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5 GREAT DENMARK STREET, DUBLIN, C. 16.

1935

Nulli Obstat:

CAROLUS DOYLE, S.J.
Cens. Theol. Deput.

Imprimi potest:

✠ EDUARDUS,
*Archiep. Dublinen.,
Hiberniae Primas.*

Dublino, die 1^o Junii, 1935.

NOTE.

These six Lenten Lectures are published in two pamphlets costing one penny each. This is done at the wish of a certain Dublin priest—whose name has not been revealed to me—who has made a most generous donation to enable publication at this low price. I take this opportunity to offer this kind benefactor my most sincere thanks.

The lectures were written for delivery and the inevitable defects of style have been allowed to remain. No change has been made from the text as reproduced in the *Irish Catholic*, except the correction of obvious printer's errors. It should be remembered that the lectures were addressed to an audience of educated laymen and women, but do not claim to be either scientific or exhaustive treatises on the problems dealt with.

E. J. COYNE, S.J.

THE PEACE OF CHRIST IN THE REIGN OF CHRIST.

IV.—THE LABOURER AND HIS HIRE.

“Behold the hire of the labourers, who have reaped down your fields, which by fraud has been kept back by you, crieth: and the cry of them hath entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth” (St. James v, 4).

So far in these lectures we have been considering the political, the constitutional, and the juridical side of social life. We have seen that there are certain basic principles on which the structure of human society must rest if it is to be human, stable, and effective. We have seen that these principles are not admitted as valid in theory and are ignored in practice by modern statesmen and politicians. And consequently we find exactly what we should expect to find—political discontent, confusion, in-

humanity, and ineffectiveness. It does not give Catholics any satisfaction to be able to say, “I told you so”; and, indeed, many Catholics are quite as ignorant, as negligent, or as sceptical of Catholic political theory as non-Catholics are. But the fact remains: the Catholic Church does know the true principles on which civil society must be built; she, and she alone, is the duly appointed and authoritative teacher in these matters; and she has never failed to preach and teach the truth in clear and unequivocal terms. So long as men continue, in Christ's words, “to shut their eyes and dull their ears” to that teaching so long will they continue to deprive themselves of that healing which He offers to the world: the refusal of which by Jerusalem forced tears from Our Lord.

It is not that there is a want of a certain superficial, and often merely sentimental, humanitarianism in the world to-day: on the contrary, perhaps the great danger is the deliberate substitution of such purely natural feelings for true Christianity, as in Communistic countries, or the belief that such humanitarianism is actually Christianity, as in many countries. What is neglected or ignored is the Church's teaching on the rational, philosophical bases of social life: the nature

of civil society, its purpose, its essential properties; the origin of political authority, its function and its limits; and the right relations between Church and State. Precisely because these things are fundamental, are they buried deep, and so hidden from the eyes of the normal citizen. Unless he consciously examines for himself, the rottenness of the foundations of society will escape his notice, though it will be the cause of many of his troubles. Precisely because these things are principles, are they abstract and theoretical—what else can principles be?—and so easily waved aside as academic and unpractical, as out of touch with reality, whereas such principles are the very things which are eternally real as they are eternally true.

We turn now to the more strictly social and economic side of civil society. Taking human nature as we find it, the economic stability, peace, prosperity, and progress of human society rest, as it were, on two pillars—human labour and private property. I do not merely mean that labour and the possession of property are necessary in some degree if a man is to attain his own personal end and perfection; or that they are necessary if ordered social life is to be possible at all. These

Social and Economic Side. statements are true and important, as we shall see. But what I want especially to stress is that even the technical economic structure or

system requires for its proper smooth functioning and its effective success in achieving its purpose that the nature and end of human labour and the rights and duties of private property be clearly understood and rigidly respected by us all. As in other departments of social life, so here, too, in the economic, we are apt to mistake symptoms for causes, and to concentrate on the more obvious technical flaws—such as currency or credit, tariffs or transport—and to forget that there may be a deep-seated disease in the form of a false principle or an unsound fundamental assumption causing all the trouble.

We shall consider the rights and duties of private property in our next lecture; in the present one we are concerned with the labourer and his hire. But we may note that these two things stand or fall together; they rest ultimately on exactly the same grounds of reason. They are, as I have said, twin pillars of the economic structure, or, better, perhaps, the two foci around which social life must move if it is to remain truly a human social life. It were well if both workers and owners were more conscious of this close inter-connection: if the one

remembered that the refusal to pay a just wage for human labour was really undermining the whole case for private property; if the other recalled that any attack on private property must inevitably recoil on the justice of wages.

What is the Catholic doctrine concerning human labour? We may divide it into three sections: First, the nature of human labour; second, the purpose or end of human labour; and third, its just reward.

The Catholic Church teaches us that man is a person, and, therefore, an end in himself, and that he is a person who has been raised to the supernatural order—made a sharer of the Divine Nature. Consequently, his destiny is not only to be a natural image of God, His Creator, but to be the very child of God, His Father. Human labour takes on an altogether unique dignity and sacredness from this fact. It is an activity by which—whatever its external results may be—man is supposed to develop in himself those virtues which make him a more and more perfect image of his Creator—an activity by

The Nature of Human Labour.

which the spiritual controls, dominates, and moulds the material, not only outside but within himself as well. And, being the activity of a finite person, human labour is by nature directed primarily to the perfection of that person, not to the perfection of mere material objects. We read in Genesis: "And the Lord God took man and put him into the Paradise of pleasure to dress it and keep it." Even before Original Sin, when Capitalism and Communism were equally unthought of, it was by labour—human labour on material things—that man was to develop his faculties and reach his perfection. And after the sin, the essential nature of human labour was not changed—it was still the personal activity of a child of God. But two things happened. Firstly, God cursed the earth: "Cursed is the earth in thy work: with labour and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." And, secondly, by this curse, man's labour, which still retained its former specific nature, received an additional quality or property—it became penitential, penal, a punishment.

"In the sweat of thy face shall thou eat bread till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken: for dust thou art and into dust thou shalt return." Original sin, which deprived us of the status of sons of God, deprived us also of all right

to walk this world with the stride of kings and to make it burgeon and blossom without any fatigue to ourselves. And though the Redemption gave us back the Divine sonship, and so took away the formality of punishment from labour, it left it materially penal and painful. And so our

The Penitential Aspect. very perfection must henceforth be sought and attained by a penitential way—"by the sweat of our brows."

So human labour is not a "commodity," and wages are not the "price" of human labour. In nothing is our present economic theory and practice more vicious than in this. It regards labour as something that must be hawked round from market to market by its possessor, who will sell it for the best price he can get for it. The laws of supply

Not a "Commodity." and demand and the free, but regulated, competition and bargaining of the open marketplace will settle its price. The value of human

labour, we are told, is measured by its marginal productivity. If the worker is free to move from market to market as demand grows or falls away, if he is not in an inferior economic position for bargaining, then the resultant "price" which he receives for his labour will be a "fair wage," whether it be enough to enable him to lead a human life or not.

This concept of labour is completely false and completely at variance with the teaching of the Popes. We need not look further for something to correct in our economic system: this alone is enough to throw it out of gear.

Nor is human labour a "cost of production," as the accounting term goes. We may reckon interest and rent, raw material and fuel, power, rates, taxes, depreciation as costs of production, but we must stop short at the human element, at human labour. The dividends or profits which some enterprise pays, the reserves which are laid up, are not, in our modern way, looked upon as "costs of production," but as income. So, too, with labour and its reward. It is not so much

Not a "Cost of Production." coal or raw stuff to be bought and consumed and paid for by wages—wages which must be cut down when it is necessary to reduce the "costs of production." The reward of labour

is the income of the human element, without which there would be no production; it is the means by which the wealth produced is distributed, and without this distribution production loses

all meaning. In other words, wages so far from being "costs of production" are the end of production, the *raison d'être* of production.

Human labour has two purposes: one essential and permanent, the other accidental and transient. Its essential and natural end, as I have already suggested, is to enable man to develop and perfect himself; its transient end is to enable him to earn his living here on earth. Labour is the God-given, God-willed means to call forth all the physical, intellectual, and moral perfection which God expects of every man. By this labour in some definite vocation—it matters not whether high or low—a man is fulfilling God's will, is perfecting himself, is aiding his fellow-men. Very many men have no other opportunity of developing their intellectual qualities except by their ordinary work, and unless a man does develop these he will be so much less a man. The same is true of those moral qualities which go to the perfection of human nature—courage, temperance, justice, trust, hope, loyalty. It is for this reason that it is so important

The Purpose of Human Labour.

that the labour to which a man has to devote the greater part of his lifetime and energy should be in its nature, intensity, and conditions specifically human, such as may achieve its specific human end. It is for this reason, too, that human labour, precisely as human, holds such a high rank in any rational scale of values—that it is one of the last things that should be surrendered or forfeited for more plausible, seductive values.

But man is not meant to live an isolated life, remote from his fellows. He is a social being, meant by nature to live with and work with other men, so that human labour is naturally a social labour. It is meant to be exercised as the activity of a member of a social body, enjoying the benefits, but limited by the obligations of organised, human society. And society is meant to make human labour more efficient and more fruitful, both for the individual and for the community.

If, then, we are faced by the situation that a number of men living in some society, instead of being helped, are being hindered and blocked, we must come to the conclusion that something is seriously wrong with the organisation of such a society, for it has lost all meaning. In order to preserve itself it has to destroy or to repudiate that only end for the sake of which it has any reason for existing. Thus in a society where human

labour is not able to achieve its natural purpose, where all a man's good-will to work hard and work honestly is futile, where either there is no work to be got or not sufficient wages can be paid—in such a society man is not being helped to his end. It would seem as if he could do better for himself outside such a society, could lead a more human life if freed from the shackles such society imposes on him. Such a society inevitably appears to many men a living lie, a contradiction in terms, destroying those very values, the human values, it was instituted to defend, preserve, and promote.

It is no answer to say that the State will, by social legislation, feed, clothe, and house such of its citizens as cannot find work. That is not the normal, natural function of civil society—it is, at best, an emergency measure, a last resource. Moreover, it is precisely the communistic or socialistic view of society: reducing men to the level of helpless domesticated beasts, which must be fed and housed by their owners. God and Nature meant men to feed, clothe, and house themselves by their own efforts, and by those efforts, by their human labour, to perfect themselves as human beings. Man is a person endowed with intelligence and capabilities for producing wealth; if social conditions are such as to force on him the indignity of having to be given his means of livelihood without any personal effort of his own or such as to deprive him of the normal means of self-development, these social conditions are wrong and call for radical reform. That is the reason why Pope Pius XI used those extraordinarily strong words of warning, which unfortunately have gone unheeded in many countries, even by Catholics. Speaking of labour conditions, he says: "These ideas were not only suggested, but stated in frank and open terms by Our Predecessor. We emphasise them with renewed insistence in this present Encyclical: for unless serious attempts be made, with all energy and without delay, to put them in practice, let nobody persuade himself that public order and the peace and tranquillity of human society can be effectively defended against the forces of revolution" (*Quadragesimo Anno*).

I have said above that private property and human labour are the twin pillars of a human economic structure; they stand or fall together. We shall come back on this point in our next

The Failure of Individualistic Society:

And its "Social Services."

lecture. For the moment it is enough to point out that while human labour is not a mere commodity to be bought and sold, while it is not a mere "cost of production" to be ruthlessly cut down, it is even less a means to be exploited to make other people wealthier. Modern economic theory and practice, however, assume this either implicitly or explicitly—namely, that the natural end of human labour is to enable capital to pay a good rate of interest and so increase the wealth of the owners. Undoubtedly this is often—indeed, generally—one of the results of well-organised labour; but it is a result that may not be sought at the expense of the true natural purpose of labour—the perfection of the worker and the support of himself and his family.

And now we pass on to consider our third point.

What, then, is the teaching of the Popes on the reward of human labour, on the hire of the labourer? In order that this supremely important and urgent teaching may be perfectly clear in the minds of us all—workers, trade union officials, employers, consumers—it may be divided up into three points.

(I.) First of all, the Popes, and with them all Catholic theologians and philosophers, teach that an employer who hires labourers is bound in commutative justice to pay them a just wage.

"In commutative justice," I say, and a "just wage." In less technical and blunter words, an employer who does not pay his workers a just wage is (i) guilty of the sin of theft, and (ii) is bound to make restitution to his workers; and normally a sin against commutative justice is a mortal sin, if there is grave matter involved, and the duty to make restitution is a grave obligation. It follows at once that it is of enormous importance for employers and workers alike to know clearly what a "just wage" is. And this brings us to our second point.

(II.) Secondly, therefore, we can lay down this doctrine: the wage of a normal adult man for normal, human, honest labour cannot even begin to be a just wage until it is first a living wage. We have here two clearly distinct ideas or concepts—a "just wage" and a "living wage."

They are not the same thing, though they are closely related. The just wage of different persons or for different work may vary greatly. But the only thing that I wish to stress at the moment is this: whatever may be the exact just wage of a

Not a Means to be Exploited.

The Reward of Human Labour.

normal adult man, it can never be less than a living wage. Consequently, if an employer is bound to pay all his employes a just wage, he is bound to pay all normal adult male employes a living wage at the very least.

Living Wage and Just Wage. He may be bound to pay them, in commutative justice, very much more than a living wage, for a just wage may be much greater than a living wage: it cannot be less. We have now limited our question down to this: every normal adult man doing normal human honest labour for an employer is entitled to receive from that employer, at the very least, a living wage, and, in addition, whatever over and above this living wage is required to make it a just wage. We are not now considering the wages of any other class of person except normal adult men, the actual or potential heads of families. We are not talking about women or children or disabled, crippled, deficient men. Nor are we considering any special or abnormal type of work, but only the usual, average work considered by an enlightened public opinion human in its nature, length, and conditions.

What, then, is a living wage which is the very lowest limit of a just wage? It has two features: (i) It must be a family wage; (ii) it must be a socially human wage. It must be a family wage. Already Pope Leo XIII, in 1894, had at least implied this in his Encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, for he speaks about a workman's wages as being "sufficient to enable him to support comfortably himself, his wife, and his children." But Pius XI has left us in no doubt about it. In his Encyclical on Marriage, *Casti Conubii*, published in 1930, he writes: "And so, in the first place, every effort must be made to bring about that which our predecessor, Leo XIII of happy memory, has already always insisted on—namely, that in the State such economic and social methods should be adopted as will enable every head of a family to earn as much as, according to his station in life, is necessary for himself, his wife, and for the rearing of his children, for 'the labourer is worthy of his hire.' To deny this or to make light of what is equitable is a grave injustice, and is placed by the Holy Ghost among the greatest sins; nor is it lawful to fix such a scanty wage as will be insufficient for the upkeep of the family in the circumstances in which it is placed." Let us notice the extremely weighty words used by the Pope: "A grave injustice"; "placed by the Holy Ghost

among the greatest sins." Hardly six months after this declaration His Holiness issued yet another Encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno*, in which he reiterated in even more emphatic terms this teaching. "In the first place (he writes) the wage paid to the working-man must be sufficient for the support of himself and his family." There is not the shadow of a doubt as to the mind of the Popes in this matter: the living wage which is due to the normal adult man for his labour is a family living wage.

But this family living wage must be a socially human wage. Pope Leo expresses this when he tells us that in every man we "must respect his worth and dignity as a man and as a Christian," and where he lays down that "wages ought not to be insufficient to support a frugal and well-behaved wage-earner," and yet again when he speaks of a workman being able "to support comfortably himself, his wife, and his children . . . and to put by some little savings and thus secure a modest source of income." His Holiness Pope Pius XI is even still clearer and more forcible, declaring that an "ample sufficiency" of the fruits of production should go to the workers, so that by the prudent management of their income "they may be able to bear family burdens with greater ease and security; that, being freed from that uncertainty which is the lot of the proletarian, they may be not only in a position to support life's changing fortunes, but may also have the confidence that, when their own lives are ended, some provision will remain for those whom they leave behind them."

From all this it is clear that a family living wage should be sufficient to provide proper and sufficient food, clothing, and housing for the labourer and his family. The exact standard of such a wage must be fixed by the enlightened, prudent public opinion of any given society. It may vary within limits in different societies, or in the same society at different times. In an extremely wealthy society with a large accumulation of capital and a high standard of life all round the requisites for the labourer must also be in some relation to this standard.

It is not beyond the wit of man to decide upon certain minimum levels of food, clothing, and housing, which, under definite social and economic conditions, would be considered by prudent, conscientious men sufficient to meet the reasonable human demands of a family. It is obvious, for example, that in a

Exact Standard.

country like Ireland two rooms are not proper human housing for a labourer and his family, and that consequently his wages should be such as to enable him to provide more. And the same line of thought may be applied to food and clothing. But here we are not concerned with details, which are matters for separate investigation, but with principles. And the principle contained in the Papal documents dealing with the reward of human labour is this: The normal adult man has a right, in justice at the very least, to a family living wage in the sense I have explained. He may have a right to much more, according to the type of work he is doing—for he always has a strict right, in commutative justice, to a just wage. But the very minimum he has a right to is a living family wage.

And in a living wage a working-man has a right to something more than the bare necessities of life—he has need of and a right to a reasonable security and a reasonable leisure. Security—against sickness or accident, against unemployment, against need in his old age. This security is in some degree provided for in modern societies by some form of insurance, or else by the State. Insurance is the normal way and the proper way, for this requires the active thought and participation of man himself, and so develops certain specific human qualities and virtues. The intervention of the State to do what the individual man ought to be able, and by nature is meant, to do for himself is always a less good way, with many grave disadvantages both for the State itself and for individuals.

We in Ireland have become accustomed to the liberalistic policy of the State taking a direct and active part in providing certain social welfare services—education, medical services, pensions, and the rest. We should recall what Pope Pius XI has said in words of grave warning: “Social life has entirely lost its organic form. The State, to-day encumbered with all the burdens once borne by those associations now destroyed, has been submerged and overwhelmed by an infinity of occupations and duties.” And again: “It is an injustice, a grave evil, and a disturbance of right order for a larger and higher association to arrogate to itself functions which can be performed efficiently by smaller and lower societies. This is a fundamental principle of social philosophy, unshaken and unchangeable . . . The State, therefore, should leave to

**Security by
Insurance.**

**Liberalistic and
Socialistic
Tendencies.**

smaller groups the settlement of business of minor importance, which otherwise would greatly distract it.”

And the working-man has a need of and a right to reasonable leisure. His hours of labour, intensity and conditions, should be such as to allow him time and energy to take his share in his home life, and in the social life of the community, political, cultural, and recreational.

Leisure.

There arises at once a difficulty: “What is to happen if it is not possible to pay workers a living wage?” “After all,” say the sound, practical businessmen, who have little time and less sympathy for any theoretical, idealistic

A Difficulty.

nonsense—“after all, business is business, and we are not in business for our health; we have to make it pay, and we just can't pay what you say is a living wage . . . As for a ‘just’ wage, the term has no definite meaning for us.” The difficulty is neither original nor hidden, nor is it denied by Catholic teaching. Quite the contrary. Pope Pius XI is the very first to admit it: neither he nor his advisers live so far removed from reality as to be unaware of what stares everyone in the face. But the conclusion the Pope draws from this difficulty is very different from that drawn by the practical businessmen. They heave a sigh of relief, and, knowing that no one is bound to do the impossible, go on as they have always gone on, “buying” their labour like their raw material at the lowest price they can. The Pope, on the other hand, takes a completely different line. His own words are: “If under present circumstances this [the paying of a family living wage] is not always feasible, social justice demands that reforms be introduced without delay which will guarantee such a wage to every adult working-man.”

Popes weigh their words before speaking them; they realise that even their mildest expressions carry enormous weight as coming from the Vicar of Christ. It is worth while examining the language of that single sentence, which is Pope Pius XI's only answer to the oft-raised difficulty, “But it is impossible to pay a living wage.” And we may note that

**Possible by
Reform of
Society.**

the translation is the second officially recognised English translation, most carefully revised by English Catholic economists and sociologists, and minutely examined by an English Archbishop at the express direction of the Papal Secretary of State.

The Pope, then, speaks of "social justice," not merely "prudence" or "expediency" or "wisdom" or "policy," but "justice": and a justice that weighs on all our consciences, rich and poor, priest, or layman, ruler or subject. He says "demands," not "suggests"; "without delay," not "next year" or "the year after"; he says "guarantee," not merely "make possible"; and he says "every adult working-man," not merely "a select few." It is difficult to see how he could have used clearer or more explicit or more forcible language to express his teaching. He does not say, "We must fold our hands, wait for better times, and hope for the best"; he does say, "Introduce reforms." Even the most extreme Communist can hardly call this teaching "opium for the people."

The fact that under present social and economic conditions a normal adult man's labour very frequently does not supply him with all that a living wage includes, should not blind us to the fact that it should do so, nor lead us—as it so often does lead us—to the conclusion that it cannot, owing to some inexorable economic law or other. We are living in an artificial, man-made economic and juridical system—one built, too, as we have seen, for the most part on false principles and pre-suppositions. We must face the possibility—and the fact—that human society has become somewhat distorted, that its whole structure has become twisted, and by sheer ignorance, error, or malice of men, has been turned away from its true end and purpose. For, as we saw, human society is a moral organism, made and moulded by the ideas, decisions, desires of free beings. If men and women set before themselves a wrong end as the end of society—say, the amassing of economic power in the form of capital or credit resources, or the attaining of political dominance in the world—then it is certain that the constituent elements of society, such as private property and human labour, will be equally distorted and twisted. Neither will be able to play the part or accomplish the work it is meant by God to accomplish. In this case, it may be true to say that it is economically impossible to pay a living wage or to ascertain what is a just wage. But what does this mean? Nothing more than this: If we want to attain some end or purpose which God never meant society to be used to attain, then we cannot pay all the working-class a living wage, and we cannot pay many of them any wage at all. But the

Distortion of Society and Economic System.

obvious answer is, Why should we be so intent on attaining this wrong end? Is it not better to go back to the end meant by God to be achieved, even if a lot of seemingly desirable things must be lost or postponed? Certain it is, as Pope Pius XI has warned us, that Nature herself will step in and stop this crass and persistent violation of her laws and thwarting of her intentions—"let nobody persuade himself that public order and the peace and tranquillity of human society can be effectively defended against the forces of revolution."—(*Quadragesimo Anno.*)

After all, society is meant for man, not man for society. The human, personal values are greater than any social material values. If society does not facilitate man in the attainment of his personal end, then it has lost all meaning. If man's human labour cannot operate as it is meant by God to operate, then would it not seem better for man that he abandon society—or else reform society?

His labour is, normally, the only weapon given to man by God to meet the slings and arrows of fortune. Society is meant to enable him to use that weapon with ever greater efficiency. If, instead, this weapon breaks in his hand on account of his living in society, then something is violently awry. We know the life-story of man from the dawn of history—cast out of the Garden of Eden—and then we can read it in the flint-tools, the axes, and arrow-heads of our museums. There is a deep pathos

Man's Labour is his Only Weapon.

with a sense of stern justice about it all. Unarmed against a hostile Nature, red in tooth and claw; the earth bearing thistles and thorns and briars; alone, man has to face it and conquer it, alone with his bare hands. We know how he has wrung from the earth its secrets: thousands of years of sweat and blood and tears—all that we owe to the generations of men and women who have gone before us. And to-day hundreds and thousands of men face a not more gentle world and a not more lenient Nature—hunger and cold and disease, and the torments of family sorrow. Can it be that God meant this one weapon of man—his power to labour, to toil—his one means of raising himself, his one hope to make himself and his dear ones something more than beasts, beggars, or slaves—can it be that God meant this weapon to break in his hand, to leave him fighting with a broken hilt, to go down "an unpitied sacrifice in an inglorious struggle?" Our punishment as a race was,

and is, great enough: men have no right to add their sentence to God's. We are all in human society, in what Catholic philosophy calls "a conspiracy" against Nature and its forces: we all have a sacred duty to see that social justice is maintained between the "conspirators"—that human labour first achieves its God-willed purpose of supporting a man and his family, and only then any other purpose.

Having laid down as the first requisite of a just wage that it "be sufficient for the support of the working-man and of his family," Pope Pius XI goes on to give two other principles to guide us in determining what a just wage should be. The first of these is "the state of the business." It is well to note that the Pope is no longer talking about a "living wage," but about a "just wage." His Holiness lays down five points concerning "the state of the business." (a) It is unjust for workers—assuming that they are being paid a family living wage—"to demand excessive wages which a business cannot pay without ruin and without consequent distress amongst the

Two Further Principles.

working people themselves." (b) It is not a just reason, on the other hand, for reducing workers' wages that the business pays only a smaller profit, if this should be caused by either want of energy or neglect of technical and economic progress. There is no doubt that this is not at all uncommon in actual practice, and well deserves the attention of those interested in labour problems. (c) If the business is overwhelmed with unjust burdens, such as too heavy rates or taxes, or is exposed to unjust competition, then its inability to pay a just wage falls back on those "who thus injure it," who are "guilty of grievous wrong, for it is they who deprive the workers of a just wage and force them to accept terms which are unjust." Strange to say, in many countries it is often the political party supposed to represent the workers which imposes the heaviest taxes and rates on industrial and commercial undertakings, so making it impossible for these to pay a just wage. And these taxes and rates are imposed for the social services, pensions, insurance, unemployment, free medical service, free food—which in the main are meant for the poorer classes. The workers would be much better advised to consider their dignity as intelligent, free men, and insist on earning all these things for themselves and getting their cost into their hands as the just reward of their labour. At present in many countries it is the working-class

who actually do pay for these services, though this is concealed from them, and the services are given to them as a form of State benevolence. (d) There should be, the Pope says, a spirit of co-operation between workers and employers to see how best the just income of each may be arranged for. So long as human labour is looked upon as a "commodity" or a "cost of production," this co-operation is impossible. (e) Finally, the Pope does not hesitate to say that "in the last extreme" it may be necessary to close down a business that has clearly shown it cannot pay a just wage. It is, indeed, a most demoralising and evil influence in any society to have even one business which can only be kept in existence by the perpetuation of injustice to the workers. The bad effects and the bad example of such a state of affairs, will, normally, outweigh any advantages.

The second principle which Pope Pius XI. puts forward as operative in this matter of the just wage is the economic welfare of the whole people. And this has a three-fold practical application.

(i) A just wage should, generally speaking, be such as to enable a worker "to attain gradually to the possession of a certain modest fortune." Once more, it is not about a living wage that the Pope is speaking: he takes that as settled and beyond question. But his doctrine is that the public welfare, the common good, or, if you wish, social justice, demands that wages be such as to enable proletarians to become property-owners, either of land, as Pope Leo XIII suggested, or of shares in the enterprise in which they work.

(ii) Secondly—Wages should be fixed at such a level as to offer to as many as possible opportunities of employment. "To lower or raise wages unduly, with a view to private advantage and with no consideration for the common good, is contrary to social justice." This is the great curse of our individualistic economic system. There is nothing wrong with Capitalism, despite the ignorant and unthinking abuse that is constantly directed against it; and Popes Leo and Pius went out of their way not only not to abuse Capitalism, but even to declare it ought not to be condemned. But this Capitalism, this perfectly indifferent and extremely efficient economic system, is exploited by both workers and employers on individualistic

**Make
Proletarians
Property-
Owners.**

**Give
Opportunities
of Work.**

principles, each class trying to grab the larger share of the products, each individual in open competition with other individuals. As Pope Pius XI points out, this is ruinous both to social peace and economic prosperity. Unless a co-operative—or, as it is called, a solidaristic—spirit animates the various classes of society, conspiring towards a single end, desired by and common to all, there can be no lasting peace.

(iii) A proper proportion between different wages is a matter of importance. There has to be a certain inequality between wages, for the objective value of the results of human labour is unequal. But this inequality should be based on a rational human scale of objective values, not on the mere subjective whims and fashions of the rich or the

avarice of money-makers.

Such, then, is the reward which, according to the Popes, the normal adult man should receive for his honest labour. But note: he is bound in justice to give honest, reasonable labour. If he, acting on his own initiative or on the instructions of his trade union, does not give an honest day's labour in return for his wage, then he is just as guilty as the employer who exploits his workers. Unfortunately, it is not unknown that workers deliberately restrict output, deliberately waste time, deliberately

Duties of Wage Earners. make extra jobs, and deliberately follow, at times, an agreed policy of ca' canny, in the belief that so they get back something of their own from their employer, who, they believe, is under-paying or overworking them. In such a case we are outside the realm of right and morality altogether: it is a state of guerilla warfare between employers and employes. While such an attitude of mind, such an inclination of will remains, it is, of course, useless talking about a just wage or a living wage at all. It is a smothered conflict, in which "the good old rule, the simple plan" prevails. The Popes were not contemplating such a situation: they were laying down principles which presuppose good will and substantial honesty and righteousness in both employers and employes.

And more: the Popes do not promise a paradise on earth as the automatic result of the paying of a living wage. The worker will have to be careful and thrifty, industrious and temperate if he is to discharge all his duties. He will have no justification for squandering his wage on drink, in betting, in wasteful,

unnecessary expenditure. Recreation he has a right to, and recreation for his wife and children, and of the kind that pleases him or them within the limits of Divine and human law. No one has a right to grudge them whatever lawful pleasures they prefer, or to try to dictate to them what is good for them; or to lay down how they should spend the hard-earned money which, after all, is their own. But the head of a family should remember to cultivate those qualities and virtues which God expects from one in his state of life: a sense of responsibility and balance, prudence and foresight, temperance and simplicity, and, above all, good example and devotion as husband and father.

Nor should a Catholic worker forget his duties to the State as a citizen. Circumstances have tended, in many countries, to give the workers as a whole a hostile attitude, almost a revolutionary attitude to the central authority, to the State. They have allowed themselves to be persuaded, perhaps with some reason, that the so-called ruling classes are hostile to them and to their interests. And consequently there is often found a negative, destructive spirit, suspicion, and an unwillingness to

**Abandon
"Class-
Warfare"
Mentality.**

make positive, constructive contributions to the social life of the community. Nothing could be more damaging to social peace and prosperity. If only this question of social justice with regard to wages was satisfactorily solved, the working-class could join in wholeheartedly and unitedly in full and fruitful co-operation towards the common good. Without that co-operation social peace is impossible: the peace of Christ will only be found in the reign of Christ, when the writ of Christ runs in all our lives, workers or owners. But it is on the rich, on the owners or controllers of capital, that the greater weight of responsibility rests. St. James's words are extremely blunt and severe, but they carry the authority of God: "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl in your miseries, which shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted: and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered: and the rust of them shall be for a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh like fire. You have stored up to yourselves wrath against the last days. Behold the hire of the labourers" (St. James v, 1-4).

V.—THE EYE OF THE NEEDLE.

“Then Jesus said to His disciples: Amen, I say to you, that a rich man shall hardly enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you: It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven” (St. Matt. xix, 23, 24).

We have considered the function, purpose, and reward of human labour in God's plan of human society under His present dispensation. Human labour is (i) the normal and morally necessary means by which man may develop and perfect his specifically human qualities, physical, intellectual, and moral; and (ii) the necessary means by which he must procure for himself what he requires of food, clothing, lodging, security, and leisure to enable him and his family to live a truly human life. This note of true humanity or “truly human” must be emphasised: the actual labour of a man must be *human* labour in its nature, intensity, length, and conditions, and in the intelligence, care, honesty, and efficiency with which it is carried out. For such human labour the normal adult man has a strict right in justice to all that is required for a normal *human* family life, measured by the cultural standards of the society of which he is a member. His Holiness Pope Pius XI was quite aware when he wrote his Encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno*, that it was not always feasible to pay such a reward for such labour. But as we saw, this did not make him change one iota of his teaching. On the contrary, it called forth the solemn injunction: “If under present circumstances this is not always feasible, *social justice demands that reforms be introduced without delay which will guarantee such a wage to every adult working-man.*” And he then went on to outline what he considered the necessary reforms.

I said last Sunday, and I should like to repeat and emphasise it again, that the just wage and private property stand and fall together: the one will not long endure without the other. They are the two *foci* around which truly human, social, and economic life must revolve. To deny in theory or in practice one inevitably brings with it the denial of the other.

Private Property and the Just Wage. And so we see that when Pope Leo XIII and Pope Pius XI wished to lay down the doctrine concerning the rights of the working-man, and the just wage, both were compelled to devote a large section of

their Encyclicals to private property. And so, too, we see when we examine the Communistic or Socialistic creed exactly the same line of thought.

For Communists and Socialists lay down as one point of their elaborate and complicated body of doctrine that truly human social life is, at the present stage of evolution, utterly impossible under a system of private property; and that consequently private property must go—the very drive and sweep of dialectic evolution will destroy it. As a proof of this thesis they offer the very obvious and shameful failure of modern society under a private property system to meet the elementary fundamental demands made on it by the nature of man and the human family. They point to the exploitation of the working-class by the wealthy class, to the failure of the system to distribute the abundance

of material wealth produced by Nature and human labour, to the constant friction between employers and employes, to the reduction of vast numbers of men to pauperism and unemployment, to the sometimes inhuman conditions of work and of life of so many members of individualistic societies. If, they say, the State must insure labourers, must pay old age pensions, must give free medical services, unemployment assistance, relief work, and the rest, why should it do these things for only one class? Having once admitted its right and duty and competence to do these things, why not be logical and apply it to the whole of society? If the problem of the just reward for human labour, by which a labourer might secure *for himself* all those things, cannot be solved, then there is no reason for private property at all. If Communism and Socialism degrade human nature and human society in principle, the abuses of the present system degrade it in practice.

Rerum Novarum and *Quadragesimo Anno* are hardly less insistent on this same fact—namely, that, at present, human labour and its problems are not adequately provided for in our actual social system. Society has attained many of its purposes, but it has failed and is failing lamentably in what is its chief purpose—in the human, personal element. Pope Pius XI sees in the necessity of “the redemption of the proletariat” (*redemptio proletariorum*) the problem before the world to-day. But the Popes and all Catholics differ completely from Communists and Socialists in regard to the institution of private property. They assert that to try to remedy the defects of society as to labour

and its reward by abolishing private property would only mean producing a still more inhuman type of society, still more injurious to the true interests and welfare of men. The

**Catholics and
Private Property.**

Catholics' position must ever be this: the human, personal element holds the primacy in this world of ours. Society is for man, the human person, not man for society. The personal values, which we know are not only supreme and eternal but are actually connected with the Divine order of the Adorable Trinity Itself—for man is a sharer in the Divine Nature and a child of God—these values come before all other values whatsoever, social or individual. There can be no real, permanent conflict, of course—or, rather, no intrinsic conflict. But in any transient or apparent clash we have a sure principle to guide us. Man is a person, not merely the individual unit of a community. Now it is precisely on account of the personality of man and all that it involves that both private property and human labour are sacrosanct. Just as private property is required in order that a man's personality may develop, that his freedom and independence of the State may be guaranteed, that his family life will be immune and inviolable, so, too, a just reward for human labour is demanded for the same reasons. Deny either or both and man living in society can no longer live a specifically human life; he becomes either a slave or a beast.

But may I point out again what has already been said frequently, and, for all that, is constantly overlooked: human society is, in Catholic philosophy and in reality, a unified moral organism. Consequently, attacks on isolated portions or principles of Catholic social teaching, on the ground that "they are not feasible," that "they do not work," that "they are impracticable," are completely beside the point

**An Organic
Unity.**

and, indeed, either downright hypocritical or merely stupid. It is useless to complain that Catholic teaching does not heal *economic* ills if at the same time Catholic principles are rigidly excluded from the *political* and *juridical* spheres, to say nothing of individual manners and morals. Apply Catholic principles all round; make them valid in legislature, executive, and judiciary; put the Church and State into due and proper relationship; see that Catholic principles apply in education, in commerce, in the arts; give them equal weight in labour questions as in property questions—and then the Peace of Christ will reign. But it will

only reign where Christ Himself reigns, not where He is, as at present in society, less than tolerated.

I have deliberately selected for the title and text of this lecture one of those stern and awe-inspiring sentences which now and again fell from the gentle lips of Our Saviour. For it is a text well known, indeed, one of the best known and remembered for the sheer improbability of its vivid image, but one which, perhaps precisely on account of that image, is very often comfortably believed to have some reasonably mild meaning. In the course of this lecture we shall try to see that the difficulty of a rich man entering heaven is really only proportionate to the difficulty, which he freely and consciously undertakes, of so employing his private property that human life is possible for individuals, his fellow-men, and peace and order are preserved in and between societies. No man is compelled or constrained

to be a rich man, just as no man is compelled to marry. A man has a perfect right to become and remain a rich man, if he wishes and is legitimately able to do so. Christ's advice, on the whole, was against so doing: "Sell what

thou hast, and give to the poor," He repeated over and over again. In other words, "Do not be a rich man; do not possess much property; you can, morally and laudably, cease to be a rich man any moment you like: do so, for "it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." And to Christ nothing could stand in comparison with entering the kingdom of God. To be and to remain rich, then, is a deliberately and freely chosen vocation, deliberately and freely persevered in. And just as a religious vocation, with its vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, involves serious, difficult, and onerous duties, obligations, and burdens, so, too, the freely persisted in vocation of riches. It were better for a man not to follow a vocation to the priesthood or to religion unless he seriously intended to fulfil the obligations of his state. It were much better, very much better, for a man not to remain rich, unless he, too, seriously and conscientiously fulfils the duties, bears the burdens of the state of life he has freely chosen.

A rich man, then, has only two choices: either "to sell what he has and give to the poor"—that is, cease to be a rich man and place his heart and his treasure in heaven, or to take a gamble, to run a risk, that, even with such odds against him as are

expressed in Christ's startling image, he will still manage to be what must, humanly speaking, be the exceptional and unusual—a rich man who has entered the Kingdom of God. Normally, the type of man who can become and remain wealthy and the effect of riches on the human heart combine to make it morally certain that it will be the second alternative that will be chosen—he will risk the gamble, he will love the danger.

It is the clear and certain teaching of the Popes that every man has by nature—or, rather, from the Creator Himself—the right to possess private property as his own. This right, according to the Popes' teaching, does not come from any positive human law whatsoever, *jus gentium* or other, nor from any State: man possesses the right before the formation of the State, and cannot be deprived of it by the State. Now, we may take it for granted that both Pope Leo XIII and Pope

Origin of Right to Private Property. Pius XI were quite aware of the opinion, very common amongst the Scholastic theologians and philosophers, and supported by many famous and weighty names, that the exclusive private ownership of productive wealth rested on, was based on the *jus gentium*, the "law of nations." They did not, however, make this opinion their own, they did not teach it—a fact which has been stressed as noteworthy by commentators and students of the social Encyclicals. On the contrary, as commentators point out, both Leo XIII and Pius XI emphasise quite definitely that the right to private property comes from the very nature of man himself, given to him directly by His Creator, not indirectly through any human law or convention. And there is not the slightest doubt that both Popes are speaking about "productive property" and about land, either land on which a man has built or which he has brought under cultivation. "In no other way can a father effect this except by the ownership of productive property which he can transmit to his children by inheritance" (*Rerum Novarum*). "Now, the natural law—or, rather God's will manifested by it—demands that right order be observed in the application of natural resources to human need; and this order consists in everything having its proper owner" (*Quadragesimo Anno*, n. 53).

Four types of private property have been especially singled out for attack in more recent times: and even among Catholics wide divergencies of opinion have been and are noticeable on these four types. They are:—(i) "The means of production,

distribution, and exchange"; (ii) Land; (iii) "Unearned increment" of ground landlords; and finally, (iv) credit. With regard to the first, the teaching of Popes Leo XIII and Pius XI is clear and explicit.

The doctrine that the State should transfer to itself the ownership of all the means of production—that is, "socialise them"—is an error of Socialistic import and as such is condemned. Pope Pius XI has made it clear that to attack the possession of the means of production by private persons is a typical, specific socialistic policy, which he rejects.

As to the second, land, that question has already been settled by Leo XIII—"Man not only should possess the fruits of the earth, but also the very soil, inasmuch as from the produce of the earth he has to lay by provision for the future." And how much land may an individual man possess? As much as he has some legitimate title—occupation, prescription, inheritance, purchase, and the rest—to own. Thousands of acres? Thousands of acres—if he has a legitimate title, or titles, to them. The *right* of private property does not grow weaker and weaker as the amount of property grows. The *titles* to that growing amount have to be more carefully examined, and the *duties* and *obligations* of such property and its surplus income may be extremely heavy and exacting and may grow with its growth.

Land. Thirdly, as to the "unearned increment," "unearned ground values," or whatever one wishes to call them, it is extremely difficult to see how, on general Catholic moral principles, one is justified in denying the owner's right to these, or to say that his right depends only on the good-will or tolerance of the State. A landlord owns the land on which, say, a house is built. The mere fact that the land increases in value without any effort or industry on his part does not shake his right to ownership: he can sell it at its increased value without doing anyone an injury. The State can, of course, place a tax on such values; but this right of the State does not come from any special claim of the State to the "unearned values," but from its general right to collect taxes, *within the limits of distributive justice*, from whatever sources it believes to be most conducive to the common good.

Were we once to admit the State's ownership of unearned increments in land values, the principle would carry us very

far and wide in social life ; unearned increment occurs in many other things besides land values.

Fourthly, as to credit : in recent years the most popular panacea for our social ills has been some form of social credit scheme. Into the technical economic merits or demerits of the various schemes proposed we need not enter. But as Catholics we should be on our guard lest we, unconsciously, find ourselves repudiating the principle of private property and led into consequences we never suspected. A man's credit, his economic and commercial credit, is his private property—a most valuable and intimate personal property. For the State to nationalise or socialise this personal credit

would be a very serious step, but that is certainly what is logically involved in more than one social credit scheme. The same applies to the credit of a body of men, a joint-stock company, a trade union, a club, or any private corporation : the credit of such a body is its private property, and of very considerable value. For the State to forbid individuals or corporations to make use of their credit would be to forbid them to use their most valuable property in the only way in which it can be used, for there is this peculiarity about credit—that its economic value lies in its use, not in its possession. It is true that a country, a society, being a corporation and a quasi-moral person, possesses credit ; and this credit, the national credit, is a communal thing in the hands of and at the disposal of the Government of the country.

Any other "national" credit or "social" credit, which is so frequently and recklessly spoken about as belonging to "the people," is, on analysis, generally found to be merely the sum total of the numerous personal or corporative credits—each of which belongs to some definite person, physical or moral—existing in any given society. Credit is an intangible and immaterial reality, but it takes long years of honesty and hard work to acquire. Catholics ought to examine any proposals to confiscate or socialise credit very carefully before lending them their support. Owing to the subtle nature of the

concepts involved, and owing to the complicated technical processes and difficulties in all financial, currency, and credit matters, no subject lends itself more easily to seductive propaganda. A redistribution of the annual national income which would give us all a much larger share than we have, is, of course,

Credit.

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Social Credit Schemes.

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impossible, unless the income itself become proportionately larger. A redistribution of the annual national income that would make some of us richer, by giving us portion of someone else's income, might be very desirable, could it be done without doing anyone an injustice, without stealing, without unjust confiscation. But we must remember that theft is theft, no matter what name we call it, no matter what ingenious methods we may use to disguise it, no matter what specious sophisms we may elaborate out of the technical flaws of our banking and financial system, no matter on what large scale and grandiose methods we accomplish it. We are quite justified in trying to remedy any injustice in our credit system : but not by committing further injustices.

What precisely is this right to private property, which we have seen every man receives from God, and which extends to almost every type of material wealth ? It is the right or the moral power of disposing of wealth as my own, just as I like, unless in so far as I am justly prohibited. Consequently, a man may hold wealth, if he has legitimately and justly acquired it, in his permanent possession, he may sell it, give it away by will or as a present, may even destroy it *pro arbitrio suo*, just as he likes, *unless*—unless some Divine or natural or just and valid human law forbids him. And even if he does use or dispose of his wealth in a way forbidden by law he does

Nature of Right to Property.

not, merely by that fact (i) offend against commutative justice, strictly injure anyone, do anyone an injustice : nor (ii) cease to be the true owner, lose his right to his property. The natural law forbids an owner of property to dispose of his property in certain ways : and a violation of such law may make his disposal illicit or invalid, but it does not make him a thief, guilty of the sin of strict injustice. The natural law places at times a grave obligation on owners to use or dispose of their property in certain ways : their duties to their children and dependents, to the poor, to the community, all are serious, urgent duties. Owners may sin, and sin very grievously, by using, misusing, or abusing their private property—sin against piety, charity, temperance, legal and social justice. Moreover, owners are under an obligation to take reasonable care that they know the duties by which they are burdened as owners ; they cannot evade their responsibilities by sheer culpable negligence or ignorance. They have freely chosen and freely persisted in

this vocation of ownership; they must conscientiously try to learn and to fulfil the duties of this vocation on which the peace and prosperity of the whole community and so many millions of individuals depend. One of the most appalling features of our present society is the reckless and thoughtless way owners of property use and dispose of their wealth, as if they were burdened by no obligations whatsoever. Not only is there wasteful, harmful, or useless extravagance, not only sheer destruction of much needed goods, but there is a complete carelessness as to what uses an owner's wealth is put to in production or under what conditions as to, say, justice, commutative justice, in the matter of wages. An owner, and a Catholic owner, just hands his spare wealth to a stockbroker and has it invested in some industry, and then believes he has nothing more to do except draw his dividends. What is it to him or how is he to know if his wealth is being used in a just way? Out of sight, out of mind. Yes, but that is why Christ said: "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." Why deceive ourselves? A rich man, as we know by experience, is unlikely to go to the trouble, expense, and annoyance of either finding out or fulfilling his duties with regard to his riches. How unlikely? Christ's image is the answer.

And, apart from Divine and natural law, the State may make just and valid laws as regards the acquiring and use and disposal of private property. But these laws must be just, must be truly necessary for the well-being of the whole community, not merely for one class, must be in conformity with the higher natural law. "The State," wrote Pope Leo XIII, "has by no means the right to abolish it (private property) but only to control its use and bring it into harmony with the interests of the public good." And Pope Pius XI writes: "The State may not discharge this duty in an arbitrary manner. Man's natural right of possessing private property, and transmitting it by inheritance must remain intact and inviolate, and cannot be taken away by the State. . . . And hence the prudent Pontiff (Leo XIII) had already declared it unlawful for the State to exhaust the means of individuals by crushing taxes and tributes." And again: "It is a grievous error so to weaken the individual character of ownership as actually to destroy it." And finally: "It is a

Duties as to Use of Property.

State may Make Laws.

mistake to contend that the *right* of ownership and its *proper use* are bounded by the same limits; and it is even less true that the *right* of property is destroyed or lost by its *non-use* or *abuse*."

Hence, the State cannot say to a citizen who misuses his property or uses it in some way that State does not approve of: "You have forfeited your right to that property, you are no longer owner." The State can punish a citizen if he disregards or disobeys just and valid laws with regard to the use of property. "Provided that the *natural* and *Divine law* be observed, the public authority, in view of the *true necessities* of the *common* welfare, may specify more accurately what is licit and what is illicit for property-owners in the use of their possessions" (Pius XI). So the State can, within the limits of distributive and vindictive justice, fine such a citizen or impose taxes on certain uses of property. Strictly speaking, such a citizen has violated what we suppose to be a just law; but he has not violated commutative justice, nor done anything that, of itself, deprives him of his right of ownership, or justifies his deprivation of that right by the State, or deprives him of his right to just compensation if the State considers it absolutely necessary for the common good to expropriate him—an extreme measure.

But while strenuously guarding and upholding the right of private property in itself, and the rights of all who legitimately hold private property or legitimately have acquired it, the Popes are insistent on the need for the wider diffusion of ownership. "The law should favour ownership, and its policy should be to induce as many as possible to become owners." No man has a right to any particular piece of property unless he has acquired a legitimate title to it. But every man has a right to own it—i.e., is morally capable of owning —some property, if he can legitimately acquire it. This capability the State should endeavour to bring into actual exercise. This Catholic policy is in direct opposition to the Communistic and Socialistic doctrines and practices. It is also different from both the policy and the tendency of individualistic societies—where property is, indeed, juridically protected, but where it tends to accumulate in the hands of those who have it and not diffuse itself among those who have not. According to the Pope's teaching, such reforms—social, juridical, and

Limits of State's Powers.

Wider Diffusion of Private Property.

economic—should be introduced as will make it possible and easy for all citizens to “acquire a certain moderate ownership.” This can be done in two ways: by re-distributing the actual wealth already in possession of the members of the community, and dividing it more equally. The Popes do not even suggest this. As it would in justice involve compensation, it could only be applied to certain special forms of wealth, such as land. And here, it is true, Popes Leo and Pius ask for a “share in the land” for those agricultural labourers who are able and willing to accept the responsibility of ownership.

The second way is by a re-distribution of the annual income, the annual wealth produced by the united efforts of human labour and capital and Nature. “Not every kind of distribution of wealth and property amongst men is such that it can at all, and still less can properly, attain the end intended by God. Wealth . . . must be so distributed amongst the various individuals and classes of society that the needs of all . . . be thereby satisfied. In other words, the good of the whole community must be safeguarded” (Q.A. 57). In individualistic societies this has not been, and is not, the principle of distribution: distribution has taken place by limitless free competition for private profit, “which permits the survival of those only who are the strongest, and this often means those who fight most relentlessly, who pay least heed to the dictates of conscience” (Q.A. 107).

Again and again Pope Pius XI stresses the fact that the reason why private property is not more widespread, as it naturally should be in a truly human society, is the defective and unjust mode of distribution of the wealth produced by the joint efforts of capital and labour. The result is a huge army of propertyless proletarians and a few rich men. He quite clearly repudiates the idea that “all accumulation of capital” should fall to the wealthy. It is, he says, “entirely false to ascribe the results of the combined efforts of capital and labour to either capital or labour alone; and it is flagrantly unjust that either should deny the efficacy of the other and seize all the product” (Q.A., 63). This is precisely what happens when wages are looked upon as “cost of production”; the whole net product then is regarded as belonging to capital. But that net product has not been produced by capital alone. “Every sincere observer is conscious,” continues the Pope, “that . . . the

distribution of wealth is to-day gravely defective” (Q.A., 58). “. . . The material goods so abundantly produced in this age of industrialism are far from rightly distributed and equitably shared among the various classes of men” (Q.A., 60). “Every effort, therefore, must be made that at least in future a just share only of the fruits of production be permitted to accumulate in the hands of the wealthy and that an ample sufficiency be supplied to the workers” (Q.A., 61). This last sentence refers to that feature of individualistic capitalism which is its specific note: the three-fold appropriation of what is now called the net product—namely (i) Depreciation; (ii) Reserves, hidden and open; (iii) Dividends. This is not the place to enter into technical economic details: it is enough to point out that (a) at present all the accumulation of capital in any community is, for practical purposes, done by, and can only be done by, the relatively wealthy, and this because the working-class do not receive an equitable share of the real net product; and (b) the accumulation of capital is a fetish, an idol, a god of the present system—it is accomplished too quickly and in too great annual increases.

In other words, more of the net national annual product of the community should be spent—and spent by the working-class on consumption goods; and of the less which is put aside as capital some should be set aside by the working-class as their private property, not all (as at present) by either joint-stock companies as reserves or wealthy shareholders as investments made from surplus dividends. The purpose of placing an “ample sufficiency” in the hands of the workers is, Pope Pius XI says, in order that “by thrift they may increase their possessions and by the prudent management of the same may be enabled to bear family burdens with greater ease and security . . . and may also have the confidence that, when their own lives are ended, some provision will remain for those whom they leave behind them” (Q.A., 61).

With all his earnest defence of individual private property, Pope Pius XI joins the warning against the dangers to society of the “immense power and despotic economic domination” concentrated in the hands of a few. Especially strong are his words concerning the domination “most powerfully exercised by those who, because they hold and control money, also govern credit and

**Re-distribution
of Net
Annual Product.**

**Too much
Accumulation
of Capital;
too little
Consumption by
Working
Classes.**

Gross Abuses.

determine its allotment, for that reason supplying, so to speak, the life-blood to the entire economic body, and grasping in their hands, as it were, the very soul of production, so that no one can breathe against their will" (Q.A., 105-106). It is obvious that here is a branch of social life where the civil authority, in the Pope's words, ought to "adjust ownership to meet the needs of the public good," and prevent it "from creating intolerable disadvantages, and so rushing to its own destruction" (Q.A. 49).

But, it is often asked, has not the State a supreme power over all property and all land? Has it not an *altum dominium*, making with private ownership (the *humile dominium*), a dual ownership. It is perfectly true to say that the State has a *dominium* over the country of which it is the State; it has, in

"**Altum
Dominium**"
of State.

fact, a double *dominium*. It has, first of all, a *dominium jurisdictionis*—it has the moral power, the authority to rule, which we discussed in a former lecture. But it has also an *altum dominium* over the property of its subjects.

But this *altum dominium* is not a right of ownership, a right of property—it is not a *dominium proprietatis*. The State has no right of ownership over the goods or wealth, land, or money or credit of its citizens. What this *altum dominium* is is nothing more than the moral power or right to make laws or employ administrative measures concerning the private property of the citizens with a view to the common good. In other words, this *altum dominium* is not ownership—there is here no dual ownership—but merely a particular application of jurisdiction, of the authority to provide for the common good. If the common good really demands certain interference with the use or the actual possession, or even the ownership itself of certain private property, then the State has a right so to interfere—but only to the extent and in the way the common good really demands. And, normally, the private owners must be justly compensated.

This right of interference is often, in theory at least, pushed to utterly absurd extremes. The situation is contemplated where the common good would demand that the State take

**Could Complete
Socialisation
become
necessary?**

over all the means of production, distribution, and exchange, all the land and all the credit of private persons. Such imaginations and forecasts arise from a false concept of the common good: they implicitly assume (or sometimes explicitly)

the liberalistic and communistic concept of society as an end in

itself, as a supreme value, for the sake of and defence of and welfare of which all other values must be sacrificed. This idea of society and the common good is erroneous and must logically lead to absurdities. For Catholic philosophy, human society is a God-will *means* (not an *end*) to defend and promote certain human personal values connected with the human person and the human family. If society has to destroy these values instead of defending and promoting them, then society has lost all meaning, is a contradiction in terms. It becomes a monster, unnatural and evil, if to preserve itself it destroys what it is meant by God to preserve, if it makes *itself* an *end* and what it was meant to protect, *means*. Therefore, the situation could never arise in which the common good would demand that men be prevented from leading a truly rational, human life: for the common good is precisely that very thing—those conditions in which truly human life is possible. But private property is morally necessary if men are to lead human lives.

But note: it is quite possible—nay, it is morally certain—that some particular artificial, man-made type or form of society will have to abolish private property if it is itself to go on existing. Thus the individualistic type of society, built on the false principles of liberal political philosophy, is quite definitely tending in the direction of absolute State ownership and the institution of the "slave State." Marx foresaw this, even in his own day: it is much clearer now. In its efforts to preserve itself, individualistic society will gradually be forced to nationalise credit, banks, public services and all productive property, and by so doing will, of course, destroy itself and become a collectivist society. That is inevitable with all error: an error has only to be itself to be nothing, to destroy itself. It is obvious that a Communistic society, to preserve itself, must abolish private property: though here, too, the same rule will hold—it will destroy itself in trying to preserve itself.

But the point for Catholics is that a truly human society, one built as God planned and wishes, resting on a proper understanding of and respect for human nature, based on sound principles of true political philosophy—such a society will never need or call for the abolition of private property. On the contrary, from its very nature it will promote the wide diffusion of property, and look upon this as one of its foremost duties and purposes. And it is with such a society only that we need concern ourselves.

In recent times many Catholics have been appalled by the inhumanities, injustices, stupidities, and human suffering and poverty which individualistic society has produced and is producing. Moved by a praiseworthy indignation, they began to attack "capitalism," and, at the same time, to explain away or soften or whittle down the traditional teaching of the Church with regard to private property. The most extraordinary theories were advanced as to the origin and nature of private property, and it was more than hinted by some

**Whittling Down
Right of
Property.**

that the Church had allowed a "pagan, un-Christian, Roman-law" idea of property to creep into her teaching. This "anti-capitalistic" and "feudal Christian concept of property" was not only advocated with great vehemence in one Catholic country on the Continent, but infected the thought and writings of many Catholics in other countries. As Pope Pius XI tells us, it was to clear up doubts of this nature that he issued his Encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno*.

In that Encyclical he deliberately and explicitly repudiates two errors: (i) that capitalism, the economic regime or system under which we live at present, is vicious of its very nature and should be condemned; and (ii) "the odious calumny that she (the Church) has allowed a pagan concept of ownership to creep into the teachings of her theologians . . . and that another concept must be substituted, which in their astounding ignorance they call Christian."

It is more or less fashionable to use the term "capitalist" as a term of opprobrium, and to look upon owners of productive property—employers, "masters"—as suspect. It is a foolish and unworthy fashion. We are learning by bitter experience that it is not an easy task to organise and employ large bodies of men in a productive way. The gifts of intelligence and the moral character to accomplish this task are very rare—quite as rare and valuable as the gifts that go to make a good doctor or a good lawyer. To use wealth to produce more wealth, to be able to make "credit" fruitful, to plan and direct large schemes of work—that is precisely what all the Governments of the world have failed and are failing to do, despite their huge powers and resources.

Had we in this country a score or so more men gifted with the skill of "capitalists" or "employers," or could we persuade

those whom experience has shown are so gifted to lend their talents to solve this problem, we should have very much less unemployment. But so long as capitalists are the object of bitter attacks and prying suspicion, so long as owners of private property are viewed by the other classes with hostility, such co-operation and organic unity of social life will be impossible. Just as it is wrong to hinder a working-man from obtaining a just reward for his labour, as we saw last week, so, too, it is wrong to hinder a rich man, a capitalist, from employing his property in a way advantageous both to the community and to himself. His task is hard and dangerous, and on the whole, badly paid, even at the very best. "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle." Capitalist, employers, owners, deserve well of society if they use their talents and their property as God meant them to be used—for the common good as much as or more than for their own advantage.

For, as the Pope says, private property has a twofold aspect: it is at once individual and social. If the social and public aspect of ownership be denied or minimised, one falls into "individualism"; if the private and individual character be rejected, one is led into "collectivism." Now, this is the heart of Pope Pius XI's doctrine on property, and this is where we must look for an explanation of Christ's solemn warning to all rich men, to all property owners. We consider firstly, the individual aspect of private property. What is the natural purpose and function of ownership? What does Nature mean by it, wish to achieve by it? This is precisely the same question as we asked about human labour, and we must give the same answer: private property is one of the two normally necessary means by which a man (i) may develop and perfect himself precisely as a man, as a rational human being, and (ii) may acquire or secure for himself the food, clothing, lodging, security, and leisure which form the essential material basis of his life. There are qualities and potentialities in man, intellectual, physical, moral, which would remain dormant and undeveloped unless private property was there as an incentive and an object. The virtues of prudence and foresight, of temperance and thrift, of patience and perseverance, of honesty and justice, and many others would, generally speaking, remain relatively uncultivated in the average run of men were private property not permitted.

It is, as Pope Leo XIII points out, because man is man, because he alone among the animal creation is endowed with reason, that it must be within his right to own things in stable and permanent possession. The other reasons given for private property—namely, that the welfare of the family, and the welfare, and even the existence, of sound civil society, depend upon private property—can easily be shown to be ultimately, closely connected with the personal perfection of the individual. Here, as in all social questions, the human person holds the primacy, is the supreme value.

Hence we conclude that, viewed in its individual aspect, private property is meant by God to make possible or, certainly, to make more easy and secure, the personal, specifically human perfection of man. But now, while private property can undoubtedly achieve this purpose, it is a double-edged weapon. For, taking human nature as it is, riches, especially great riches,

**Danger of
Riches for the
Individual.**

are probably the most powerful influence for de-humanising man, the most deadly corrosive destroyer of all the best and noblest human qualities and virtues. The wealthy man is, as it were, sailing in a little cockle-shell of a boat surrounded by three whirlpools whose drags he must feel day in and day out. There is avarice and selfishness: sucking down a man to be a miser, ruled by gold. There is pride and independence: "Soul, thou hast goods laid up for many years, . . . But God said to him: Thou fool" (St. Luke xii, 19, 20). There is sensuality and extravagance: the purple raiment and sumptuous feasting, while Lazarus lies at the gate. What are the chances that a rich man will avoid, over a long period, all three whirlpools? Humanly speaking, Christ gave us the odds: "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle" (St. Luke xviii, 25). No wonder Christ refused to compel any man to be rich, no wonder He left this momentous choice to themselves, no wonder, when asked for His advice, did He speak out that astounding, incredible word of solemn advice: "Sell what thou hast and give to the poor."

We turn to the social aspect of private property, and if Christ's warning were justified before it is tenfold more justified now. "A man's surplus income," writes Pope Pius XI, "is not left entirely to his own discretion. We speak of that portion of his income which he does not need in order to live fittingly and becomingly. On the contrary, the grave

obligations of almsgiving, beneficence, and liberality which rest upon the wealthy are constantly insisted upon in

Surplus Income. explicit terms by Holy Scripture and the Fathers of the Church." In this passage we have two extremely important points brought out. Firstly, what does it mean "to live fittingly and becomingly?" The wealthy, especially in a society where there are numerous poor people and where the workers' standard of life is low, are not justified in considering every kind of imaginable expenditure and extravagance as necessary to a fitting and becoming life. Just as in the question of the fixing of a living wage, some attention has to be given to the general standard of life all round, so, too, here, in deciding what standard of life is reasonable and permissible to wealthy people. This is not only an individual question, but a social one, too; it is not only a question of how much money the rich *can* spend on food, clothes, housing, and recreation, but how much money they *ought* to spend: a surplus income is not that amount which a rich man *actually has over* because he just cannot spend it, but that amount which he *should*, in the judgment of prudent, conscientious men, have over, after providing fittingly and becomingly for himself and his family. There is, let it be said, no question of commutative justice involved here; a man's property is his own—no one else has a strict right to it. But there is a question of grave obligation, possibly very serious sin. Once more, a man is and remains a rich man because he freely chooses; it is his vocation, as it were—he must give all reasonable care to know and carry out the duties of that vocation. And one of his first duties is to know what is really, in the eyes of God, his surplus income, and then to know what he is meant by God to do with it. As I have said, riches are dangerous things of their nature—desire for ostentation and display, snobbery to be as good or better than one's neighbour, thoughtless and reckless extravagance on clothes, amusements, betting—all these tempt one to make inroads on what should be, and in God's eyes is, one's surplus income.

But, secondly, having fixed what is this surplus income, what is to be done with it? It is, I repeat, the private property of the owner, but its expenditure "is not left entirely to his own discretion." The Pope mentions three grave obligations—(a) almsgiving, (b) beneficence, and (c) liberality. Almsgiving: "Give to the poor"—it was Christ's great remedy for the dangers of riches. There are plenty of opportunities for exercising this

virtue in our society: the rich will have no difficulty in disposing of some of their surplus income in charity, both organised and unorganised. We have the St. Vincent de Paul Society, we have the Legion of Mary, and numerous other associations, and we have the poor all round us, with whom we can come into personal, human contact. Beneficence—good works—how many are there in sore need of funds! The Foreign Missions, the education of priests, the orphanages, the asylums, the hospitals, the social service clubs. Liberality—to pay something more than we need, or, put in a very much blunter and more concrete way to take 2 per cent. for our money rather than $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. or 4 per cent. There is one aspect of liberality that the Pope expressly mentions, but before going on to consider it I want to suggest that the wealthy, or relatively wealthy, should make some calculation every few weeks as to how much surplus income they disposed of in fulfilling these grave obligations in comparison, say, with how much they spent on amusements, racing, theatres.

“The employment of a large income,” says Pope Pius XI, “in increasing opportunities for remunerative work, provided the work is devoted to the production of really useful goods, is to be considered . . . an excellent act of liberality, particularly appropriate to the needs of our time.” And here we come to a fresh set of duties and obligations that affect the rich man, the owner—the duties connected with the productive use of his

**Productive
Use of
Wealth.**

property, the duties of capitalists, shareholders and banker or financier. It is impossible to go into full details concerning this matter in a lecture such as the present: the most that I can do is to outline the chief dangers one has to guard against. The great and principal duty of a capitalist or any employer is to give everyone what is just. “Wealthy owners and all masters of labour should be mindful of this—that to exercise pressure upon the indigent and the destitute for the sake of gain, and to gather one’s profit out of the need of another is condemned by all laws, human and Divine,” so writes Pope Leo XIII. The modern system of joint-stock companies, debenture shares, bank deposits, and all the various ways of financing production and commerce tend to hide from sight and so to banish from mind and conscience some of the most serious and urgent duties of owners of productive property.

It is extremely troublesome and difficult for the ordinary shareholder or bank depositor to find out whether his property is being used in the production of really useful goods or whether everyone employed in such production gets a just wage and humane conditions of work.

The impersonality and anonymity of modern productive enterprises leave the road open to the danger of much injustice, for which it is hard to say who is responsible. Owners of property, even if not directly obliged to examine into such questions personally, as they may very easily be, should at least try to bring about such reform in the methods of credit and finance as will give them some assurance that they are not being made the unknowing and unwilling partners to the grave injustices Pope Pius XI declares are present in our modern system. It is well to recall, however, that the Church has always warned the wealthy against the dangers and pitfalls of riches

and that Christ’s consistent advice to those who sought perfection was: “Sell what thou hast!”

Summary.

The right of individual men to own private property—and great quantities of private property—of all kinds is certain. Equally certain is the right to dispose of their private property as their own—*pro arbitrio suo*—just as they like, unless legitimately prohibited by some just law, Divine or human. One such law, at least, exists and does, as a matter of fact, impose limitations and grave obligations concerning the disposal of a man’s “surplus income”—i.e., that portion of his income which he *should* have over, in the judgment of prudent, conscientious men, after providing “fittingly and becomingly” for himself and his family. The State has no right to abolish private property or to “socialise” all the means of production, distribution, and exchange; nor can it justly exhaust the means and property of the rich by crushing taxes and tributes. The common good can never demand the complete socialisation of productive property nor the weakening of the individual nature of property. At the same time, the present distribution of the product of the combined efforts of capital and labour is defective and inequitable: capital is getting too much. The consequence is the accumulation of all private property in the hands of a few, whereas the common good of society and indeed commutative justice demands the wide diffusion of private property.

The ownership of large amounts of private property, especially

productive property, involves really awe-inspiring dangers, risks, responsibilities and obligations. These arise not only from the natural, almost irresistible effect of riches on the individual character of their possessor—on his judgment, will, and heart—but also because the lives of other men depend to a large extent—and even their eternal salvation to some extent—on the use he makes of his property, and still more because the peace and prosperity of civil society can be very seriously hindered or very greatly promoted by the vices or virtues of the rich. Owners are gravely bound, first, to know their duties and responsibilities, and then to fulfil them. Christ Himself or His Church never minimised the dangers or burdens of riches. Some of the keenest intellects, most courageous wills and most beautiful characters the world has seen have fled in terror from the possession of riches, taking Christ's words as true. Nothing, indeed, is more striking in the life of the Church, in her constant teaching, and in the words and example of Christ than this constant note of warning and appeal, culminating in that solemn, candid estimate of the difficulty for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God—an estimate that called forth from those poverty-stricken fishermen, Christ's Apostles, a cry of almost incredulous protest and horror: "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God" (St. Matt. xix, 24).

VI.—THE COMMON GOOD.

"And coming, He preached peace to you that were afar off, and peace to them that were nigh. . . . Now, therefore, you are no more strangers and foreigners; but you are fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone: in Whom all the building being framed together, groweth up into a holy temple in the Lord" (Ephes. ii, 17-21).

At the beginning of this course of lectures we put before ourselves two facts, the simultaneous existence of which presented a riddle demanding an answer. The first was Christ's clear intention and promise to give His peace to men of goodwill: the second was the universal absence of peace in every department of life—international, political, social and economic. We gave the answer to this riddle, the riddle of disorder and

babel in a world blessed by the Blood of the Prince of Peace: the refusal of the world to seek that peace in the only place where it could be found—in the Catholic Church. We were not caught un-awares, were not taken by surprise, by this refusal: we had several prophecies of it and of its results, one prophecy even from the lips of Christ Himself.

A Riddle and an Answer.

Nor will the Church meet anything unexpected in the future, when her teaching continues to fall on deaf ears. She knows the Bible, she knows the history of man; she is not greater than her Master, and knows that she must make His words her words: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered together thy children and thou wouldst not" (St. Matt. xxiii, 37). "Thou wouldst not": at the dawn of human life, when Adam's face was yet flushed with the breath of God, he gave his Creator the lie: "In whatsoever day thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death." It was the first prophecy, the first prophetic warning ever given to man, and given by God's own lips, and heard and as little regarded as the thousands that were to be repeated down the ages. We know the prophets fled from before the face of God when He ordered them to warn men that punishment was at hand. We know that Christ could only find one description, one title, one motto for His beloved Jerusalem—"Thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee" (St. Matt. xxiii, 37). And we know that the Bride of Christ, the Catholic Church, was sent by Him to continue His task and His Father's, and to be given the lie as they were given it: "Yea, the hour cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doth a service to God" (St. John xvi, 2)—such was what He told her to expect, and such experience has taught her to look for.

But the Church needs must give her message to the world, whether the world will listen or not: "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin" (St. John xv, 22). She may not know what particular form the refusal of any age to listen to her may take, but she has already run through the whole gamut of possible oppositions. She has been cursed for her importunity, she has been mocked for her failure, she has been flattered for her adaptability, and the modern fashion is to smile at her for her naïvety, for her "theoretical unsoundness and hopeless impracticability," and in all ages the cynical *Après moi le déluge!* is never far from the lips of her half-believers.

We considered what the Church has to tell us of the ground work of political society. If men wish to enjoy substantial political stability, peace, and prosperity, they can find in the teaching of the Church the very few solid principles they must cling to at all costs. She can give no magic formula, wave no wizard's wand, and bring Paradise on earth again: that she has always confessed, and against will-o'-the-wisp Utopias she has always warned and pleaded, "In the sweat of thy face . . ." But true peace and substantial prosperity—to them she can point out the road, give the light, supply the strength—and the wise men, the practical politicians, smile at her naïvety as Herod's court smiled at her Founder, and get down to real work, to business propositions, which, unfortunately for those who trusted in them, always turn out miniature Towers of Babel.

But it is not enough that the actual structure of society should be built on solid foundations and in accordance with the sound principles of Catholic political philosophy; more is required—namely, respect for Authority of Church and State. Without this respect, submission, obedience, no society of free beings, no matter how skilfully organised, will either achieve its purpose or last long. For without authority we can have no certainty as to truth in many matters, no unity of end or action, no consistency and uniformity in means or policy.

But this is not yet enough; for if there is to be peace and prosperity, political authority, the State must use its powers, legislative, executive, and judicial, to guide the combined efforts of its citizens to the true and proper purpose of human society, towards the common good. All through the history of the world this has been the crux in all societies. The holder or holders of the central authority and the physical forces of society have either not clearly known what was the common good or else have deliberately chosen to use their powers to seek some private advantage or gain at the expense of others. The great republics of antiquity built on the slavery of thousands of men and women; the absolute monarchies in their worst form seeking the good of the prince or of his dynasty; the various modern societies, the liberal State, defending the actually ruling class and its interests, becoming "a slave, bound over to the service of human passion and greed." The Communistic republic, governing in the name of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" for the interest of the working-class and the Communist Party; the Fascist State, a rule by "the Party" in the name of "the

Nation," ending "in serving particular political aims rather than in contributing to the initiation and promotion of a better social order"—all these are but examples of how easily a social authority may in the name of the common good use its powers in such a way that the common good is never attained.

There are three questions we must consider now regarding the common good. (1) What the common good is not? (2) What the common good is? (3) What is the best social structure to safeguard the common good?

The famous phrase, "Liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name!" uttered almost on the steps of the guillotine, might well be modified by the substitution of "common good" for "liberty." In the minds of modern statesmen the common good means anything or everything—and therefore nothing. It is a convenient label to justify the most diverse policies and activities. It is used even as an excuse to justify the most

**What the
Common Good
is Not?**

immoral course of action, in the belief that it is a thing of such sanctity and importance that it can sanctify and justify the use of any means. Now, there are three things which the common good certainly is not:—

It is not the welfare or the dominance of a single class or a single "party" in society. For Marx and the Communists this is the purpose of society: their ideal was a "future State" which should be "classless," where all should be equal in every possible respect. Towards this all their efforts must be directed. Not, indeed, that these efforts are absolutely required; for they are not . . . they are only helpful. Evolution, economic evolution, will bring about this "classless society" whether we like it or not; we can retard its arrival or we can hasten it, but no more. And according to Communists, we are acting in a praiseworthy way, in a way most in accord with Nature, if we do everything to hasten it. This is, for them, the common good—and it, in their practice at least, justifies every means, however, inhuman and brutal. Consequently, anyone who acts in a way calculated to retard the establishment of the "classless society" is, in their eyes, an enemy of mankind; and anyone who even teaches, as the Catholic Church must teach, that their idea of the common good is false and evil, is an even more dangerous enemy, undermining the very foundations of Communism. We are slowly waking up in Ireland to what Communism is, and the very considerable danger of it striking

roots in Ireland. Pope Pius XI has warned us: "We cannot contemplate without sorrow the heedlessness of those who seem to despise these imminent dangers of Communism, and with a sort of indolent apathy allow the propagation far and wide of those doctrines which seek by violence and bloodshed the destruction of the whole of society." But—and this is the more important and significant sentence—the Pope does not believe in merely a negative, still less a violent, answer to Communism: he goes on: "Even more severely must be condemned the *foolhardiness* of those who neglect to remove or modify *such conditions as exasperate* the hearts of the people, and so prepare the way for the overthrow and ruin of the social order" (Q.A., 112). What are those conditions that exasperate "the hearts of the people"? We have seen them enunciated by the Pope, in much stronger terms than any priest would have dared to use on his own authority: (a) the refusal to pay a just wage; (b) the abuse of private property and economic power; (c) the unjust distribution of the annual income; and (d) the evils of individualism.

The only answer to Communism is not violence, not persecution, not abuse, not even theoretical refutation—it is destruction of that evil soil and atmosphere in which alone it can live and grow. Pardon me for using a coarse image: any doctor will tell you that the way to stop typhoid fever is to look to the drains. And we know that the public health authority insists on this being done. If we want to keep the body politic free from the bacillus of Communism we will look to the drains, will destroy the only *bouillon de culture* in which it can exist. If we are not willing to do this in an energetic and effective way we leave ourselves open to the accusation—just or unjust—that our attacks on Communism are more directed to preserving the evil social conditions of to-day for our own supposed profit than to warding off any evils Communism contains. If the Pope's words mean anything they mean this: that he wishes to dissociate the Catholic Church from any attempt to maintain "such conditions as exasperate the hearts of the people"—wishes to make it clear beyond possibility of doubt that the Church's hostility, her uncompromising hostility to Communism and Socialism, is in no way due to or motivated by a desire to profit in any way out of the abuses of the present system.

**The only
Answer to
Communism.**

The second thing which should not be identified with the common good is an "exaggerated nationalism." In quite recent times the Pope has had to speak out very strongly on this point, and we ourselves see, at the present moment, how far it is carrying more than one nation in Europe. Ethnical, racial, national values are not the supreme and ultimate criteria of everything in human life. They have their place, and a lofty place, in every rational scale of values, but supreme they are not—they are subordinate. When an exaggerated nationalism is set before a people as the purpose of society, as the common good, then gradually but inevitably the whole force of public authority is used to make national values prevail at the expense of much more important and sublime values. We see it happening under our own eyes, notably in two countries where nothing is recognised as good or true unless it is tinged by national colours—culture, learning, economy, law; and the last supreme blasphemy, a national religion in place of Christianity—a religion which will soon worship the Nation, just as Communism worships Humanity.

Thirdly, the common good, the purpose of society, is not mere economic wealth and progress or political power. This is one of the characteristics of the liberal State—in practice, at least, whatever about its theory. It considers that the whole social organisation and all its resources and forces should be directed towards securing ever more and more wealth, particularly in the form of productive wealth, capital and credit. It has its origin in a philosophical error: that the "common good" of a society is merely the sum-total of all the "particular goods" of the members—an error arising from the denial of the organic nature of society and the substitution of a mechanistic concept.

To give but one example: In our present system it is next to impossible to make either employers or workers of a given enterprise realise that their interests are more closely bound together than the interests of either employers or workers as a class, that for either to injure the other is to injure themselves at the same time. And this is the ultimate reason why "vocational groups" should be the units in economic organisation, not "classes" in the sociological sense of that word. Pope Pius XI has pointed out the consequences which follow from making either economic or political power the purpose or

end of society, the common good. He writes: "The clash between States themselves . . . arises from two causes: because the nations apply their power and political influence to promote the economic advantages of their citizens; and because economic forces and economic domination are used to decide political controversies between nations." And, again, he condemns that "economic nationalism or even economic imperialism . . . and a no less noxious and detestable internationalism or international imperialism in financial affairs . . ." which is the fine flower of the liberal, individualistic State. Once more economics and politics are important enough in their own way and place but they are not the final purpose of society—they are not the common good. The spirit of materialism, which is so widely taken as a matter of course, produces a kind of optimism in modern men, that material progress, the physical control of matter, will eventually lead to a solution of all human problems. The inevitable result is that hypertrophy of economics, an almost hysterical pursuit of wealth, production gone mad. Until men realise that the common good must include intellectual progress and moral progress, must be an equilibrium and a hierarchical ascension, true social stability, peace or prosperity, will not be attained.

The short formula frequently used as a definition or description of the common good—"Peace and Prosperity"—while true is hardly adequate. As we have seen already, the supreme value in this material world is the human person, the image and child of God. He is an end in himself and all other things are meant

**What the
Common
Good is?**

for his use and his benefit. Among these other things is human society; so that the end or purpose of society must be found in man. It may be formulated as the establishment of those material and spiritual conditions which will best promote the development and perfection of all the members of society.

Now, these conditions consist in a certain order: or, as Pope Pius expresses it, after St. Thomas, a unity arising from the proper arrangement of a number of objects. But to set up a definite order we must have some principle of arrangement, and that principle is given to us in the objective scale of values which we find existing in creation. In other words, some things are, in reality, in God's eyes, in reason, more important than others, and deserve a more prominent place than others. This

scale does not depend upon the subjective wishes or whims of any man or number of men: it is founded in the immutable and necessary nature of God Himself. For our purpose, it is enough to say that in the temporal order there is no higher good than the human good. Hence it will stand at the head of our scale of values, and all other things will take up their position in that scale according to their relation to it, the human good.

The sovereign authority of the State, with its powers of life and death; the obligatory force of valid laws, promising heaven or threatening hell, are what they are only because of the importance of the common good. All political authority, it has been well said, is based on the common good and limited by it, is linked and enchained to a determinate end: hence its acts must have the true common good as their object. This is the great bulwark against tyranny and despotism, against all the evils of a "totalitarian" State.

All that the State is required to do is to establish and maintain an "order" between the different constituent elements of any society: an order not arbitrary or man-made, but one given in the very nature of things and calculated to secure the co-ordination and co-operation between very diverse units with a view to the good of the human person. The State should not—and indeed cannot—create and bring into existence the subordinate social units or structures which form its organic parts. These units are built up, partly by Nature, partly by the rational and free effort and industry of private persons.

Human individuals, families, economic groups, regional groups, religious societies—all pre-exist in some way political organisation. Each has its own end, its own nature, its own laws and rights—each exercises its activity on its own responsibility. What the State has to do is to establish the proper order between all these: to respect their special characteristics, rights, purposes, but to co-ordinate, orientate, direct. The State should not destroy nor weaken these smaller organisms, it should protect them, it should "adjust" them. That is social justice, that is the common good, when all are "adjusted" each in its own place according to an objective scale of values, all co-operating to make human life, moral, physical, intellectual, possible for all the human persons in society.

The corporative organisation of society, which Pope Pius XI declares should be the aim of social legislation, can best be under-

stood by a comparison with the two other social organisations we know—the individualistic and the collectivist. The individualistic society rests on the false theory that human society is merely the sum or collection of a number of free and equal “individuals,” mechanically held together by external conventions, but with no organic unity: there is only the State and individuals; and the State should confine itself to protecting the rights and liberty of the individuals. These, then, struggling among themselves with the fullest liberty, equality, and fraternity, each seeking his own private advantage and gain in open competition, will produce inevitably the greatest happiness of the greatest number. The guiding purpose and the driving motive is always the private gain of the individual. The collectivist society, on the contrary, sets very little value on the individual as such, and regards him only as a mere cog or unit in a whole, in the community. The important things are “collectivities”—the nation, the race, the “State” the class (proletariat), the party. Personality, liberty, or equality are not valued highly, if at all; subordination and discipline and a readiness to sacrifice oneself for the “collectivity,” the party, or the class, are what are sought for and encouraged. The State in this type of society (if it is permitted at all) is generally identified with the party or the class: it is merely the centralised, executive power of the party, absolutely authoritarian and dictatorial, and completely totalitarian, both as to the origin of rights and the extent of its power. Whatever groups may be allowed to exist—such as the Soviets in Russia or the Corporations in Italy—are only mere executive organs, blind and dumb instruments of the party or “State.” This is, strictly speaking, the “corporative State,” which is very often confused with, or even identified with, a completely different thing—a corporative society.

Now the main principle on which a corporate society must rest is that the human person is the supreme value in all social organisation, but that this person is, by his very nature, a social being, meant to live and perfect himself as a member of a community. From this dualism of man we conclude that human society is meant by Nature to take both personality and individuality into account. Hence while liberty must be preserved for the sake of man, the person, order must be

Two Social Organisations.

Personality and Individuality.

secured on account of man, the individual: while as “persons” we may be equal, as “individuals” we must be unequal; fraternity will flourish between us as “persons,” but authority will regard us as “individuals.” Now, we find that man is not ordered only to one large group, the community or political society. By his very nature he is a member of smaller groups. Two of these smaller social structures are of great importance—the one for social reasons, the family; the other for economic reasons, the vocational group. These two smaller communities have a just claim to recognition in the social life of any political society, and have a definite place in the structure of society. Unless they are given their proper place, it will be impossible to secure a harmonious co-ordination and equilibrium of the personal rights and prerogatives and the individual duties of men in society.

For what is the purpose of this corporative organisation? It is to secure that a rational, intelligent order shall reign in social life—an order achieved by the free, deliberate decisions of men and women themselves, not imposed on them by a party or the State. In other words, all men and women are to contribute by their free, human, responsible acts to making life in society *social* life, not merely the addition of a number of individual lives. In individualistic and collectivistic societies all social life, precisely as social, comes from the State or the party. Whatever other small social life, cultural or recreational, there is has very little influence on the community as a whole, for it does not touch essentials or necessities.

“Vocational Groups.”

“Vocational groups” are engaged in securing socially necessary goods and services, in securing the advantages and benefits of civilisation. Each group is making a contribution to the common good, which is achieved by the co-ordination of all their efforts and results. Each member of a group is not striving solely for his own gain, but first and primarily for peace and efficiency in the functioning of his group, and so indirectly for the common good. And this is a conscious, deliberate, rational striving: he is really living and thinking as a *social* being, as an “individual,” and at the same time as a “person.” Pope Pius XI writes about vocational groups: “True and genuine social order demands that the various members of a society be joined together by some firm bond. Such a bond of union is provided both by the production of goods or the rendering of services in which

employers and employes of one and the same vocational group collaborate; and by the common good which all such groups should unite to promote, each in its own sphere, with friendly harmony." And he goes on: "In these corporations the common interests of the whole vocational group must predominate; and among those interests the most important is to promote as much as possible the contribution of each trade or profession to the common good." The Pope's teaching is clear, and sketches an organisation exactly the converse of our present one. The common interests of the vocational group include the peace, security, welfare, and prosperity of each member of that group. Instead of having two "classes," employer and employed, fighting each to "down" the other, we have the two working in harmony for a definite end, to secure full justice to each and to the whole community. The only reason for any individual or class to fear such an arrangement or to reject it is that that individual or class does not really wish for justice, but prefers to take the chance of getting less than justice if he or it has also the chance of sometimes getting more than justice. But such an attitude is immoral, inhuman, and unsocial, and should not be tolerated in civilised society. But, then, the group as a group may not advance the interests of its members by exploiting all the other groups or members of society. Each group will strive only for justice for itself, and for nothing more, and will strive equally for justice for each of the other groups. But is it possible to ascertain what "justice" is? Unless we despair of human nature, human intelligence and goodness, and unless we repudiate the Church of Christ, we cannot doubt but that substantial justice can be known and achieved by men.

"It is . . . very necessary," writes Pope Pius XI, "that economic life be once more subjected to and governed by a true and effective guiding principle. . . . More lofty and noble principles must . . . be sought in order to control this economic dictatorship sternly and uncompromisingly—to wit, social justice and social charity. To that end all the institutions of public and social life must be imbued with the spirit of this justice, which must be truly operative, must build up a judicial and social order pervading the whole economic regime. Social charity should be, as it were, the soul of this order—an order which the State must actively defend and

**Social Justice
and
Social Charity.**

vindicate. This task the State will perform the more easily if it free itself from those burdens which, as we have already declared, are not properly its own" (Q.A., 88). May I stress once again the difference between a "corporate¹ State" and a "corporative society."? Only downright ignorance of elementary sociological notions, or else downright dishonesty could mix or confuse them. But they have been confused, and, what is more, the Pope's authority has been put forward on behalf of the "corporate State"—a thing that should call forth a protest from every loyal Catholic. Perhaps nothing is more clearly or strongly expressed in *Quadragesimo Anno* than this distinction of the State from the corporative organisation, and the warning that the State should keep to its own business, and not interfere unduly in corporative social life. The quotation I have just given is but one of many. The Pope is not concerned with any form of political organisation or regime. The State may take what form the people wish—monarchy, absolute or constitutional; oligarchy; aristocracy; dictatorship; republic; democracy. So far as the corporative organisation of society is concerned, it does not matter what form the State takes, provided that it is legitimate, rules justly, and keeps to its own sphere. "The State, therefore," writes the Pope, "should leave to smaller groups the settlement of business of minor importance, which otherwise would greatly distract it; it will thus carry out with greater freedom, power and success, the tasks belonging to it alone, because it alone can effectively accomplish these.

. . . Let those in power, therefore, be convinced that the more faithfully this principle of subsidiary function be followed, and a graded hierarchical order exist between various associations, the greater will be both social authority and social efficiency, and the happier and more prosperous the condition of the commonwealth" (Q.A., 80). Were any other proof needed of this important point—namely, that a corporative society is not the same thing as a corporate State—the Pope's clear criticism of the Italian Fascist Corporate State would clinch the matter. "We feel bound to say that to our knowledge there are some who fear that the State is substituting itself in the place

¹ I have made no distinction between "corporate" and "corporative" in this lecture: there is a technical distinction, but it is rarely observed by non-specialist writers. "Corporative society" or "corporative organisation of society" are the best expressions for the Catholic idea. "Corporate state"—expresses something quite different.

of private initiative, instead of limiting itself to necessary and sufficient assistance. It is feared that the new syndical and and corporative organisation tends to have an excessively bureaucratic and political character, and that, notwithstanding the general advantages referred to above, it ends in serving particular political aims rather than in contributing to the initiation and promotion of a better social order" (Q.A., 95).

When Pope Pius XI analyses our present day social organisation, he finds *not capitalism* but the "evil of *individualism*" responsible for the disorder and confusion which are so obvious "The highly developed social life which once flourished in a variety of associations organically linked with each other has been damaged and all but ruined . . . Social life has entirely lost its organic form . . ." (Q.A., 78). Why can

"The Evil of Individualism." we not secure political peace, order, and progress? Why is authority not respected and obeyed? Why is the economic system so out of joint that a living wage, not to speak of a just wage, cannot be paid? Why must there be unemployment and poverty and wanton destruction of wealth and deliberate restriction of the production of wealth when thousands have not enough? Why? For no other reasons than (i) that the whole social organisation, political and economic, is unnatural, against the natural tendencies, inclinations, and exigencies of human nature, built on false assumptions, false principles, false philosophy, ruled and directed by false maxims, towards a false end: and (ii) that men have become "hardened in excessive self-love and refused to extend that order (the corporate order), as was their duty, to the increasing numbers of the population; or else, deceived by the attractions of false liberty and other errors, they grew impatient of every authority and endeavoured to throw off all government" (Q.A., 97). The seriousness and importance of the loss of the organic form by human society has been realised by Catholics in some countries—in Austria and Portugal most notably, where two Catholic statesmen have introduced the corporative society in varying forms, but also in Belgium, and even in Holland, where partial success has been achieved. The Pope's words are too strong to be long ignored by truly Catholic statesmen: "Just as it is wrong to withdraw from the individual and commit to a group what private enterprise and industry can accomplish, so, too, it is an injustice, a grave evil and a

disturbance of right order, for a larger and higher association to arrogate to itself functions which can be performed efficiently by smaller and lower societies. This is a fundamental principle of social philosophy, unshaken and unchangeable" (Q.A., 79). It would seem as if the Pope searched the dictionary for words sufficiently weighty to express his thought. "A grave evil," "an injustice, a disturbance of right order,"—what more could he say? How could he convey the importance of this matter more forcibly?

Why is society to-day in a strained and unstable, uncertain state? "Because it is founded on 'classes' with divergent aims, and hence opposed to each other, and consequently prone to enmity and strife" (Q.A., 82). What must we do to restore

society to its natural perfection, to make authority secure, private property inviolate but socially fruitful and beautiful, a just wage possible? "The aim of social policy must be the re-establishment of vocational groups" (Q.A., 82). "There cannot be question of any perfect cure unless this opposition (of 'classes') be done away with, and well-organised members of the social body be constituted: vocational groups, namely, claiming the allegiance of men, not according to the position they occupy in the labour-market, but according to the diverse functions they exercise in Society. . . . These groups, with powers of self-government, are considered by many to be, if not essential to civil society, at least natural to it" (Q.A., 83).

In bringing these lectures to a conclusion we may sum up for ourselves the results of our investigations by asking and answering three questions:—

I. Is Pope Pius XI satisfied with the present social and economic system?

We answer: (i) the Pope does not condemn "capitalism" as an economic system, but he does declare that it has been misused, has many serious defects, and needs to be readjusted to the "standards of right order."

(ii) He emphatically condemns the sociological evil of "individualism," and for three reasons:—

- (a) It is making the payment of a just wage impossible;
- (b) It is keeping a vast army of proletarians propertyless, and

thereby both abusing private property and preparing the destruction of private property altogether ;

- (c) It is inevitably leading to violent conflicts in societies and between societies, which must end in revolution.

Final Summary. II. Does Pope Pius XI see any hope in Communism, Socialism, or a policy animated by a socialistic spirit ?

Emphatically no ! He vigorously condemns every form of Communism and Socialism. At the same time, he admits that certain just demands and desires are sometimes found in Socialist programmes, but that these are not peculiar to Socialism, and that, therefore, "those who look for nothing else have no reason for becoming Socialists." His whole policy is the opposite to Socialism : (i) the wider diffusion of private property ; and (ii) the restriction of State activity in social life.

III. What, then, are the Pope's constructive proposals ?

(i) To re-organise society by establishing "vocational groups," so as to restore the organic nature of society : in other words, a corporative organisation of society.

(ii) To insist on the payment, at all costs, to every adult man of a just wage, which must first be a family living wage. This may involve far-reaching and drastic reforms as to the place of women and children in industry, as to control of profits, prices, investments. All such reforms will be made smoother by the setting up of "vocational groups."

(iii) To secure the wider diffusion of private property by some form of co-operative ownership, co-partnership, or profit-sharing, as well as by the just wage.

(iv) Free competition, kept within just and definite limits, and economic power, such as is held by banks, etc., must be brought under the effective control of the public authority in matters appertaining to the latter's competence.

(v) An essential preliminary to this social reconstruction is "a renewal of the Christian spirit" in all of us—a task for the individual, well within his competence, and of incalculable value in hastening a social reform.

I cannot conclude more fittingly than by quoting the Pope's appeal : "Let, then, all men of goodwill stand united. Let

all those who, under the pastors of the Church, wish to fight this good and peaceful fight of Christ, as far as talents, power, and station allow, strive to play their part in the Christian reconstruction of human society. . . . Let them seek, not themselves and the things that are their own, but the things that are Jesus Christ's. Let them not urge their own ideas with undue persistence, but be ready to abandon them, however admirable, should the greater common good seem to require : that in all and above all Christ may reign and rule." And in the reign of Christ will be found the Peace of Christ.

THE END.

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