established under Theodosius the Great (*d.* 395) as the religion of the State.

Society only Partially Christianised.—A considerable portion of the people were still pagan; and even among large sections of the Christians many pagan customs and unchristian principles rooted in an unbroken tradition of a thousand years, continued to retain their hold. Even Roman law had not yet fully put off its Pagan characteristics. Still both laws and customs had already undergone a profound change in the early half of the 5th century: and the Theodosian Code which was compiled about 430 A.D. shows that Christian principles had then gained a definite mastery in the Roman world.

Supremacy of the Divine Law.—To begin with, the absolute supremacy of the State and the unchecked despotism of its ruler were no longer acknowledged even in civil law. By the fundamental principles of Christian teaching there is a higher law against which no human authority can prevail. The eternal law of God binds emperor, citizen and slave with the same force. This principle was now definitely recognised. Hence even slaves were now allowed rights of conscience with which slavery in the old sense was incompatible.

¹ References as for preceding chapter.

Rights Attaching to Human Personality.—Again, in opposition to the teaching of the Græco-Roman philosophy and the spirit of the old Roman law, the essential dignity and inalienable rights of the human person no matter how poor or weak were now at least partially recognised. According to Christian teaching, all, whether slaves or Romans, women or men, infants or adults, being children of the same Father, predestined to the same eternal end, and redeemed by the same Saviour, have by their nature indefeasible rights and inalienable responsibilities which no human law can make void. For under the Christian law there is, as St. Paul writes: *neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ.*¹

In enforcing this principle not only was the Church confronted with prejudices rooted in the Pagan tradition; but the whole framework of the social organism, which was fashioned on a Pagan philosophy, had to be recast. Such a reform was necessarily slow. Still even the century after the freedom of the Church was first declared witnessed substantial progress. Thus in the case of women, minors, slaves, prisoners and the poor, the Church insisted from the very beginning that their essential rights be fully recognised, and she exerted her whole influence that all their other natural rights be gradually conceded.

Reforms in Roman Law.—The right of life and death which, by the old Roman law, the master had over his slaves, and the father over his children, is withdrawn in the Theodosian Code. Children are allowed emancipation from the parents' control when they reach a certain age. Girls over eighteen years of age can marry of their own free choice: and are allowed also the free disposal of their property. Slaves are allowed rights and facilities to acquire property; and many provisions are made protecting them against the injustice of tyrannical masters.

Many evidences also now appear of the more humane attitude of Roman law towards the poor and weak. Thus the bishops are accorded extensive powers of arbitration in disputes, and in several other ways are enabled to protect

¹ *Gal.* iii. 28.

the poor against oppression. When the parties to a dispute agreed to choose the Bishop as arbitrator, the civil judge was bound by law to enforce his decision. The Bishop also visited the prisons to see that the prisoners were properly treated. The provincial governors took their oath of office at the Bishop's hands, and after their period of office gave an account of their administration before him. Churches, and later on, even houses in the vicinity of the Church, were accorded rights of asylum where those accused of crime might take refuge and be thus safeguarded against precipitate punishment or personal vengeance. Hospitals endowed from public funds were established for the poor ; and special houses of refuge were opened for orphans, widows, and poor travellers.¹

The inhuman custom of gladiatorial combats, in which hundreds and thousands of men slaughtered one another in the arena for the amusement of the people, was forbidden by Constantine about 313 A.D., but owing to the opposition which this measure aroused it was not enforced till 404 A.D. The abolition of gladiatorial combats was brought about by the heroic martyrdom of the monk Telemachus, who rushed into the arena to separate the combatants and was immediately stoned to death by the populace. Owing to the profound impression created by this incident, the Emperor Honorius was enabled to suppress finally these inhuman exhibitions in Rome.

The Example set by the Christians.—Among the Christians themselves, slaves and the poor were regarded, in contrast with the old pagan ideals, as the equals of the rich in human dignity and personal responsibility. They were treated with special kindness by the Church ; while in the Christian homes, all the members of the family, including the slaves, were united by close ties of charity and piety.

The principles regulating men's duties towards one another form another feature of Christian teaching which clashed with the social ideals of pagan Rome. In the latter, self-interest and self-gratification were recognised as the fundamental consideration, while the Christian ideal is summed up in the words of Christ : *Thou shalt love thy neighbour*

¹ Schmidt, *op. cit.* ; Benevot, *op. cit.* 73-91.

as *thyself*;¹ and again: *A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another as I have loved you.*² The practice of justice and charity which this law includes marked the mutual relations of the early Christians; and extended itself even to those outside the Christian fold. Such an example exerted an immense influence in the whole social life of Rome and made itself felt in almost every detail of life.

The New Concept of Ownership.—Finally, one of the most important and revolutionary of the new principles introduced by Christianity was the Christian concept of private ownership. This was directly opposed to the non-Christian idea. According to Christian teaching the human owner of material goods is merely a steward in the service of the Supreme Owner Who is God. Hence, the wealthy proprietor is bound by the law of Christ (and in those days he fully recognised his obligations) to give for the relief of the needs of others what remained over after his own reasonable needs were satisfied. He was taught, too, that his own wants were to be interpreted rather strictly, excluding luxuries and even unnecessary comfort and convenience.³

During the early centuries of Christianity, preachers and writers were accustomed to emphasise these obligations very strongly. They insisted a good deal upon the duties and limitations of ownership and upon the fundamental right of all to their due measure of access to the material goods of the world. Although there is no proof that communism prevailed in the early Church, or that the teachings of any of the early Fathers were opposed to the institution of private property, the mere fact that many non-Catholic writers can assert with a certain show of plausibility that such was the case is sufficient to prove how strongly Christian moralists and preachers insisted upon the limitations and responsibilities of ownership.

Among the Christians themselves the ideals of the Gospel were very largely realised; and as the Christians formed in the fifth century the vast majority of the population, their influence profoundly affected the whole tone of society.

¹ *Matth.* xxii. 39.

² *John* xiii. 34.

³ Cf. *Catholic Encyclopædia*, vol. iii, art. "Charity," pp. 594, 595.

Marriage.—Among the Christians the marriage tie was then, as now, inviolable and perpetual; and the marital obligations of husband and wife mutual. Even in Roman law, although divorce and concubinage still continued to obtain recognition, both were placed under strict limitations. Divorce was made very difficult. The law discouraged it; and civil equality was established between husband and wife in all their essential marriage obligations.

The Social Status of Women.—The pagan idea of the essential inferiority of women was reprobated and a completely new ideal of womanhood was upheld. The Christian matron is a type quite unknown to the pre-Christian Romans. She is the close friend and companion of her husband to whom she is bound by ties which death alone can sever. She is the educator of the children and the mistress of the home in which her position is secure. The important rôle assumed by the Christian matron in all works of charity and benevolence was also a new phenomenon.

Finally, the special place set apart in the Christian law for virgins consecrated to God contributed to give to the Christian woman a dignity and a standing that were in striking contrast with pre-Christian ideas. So completely indeed had the influence of Christianity revolutionised the attitude of the Romans towards their women that we find Pulcheria, sister of Theodosius II, acting as her brother's regent and guardian and succeeding him as Empress after his death (450 A.D.).¹

The Roman Slaves.²—The abolition of slavery was perhaps the greatest and most decisive triumph of Christianity in the social life of the people. That the disappearance of slavery among the European nations was a result of Christian principles is recognised by all historians. "As the morning rays of Christianity," writes Dr. Sigerson, "fell upon the nations, they first dispelled the darker clouds of slavery and then, as the light prevailed, bondage passed away. This happened more or less rapidly in different localities

¹ Cf. Ozanam, *op. cit.*, tom. ii (pp. 86-89).

² Cf. Paul Allard—*Les Esclaves Chrétiennes; Dict. Apologetique*, art. "Esclavage"; *Cath. Encyclopædia*, art. "Slavery"; *Letters on Social History*, pp. 27-39.

as mountains may be seen illuminated with sunshine while the valleys at their feet are still in the shade." ¹

The slave question was the most troublesome and thorny of all the difficulties that the Church had to deal with. To liberate the slaves at once, even if it were possible, would mean a social upheaval the result of which no one could foresee; and would have been fatal even to the interests of the slaves themselves. The numbers of slaves were immense, and the institution of slavery was deeply rooted in the manners, the ideas, and the whole social life of the people. Hence the Church had to proceed slowly and cautiously.

The Church's Mode of Procedure.—"Christianity," writes Lecky, "broke down the contempt with which the master regarded his slaves and planted among the slaves themselves a principle of moral regeneration which expanded in no other sphere with equal perfection. Its action in procuring the freedom of slaves was unceasing." ² The Church reprobated the false idea that manual work is degrading. She insisted on the duty and the necessity of labour for all, and on the well-grounded self-respect which the practice of labour gives. She preached the equality of all in natural dignity, in personal responsibility, in the participation of heavenly graces and in the predestination to eternal happiness. While preaching to the slaves the duty of obedience to the master's just commands (because the master's authority at the time was necessary for the common good and consequently sanctioned by the Divine will) she also insisted strongly on the duties of masters towards their slaves; and had her preaching sanctioned by canonical enactments and very severe penalties. ³

Outside of what was essential for the needs of existing society, the Church acknowledged no distinction between slave and freeman. All had the same sacraments. The marriage of slaves among themselves had the same sanction as that of the free. Clerics of servile origin were numerous; and so levelling was the Christian principle of personal

¹ Sigerson—*Land Tenure and Land Classes of Ireland* (Longmans, London, 1871), p. 228.

² *History of European Morals*, vol. ii, p. 69 (edit. 1913).

³ Cf. Balmes, *op. cit.*, chaps. xv-xviii.

equality that the Chair of Peter was sometimes filled by men born of slaves, such as Pius in the second century and Callistus in the third. In the Christian cemeteries there is no distinction between the tombs of slaves and those of the free.

Above all, the Church prepared the way for the eventual abolition of slavery. The liberation of slaves was endowed with special ecclesiastical favour. It was usual to perform the ceremony of manumission in the Church ; and the Bishop was accorded by civil law special powers to facilitate it. The Church also took liberated slaves under her special protection and strictly forbade that they should be in any way again reduced to servitude. Under the influence of the Church, the State also made many other enactments to facilitate the manumission of slaves. The movement was further supported by the example of Christian masters who frequently set free their whole households of slaves. Besides all this the general attitude of the Christians towards their slaves and towards the poor set an example which profoundly affected the whole tone of Roman Society.

Results of the Church's Influence.—If the Roman State had been allowed to develop on the new lines thus marked out, the sixth century A.D. would probably have seen the complete liberation of the slaves, and the establishment of a fully developed Christian social régime.

The downfall of the Western Empire checked the development of Christian civilisation in Western Europe, although in the Eastern Empire the movement still continued. Enough, however, was already done even in the West to permeate the fabric of Roman law with Christian principles. This law became later on the groundwork of the legal systems of the European kingdoms which grew out of the Teutonic invasions that now swept over Europe.

CHAPTER III

THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES¹

Art. 1—*General Historical Survey (5th to 11th centuries)*

The Teutonic Invasions.—The period of the Early Middle Ages may be said to extend from about the middle of the 5th century to the Pontificate of Pope Gregory VII (*d.* 1085). The reign of the Emperor Honorius (395–423) had witnessed the beginning of the last struggles of the Roman Empire in Western Europe. From across the Danube the Goths over-ran Italy, Gaul and Spain. The Saxons, Jutes and Angles crossing the North Sea from the regions south of Denmark, swarmed into Britain. The Alemanni, Franks, Burgundians, and later on the Lombards, advanced from beyond the Rhine; while from the plains of the Vistula, the fierce Vandals and the savage race of the Huns poured over Western and Southern Europe. Before the close of the 5th century, the Western Empire was finally dissolved. The Goths were ruling in Spain and the Vandals in Africa. The Franks had obtained mastery in Gaul and along the basin of the Rhine. Soon after, the Lombards definitely established their power in Northern Italy, and the Anglo-Saxons in Britain.

Many of these nations, including the Franks, Burgundians and Anglo-Saxons, were pagan. The Vandals, Lombards, Alemanni and Goths were Christian only in name. They professed Arianism, a debased form of Christianity, in which the mysteries of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation of the Son of God were rejected.

Ireland and the Barbarians.—Meanwhile, during the second half of the 5th century, the Irish people, who had

¹ Besides the references already given, cf. Mourret—*Histoire Générale de l'Eglise*, vols. ii and iii; Allies—*Formation of Christendom*; Albers—*Histoire de l'Eglise*, tom. i, pp. 244 ff; Kenelm Digby—*Mores Catholici*; *Letters on Social History*, pp. 44, 45; Brown—*The Achievement of the Middle Ages* (Sands & Co., London, 1925), pp. 9–45.

remained outside the Roman Empire, and were not touched by the barbarian invasions, had been converted to Christianity; and in a short time the Christian spirit had permeated the laws and social customs of the nation. During the three centuries that ensued, while confusion and turmoil reigned on the continent, Ireland became the principal depository in Europe of the Christian tradition. From Ireland most of the missionaries came that laboured during the 6th and 7th centuries for the conversion of the barbarian conquerors of Western Europe, both pagan and Arian, to Christianity.¹

Conversion of the Barbarians.—By the end of the 8th century, the nations west of the Danube and Rhine, including Britain; and two hundred years later, practically all Europe with the exception of the Moors in the southern half of Spain, had accepted the Christian faith. But the work of bringing the laws and social life of the converted nations into harmony with Christian principles was a more tedious and difficult task; and much of the pagan spirit and outlook continued to live on among them for centuries after they had nominally embraced Christianity.

Eighth and two following Centuries.—The work of the Church was rendered more difficult by the disturbed state of Europe, and especially by the rise of the Mohammedan power and the invasions of the Norsemen, Hungarians and Slavs. In the early half of the 8th century, the Mohammedan Moors established their power in Spain and continued to push their way into France till the wave of invasion was finally broken by Charles Martel, on the field of Tours (A.D. 732).

Soon after, the pagan Norsemen and Danes began their wars of conquest in the North. These wars continued for

¹ More than two hundred and fifty saints of Irish birth and very many others who were educated in Ireland, all belonging to these centuries, are still venerated as local patrons, in Germany, Austria, Belgium, France, Britain and Italy. These were only the leaders of the crowds of Irish missionaries that evangelised these countries. Cf. B. Fitzpatrick—*Ireland and the Foundation of Europe* (New York, 1927), and *Ireland and the Making of Britain* (London, 1927); Lynch—*Cambrensis Eversus*, vol. ii, pp. 641-653; White—*Apologia Pro Hibernia*, pp. 14-45; Gougaud—*Les Chrétientés Celtiques* (Le Coffre, Paris, 1911), chap. v; and *Gaelic Pioneers of Christianity* (Dublin, 1923).

more than two centuries and extended even to Italy and Sicily. The Norsemen broke up the civil and ecclesiastical organisation in Northern France, Belgium, Ireland and England, before they were themselves won over to Christianity in the 11th century.

Meanwhile, from the East the Slavs, still half pagan, carried on a fierce war against the Christian states on their borders ; while the fierce race of the Magyars or Hungarians began in the 8th century their terrible incursions into central Germany and Northern Italy. All these wars impeded the civilising influence of Christianity and delayed for more than two centuries the formation of Christendom.

Art. 2—*Social Regeneration of the Barbarians*

Influence of Ecclesiastics.—During the whole of this period the Catholic Church was the one power in Europe that stood for human right and liberty. As the nations became Christian, the Pope gradually gained recognition as the delegate of God who is the source of all legitimate authority. Hence he became the official adviser and admonitor of Christian rulers, the mediator between the rulers and the people and the arbiter in international affairs. The local bishops and abbots, and even individual priests, exercised, each in his own limited sphere, an influence similar to that which the Popes possessed in Christendom as a whole. For in those days intellectual training, at least outside of the Greek Empire and of Ireland, was practically confined to the clergy and the monks.¹ Thus it was from the Church's representatives—the Pope, the Bishops and the Clergy—that the serf, the slave, the poor and the weak sought and obtained protection against wrong.

And of Christian Teaching.—Historians generally recognise that it was as a result of Christian teaching and the Church's influence that the barbarian nations were gradually moulded to that sense of justice, charity and true liberty, which formed the basis of mediæval civilisation. Leo XIII strongly emphasises this fact :

“ Christian Europe has subdued barbarous nations, and changed them from a savage to a civilised condition ; from

¹ Cf. Albers, *op. cit.*, vol. i, pp. 314–316.

superstition to true worship. It victoriously rolled back the tide of Mahomedan conquest ; retained the headship of civilisation ; stood forth in the front rank as the leader and teacher of all in every branch of national culture ; bestowed on the world the gift of true and many-sided liberty, and most wisely founded very numerous institutions for the solace of human suffering. . . . Whatever in the State is of chief avail for the common welfare : whatever has been usefully established to curb the licence of rulers, who are opposed to the true interests of the people, or to keep in check the leading authorities from unwarranted interference in municipal or family affairs ; whatever tends to uphold the honour, manhood and equal rights of individual citizens—of all these things, as the monuments of past ages bear witness, the Catholic Church has always been the originator, the promoter, or the guardian.”¹

It was the Church that checked the tyranny and absolutism of the ruler while teaching the subjects the duty of submission and obedience to lawful authority, thus pointing out to all the path leading to social happiness and peace. It was from the Church’s teaching and admonitions that the wealthy and powerful baron learned his duties of justice and charity towards his vassals and serfs, while the latter from the same teaching became conscious of their dignity as children of God and realised the indefeasible rights they had, no less than the prince or the feudal baron, to a fair share even of temporal well-being.²

Formation of a Christian Civilisation.—All the complicated organisation which was gradually built up all over Europe in the interests of the poor, the aged, the infirm and the young—hospitals, asylums, orphanages, houses of refuge, etc.—was the work of the Church alone. “The Church,” writes Lecky, “which seemed so haughty and overbearing in its dealings with kings and princes and nobles, never failed to listen to the poor and the oppressed ; and for many centuries their protection was the foremost of all the objects of her policy.”³ Again, it was the Church that

¹ *Immortale Dei*, 1855, pp. 55, 56 and 63.

² Cf. Ryan and Millar—*State and Church*, chap. v, for a valuable sketch of the process by which the Church introduced the ideas of law, of Christian constitutional government and of democratic freedom among the European nations.

³ *Rationalism in Europe*, vol. ii, chap. 17.

purified the home and restored and safeguarded the dignity of the woman so closely identified with the purity and happiness of domestic life.

Restoration of the Arts and Sciences.—It was by Churchmen that the literary treasures of ancient Greece and Rome were preserved, and science and letters propagated among the people. The mechanical arts, too, such as masonry, carpentry, iron-work, etc., as well as agriculture, forestry, fishery, which are so essential for material prosperity, were restored throughout Europe principally by means of the Church. Even for the foundation of the great public utilities—schools, universities, banks, insurance companies, roads, bridges, etc.—which had practically disappeared over most of Europe as a result of the barbarian invasions, we are indebted to activities of the Church.

Special Christian Institutions and Achievements.—Among the Christian institutions and practices specially beneficial were the practice of Sacramental Confession, the discipline of the Penitential Canons,¹ the enforcing of the unity and perpetuity of the marriage contract, the institution of the Peace of God, and the prohibition of usury. It is outside our scope to treat these matters in detail. A few points, however, which refer directly to social well-being require special notice. These concern monasticism, the abolition of slavery and the charity of the Church. The question of usury will be dealt with later.

Art. 3—*Monasticism*²

Its Great Importance.—In the history of *Monasticism* during this period will be found perhaps the most striking

¹ According to the Penitential Canons, the penitent had to submit to long periods of penitential works, sometimes extending over several years, in expiation of the more serious social crimes, such as homicide, rape, adultery, etc. This universal practice of voluntary penance served to produce gradually in the minds of all a horror of crime which no merely civil sanction could bring about. The general use of Sacramental Confession in Western Europe, as well as the discipline of the Penitential Canons, were largely due to the influence of the Irish missionaries. The Irish Penitentiary Canons became prevalent in Europe before the middle of the eight century. Cf. Gougaud, *Chrétientés Celtiques*, chap. viii, sec. 4, pp. 267 ff; also Watkin's *History of Penance* (London, 1920), vol. ii, part ii, "The Celtic System."

² Cf. Montalembert—*Monks of the Church*; Albers, *op. cit.*, tome i, pp. 380-401. Mourret, *op. cit.*, vol. iii.

illustration of the Church's beneficent influence. It was largely through the medium of her monastic institutions that the Church evangelised the Teutonic nations and fashioned their social life to Christian ideals. From the 6th century onward the Benedictine and Irish monks spread over every country of Western Europe. In every district, on mountain and valley, near the sea-shore, and in inland regions their monasteries were to be seen. These formed the centres of the organised religion of the neighbourhood. It was the monasteries and convents of nuns that relieved the poor, reared the orphans, cared for the sick, afforded shelter to the traveller, and were havens of refuge for all who were weighed down by spiritual or corporal suffering.¹

Its Influence on Social Customs.—The example of self-abnegation in the monk's life, the object lesson in human equality which the democratic spirit of their institute afforded, the ideals of co-operation embodied in their corporate organisation, their charity, their attitude towards their dependents and the poor, all exercised a profound influence on social customs.

The example of the monks gave a prestige to manual labour which, among the barbarians, as in pagan Greece and Rome, was previously esteemed unworthy of a freeman. Every Benedictine and Columbian monk, including the abbot, who in the people's eyes had the status of a feudal lord, was bound by rule to spend many hours a day in manual labour in the fields or in his workshop. As a result of the monk's example a lay artisan class of freemen was gradually formed, preparing the way for the subsequent city guild organisations.

On Agriculture, the Handicrafts and Art.—It was the monks, too, who introduced into Europe the art of agriculture and brought the land back again to cultivation.²

¹ "In the relief of the indigent it may on the whole be asserted that the monks did not fall short of their profession" (Hallam, *Middle Ages*, vol. iii, chap. ix, p. 302). This is the unwilling testimony of a prejudiced and hostile writer.

² Even such Protestant historians as Guizot and Hallam, both strongly prejudiced against the Church, assert this. Cf. Hallam, *loc. cit.*, p. 436; Guizot, *Histoire de la Civilisation*, ii, p. 75.

In the last centuries of the Roman Empire agriculture had fallen into disuse ; and it disappeared almost entirely as a result of the Teutonic invasions. Most of the lands given over to the monasteries were uncultivated and unappropriated at the time of the donation. The monks cultivated them with their own hands. In course of time immense tracts of country were thus reclaimed. Marshes were drained ; forests cleared ; roads made through the cultivated territory ; bridges built ; and all the equipment of civilised life gradually reappeared. A tradition of highly-skilled agriculture and of proficiency in handicraft as well as in fishery, forestry, horticulture, etc., was developed in the monasteries ; and from the monasteries these arts got diffused among the people. "Though agriculture and gardening," writes Lecky, "were the forms of labour in which the monks especially excelled, they indirectly became the authors of every other. For when a monastery was planted it soon became a nucleus around which the inhabitants of the neighbourhood clustered. A town was thus gradually formed, civilised by Christian teaching, stimulated to industry by the example of the monks and protected by the reverence that attached to them. At the same time, the ornamentation of the Church gave the first impulse to art."¹ Thus, not only agriculture, and the kindred arts, but architecture, also, as well as painting, sculpture and music, were renewed in mediæval Europe, by the initiative and example of the monks.

On Letters and Science.—Again, the monasteries were the schools of learning. In fact, outside of Ireland where, besides the monastic schools, a system of education existed independent of the Church,² the monasteries were, during all these centuries, the sole custodians of literary and scientific knowledge in Europe. It was in the monasteries, too, that historical records began to be kept.³ It was by the monks, and especially by the Irish monks, that the people were taught to cultivate their own national languages,

¹ *History of Rationalism in Europe*, vol. ii, pp. 239, 240.

² Cf. *Joyce's Social History of Ireland*, vol. i, chap. xi (See sec. 3, *Lay Schools*).

³ In this, too, Ireland is an exception. The Irish bardic class included hereditary historians as well as lawyers, doctors, poets, etc. Cf. *ib.*

thus laying the foundation of modern European literature. The monasteries as well as the Carolingian schools,¹ established by Charlemagne in the beginning of the 9th century under the influence and inspiration of the Church, were the parent stems from which the great mediæval schools and Universities of Europe afterwards developed.

Art. 4—*Abolition of Slavery*²

Church's Efforts on behalf of Slaves.—The Teutonic invasions had been calamitous for the slaves. Slavery now became much more widespread, and slaves lost very many of the privileges which had been secured for them during the preceding century. As the nations became Christian the Church again intervened in their behalf. It procured the liberation of large numbers of slaves in every country. Documents of the 5th, 6th, and 7th centuries contain numerous records of captives who had been reduced to slavery being redeemed by bishops, priests, monks and pious laymen. Such redeemed captives were sometimes sent back in thousands to their own country. During all these centuries, enactments were constantly made in the national and provincial Councils of the Church in the interests of the slaves, providing for the protection of maltreated slaves and for the help and patronage of those that were liberated, securing the validity of the marriages of slaves, enforcing in their interests rest on Sundays and feast days, forbidding or limiting traffic in slaves and forbidding that freemen be reduced to slavery.

Development of Slavery into Serfdom.—But the Church's beneficent influence is best illustrated in her treatment of the slaves employed on the ecclesiastical estates, which eventually led to the abolition of slavery in Christendom. In the early centuries of this period the Church, owing to several causes, found itself in the possession of immense

¹ For an account of the dominating influence of the Irish scholars in these schools, cf. Zimmer—*Ireland's Contribution to European Culture* (translated from the German); Fitzpatrick, *op. cit.*

² Cf. Allard—*Esclaves, Serfs et Mainmortables*; Brownlow—*Lectures on Slavery and Serfdom in Europe* (reprinted from *The Month*, 1890-91); Palgrave—*Dictionary of Political Economy*, arts. "Serfs," "Servus," etc.; *Cath. Encyclop.*, art. "Feudalism and Land Tenure."; Belloc—*The Servile State*.

estates in every country of Europe. The immediate owners of these estates were the Pope himself, the bishops, the cathedral or collegiate chapters, and the monasteries. By virtue of a 4th century statute of Roman law, due to the influence of the Church, rural slaves could not be removed from the lands on which they worked even when the lands passed to another owner. This law was revoked after the barbarian invasions, except for slaves belonging to ecclesiastical estates. Hence the latter, whose numbers were immense, had the privilege of fixed work and permanent homes. By a whole series of canonical enactments the position of these slaves was gradually improved; and the privileges enjoyed by the ecclesiastical slaves were gradually extended to those belonging to the lay-lords. The result was that about the 10th century European slavery had practically given way to serfdom.¹

We shall see later how tolerable was the position of the mediæval serf as compared with that of the slave or of the modern proletarian labourer. Especially on the immense ecclesiastical estates, the serf or villein was treated with peculiar liberality. Here again the standard set up in ecclesiastical estates gradually spread to the lay-manors, preparing the way for the eventual development of serfdom into peasant proprietorship.

Art. 5—*Charity of the Church*²

Its Influence on Feudal System.—Besides the relief which the monasteries provided for the poor and weak, the Church which always regarded the *Corporal Works of Mercy* among her primary functions, made provision for their wants in several other ways. The feudal system, which had developed in Europe during these centuries and dominated the whole social life of the middle ages, became largely permeated by Christian principles, and the relations between lord, vassal and serf were strongly imbued with the Christian spirit. King, prince and feudal lord were constantly reminded that they held their offices from God and were responsible to God for the welfare of those under their charge. The poor, the weak and the helpless were, in theory and to a large

¹ Cf. Belloc, *op. cit.*, sec. iii, for a brief and graphic account of this process of transformation.

² Cf. *Catholic Encyclop.*, "Charity."

extent in practice, objects of their special care. Thus, by Charlemagne's legislation (*circ.* A.D. 800) the feudal lord was charged with the duty of caring for all the needy among his own vassals according to St. Paul's principle that everyone should attend to the needs of his own household.

The Patrimony of the Poor.—Besides the legal provisions in the feudal system in favour of the poor and the weak, there existed from the early centuries of the Church many other provisions for the relief of distress. All the Church revenues, even the sacred vessels, were regarded as subject to the demands of charity. Ecclesiastical property was referred to as "the Patrimony of the Poor," and a fourth part of all ecclesiastical revenue was always set apart for this object.¹

Charitable Organisations and Institutions.—Collections were regularly made for the same purpose in the churches. The wealthy and the powerful constantly contributed large portions of their property.

The administration of charity was carried out by regular parochial organisations under the presidency of the bishops. Besides, there existed in almost every city from earliest times, parochial institutions called *Xenodochia*, which were under the control of the bishops. These, which had begun in the time of Constantine, were meant originally for widows, the poor, the homeless, abandoned children and other helpless classes. They were commonly managed by pious associations and were endowed from ecclesiastical property.

Conclusion.—Between the charitable work of the monasteries, the recognised duty of the feudal lords, and the parochial organisations to meet the needs of the poor, destitution and misery were always tolerably provided for. Hence it is certain that even during the darkest period of the Early Middle Ages, amid almost universal war and violence, pauperism never reached the appalling proportions which it assumed in England and Ireland in the 18th and 19th, and even the 20th centuries, although these countries then enjoyed peace, and England abounded in wealth.

¹ In the early ages of the Church, particularly during and after the reign of Constantine, ecclesiastical property gradually accumulated, as a result of grants and bequests made by the Emperor and other wealthy Christian proprietors. See *infra*, chap. xxvii, art. 4; cf. also Albers, *op. cit.*, vol. i, pp. 254-257

CHAPTER IV

THE TWELFTH AND THIRTEENTH CENTURIES—HISTORICAL OUTLINE¹

The Christian Age.—It is of this period, which is sometimes referred to as the Golden Age of Christianity, that Leo XIII writes :

“ There was once a time when States were governed by the principles of Gospel teaching. Then it was that the power and divine virtue of Christian wisdom had diffused itself throughout the laws, institutions and morals of the people, permeating all ranks and relations of civil society. Then, too, the religion instituted by Jesus Christ, established firmly in befitting dignity, flourished everywhere by the favour of princes and the legitimate protection of magistrates ; and the Church and State were happily united in concord and friendly interchange of good offices. The State, constituted in this wise, bore fruits important beyond all expectation whose remembrance is still and always will be in renown, witnessed to as they are by countless proofs which can never be blotted out or even obscured by any craft of any enemies.”²

Again, the same Pontiff writes :

“ Civil society was renovated in every part by the teachings of Christianity. . . . In the strength of that renewal the human race . . . was brought back from death to life, and to so excellent a life that nothing more perfect had been known before, or will come to be known in the ages yet to come.”³

The time referred to is the period of the 12th and 13th centuries, when the influence of the Church in Europe was at its zenith. Christian principles then dominated social relations more fully than at any other period before or since ;⁴ and the Christian State then approached most nearly its full development.

¹ Besides the works of Chateaubriand, Balmes, Allies, K. Digby and Devas already referred to, cf. Mourret, *op. cit.*, vol. iv., “ La Chrétienté ” ; Albers, *op. cit.*, tome i, pp. 423 ff ; *Letters on Social History* (C. S. Guild) ; Benevot, *op. cit.*, part iii, “ Christian Rule at its Best ” ; Browne—*The Achievement of the Middle Ages* (London, 1928) ; Walsh—*The Thirteenth, the Greatest of Centuries* (New York, 1924) ; Montalembert—*Histoire de Sainte Elizabeth de Hongrie*, “ Introduction ” ; Frederick Schlegel—*Philosophy of History* (translated by B. Robertson—Bohn's Standard Library), Lectures xiii and xiv, pp. 320–388.

² *Immortale Dei*, p. 55.

³ *Rerum Novarum*, p. 148.

⁴ This refers to Europe as a whole. Some few countries should be excepted. Ireland enjoyed the blessings of a Christian civilisation long

Its Outstanding Characteristics.—It was the age of great saints and churchmen like Bruno, Bernard, Francis of Assisi, Thomas of Aquin, Bonaventure, etc. ; of great rulers who were at the same time Christian knights and heroes, such as St. Ludwig of Poland (*d.* 1227), Rodolph of Hapsburg (*d.* 1281), St. Louis of France (*d.* 1270), and his cousin and contemporary, St. Ferdinand of Spain. It was the period, too, when the influence of Christian womanhood was most deeply felt in European life ; when the thrones of Europe borrowed lustre from such noble matrons as Matilda of Tuscany (*d.* 1114), St. Elizabeth of Hungary (*d.* 1231), St. Hedweg of Poland (*d.* 1245), Blanche of Castille, mother of St. Louis, Countess Sophia of Holland (*d.* 1176), and very many others. It was the age of the Crusades, of Gothic cathedrals, of Christian poetry and art, of Christian philosophy.¹ Finally, it was the epoch of true Christian democracy which was then realised under the control of the mediæval guilds, more fully than it has ever been before or since.²

Social System not Perfect, but Founded on True Principles.

—We do not say that the mediæval State was perfect. No human institution can ever be so, as long as human passions and human ignorance remain. Besides, in mediæval Europe not a few characteristics inherited from paganism still survived, especially a certain helplessness among the masses of the people which was a heritage from centuries of slavery. Frederick Schlegel treating of this epoch when, as he says, great characters, noble motives, lofty feelings and ideas abounded more than in any other period of history, writes : “ All that was then great and good in the State proceeded from Christianity and from the wonderful efficacy of religious principles. Whatever was imperfect and harmful was in the character of the men and of the age not yet fully

before. In her case the period extending from the 6th to the 9th century (before the Norse invasions) may be regarded as the truly Christian epoch. Again, the Christian State flourished in the Spanish Peninsula on to the 17th century and later still in Spanish-America, especially Mexico, where justice and liberty continued to flourish under a predominant Christian régime down almost to the 19th century.

¹ Cf. Walsh, *op. cit.*, chaps. xvi-xx ; Brown, *op. cit.*, pp. 161 ff.

² *Ib.*, chaps. ii-ix ; Brown, *op. cit.*, pp. 46 ff.

attuned to the ideals of Christianity.”¹ Had the Christian State been allowed to develop in a normal way, there is little doubt, that many of these defects would be gradually eliminated, and a type of true democracy evolved in each country, suitable to the needs and character of the particular nation. This is substantially the evaluation of the mediæval social system which is conveyed in the moderate and carefully weighed words of Pius XI :

“ At one time,” he writes, “ there existed a social order, which, though by no means perfect in every respect, corresponded nevertheless in a certain measure to right reason according to the needs and conditions of the times. That this order has long since perished is not due to the fact that it was incapable of development and adaptation to changing needs and circumstances, but rather to the wrong-doing of men. Men were hardened in excessive self-love and refused to extend that order, as was their duty, to the increasing numbers of the people ; or else, deceived by the attractions of false liberty and other errors, they grew impatient of every restraint and endeavoured to throw off all authority.”²

Unity of Christendom.—Before the end of the 11th century practically all the nations of Europe, except those on the eastern shores of the Baltic, had embraced Christianity. The worst abuses in the discipline of the Western Church—the Eastern Church had at this time practically completed its separation from Rome—arising from the perpetual strife of the 9th and 10th centuries, were now mostly healed by the reforms associated with the name of Hildebrand or Gregory VII (*d.* 1085). With all the nations and all the rulers of Europe sharing a common Catholic faith, the Pope as the Vicar of Christ on earth, was accorded by unanimous consent a position of paramount influence. This reached its climax during the reign of Innocent III (1193–1216), when the sense of a common Christendom forming, as it were, one great European Empire, and held together by the ties of a common faith pervaded all classes.

The Crusades and Military Orders.—This union of the European nations was intensified by the great wars of the Crusades (1096–1273), including the protracted struggle with the Moors in the Spanish Peninsula. These wars, too,

¹ *Op. cit.*, lecture xiv, p. 364.

² *Quadragesimo Anno*, 1931 (C. T. S. edit.), p. 44.

gave occasion to the rise and spread of the great military Orders, the Knights of St. John, the Templars, the Teutonic Knights and the Spanish Knights of Calatrava and of St. James, which are a peculiar feature of Catholic life in this period. These Orders played an important part in the erection of the Kingdom of Portugal, in the suppression of the neo-pagan Albigenses of Southern France in the early half of the 13th century, and later on in the conversion to Christianity of the Eastern Baltic nations and the creation of the Prussian State. It was the Crusades, too, and the Christian spirit, of which they were an expression, that brought the Order of Chivalry to its highest development and enabled the clergy to enforce effectively in Europe the observance of the 'Truce of God.

Religious Institutions.—At the same time the Christian spirit of self-denial and prayer was exemplified and intensified by the rise and spread of the Cistercian Order,¹ in which the spirit of the early Benedictines was renewed. St. Bernard (*d.* 1153), the greatest of the Cistercians, whose attractive personality dominates the first half of the 12th century, may be regarded as the type and personification of his age.

The foundation of the great Mendicant Orders in the 13th century, namely, the Franciscans, the Dominicans, the Order of Mount Carmel and the Hermits of St. Augustine, marks a new development in the life of the Church. Unlike the earlier religious Orders, the Mendicant Friars bound themselves to absolute poverty, even as corporate bodies.² Besides, they did not confine themselves to their monasteries, but mingled with the people, devoting their energies to the work of leading others by their example and preaching to follow the teaching of the Gospel. Their influence can hardly be exaggerated. The Mendicant Friar moving about among the people, living upon the alms of the faithful,

¹ The Benedictine monasteries have been computed to number about 37,000 at the end of the 13th century (Cf. *Catholic Encyclop.* ii, p. 446). About the same time the Cistercian Congregation, which began in 1098, had more than 700 large monasteries of men in different countries of Europe and some 900 convents of nuns (Cf. Albers, *op. cit.*, tome i, p. 535.

² This rule of mendicancy was gradually modified by different Popes till finally the Council of Trent allowed all religious, except the Franciscans of the Strict Observance and the Capuchins, to hold corporate property.

clad in the habit of poverty, was a perpetual reminder to all of the ideals of Christ.

In the social sphere especially, the movement wrought by the spirit of St. Francis, renewed Christian life in Europe. The Third Orders of St. Francis and St. Dominic, which were an adaptation for lay people of the Mendicant ideals of piety, detachment and charity, spread rapidly through Europe. The members included men and women of every rank, who bound themselves to carry out the obligations of religious perfection while following their ordinary avocations in the world. "The Third Orders," says Lacordaire, "produced saints in every walk of life from the palace of the monarch to the peasant's cot; and that, too, in such teeming multitudes that even the desert and the cloister might well feel jealous."¹

The Cities and Schools.—This period is also marked by the rise of the towns. In the preceding centuries there was comparatively little town life in Europe. The Roman towns were declining even before the barbarian invasions; and these hastened their decay. The new German races loved the open life of the country; and during all the period of the Early Middle Ages social activities centred round the manor or the monastery. Owing to various causes, however, such as the attacks of the Northmen, Hungarians and Saracens in the 9th and 10th centuries, against whom strong walls and a central government were the only effective bulwarks, towns began to assume importance. The growth of trade and commerce, which appeared in the following centuries as a result of the Crusades, caused their further development. The cities of Northern and Central Italy were the first to reap the fruits of the trade and commerce with the East, which developed with the Crusades; and towards the close of the 13th century, Venice, Genoa, Florence and Milan were not only wealthy and prosperous cities, but had each become the centre of a powerful republican State. Northern and Central Italy was studded over with similar city-republics of a smaller type, all practically independent. The Italian cities became the centres of industry, learning and art, scarcely surpassed by the famous cities of early Greece. The Southern French towns

¹ *Vie de St. Dominique*, chap. xvi.

and Barcelona developed a little later. In the 13th century, numerous important centres of commerce and trade had been established in France, Flanders, Germany and England, some of which remain to this day among the great commercial towns of the world.¹

The most important social development resulting from the rise of the towns was the formation of the great burgher class out of whose successful struggles for political emancipation arose the Third Estate or Commons which would most probably have grown into a full and real democracy had not the virus of modern Liberalism poisoned its later development.

Decline of Christendom.—It is outside our present scope to follow the course of the decline of the Church's influence, or to trace the sorrowful story of the events which led to the catastrophe of the Protestant Revolt—commonly called the "Reformation"—of the 16th century. The enforced exile of the Popes at Avignon (1309–76), the aggressive interference of the French kings, the great Western Schism (1378–1417), the neo-paganism intermingled with the revival of classical learning in the 15th century, the avarice and ambition of the German princes and, later on, of the English sovereigns and the Scottish lords, all had their share in bringing about the disaster. Abuses, too, in ecclesiastical discipline, owing principally to the above causes, were made the occasion and the pretext of robbing the people of their faith over large portions of Europe and preparing the way to their future enslavement.²

The social conditions, however, which had developed in the 12th and 13th centuries when the influence of the Church was at its height, did not change substantially till after the rise of Protestantism. The principles of Christian teaching which produced all that was good in these conditions, were not seriously questioned till the 15th century. We have now to analyse these conditions and principles a little more fully.

¹ Town-life in Ireland did not develop till the 14th century, when a considerable degree of peace and prosperity and a renewal of Christian civilisation were realised in proportion as the Norman and English invaders were beaten off or partially absorbed by the native element. Cf. Mrs. Green—*Making of Ireland and Its Undoing*, chaps. v and vi; Ryan, S. J.—*Ireland from A. D. 800 to A. D. 1600*, chaps. vii, viii, xi and xii (Dublin, 1928).

² Cf. Pastor—*History of the Popes*, vol. v, "Introduction," and vol. vii, "Introduction."

CHAPTER V

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTENDOM

Social Life permeated by the Christian Spirit.—The whole structure of mediæval society was founded upon Christianity. All the people were Catholic ; and ecclesiastical influence was very powerful. Christian principles were inculcated in the current literature, the pulpit, the schools, and the tribunal of Penance ; and were taken for granted, even when not faithfully followed, by all classes of society. The laws and their administration, the economic policy of the State, the recognised relations between the different classes, even international politics, were judged by Christian standards. So strong and deep-rooted was public opinion in the matter that it was difficult for individuals to disregard these standards openly.

Kenelm Digby mentions many interesting particulars illustrating the Catholic tone of public life. Thus : “ A painting of the Crucifixion was usually to be seen in the great chambers of the parliaments . . . and over the seats of justice. The great, solemn, thirteenth century paintings of sacred subjects on the walls of the great hall at Sienna, in which the grand council of the Republic assembled, are an evidence of the tone of the government.”

In the choice of public functionaries, fidelity and probity were the great qualities insisted on. The injunction contained in one of the Capitularies of Charlemagne gives an idea of the spirit which continued during mediæval times to dominate public administration.

“ Let no count hold his *plaids* [viz., *placita generalia*—a kind of local council] unless he be fasting and fed with sense.”

Again, Digby quotes the following from a mediæval collection of municipal laws :

“ The town sheriff has to visit the round of the walls at night

to see that the watch has sufficient clothing. He has to inspect the provisions destined for the poor." ¹

Political Principles.—The fundamental principle of all mediæval teaching upon public authority and civic rights was that authority comes from God and is given to the ruler solely for the people's good ; and that the people whose good was to be promoted include all classes equally, rich and poor, high and low, serf, burgher and feudal lord.² Further, owing to the ingrained spirit of Christianity in favour of the poor and weak, the principle was commonly admitted that the humbler classes had the first claim upon the consideration and solicitude of the ruling powers. Thus John of Salisbury³ (*d.* 1180), a typical 12th century political philosopher, writes :

"Then and only then will the health of the commonwealth be sound and flourishing when the higher members devote themselves to the lower ; and when similarly the lower members cooperate with the higher so that each and all are as it were members of one another, and each believes his own interest best served by what he knows to be most usefully provided for others."⁴

Again, the same author writes :

"All things are to be referred to the public good ; and whatever is useful to the humbler classes, that is, the multitude should be pursued in all things. . . . Christ will hear the poor when they cry out, and it will be in vain to multiply vows, and to endeavour, as it were, to bribe God by gifts."⁵

Hence, Henry II of England describes himself (and was described) as the "Defender of the Poor and the Defenceless."

¹ *Op. cit.*, bk. iii, chap. iv. Cf. also Otto Gierke—*Political Thought of the Middle Ages* (1900), translated by F. W. Maitland. For an interesting and well-documented account of the Christian spirit which pervaded the English mediæval law, see an article in *The Clergy Review* (March, 1931) entitled "Christianity and the Common Law."

² Cf. St. Thomas, *De Rege et Regno (De Regimine Principum)*, for a sketch of the ideal Christian State. Whether or not this book or the greater part of it is really the work of St. Thomas, it certainly belongs to the period of which we treat and summarises the then prevailing teaching.

³ John of Salisbury, familiar to students of Irish history in connection with the supposed Bull of Pope Adrian IV, was the friend of Adrian IV and of Henry II of England ; and the secretary of Henry's Chancellor, Thomas à Becket. He was a prolific writer on political and other subjects.

⁴ *Policraticus* vi. 20, cited by Rev. Paschalis Larkin, O.S.F.C.—*Property in the XVIII Century* (Cork University Press, 1930), p. 3.

⁵ *De Nugis Curialium*, lib. v, chap. xxvi (Rolls Series).

Vincent of Beauvais of the Order of St. Dominic (*d.* 1264), who was tutor to the children of St. Louis, writes in much the same strain as John of Salisbury on the duty of government :

“ There must be mutual safety for the king and the people ; he errs who thinks that the king is safe when nothing is safe from the king.”¹

Tyrannical Rule Reprobated.—Another fundamental principle strongly insisted upon in the political teaching of that age is that the most absolute power is regulated by fundamental laws against which whatever is done is of its own nature null and void. This principle, at variance alike with the pagan principles of absolutism and the modern Liberalist view of the omnipotence of a majority, is frequently emphasised by St. Thomas (*d.* 1274). Thus he writes :

“ One is bound to obey civil rulers, in as far as the order of justice demands. Hence if the power is not held justly, but is rather a usurpation, or if the laws are unjust, the subjects are not bound to obey, unless perchance in order to avoid scandal or danger.”²

Again the same writer has :

“ Those who defend the common good are not to be called seditious in resisting those who oppose it. . . . The tyrant himself it is that is seditious, who encourages disunion and sedition in the people he rules, in order that he may more easily retain his control over them. For this is tyranny to aim, namely, at the personal advantage of the ruler to the detriment of the people.”³

We find in Dante (*d.* 1321), whose work contains so faithful a picture of the mediæval spirit, many echoes of this attitude towards unjust rule. For instance a certain group in the infernal regions are thus referred to :

“ Those are the souls of tyrants, who were given
To blood and rapine. Here they wail aloud
Their merciless wrongs.”⁴

¹ *Speculum Doctrinæ* (Rolls Series), lib. v, chap. ii.

² 2^a, 2^æ. Q. 104, a. 6 ad 3^{um}.

³ *Ib.*, Q. 42, a. 2 ad 3^{um}. Cf. the words of the great English lawyer Coke to James I ; “ Rex non debet esse sub homine sed sub Deo et lege ” (a king ought not to be subject to man but to God and to the law)—(cited in *The Clergy Review*, *loc. cit.*, p. 257).

⁴ *Hell*, c. xii. ll. 104–107 (Cary’s translation). Cf. St. Thomas, *De Rege et Regno* (*De Regimine Principum*), cap. xi, for the same ideas.

Mediæval Christian Democracy.—Such doctrines commonly acknowledged, and the structure of a society fashioned under their influence, effectually secured a high degree of genuine democratic rule. Despotism, understood in the sense of irresponsible rule exercised mainly in the interest of the rulers and practically regardless of the people's rights—the system of government which obtained all over Europe before the rise of Christianity and was re-introduced as a result of the Protestant Revolt—did not generally prevail under the Christian régime of the Middle Ages. This fact, which is strongly asserted by the Catholic apologists,¹ is acknowledged even by historians hostile to the Church. Thus Lecky writes: “The balance of power produced by the numerous corporations which she [viz., the Church] created or sanctioned, the reverence for tradition resulting from her teaching which created a network of unwritten customs with the force of public laws, the dependence of the civil upon the ecclesiastical power, and the rights of excommunication and deposition [exercised by the ecclesiastical authorities] all combined to lighten the pressure of despotism.”²

Hallam, while acknowledging the prevailing spirit of justice and democratic independence in the mediæval system, does not state that this was due to the influence of Christianity.

Decentralisation of Political Power.—Another very important safeguard against tyranny was the decentralisation of political power. In this the mediæval state contrasts strongly with the ancient pagan state as well as with the royal absolutism of the 17th and 18th centuries and the centralising tendencies of the modern bureaucracies. The extensive power conferred by royal charter on the city municipalities, which were organised on a democratic basis, and the fundamental laws and privileges of the provinces were all strong safeguards against centralised despotism.

¹Cf. Ryan and Millar, *op. cit.*; also Chateaubriand, *op. cit.*, tome iii, chaps. vi, x and xi; Balmes, *op. cit.*, chaps. xlix–lxiii; De Maistre, *Du Pape*, liv. iii, chaps. ii, iv and v.

²*Rationalism in Europe*, vol. ii, chap. vi, pp. 216, 217. Cf. also Hallam—*Middle Ages*, vol. i, chap. ii, part ii.

So too was the guild organisation of the towns, to which Pius XI refers as

“The highly-developed social life which once flourished in a variety of institutions organically linked with each other.”¹

On the other hand the very real power of the king, which depended largely upon popular support, acted as a check against the abuses of local barons.²

Conclusion.—Hence, although wicked and unprincipled rulers are to be met with even in the period of which we write, their power to injure and oppress was much more limited than that of a modern bureaucracy. Widespread injustice and continued tyranny were scarcely possible; and the oppression and tyranny which did exist here and there were partially counteracted by the resources which religion supplied.

¹*Quadragesimo Anno*, p. 36.

²Concerning the attitude of the great mediæval theologians towards slavery, an attitude which some writers represent as out of harmony with the Christian principle of men's equality in essential rights and human dignity, see *infra*, part ii, chap. xvii, art. 4. On the whole question of mediæval political teaching, cf. four valuable articles by Professor A. O'Rahilly, M.A., published in *Studies*—viz., “The Catholic Origin of Democracy” (March, 1919); “The Sources of English and American Democracy” (June, 1919); “The Democracy of St. Thomas” (March, 1920); and “The Sovereignty of the People” (March and June, 1921).

CHAPTER VI

MEDIÆVAL ECONOMIC TEACHING

Division of Subject.—Christian principles dominated the economic no less than the political teaching in mediæval times. The responsibilities attaching to the ownership of property, the principles of justice and equity in wages and commercial dealings, the lawfulness or unlawfulness of charging interest upon borrowed money, are questions of conscience which find practical application every day of one's life. Hence it was inevitable that the Church's teaching upon such matters should exert a profound influence on social relations among Catholic and deeply religious communities as all the European nations then were. We shall, therefore, treat briefly of the three main principles of mediæval economy that clash most strongly with modern Liberal views. These relate to *Ownership of Goods*, the *Just Price* in buying and selling, and *Usury*. The contrast between social and economic life, as we know it to-day, and that of the Christian period is rooted mainly upon the difference between the Christian and the modern Liberal attitude towards these three questions.

Art. 1—*Ownership of Goods*

Before attempting to analyse the mediæval doctrine of ownership (which has always been the Catholic view) we shall first try to explain briefly the difference between *Private Ownership* and the *Communal Ownership* of goods.

Communal Ownership.—In communal ownership, the goods in question are held in common by the members of a certain group such as a corporation, a municipality, an industrial guild, or even the State itself. No individual member can claim exclusive ownership of any of the goods, although he may use them in common with the other members as far as his needs require; or even may have certain portions of them—determined according to the nature and extent of his needs—assigned to him for his exclusive use.

Religious Communities and Socialists.—This type of ownership is familiar to us in the institution of religious

communities. The community or congregation owns property as a corporate body, but the individual members are excluded by their vow of religious poverty from personal or private ownership, or at least from the free exercise of it. Each member does the work assigned him, and each receives from the common store all he may reasonably require.

Such also is the system of ownership which the Socialists or certain sections of them, aim at establishing, at least to some extent, over the whole State. They would have the goods, or at least the productive goods, owned in common by certain groups within the State, or even by the whole State as one corporate body, while the individual members co-operate in the work of production and distribution, and each is enabled to use the property and to enjoy the fruits of the co-operative labour in accordance with his reasonable needs.

Communal Ownership and Co-Partnership.—We may note that communal ownership, as here defined, differs essentially from co-partnership as exemplified in trading companies. In the latter system, the extent of each member's claim upon the fruits of the industry is determined solely by the amount he has contributed to the common fund whether in capital or by labour; while, in communal ownership, the individual member's claim is determined principally or solely by his reasonable needs.

Communism and Collectivism.—We may further note the distinction sometimes made between *Communism* and *Collectivism*. Both these terms imply common ownership of the means of production established as a regular system over the whole State. In the system known as *Communism* (which is characterised by *Communal Ownership* properly so-called), the distribution of the produce is made according to the principle: "To each according to his needs"; whereas in the system known as *Collectivism*, the distribution of the produce is carried out on the principle: "To each one according to his merits." In other words, under the Collectivist system each is supposed to receive his share of the fruits of the work of production in proportion to the amount or efficiency of the labour he has contributed. Thus the system of ownership, which at present (1931)

actually exists or is supposed by law to exist in Soviet Russia, seems to oscillate between Communism and Collectivism as here defined. Hence, Collectivism may be broadly described as universal co-partnership established compulsorily and by law as the prevailing system of ownership over the whole State.

Private Ownership.¹—In opposition to the communal system of ownership is that of private ownership. In this the individual (or family) has exclusive rights over such property as appertains to him in virtue of certain recognised titles, such as occupancy, production, inheritance, contract, etc.; and ordinarily, each individual or family depends for sustenance solely or principally upon such goods.

Unchristian Concept of Private Ownership.—We find this system *in its extreme form* in the old Roman Empire, before the rise of Christianity, and in modern states which have fallen under the influence of unchristian Liberalism. In these social systems communal ownership, though not illegal, did not and does not prevail to any considerable extent except in the public utilities (such as roads, public hospitals, the postal service, public libraries, etc.), and in the religious or charitable institutions organised by the Church. The individual owner may control property to an unlimited extent. He may do what he likes with this property and live in the highest degree of luxury *without any reference* to the needs of other members, even those of his own country or municipality.

This perverted conception of ownership, resulting from a non-Christian attitude of mind and belonging properly to an unchristian civilisation, was first introduced into the Christian States of Europe in the 14th and 15th centuries

¹ Cf. St. Thomas, 1^a. 2^{ae}, Q. 105, ; 2^a. 2^{ae}, Q. 66 ; a. 1, 2 and 7 ; Q. 32, a. 5 and 6 ; 1^a. 2^{ae}, Q. 94 ; a. 5 ad 3^{um} and Q. 105 a. 2 (*corp.*). Ashley—*Economic History*, vol. i, chap. iii, pp. 126-131 (London, 1913) ; O'Brien—*Essay on Mediæval Economic Teaching*, chap. ii, secs. 1 and 2 (Longmans, London, 1920) ; Palgrave—*Dictionary of Political Economy*, art. "Aquinas." Dom Bede Jarrett, O.P.—*S. Antonio and Mediæval Economics* (Herder, London) ; Larkin, *op. cit.*, chap. i—A very valuable and well-documented sketch of the mediæval conception of property rights. Professor O'Rahilly—*St. Thomas' Theory of Property* (art. in *Studies*, vol. ix, p. 337, 1920) ; McLoughlin—*St. Thomas and Property* (*ib.*, p. 571) ; W. Sanderson—"Chaos in Industry", a thoughtful and able article published in *The Nineteenth Century and After* (October, 1925, pp. 515-526).

with the introduction of Roman law.¹ It was, however, only after the rise of Protestantism in the 16th century that it gained general currency.

The most repulsive feature of this extreme system of private ownership is that many individuals, sometimes even the majority of the population, may be practically excluded from their natural right of access to the goods of the earth. This exclusion may be enforced by law as in case of the slaves under the old Roman régime. Sometimes it arises as a result of the actual working of the system as in the case of multitudes of the modern proletariat population.

Mediæval System of Ownership.—Mediæval teaching rejected completely this extreme form of private ownership, emphasising the limitations which the natural law, as well as Christian teaching, set to property rights. While not repudiating or even discouraging communal ownership where found practical and useful as a supplementary and corrective element within the prevailing system of private ownership, mediæval teaching and practice rejected communal ownership as the ordinary system of conducting human affairs. The mediæval doctors maintained that the only system compatible at the same time with man's temperament and with the teachings of Christianity, was a system of private ownership limited by obligations of justice and charity, subject in due measure to the *Higher Dominion* (*altum dominium*) of the State, and supplemented where useful and possible by a certain admixture of communal ownership.

St. Thomas' Teaching.—The Christian and mediæval teaching on ownership may be gathered from several passages in the *Summa* and other writings of St. Thomas. His doctrine, which is founded upon the Gospel teaching as interpreted by the early Fathers, summarises the current views of his time, and was adopted as the standard by all or practically all the mediæval writers. He has been followed also by the great Catholic theologians of the 16th

¹ Cf. Mourret, *op. cit.*, vol. v, chap. ii; also Meyer and Ardant—*La Question Agraire*, 2nd edit. (Paris, 1887), Prém. Partie—"Introduction." Larkin, *loc. cit.* See *infra*, chap. xvii, art 3.

and 17th centuries. We may briefly summarise St. Thomas' doctrine as follows :

1. God, Who alone has the supreme dominion and ownership of material things, has ordained the latter for the use of all. Hence, such a practical access to these things as may enable man to supply his human needs is natural to him, and is each man's inalienable right.¹

2. It is false and even heretical to say that all private or exclusive ownership of material things is against the natural law.²

3. The system of private as contrasted with that of communal ownership is not only lawful, but within certain limits is necessary for the due conduct of human life, at least as long as men retain their present normal characteristics. Hence it is imposed on man by the *Law of the nations (Jus Gentium)*.³

Proofs of the Necessity of Private Ownership.—This last proposition St. Thomas proves by three reasons—(a) Private ownership supplies a necessary stimulus to human endeavour. For men will not ordinarily put forth their best efforts in productive labour except the fruits of the labour are to be their own. (b) Private ownership facilitates the proper division and co-ordination of labour, whereas in communal ownership the distribution of labour would be very difficult or impossible. (c) Private ownership promotes peace and harmony. For in this system (when properly understood) each one has sufficient and is content with his own ; whereas

¹ 2^a, 2^{ae}, Q. 66, a. 1 and 7.

² *Ib.*, a. 3, *Sed contra*.

³ Cf. *ib.*, a. 2 ad 1^{um} and Q. 37, a. 3. For the precise meaning of the *Jus Gentium*, cf. St. Thomas 1, 2^{ae}, Q. 95, a. 4, and Meyer, S.J., *op. cit.*, Pars. 1^{ma}, n. 571, and Pars. 2^a, n. 178. It differs from the natural law in that its obligations are not so urgently demanded by man's individual nature and destiny as the obligations of the natural law. Nevertheless given fallen man as he actually is, and with his social instincts and needs, the dictates of the *Jus Gentium* are morally necessary for him. Hence, whether the obligations of the *Jus Gentium* rest upon positive human law, as some seem to hold, or upon remote conclusions of the natural law, as others assert, all agree that it is in practice necessary for man's well-being and cannot be changed by human enactment. For such an enactment, as for instance a law abolishing the institution of private property, would be contrary to the common good and so intrinsically invalid.

disputes occur more frequently among those that possess things in common.¹

Christian Concept of Private Ownership.—The system of private ownership, however, which St. Thomas defends as lawful, and in practice obligatory, is not to be understood in the extreme individualistic sense already referred to. It includes only the exclusive right of *dominion* and *the control of the production or exploitation and of the distribution of the goods* (*potestas procurandi et dispensandi*). It does not include the *exclusive* right to the *use* of them. This right is strictly limited and cannot be exercised without due consideration for the needs of others. In this regard the owner has only a priority or first claim as far as his needs require. St. Thomas's words are as follows :

“ In regard to that [namely, the *use* of goods] one must not regard material things as one's own, but as common property, so that one freely shares them with others who need them.”²

The limitation here implied to the lawful use of property rights is an obvious conclusion from the fundamental principle that God has ordained material things to satisfy the needs of all. The actual division of them by means of private ownership, which is a human institution, cannot validly contravene that decree, nor therefore prevent men from satisfying their needs by them. Consequently the property which people possess in excess of what they require should be used to satisfy the needs of those that are in want.³

Its Social Aspects.—Hence, according to mediæval teaching the rights of private ownership were subject to the following limitations :

(a) Anyone may in case of a clear and pressing need (*evidens et urgens necessitas*) lawfully disregard another's ownership and appropriate for his own use what he thus clearly and urgently requires ; nor can the owner who has no urgent and immediate need of the thing in question lawfully prevent him. He would violate charity and even justice by doing so.

¹ *Ib.*, Q. 66, a. 2 (*corp.*). St. Thomas apparently does not mention the reason which by some is regarded as the most convincing of all in favour of the system of private ownership, namely, that it is a necessary means of securing the individual's personal independence and responsibility.

² *Ib.* From other passages (such as *ib.*, a. 7) we know that St. Thomas implies that one's own reasonable needs are satisfied before the obligation arises of sharing the goods with others.

³ *Ib.*, a. 7 (*corp.*).

(b) The owner is bound at least under an obligation of charity to distribute the goods he does not require for his own reasonable needs to those that do need them. Hence his exclusive right to *such* goods is confined to the control over the working or exploitation of the capital, and directing the distribution of the proceeds (*potestas procurandi et dispensandi*). These latter he is bound, in varying degrees and within varying limitations according to circumstances, to give to those in need.¹ But when all men's wants cannot be relieved, the owner may select the particular persons with whom he will share the goods.²

(c) Although outside the case of clear and pressing needs, an individual may not lawfully appropriate for his own use even the superfluous goods of his neighbour, he has a right in *Legal Justice* that the public authority, whether guild or municipality or State, should see to it that he *gets a fair opportunity* of providing for all his reasonable needs, even though it were necessary for that purpose to override another's ownership, in regard, that is, to his superfluous goods.³

Extension of Communal side by side with Private Ownership.—The tendency of mediæval teaching and practice was to encourage a reasonable and voluntary extension of the communal ownership of property, as an offset to the dangers and shortcomings of an exclusive system of Private ownership. For the Church has always recognised that private property alone is not sufficient to meet the needs of the masses of the people. There will always be numbers who cannot, or in practice will not, acquire private property sufficient for their security. Hence some type of communal or quasi-communal property is usually required to supplement private ownership.⁴

¹ Cf. chap. xxvii, art. 4, for a short exposition of the extent and urgency of this obligation.

² *Ib.*

³ *Ib.*, Q. 58, a. 6; Q. 61, a. 1 ad 4^{um}; 1^a 2^a, Q. 105. *De Rege et Regno (De Regimine Principum)*, lib. i, cap. xv.

⁴ See Meyer et Ardant, *op. cit.*, 2^{ieme} partie, chap. vi, pp. 279 ff. Compare also the words of Comte de Mun, leader of the Catholic social movement in France: "While proclaiming that the right of private property is a natural right we only demand that alongside of private property a certain amount of collective [or communal] property be freely

Owing to this attitude on the part of the Church, it gradually came about in nearly every country of Europe as a result of the voluntary gifts of Christian rulers and other pious benefactors, that a large portion of the wealth, including sometimes almost a third part of the whole property of the country, was held in trust by Christian corporations of various kinds to be administered for the benefit of the members and others in accordance with their actual requirements. Thus Church property and the corporate property of the guilds were applied and distributed, to a great extent in meeting the wants of those in need.

Especially in Land.—There were besides, in every country, large tracts of land called “Commons,” which were held on the communal system. Again, turbary rights, fishing rights, hunting rights, etc., were also usually communal. It was in accordance with the general custom in mediæval times, if not a recognised principle, that *all the soil should not be appropriated, and even in what was appropriated that certain rights should always be reserved to the community.*

Conclusion.—All these customs and recognised principles, limiting property rights, and supplementing the system of private ownership, combined with the influence upon public opinion of the Church’s teaching, had an immense effect during all this period in equalising the condition of the people and moderating extremes of poverty and wealth.

Art. 2—*The Just Price*

Application in Mediæval Times.—The mediæval law of Just Price is another example of the altruistic spirit which permeated the social and economic life of the middle ages. Individuals were not permitted to use freely the property they controlled in ways that might be detrimental to the common good. They were compelled, when the needs of others required it, to place the goods they had to dispose of at the service of the public *under equitable conditions.* The poor and weak were protected against unfair competition,

established to vest [for communal purposes] in free associations, municipalities and corporations” (cited by Garriguet, *op. cit.*, pp. 163, 164). Hence, too, the Church has always been so insistent on the conservation of ecclesiastical property, which is in large part the “Patrimony of the Poor.” Cf. Meyer et Ardant, *loc. cit.*, and Sanderson, *loc. cit.*

