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IN THE LIGHT OF CHRISTIAN
PRINCIPLES AND THE TEACHING
OF THE PAPAL ENCYCLICALS

A DISCUSSION CLUB MANUAL
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S GROUPS

BY *Rev. RUDOLPH G. BANDAS*

SERIES FOUR

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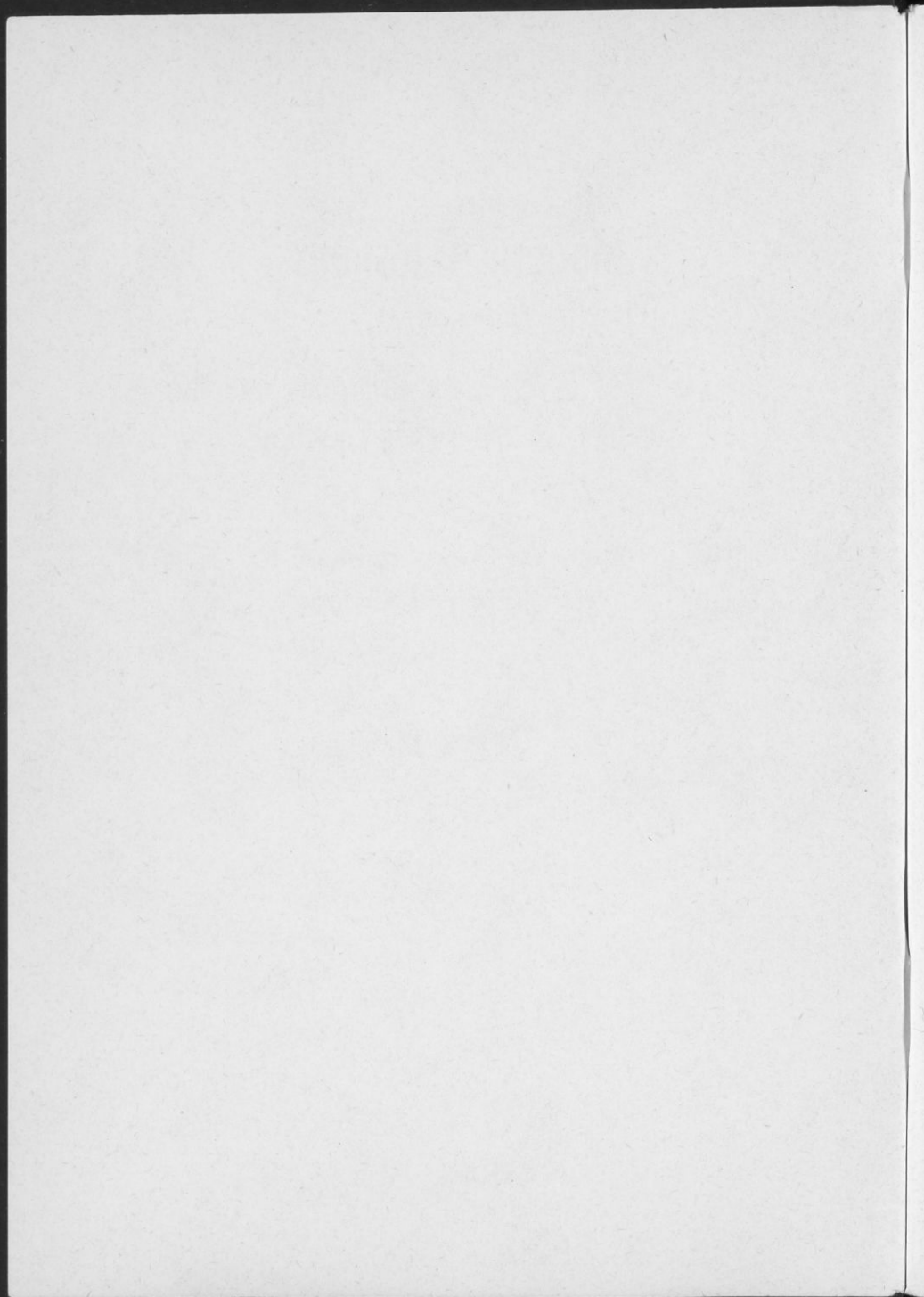
In the Light of Christian Principles and the
Teaching of the Papal Encyclicals

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By
Rev. Rudolph M. Hannan

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SERIES IV



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Teaching of the Papal Encyclicals

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Young People's Groups

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Rev. Rudolph G. Bandas

Sixth Edition, 27,000

SERIES IV

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I Euthanasia or Mercy Killing	7
II Cremation	16
III Private Property	25
IV A Living Wage	35
V Labor Unions	47
VI The Morality of Strikes	59
VII The Social Apostolate	69
VIII Our Civic Duties	80

Introduction

The chapters in this book are brief explanations of topics which have proved interesting to young people's open forums and discussion clubs. The chapters do not pretend to be exhaustive explanations of the subjects but serve rather as an introduction to the question. They contain basic principles which are indispensable for the proper evaluation of any modern problem.

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Chapter I

EUTHANASIA OR MERCY KILLING

The term euthanasia ("good death") was used by Cicero and the Greeks to express a happy, peaceful death, but its use in the modern sense of inducing an easy death to terminate suffering in others is said to owe its origin to the English philosopher and author, Francis Bacon (1561-1626). It designates a gentle, peaceful and painless death brought about by the administration of a large dose of drugs or opiates. According to Millard S. Everett, Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Minnesota, euthanasia means "mercifully bringing to an end the sufferings of a person who has an incurable disease and desires to be put out of his misery, or putting to death a deformed infant" ⁽¹⁾.

Certain sociologists and physicians advocate the use of euthanasia for the following groups: the aged; deformed infants; the completely paralyzed; the hopelessly criminal; insane and idiotic persons; and patients suffering from incurable diseases such as syphilis in its most advanced stage, tuberculosis, cancer, etc. The existence of these groups is considered so useless, onerous, expensive and harmful that the only solution seems to be in quietly putting them out of the way. "Even a minor physical deformity," says Millard S. Everett, "may well be considered as justification for euthanasia. A minor deformity may sometimes be a major catastrophe, making of life only a burden. I would, therefore, extend euthanasia to cover all cases in which one may predict with cer-

(1) "Ethics in a Democracy" (Minneapolis, 1938), p. 6.



tainty any serious social handicap" (2). And again: "If a man is suffering from an incurable disease, such as cancer in an advanced stage, so that he is incapable of serving others and life has become worthless to himself, then he is under no obligation to live" (3).

Ancient peoples frequently did away with individuals whom they considered as useless or incurable. Old persons were clubbed to death or cast down from a precipice, children's heads were dashed against the rock, the desperate cut their veins open, etc. We read in Scripture that Saul said to the Amalecite, "Stand over me and kill me, for anguish is come upon me, and as yet my whole life is in me" (4); and the Amalecite standing over him, killed him, for he knew that "he could not live after the fall." But while the mercy-killings of the ancients were *cruel* and *sensational*, those of the moderns are scientific, being brought about gently and painlessly by the administration of apposite drugs. Russia, however, prefers to follow the savage and barbarous methods of old. The *Christian Alliance Weekly* carried the following account of a recent happening in the Soviet Union: "A Russian from the Soviet republic reports, under oath in a public court, that in Moscow the police made a street drive, bringing all the homeless children and young people together. They were inspected by a medical man as to their condition. Out of this mass from twelve to fourteen hundred were singled out, and by means of a good substantial meal, and other favors, they were induced to follow soldiers on horseback out

(2) *ibid.* p. 28.

(3) *ibid.* p. 24.

(4) II Kings, I, 9, 10.

into the open field. At last they halted. The soldiers on horseback were on the outside of the group, driving them into a bundle tight together. Hidden machine guns began a wierd song of death. In a few minutes the whole mass of humanity was a mass of dead and dying. Soldiers came to bury everything that was left. These young people living on the streets of Moscow had become so diseased that the government knew of no other way to get rid of the plague" (5).

Euthanasia is one of the logical consequences of the materialistic philosophy inculcated at our state universities and gradually applied in practice by a large portion of the American population. If man is merely a mass of chemical elements, if life is merely matter taking on a more complex organization, if free will and thought are merely shiftings of the molecules in the brain, if there is no soul, no hereafter, and no God, then we can understand the low and cheap estimate which materialists have of human life. We can grasp why they wish to eliminate and discard all those who have outlived their usefulness and strength.

But no matter how scientific the methods used, no matter how euphemistic the term employed to designate the process—euthanasia is murder. To kill another, even at his own request and for any reason whatsoever, is downright murder. "Thou shalt not kill" is a principle of the natural law and a commandment of the Decalogue. Murder is one of the greatest assaults on the dignity of man, who was made in the image and likeness of God, redeemed by Christ's precious Blood, made a member of Christ's mystical body and an heir of heavenly glory.

(5) Quoted in *Ave Maria*, November 21, 1936, p. 662.

God alone is the Supreme Lord of all things, the Master of life and death: "See ye that I am alone, and there is no other God besides me: I will kill and I will make to live; I will strike, and I will heal, and there is none that can deliver out of my hand" (6). "It is thou, O Lord, that has power of life and death, and leadest down to the gates of death, and bringest back again. A man indeed killeth through malice, and when the spirit is gone forth, it should not return, neither shall he call back the soul that is received" (7). Man depends essentially and in his whole being upon the Creator: "Whether we live, or whether we die we are the Lord's" (8).

Life comes into our body with the soul. Now, neither we ourselves nor any other human being is the cause of our soul and of our life. God alone can create the soul and hence He alone remains Master of our life. This basic truth, however, is contemptuously rejected by professors at our state universities: "There is no justification for making the sacredness of life an absolute, universal and indiscriminating rule. We may let each one regard his life as his own, to preserve or to end as he sees fit" (9).

God is not only our Creator but also our Last End and has a right that we tend to Him by the means which He has established for us. Our span of life and the period of probation are one of the means which He has determined and which we have no right arbitrarily to shorten. By cutting off life,

(6) Deut. XXXII, 39.

(7) Wisd. XVI, 13, 14.

(8) Rom. XIV, 8.

(9) Millard E. Everett, o. c. p. 24.

we cut off the possibility of a spiritual improvement, of meriting additional graces and of expiating our sins. Our conscious life is our most precious gift. It is exclusively by the use of our intellectual faculties that we can influence and determine our eternal destiny. For the faithful soul each instant of conscious life is an occasion of spiritual progress, of corresponding better with the infinite love of the Creator and of enriching one's merits with a view to eternal life. To deprive our neighbor of this opportunity is to inflict the greatest injury upon him. And if a man is in a state of mortal sin, if he has important temporal matters to settle, the last moments of his conscious life acquire an even greater value for time and for eternity. Is not euthanasia apt to transfer man from temporal to eternal sufferings?

Euthanasia is based on a hedonistic concept of life, on a scheme of things in which pleasure and pleasure alone is the supreme law and aim of life. Yet man's purpose on earth is not pleasure, but to know and love God in order to be happy with Him in the next life. Now, suffering is one of the important experiences of life which enables us to work out our destiny: Were it not for trials and tribulations many would scarcely ever think of the next life and of their true end. Sufferings remind us that we have not here a "lasting city" but seek one which is to come. Sufferings are an occasion of practicing such virtues as patience, resignation, confidence and detachment from earthly things. They are a means of expiating our sins and of meriting eternal happiness and glory. "For that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation," says St. Paul, "worketh for us above measure

exceedingly an eternal weight of glory" ⁽¹⁰⁾. The sufferings of this world, the Apostle adds, are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to come. We shall be glorified with Christ only if we first suffer with Him. And let no one say that, because of his age and sickness, he is a useless burden to others. Let him remember that he is thereby giving others an opportunity to exercise charity and patience: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so you shall fulfill the law of Christ" ⁽¹¹⁾. If he bears his ills courageously he will edify others and give them an example of fortitude. Men who suffer from serious handicaps may often have an important place in life. Milton was incurably blind. Helen Keller and Ludwine Lachance were deaf, dumb, and blind. And yet how much better the world has been for their presence in it.

Furthermore, we must not be delicate members of a body whose Head is crowned with thorns. The God-Man suffered as also did His Immaculate Mother. "Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his steps" ⁽¹²⁾. Christ took up His Cross, carried it to Calvary, suffered and died. He indicated the route; it is for us to follow.

Euthanasia would lead to intolerable abuses. Physicians frequently make a false diagnosis, and err as to the possibility of a patient's recovery. If Euthanasia were permitted, countless people would be put to death who under normal circumstances would recover. Quacks, malpractitioners and unskilled physicians would cover up their ignorance

⁽¹⁰⁾ II Cor. IV, 17.

⁽¹¹⁾ Gal. VI, 2.

⁽¹²⁾ I Pet. II, 21.

and blunders by applying euthanasia. On the other hand certain people whose philosophy is thoroughly paganistic and materialistic, would welcome Euthanasia as an opportunity of being relieved of the duty of caring for their afflicted and suffering relatives. Others would advocate "mercy-killings" for aged people on relief in order to save the country money. Men and women who have sacrificed their health and strength for the good of their family or of their country or of their community would receive as a reward—euthanasia. "Once you admit the principle that the individual has the right to take the life of his fellow man there is no telling how far the evil may go. Today it may be a person who is suffering extreme pain who is put to death; tomorrow it may seem justifiable to kill those who are lazy or not mentally alert. This so-called mercy-killing of the individual would, in all probability, lead to the killing of inferior types, and perhaps to the massacre of whole groups, until we would find ourselves engaged in mass murder. We sometimes wonder how many doctors would put themselves into the hands of their fellow citizens if a law of mercy-killings should be passed" ⁽¹³⁾.

Millard S. Everett argues that "if the sacredness of life can be violated by the state in the case of capital punishment—then it is not contrary to religion and morals for the state to practice euthanasia for the welfare of incurables" ⁽¹⁴⁾. But there is no comparison between capital punishment and euthanasia. The state inflicts capital punishment upon those criminals whom it considers as unjust aggressors against society. Now, all admit that in de-

(13) From the "Ave Maria," November 21, 1936, p. 665.

(14) o. c. p. 27.

fending one's life one may cause the death of an unjust aggressor. The groups for whom Everett advocates euthanasia—the aged, sick, insane, incurable—are not unjust aggressors—they are harmless. Secondly, the state does not violate the sacredness of human life in inflicting capital punishment. To God, of course, belongs the full and direct power over the life of man. But God has delegated indirect power over life to civil authority. Civil rulers have the authority from God to promote the common welfare of society and to provide for the safety of its children. In order to attain these ends, the administering of capital punishment becomes at times necessary. Civil rulers in that case act as the representatives of God on earth: "There is no power but from God—For he is God's minister to thee for good; for he beareth not the sword in vain. For he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil" ⁽¹⁵⁾.

(15) Rom. XIII, 1-4

Discussion Aids

1. Explain the meaning of the term, "euthanasia."
2. For what groups is euthanasia advocated?
3. What is the principal difference between ancient and modern mercy-killings?
4. How account for the increasing popularity of the doctrine of euthanasia?
5. Show that euthanasia is murder.
6. Show that God alone is master of life and death.
7. Show how euthanasia is opposed to the rights of God as our Last End.

8. What is the value of suffering?
9. What example did Christ leave us?
10. What abuses would follow from the use of euthanasia?
11. Does capital punishment justify euthanasia?

Application to Conduct

1. Thou shalt not kill.
2. I shall consider sufferings as a reminder that I have not on earth a "lasting city."
3. I shall bear my sufferings with patience and fortitude, and so give a good example to others.

Chapter II

CREMATION

Cremation is a funeral rite which consists in burning or reducing to ashes the bodies of the dead. It is distinguished from burial which consists in consigning the body to the earth or to sepulchral vaults and abandoning it to the slow dissolving activity of natural forces. Both cremation and burial go back to prehistoric times. Sometimes the two are isolated, at other times they are combined, and sometimes one predominates. The choice of the rite was frequently determined by the religious convictions of the people. When men considered the next life as a prolongation of the present life, they practiced burial. When they came to consider it as a mere abstraction, they resorted to cremation. At times a people about to be vanquished cremated its dead in order to protect them against profanation by the enemy. Among the Canaanites, Chaldeans, Greeks and Romans we find both rites prevailing. The Medes and Persians considered fire as something sacred and felt that it would be contaminated by cremation. The land of the Egyptians was full of tombs, while the Jews interred the bodies of all. In the Old Testament we read, for example, of the burial of Abraham and Sara ⁽¹⁾, of Jacob, Isaac and Rebecca ⁽²⁾, of Miriam ⁽³⁾, of Aaron ⁽⁴⁾, of Joseph ⁽⁵⁾, of Saul and Jonathan ⁽⁶⁾, while in the New Tes-

(1) Gen. XXV, 9-10.

(2) Gen. XLIX, 31.

(3) Num. XX, 1.

(4) Deut. X, 6.

(5) Jos. XXIV, 32.

(6) II Kings XXI, 14.

tament we read of the burial of John the Baptist, Lazarus, St. Stephen, etc.

The Church from the very beginning adopted burial as her mode of interment. In the measure in which Christianity progressed and the old pagan customs disappeared, cremation was gradually abandoned. In the Acts of the Apostles we read of the burial of Ananias and Saphira ⁽⁷⁾. In his First Epistle to the Corinthians St. Paul in his discourse on the resurrection frequently refers to them "that are fallen asleep" ⁽⁸⁾, and in his First Epistle to the Thessalonians he speaks of their lot at the second coming of Christ ⁽⁹⁾. Burial, as a method of interment, receives eloquence from the early catacombs which seem to know nothing of cremation. The early Christians were wont to gather—sometimes at the risk of their lives—the remains of martyrs in order to give them pious and reverent burial. The office of the so-called *fossores*, who were charged with the burial of Christians, was placed almost on a level with sacred orders. In mediaeval times cathedrals and cloisters frequently sprang up and developed in the midst of the cemeteries. In fact, the rite of burial is so universal in the Church that many seek its origin in a precept which the Apostles gave to the Church not indeed as inspired recipients of divine revelation but as ecclesiastical legislators. Hence the Church could not modify this venerable tradition without reasons of exceptional gravity.

When some Christians tried to restore cremation in the time of Boniface VIII, the Pope threatened them with automatic excommunication and for-

(7) V, 6, 10.

(8) Chapter XV.

(9) Chapter IV.

bade that the ashes of cremated persons receive Christian burial. The idea of cremation was revived at the time of the French Revolution which demanded that every citizen be granted the right to arrange for the cremation of his body. But the attempt did not have any consequential results. The practice entered on an active phase—simultaneously with the spread of atheism and materialism—during the second half of the nineteenth century. Cremation was authorized in Italy in 1873, in Germany in 1884, and in France in 1889. Since then it has been making slow inroads into the various countries of the world.

Now, what are some of the reasons alleged in favor of this practice? They are usually the following: 1) The emanation from the decaying bodies constitute a danger to the public health. 2) The rain water draining through the tombs will become contaminated and will eventually poison the waters of the wells and of the rivers. 3) The exhalations from the tombs will contaminate the air. 4) Cremation will eventually become necessary because of lack of space for cemeteries. 5) Cremation is necessary to forestall premature burial.

Cremation is largely an outgrowth of the materialistic and paganistic spirit of the day. It is advocated especially by Freemasons and by members of secret and condemned societies, who wish to replace funeral ceremonies by civil ceremonies and the priests by civil officials. Their ultimate aim is to destroy all belief in the spirituality and immortality of the soul.

The discipline of the Church in regard to cremation is contained in three decrees of the Holy Office and in the Canon Law of the Church:

1) On May 19, 1886 the Holy Office declared: first, that it is not permissible to join societies whose aim is to promote cremation and that, if there is question of societies affiliated with Masonry, one incurs all the penalties directed against the latter; second, it is not permissible to arrange for the cremation of one's own or of another's body.

2) On December 15, 1886 the Holy Office ruled that those who have deliberately chosen to be cremated and who have to the knowledge of others persevered in this resolution are to be denied the sacraments while living unless they recede from their attitude, and are to be denied ecclesiastical burial.

3) On July 27, 1892 the Holy Office forbade the public celebration of Mass for the souls of cremated persons, although permitting private Masses for them. It declared that those who knowingly and willingly order the cremation of their body are unworthy of the last sacraments. It also prescribed that no laborer may take part in the physical act of cremation if it is considered as a distinctive mark of a Masonic sect, or if it expresses reprobation of a Catholic doctrine or approval of a non-Catholic body, or if it implies contempt of the Catholic religion.

4) The present legislation of the Church is contained in Canons 1203 and 1240:

"The bodies of the faithful must be buried: cremation is forbidden. If any one has in any manner ordered his body to be cremated, it shall be unlawful to execute the desire; if this order has been attached to a contract, last will, or any other act, it is to be considered as not added."

"The following persons are to be deprived of

ecclesiastical burial, unless they have before death given some signs of repentance: Those who have given orders to cremate their body" (10).

Burial, as we explained above, is prescribed neither by the natural law nor by the revealed law of God. Cremation is not intrinsically opposed to any Catholic dogma, nor is it opposed to the resurrection of the body, which is equally easy for God's power whether the body is cremated or buried. But burial is a traditional liturgical rite intimately connected with the faith, worship, and moral life of the faithful. The ancient and beautiful prayers of the burial rite would lose their significance if they were applied to a dead person whose remains are about to pass into the crematory. The Church, which is the faithful guardian of these ceremonies, is justified in refusing them to any one who has practically rejected them. The Church forbids cremation as a normal funeral rite. She realizes that there may be exceptional circumstances such as war, pestilence, epidemics, when she would have to dispense with the liturgical rite.

Let us now enumerate and briefly explain some of the doctrinal reasons on which the burial rite is based:

1) *The body is a temple of the Holy Ghost.* The body is vivified by the soul which is raised to a divine life by sanctifying grace. It is sanctified by the Holy Eucharist and by the other sacraments. It is the instrument of the soul in its acts of self denial, mortification and sacrifice for love of God. It is destined for a glorious resurrection. It is true,

(10) S. Woywod, "The New Canon Law" (New York, 1918) pp. 245, 253.

of course, that decomposition takes place in both cremation and inhumation. But in interment the process is slow, hidden, and insensible, wrought by forces created by God. It resembles a peaceful sleep beneath the green lawn. It is not a violent and brutal disappearance of a person, wrought by the hands of indifferent laborers and in the presence of grief-stricken and horrified relatives. In many instances the urns of ashes are sent like other packages and are handled with the same carelessness as the latter. In fact, in certain quarters it has been suggested that the ashes be used to fertilize the fields.

2) *Burial a symbol of penance.* Death was introduced into the world by the Fall and, as St. Paul says, is the "wages of sin." The penal character of death consists not only in the death agony but also and especially in the decomposition and decay of the body. Since Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin were born without original sin we do not predicate decay of their bodies before their resurrection. The complete collapse of the body in death, the destruction of all its vanities, the decomposition in the grave, the total separation from the land of the living—all this is an expressive image of the penalty due to sin.

3) *Burial a symbol of hope, cremation of annihilation.* Cemetery means "sleeping chamber," a place where the dead await to be aroused from their slumber. "Lazarus our friend sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him out of sleep" ⁽¹¹⁾. "The girl is not dead but sleepeth" ⁽¹²⁾. The inhabitants of the

⁽¹¹⁾ John XI, 11.

⁽¹²⁾ Matt. IX, 24.

cemetery are those that "rest from their labours"⁽¹³⁾; they "that are asleep"⁽¹⁴⁾.

4) *Full conformity with Christ our Head.* We, the members of Christ's Mystical Body must in all things be like unto our Head. If we wish to share in the glories of His resurrection, we must first share with Him His tomb: "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also in the likeness of his resurrection"⁽¹⁵⁾.

In conclusion we shall briefly comment on the arguments usually advanced in favor of cremation.

1) There is no scientific evidence on hand to show that emanations from either rural or urban cemeteries have been responsible for sickness, epidemics or pestilences. Corruption of the body takes place several feet beneath the soil, and, owing to the small quantity of oxygen, results in few emanations. Whatever emanations do occur are absorbed and disinfected by the earth.

2) Nor is there any scientific proof to show that rain water is contaminated by the germs of the decaying bodies. If the small portion of rain water which may penetrate the tomb is in any way polluted, it is purified and disinfected by the earth.

3) Exhalations from the tombs are powerless to poison the air. The greater part of the gases—either because of the compression which they undergo, or because of their combination with the various elements of the earth—do not reach the surface at all. The small quantity of gases which do reach the surface and freely expand in the air, are unable to harm even the most exposed individual. It

(13) Apoc. XIV, 13.

(14) I Thess. IV, 12.

(15) Rom. VI, 5.

has been demonstrated that there are more poisonous gases in a packed hall than are exhaled from cemeteries in a year.

4) Will the cities of the dead eventually crowd out the cities of the living? The satisfactory and efficient manner in which both rural districts and larger cities have handled this problem is sufficient proof that we need have no fears on this score.

5) Cremation is said to prevent premature burial. But we ask: Is it permissible to cremate a person in order to kill him if he is still alive? Besides what is worse: to be burned alive or to be asphyxiated in the tomb? Science is certainly sufficiently advanced to devise satisfactory means of ascertaining the death of a person without resorting to cremation. Nowadays bodies are always embalmed before burial. No embalmed body could live.

Cremation puts a premium on crime since it makes impossible the verification of cases of poisoning. Cremation effectively destroys all organic poisons in the body. It renders all medical examination fruitless, because ashes can easily be scattered or replaced or mixed with others.

Finally, cremation is contrary to the traditional preservation of the bodies of the saints whose process of canonization is intimately associated with the miracles occurring in and through the bodies of the saints.

Discussion Aids

1. Define cremation.
2. Give a brief history of cremation.
3. What rite did the Church adopt from the very beginning?

4. When was cremation revived? Why?
5. What reasons are usually urged in favor of cremation? Criticize each argument briefly.
6. Explain the legislation of the Church concerning cremation.
7. Is burial based on the natural or revealed law? Explain.
8. What theological arguments are advanced in favor of the rite of burial?
9. Why does cremation put a premium on crime?

Application to Conduct

1. I shall accept death and the decay of my body in the grave as a penalty of sin.
2. I shall see in my interment in the grave a sleep from which I shall awaken to a glorious resurrection.
3. I shall make a careful study of the ceremonies of burial and be penetrated by their meaning.

Chapter III

PRIVATE PROPERTY

"The right to own private property has been given to man by nature or rather by the Creator Himself, not only in order that individuals may be able to provide for their own needs and those of their families, but also that by means of it, the goods which the Creator has destined for the human race may truly serve this purpose. Now these ends cannot be secured unless some definite and stable order is maintained" (1).

All things were created by God out of nothing and are maintained in existence by His all-pervasive power of conservation. He is not only the Creator but also the absolute Lord of all things: "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof" (2). He created man in His own image and likeness and placed all things at his disposal, for the full development of his faculties and for the attainment of his end. In associating man with Himself in the dominion over created things, God willed that each created thing should serve its purpose in the world by becoming the property of a determined master.

The word property comes from the Latin term *proprium*, meaning "that which is proper to us." *Property* is anything lawfully possessed by a person and belonging to him to the exclusion of every one else. The *right of property* is the right exercised over a thing, to the exclusion of every one else, in a

(1) "Quadragesimo Anno" in "Four Great Encyclicals" (Paulist Press), pp. 133-134.

(2) Psalm XXIII, 1.

manner conformable to man's nature and to his destiny. When the thing possessed serves directly the good of a particular individual, it is called *private*; when it serves the common good of all citizens, it is called *public*.

The two groups which oppose the right to private property are the Socialists and Communists. The former maintain that individuals have no right to own capital goods, that is property used in the production of more goods; the state alone should own these. The Communists deny all right to private ownership of anything. The Socialists wish to bring about the change by peaceful, legal means; the Communists advocate violence and revolution.

Leo XIII discusses the right to private property in his Encyclical, "Rerum Novarum" in connection with socialism, which he condemns as a false remedy for the social evils of his day. This Pontiff and later on Pius XI lay down the following principles concerning private property:

1) *Private property is universal*: "The common opinion of mankind, little affected by the dissentients who have maintained the opposite view, has found in the study of nature, and in the law of nature herself, the foundations of the division of property, and has consecrated by the practice of all ages the principle of private ownership, as being and as conducing in the most unmistakable manner preeminently in conformity with human nature, to the peace and tranquility of human life" (3).

The doctrine of private property runs throughout the Old and New Testament. After God created our first parents, He gave them power over the

(3) "Four Great Encyclicals," (Paulist Press), p. 6.

earth and over all living creatures ⁽⁴⁾. The first men were to acquire property by occupation made effective by recognizable signs such as cultivation of the soil and fixed abode. Abel offered to God the firstlings of *his* flock and Cain the fruits of the earth ⁽⁵⁾. Abraham and Lot are represented as rich in gold and silver and flocks ⁽⁶⁾. Abraham bought from Ephron a burial place for Sara ⁽⁷⁾. The Mosaic Law confirmed the right to private property; it forbade the Jews to steal or even covet the goods of another: "Thou shalt not steal—Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house—nor anything that is his" ⁽⁸⁾.

In the Gospel Our Lord counsels those who would be perfect to *sell* all that they possess and give to the poor ⁽⁹⁾. The Acts tell us that some of the early Christians who were "owners of lands or houses" sold their property "and brought the price of the things they sold, and laid it down before the feet of the Apostles. And distribution was made to every one, according as he had need" ⁽¹⁰⁾. These Christians were not Communists in the Russian sense of the word. They believed in God, in the divinity of Christ, and in the right to private property. For higher motives they voluntarily relinquished the exercise of the right to private property.

In Egypt the Pharaohs and nobles possessed vast properties as early as the year 3000 B. C. The Code of Hammurabi which goes back to 2000 B. C. has

(4) Genesis I, 28-29.

(5) Genesis IV, 3-4.

(6) Genesis XIII, 2-5.

(7) Genesis XXIII, 16-20; Josue XXIV, 32.

(8) Exodus XX, 15-17; Deuteronomy, XIX, 14.

(9) Matthew, XIX, 21.

(10) Acts IV, 34-35; V, 4.

several laws concerning private property. The Babylonians and Assyrians, Greeks and Romans, all recognized the existence of private property.

Private property, in fact, is as universal as human nature itself. For man has a right to whatever is necessary for his perfection, for the normal and complete development of his faculties. Now man's body which is substantially united to the soul, needs to be nourished, clothed and protected. Hence man must have that sufficiency of external goods which are necessary for his sustenance and personal dignity. In fact, the acquisitive tendency is spontaneous in man, and becomes evident in earliest childhood. Even among birds and animals we find the instinctive recognition of mine and thine.

2) The right to private property, then, flows from man's very nature. Since God has endowed man with bodily faculties, man has a right to work. Every faculty, as the scholastics were wont to say, is destined for action. "Man is born to labor," says Pius XI, "as the bird to fly" ⁽¹¹⁾. The product of man's powers are external things, and man has the same right over the latter as over his own faculties. The products of man's energies are nothing more than his energies transformed: When man labors "he makes his own that portion of nature's field which he cultivates—that portion on which he leaves, as it were, the impress of his own personality" ⁽¹²⁾. If man could not retain a right over the products of his hands, the following evil consequences would result:

a) A conflict would arise within man's being. On the one hand, he would perceive that nature has

⁽¹¹⁾ "Quadragesimo Anno" in o. c. p. 140.

⁽¹²⁾ "Rerum Novarum," o. c. p. 5.

fitted him for procuring the means of his own sustenance, and, on the other hand, he would see himself dependent on the state for everything.

b) There would be no incentive for man to develop his powers, since he could not retain as his own the goods earned by his hands.

c) By denying to man the right to private property we would deprive him of what is in a sense an extension of his personality and which constitutes the basis of his happiness, self-confidence, independence and dignity.

d) Nature would not yield to mankind the riches which she has in store for him: "That which is required for the preservation of life and for life's well-being, is produced in great abundance by the earth, but not until man has brought it into cultivation and lavished upon it his care and skill" ⁽¹³⁾.

3) Private property is necessary in order that the laborer's wages may have full validity: "When a man engages in remunerative labor, the very reason and motive of work is to obtain property, and to hold it as his own private possession. If one man hires out to another his strength or his industry, he does this for the purpose of receiving in return what is necessary for food and living; he thereby expressly proposes to acquire a full and real right, not only to the remuneration, but also to the disposal of that remuneration as he pleases. Thus, if he lives sparingly, saves money, and invests his savings, for greater security, in land, *the land in such a case is only his wages* in another form; and, consequently, a workingman's little estate thus purchased should be as completely at his own disposal

⁽¹³⁾ *ibid.* p. 5.

as the wages he receives for his labor. But it is precisely in this power of disposal that ownership consists, whether the property be land or movable goods" (14).

4) Private property, especially the possession of a modest estate, is required by man's forethought and foresight. The animal is governed by its instinct and its activity is restricted to what it immediately perceives by the senses; it can attain its purpose by the things at hand within this domain of sense. Man, on the other hand, reasons, calculates and foresees the future. "It is in his power to exercise his choice not only on things which regard his present welfare, but also on those which will be for his advantage in time to come. Hence man not only can possess the fruits of the earth, but also the earth itself; for of the products of the earth he can make provision for the future. Man's needs do not die out, but recur; satisfied today, they demand new supplies tomorrow. Nature therefore owes to man a storehouse that shall never fail the daily supply of his daily wants. And this he finds only in the inexhaustible fertility of the earth" (15).

5) Private property is necessary in order that the head of the family may discharge satisfactorily the duties of his state. By an arrangement of nature and by a divine ordination man freely begets children into the world, and assumes the responsibility of rearing and supporting them. Since the period of begetting children is coextensive with the entire period of fertility, and since the father has not only the obligation of providing for his children but also the right

(14) *ibid.* p. 3.

(15) *ibid.* p. 4.

to give his children a reasonable start in life, he is entitled to amass property during his whole life time. "It is a most sacred law of nature that a father must provide food and all necessaries for those whom he has begotten; and, similarly, nature dictates that a man's children, who carry on, as it were, and continue his own personality, should be provided by him with all that is needful to enable them honorably to keep themselves from want and misery in the uncertainties of this mortal life. Now in no way can a father effect this except by the ownership of profitable property, which he can transmit to his children by inheritance" ⁽¹⁶⁾.

At this point the Communist is ready to interpose the following objection: Could not the state provide for the needs of individuals and of families much better than they themselves? "Man," Leo XIII answers "is older than the State and he holds the right of providing for the life of his body prior to the formation of any State" ⁽¹⁷⁾. In the designs of the Creator of man, the State arose naturally in order that it might provide for the individual and the family what they cannot effectively provide for themselves. The task of the state is to regulate the use of and protect private property, and to emphasize the sacred and inviolable character of this right. The state must safeguard and not destroy the rights of the individual. If the state deprived its subjects of property which they had justly acquired by their industry, it would be guilty of theft.

Anticipating this contention of the Communists, St. Thomas shows how a denial of private property would be an incentive to laziness, an ob-

⁽¹⁶⁾ *ibid.* p. 7.

⁽¹⁷⁾ *ibid.* pp. 4-5.

stacle to economic organization and to social peace: 1) "Every one is more careful to look after what belongs to himself alone than after what is common to all or to many, since all men shun labor and leave to others what is matter of joint concern, as happens where there are too many servants. 2) Human affairs are more orderly handled, if on each individual there rests his own care of managing something, whereas the world would be nothing but confusion if every one without distinction were to have the disposal of anything he chose to take in hand. 3) By this means society is the better kept at peace, every member being content with his own possession, whence we see that among those who hold anything in common and undivided ownership strifes not infrequently arise" (18).

What, it may be asked, is the extent of the right to acquire and possess property? It is certain that an economic regime which results in the extreme wealth of the few and in the extreme poverty of a great number is not in accord with Christian Doctrine which teaches the equality of origin, nature and destiny of all men. It is equally irreconcilable with the great truths that all men were created by the same Father, redeemed by the blood of the same Jesus Christ, and called to participate in the same eternal beatitude. Such an inequality tends to undermine patriotism and love of country, fosters antagonism of classes, and a revolution and civil war become inevitable. Hence theologians generally agree on the following principle: The exercise of the right to acquire and possess should stop at the point where its further extension would be prejudicial to the

(18) *Ila Ilac. q. 66, a. 2.*

common good. The state should limit by law and subject to special taxes all wealth hurtful to the common good of the people. However, Pope Pius XI insists that the right to private property must be distinguished from its use, and that the misuse and abuse of the right does not destroy the right itself ⁽¹⁹⁾.

Finally, Pius XI insists on the grave obligations of charity which govern that portion of man's income "which he does not need to live as becomes his station" ⁽²⁰⁾. Theologians usually distinguish three degrees of possessions: 1) Goods necessary for the bare support of one's life or of one's dependents; 2) Goods necessary for the decent living of oneself and of one's dependents, and 3) superfluous goods, any amount over and above the first two grades. Theologians teach that superfluous goods must be used to relieve the needs of those who, through no fault of their own, are not in possession of the first and second degrees of goods, and this may be done by investing in projects that provide employment for those who are dependent, such method of investment being declared by St. Thomas an act of liberality. ⁽²¹⁾

⁽¹⁹⁾ "Quadragesimo Anno" in o. c. p. 134.

⁽²⁰⁾ *ibid.* p. 136.

⁽²¹⁾ cf. "Church and the Social Order" (N.C.W.C., 1940), a statement by the American Bishops.

Discussion Aids

1. Who is the Supreme Master of the universe?
With whom does He share this dominion?
Why?
2. What is meant by *property*? The *right to private property*? *Private* and *public property*?

3. What is the difference between Communism and Socialism?
4. Prove the existence of private property from the Old Testament. From the New Testament. From History. From reason.
5. What evil consequences would follow from a denial of the right to private property?
6. What do we mean by saying that "private property is necessary in order that the laborer's wages may have full validity"?
7. Give other reasons for the need of private property.
8. Could not the Communistic state provide better for the individual and for the family? What, according to St. Thomas, would be the effects of such an arrangement?
9. Is the right to acquire and possess property unlimited?
10. What are "superfluous goods"?
11. Gilbert Wilson remarked: "Since every man has a right to private property, and since there are millions of unemployed in the country, let us divide all wealth among ourselves." Is his plan ethical?
12. John Smith said: "A man who makes a fortune by paying too low wages to his employees and who resorts to unscrupulous competition, has no more right to his wealth than a thief. Let us take it away from him." Do you agree?

Application to Conduct

1. "Thou shalt not steal."
2. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbors goods."
3. "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Chapter IV

A LIVING WAGE

“Workman and employer should make free agreements, and in particular should freely agree as to wages; nevertheless, there is a dictate of nature more imperious and more ancient than any bargain between man and man, that the remuneration must be enough to support the wage-earner in reasonable and frugal comfort. If through necessity or fear of a worse evil, the workman accepts harder conditions because an employer or contractor will give him no better, he is a victim of force and injustice” ⁽¹⁾.

A living wage is a wage which is sufficient for the worker to live in reasonable comfort as a human being, to develop his faculties and to attain his ultimate end. The right to a living wage flows from the following dictates of reason:

a) *The right to life:* “The preservation of life is the bounden duty of each and all, and to fail therein is a crime. It follows that each one has a right to procure what is required in order to live; and the poor can procure it in no other way than by work and wages” ⁽²⁾. Every man has received life from God. Who is the Creator of his soul. Hence, he must preserve his life, his health and his bodily integrity. To do this he needs food, clothing and shelter. Furthermore, he must develop his life according to the purposes and designs of the Creator; he must develop both his spiritual and bodily facul-

⁽¹⁾ Leo XIII, Ency., “The Condition of Labor” in “Four Great Encyclicals” (Paulist Press), pp. 25-26.

⁽²⁾ o. c. p. 25.

ties. He must fashion his existence in conformity with his dignity as a human being. Now a propertyless worker has no other means of procuring the necessities of life except by his wage which he receives in return for his labor. Hence his wages must be sufficient to cover at least the expenses of a frugal, thrifty life. When the employer appropriates the worker's energies, he is bound to give in exchange for them the equivalent of that amount of welfare which the worker's energies are the divinely given means of obtaining.

b) *The right to live from nature's storehouse:* "The Earth, though divided among private owners, ceases not thereby to minister to the needs of all; for there is no one who does not live on what the land brings forth. Those who do not possess the soil, contribute their labor; so that it may be truly said that all human subsistence is derived either from labor on one's own land, or from some laborious industry which is paid either in the produce of the land itself or in that which is exchanged for what the land brings forth." ⁽³⁾. This passage of Leo XIII's Encyclical contains explicitly or implicitly the following propositions:

1) God has granted the earth with all its benefits to the whole of mankind, and every one has a strict right to as much of nature's blessings as is required for a decent livelihood.

2) Since all men are essentially equal and since life has the same intrinsic value in all, all men have an essentially equal claim to nature's storehouse. One man has as much right of access to the material goods of this world as his neighbor.

⁽³⁾ *ibid.* p. 5.

3) In our present system of industrial organization the goods of the earth are controlled by a certain number so that the rest cannot have access to nature's storehouse directly but only by selling their labor to the first group in return for wages.

4) Those who have appropriated nature's goods directly must administer them conscientiously and must not exclude or hinder others from enjoying their share in nature's goods. In return for the laborer's work they must pay wages which will be the equivalent of a decent and reasonable livelihood.

5) The right to a living wage is a derived right, being deduced—because of existing social and industrial conditions—from the strict right to nature's storehouse. We do not deny that there are conditions in which men derive their livelihood directly from nature and consequently have no claim to wages.

A Family Living Wage

The laborer is entitled not only to a personal but to a family living wage. Pope Leo XIII bases his doctrine on the fact that the child is, as it were, a prolongation of the father's person: "It is a most sacred law of nature that a father must provide food and all necessaries for those whom he has begotten; and, similarly, nature dictates that a man's children, who carry on, as it were, and continue his personality, should be provided by him with all that is needful to enable them honorably to keep themselves from want and misery in the uncertainties of this mortal life" ⁽⁴⁾.

A laborer has a right to a decent reasonable livelihood. But a reasonable life implies the de-

⁽⁴⁾ *ibid.* p. 7.

velopment of a man's personality and faculties and the satisfaction of all his essential needs. The differences in sexes set up by nature itself clearly shows that most men are to find proper self-development in the married life. The love and companionship of a member of the opposite sex are the satisfaction of a natural need, and self-propagation the manifestation of a strong natural instinct. Hence a laborer will not enjoy a decent and reasonable livelihood if he is unable to exercise his right to marry, to create a home and to support a family. Hence a living wage must in reality be a family living wage.

"The wage paid to the workingman," says Pius XI, "must be sufficient for the support of himself and his family. It is right indeed that the rest of the family contribute according to their power toward the common maintenance, as in the rural home or in the families of many artisans and small shopkeepers. But it is wrong to abuse the tender years of children or the weakness of woman. Mothers will, above all, devote their work to the home and the things connected with it. Intolerable, and to be opposed with all our strength, is the abuse whereby the mothers of families, because of the insufficiency of the father's salary, are forced to engage in gainful occupations outside the domestic walls to the neglect of their own proper cares and duties, particularly the education of their children. Every effort must therefore be made that fathers of families receive a wage sufficient to meet adequately ordinary domestic needs" (5).

Both Leo XIII and Pius XI recommended that

(5) "Reconstructing the Social Order" in "Four Great Encyclicals" (Paulist Press), pp. 141-142.

the worker set aside a small fortune. "If a workman's wages be sufficient," says Leo XIII, "to enable him to maintain himself, his wife, and his children in reasonable comfort, he will not find it difficult, if he is a sensible man, to study economy; and he will not fail, by cutting down expenses, to put by a little property; nature and reason would urge him to do so" ⁽⁶⁾. "It is conducive to the common good," says Pius XI, "that wage-earners of all kinds be enabled by economizing that portion of their wages which remains after necessary expenses have been met, to attain to the possession of a certain modest fortune" ⁽⁷⁾. The worker, then, has the right and the duty to put by a little fortune. Nature itself seems to give him this advice. But he could not set aside anything unless his salary be such that he can provide not only for his own frugal needs but also for those of the family.

Determination of a Family Living Wage

According to Leo XIII wages must be sufficient to support the worker in "reasonable and frugal comfort." This proposition, he adds, is a "dictate of natural justice." Now what is meant by a reasonable and decent livelihood? It implies more than the mere necessities of existence. It demands at least that minimum which will satisfy right reason, and which a person of a given age or sex must enjoy in order to live as a human being. There are two criteria for determining the meaning of "reasonable comfort." First, the judgment of competent and fairminded men, and, second, a consideration of man's dignity and needs. The second point calls for a more detailed explanation.

⁽⁶⁾ o. c. p. 26.

⁽⁷⁾ o. c. p. 143.

Man is not a mere thing, he is not a mere animal, a beast of burden, an instrument of production; he is a person. His body is animated by a divinely created soul which was made to the image and likeness of God and redeemed by Christ's precious blood. Hence man's actions are lifted from the brute level and invested with a superior dignity which does not belong to any other creature. Hence his wages must enable him to develop his whole personality and to exercise all his faculties—spiritual, moral, intellectual, and physical. It must enable him to provide, first of all, for his *soul* and *mind*: It must enable him to belong to a Church, practice his religion, lead a moral life, educate his children and furnish certain educational facilities for the entire family (books, periodicals, etc.) It must enable him, secondly, to provide for the needs of the *body*. The laborer must have adequate food, clothing, housing, wholesome recreation, and vacation. He shall enjoy a minimum security against sickness, accident and old age.

The determination of a family living wage encounters certain difficulties in practice because of the unequal number of children in different families. We shall briefly describe some of the solutions advanced by Catholic sociologists:

1) Some propose that the unmarried worker but potential head of the family be paid from the very beginning a wage that would support in decent comfort a normally sized family (about five children). The surplus which he receives before marriage will accumulate into a fund which he will need for the maintenance of the family later on.

2) Others recommend the so-called Employers' Endowment Funds. The employer establishes a

standard wage which is not as high as the normal wage in an industry and which is about enough to support a single man. The employer would pay, let us say, thirty dollars a week to his employees, and at the same time pay into an endowment fund ten dollars additional for each one of his laborers. Married men would be entitled to draw from this fund—over and above their wages—ten dollars a week for their wives and five dollars for each child under fourteen. In France and Belgium these family allowances are known as the “allocations familiales” and have been sponsored by such men as Leon Harmel of Val-des-Bois, Abbe Cetty of Mulhouse, and M. Romanet of Grenoble.

3) Trade Union Funds, established in some countries by the contribution of members of labor unions, pay family allowances to those workers who are not benefiting by the Employers' Endowment Funds.

4) Women laborers have a right to what is a living wage for them, and if they perform with the same efficiency work done by men, they have a right to the same living wage as men. Children have a right to what is a living wage for them, and if they perform efficiently work done by adults, they should receive adult-wages.

Where workers are suffering from grave economic evils, the State should interfere, and establish legal minimum wages. “Every effort must be made,” writes Pius XI, “to bring that which Our Predecessor Leo XIII, of happy memory, has already insisted upon, 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" ⁽⁸⁾. In their Program of Social Reconstruction the American Bishops also demand a legal minimum wage:

"The several States should enact laws providing for the establishment of wage rates that will be at least sufficient for the decent maintenance of a family, in the case of all male adults, and adequate to the decent individual support of female workers. In the beginning the minimum wages for male workers should suffice only for the present needs of the family, but they should be gradually raised until they are adequate to future needs as well. That is, they should be ultimately high enough to make possible that amount of saving which is necessary to protect the worker and his family against sickness, accidents, invalidity and old age" ⁽⁹⁾.

Suppose now that the employer is insolvent, is he bound to pay living wages? The following moral principles seem to be applicable to a situation of this kind: 1) The employer has a right to take from the business a family living wage even though the others may be deprived of a full living wage, and also whatever is necessary to keep up his business. When a man is in the presence of two conflicting equal claims he is justified in favoring himself. 2) Beyond this, the employer may not take anything more until he has paid to all his employees a full living wage. The workers' right to a reasonable livelihood is superior to the employer's right to superfluous goods; their right to nature's storehouse is equally the same as that of the latter.

⁽⁸⁾ "Christian Marriage," o. c. p. 116.

⁽⁹⁾ "Bishops' Program of Social Reconstruction" (N. C. W. C., 1939), pp. 21-22.

"The conditions of any particular business and of its owner," says Pius XI, "must also come into question in settling the scale of wages; for it is unjust to demand wages so high that an employer cannot pay them without ruin, and without consequent distress among the working people themselves. If the business make smaller profit on account of bad management, want of enterprise or out-of-date methods, this is not a just reason for reducing the workingmen's wages. If, however, the business does not make enough money to pay the workman a just wage, either because it is overwhelmed with unjust burdens, or because it is compelled to sell its products at an unjustly low price, those who thus injure it are guilty of grievous wrong; for it is they who deprive the workingmen of the just wage, and force them to accept lower terms. Let employers, therefore, and employed join in their plans and efforts to overcome all difficulties and obstacles, and let them be aided in this wholesome endeavor by the wise measures of the public authority. In the last extreme, counsel must be taken whether the business can continue, or whether some other provision should be made for the workers" ⁽¹⁰⁾.

Partnership

Even when the employer has provided proper working conditions—namely, decent hours, sanitary conditions, and sufficient rest—and paid a living wage, the Papal ideal has not yet been fully attained. The Popes advocate the modification of the wage contract by some measure of partnership: "In the present state of human society, We deem it advisable that the wage-contract should, when possible,

⁽¹⁰⁾ o. c. p. 142.

be modified somewhat by a contract of partnership, as is already being tried in various ways to the no small gain both of the wage-earners and of the employers. In this way wage-earners are made sharers in some sort in the ownership, or the management, or the profits" ⁽¹¹⁾. In carrying out this program, the employers may divide a determined sum of profits among the workers either in proportion to their salary or equally. Or, they may put out the workers' part of the profits in the form of shares of stock in the company, gradually making the workers copartners in business and in the management. "Labor," says the American Bishops' Program of Social Reconstruction, "ought gradually to receive greater representation in what the English group of Quaker employers have called the 'industrial' part of business management—the control of processes and machinery; nature of product; engagement and dismissal of employees; hours of work, rates of pay, bonuses, etc.; welfare work; shop discipline, relations with trade unions'" ⁽¹²⁾.

(11) Pius XI, Ency., "Reconstructing the Social Order," o. c. pp. 140-141.

(12) o. c. p. 23, cf. "The Church and Social Order" (N. C. W. C., 1940) a statement of the American Bishops.

Discussion Aids

1. What is meant by a living wage?
2. State the argument from the right to life.
3. Explain the argument from the right to nature's storehouse.
4. What is meant by a family living wage? On what grounds is it based?

5. What are the criteria for determining a living wage?
6. Explain some of the methods of paying a family living wage.
7. When and why should the State intervene to procure the payment of living wages?
8. Is an insolvent employer bound to pay a living wage? Explain.
9. What do the Popes mean when they say that the wage contract should be modified by some measure of partnership?
10. A business man once said: "I know that I am not paying my men enough to live on, but I do not feel that there is anything wrong with it because I will give my money to charity." What do you think of his policy?
11. An employer said: "I pay my employees as much as they get anywhere else. If they do not like to work for me for twelve dollars a week, they can quit and I will have a hundred others looking for the jobs tomorrow." What do you think of his attitude?
12. A man owned a factory. He needed someone to manage it. If he hired an expert the profits from the factory would be sufficient to pay a living wage to the employees. But he had a brother who, though inexperienced, applied for the work. Should he hire his brother as manager?
13. Is a man justified in installing labor-saving machinery if thereby he throws laborers out of work?

Application to Conduct

1. If I am a laborer and receive a living wage, and at the same time deliberately fail to do satisfactory work, I am guilty of stealing.
2. If I am a successful employer, and fail to pay my employees a living wage, I am guilty of stealing.
3. I am not an absolute owner of my possessions but only a steward and administrator of God's storehouse.

Chapter V

LABOR UNIONS

Preliminary Notions and Definitions

1) A *labor union* is an organization of working people created to maintain or improve their working conditions and to advance their interests.

2) A *trade union* is an organization of workers engaged in the same trade.

3) An *industrial union* is an organization of workers engaged in a certain industry irrespective of the particular work which the laborers may perform within that industry (e.g., bookkeepers, mechanics, etc. in the mining industry).

4) A *company union* is one in which members and officers are chosen from among persons employed by the same company with which the union has to negotiate. Since the employer controls the jobs of the members of a company union he virtually controls their bargaining power with him. Its success depends not on competition and hostility but on good will and cooperation between employer and employee.

5) A *free or outside union* is one in which the officers need not and usually are not chosen from the company's paid personnel.

6) A *closed shop* is a place of employment where only members of a labor union are permitted to work.

7) An *open shop* is a workshop where union and non-union workmen are employed without discrimination.

8) A *non-union shop* is one in which union members are not employed or one in which a labor union forbids its members to be employed.

9) A *shop committee* is a group which consists of representatives of both the employers and employees and which settles internal and local matters without referring them to a union.

10) *Collective bargaining* is negotiating concerning the terms of a contract or conditions of employment between an employer, or several employers, on the one hand, and an organized body of workers, on the other.

11) *Unfair list*: A published list of employers unfair to labor unions.

12) *Union label*: a sign stamped upon their products by employers of union men.

12) *Blacklist*: a list of undesirable workers published by employers.

14) "*Yellow Dog*" *contract*: An employment contract which implies cessation of membership in a labor union and promise not to join a union while in that employer's service.

History of Labor Unions

The organization of labor in ancient and modern times may be described briefly in the following four statements: 1) For many centuries slaves and serfs took the place of the laboring class. It would be incorrect, however, to speak of slavery as a labor union or to refer to the rebellion of slaves as strikes.

2) Before the profound division and specialization of labor—which characterizes our times—set in, and under the influence of the Christian teaching of solidarity, the employer, his associates and apprentices frequently united—especially in the middle ages—into one group or guild to defend the in-

terests common to all of them. 3) With the introduction of the Liberalistic principle of individualism, and with the rise of monopolies and of capitalism, workers sought by distinct and secret associations to defend themselves against the exploitation of which they were victims. The right to existence of these organizations was strongly contested by the exponents of economic liberalism who saw in these unions a menace to all private initiative. 4) The French Revolution dealt a mortal blow to all corporative organizations. The law Le Chapelier of 1791 suppressed all corporations and forbade the citizens to reestablish them for any reason whatsoever. Art. 414 of the penal code of 1810 forbade all coalition among employers and Art. 415 all coalition among workers.

The history of labor unions since then may be summarized in three words: repression, toleration and recognition. In *France* the right of coalition (but not of association) was granted in 1864. In 1884 the Waldeck-Rousseau code authorized the creation of professional unions, and further and more liberal laws were passed in 1901 and 1920. The various unions were allowed to federate into the "Confederation General du Travail." In *Belgium* the Constitution in 1831 recognized the right of association, but workers' unions were forbidden to agitate for higher wages and shorter hours of labor. In 1866 Art. 310 granted the laborers the right to strike but punished with extreme severity any recourse to violence in the conduct of a strike. Art. 310 was suppressed in 1921 and organization rights were granted to both employers and employees. In *Germany* prohibitions against worker's associations were abrogated by the Industrial Code of Germany

in 1869, although many restrictions still remained. Full juridical status was granted to labor unions by the Constitution of Weimar. At present whatever labor unions still function must be fully subject to the Nazi government.

In *England* labor unions began to develop from the beginning of the eighteenth century. But the government showed itself rather hostile, and forbade them in 1799 and again in 1800. These prohibitive laws however, were enforced only when the unions tended to exercise an excessive influence on industry; they were abrogated in 1824. A juridical status was not granted to labor unions until 1871. At the same time the Criminal Amendment Act, which was destined to curb strikes, in reality deprived the unions of juridical status once they engaged in a strike. The Amendment Act was abrogated in 1875, and thereafter the law gave full recognition to labor unions and determined what measures were licit in a strike. The Trades Dispute Act of 1906 declared as lawful in a strike certain actions whose legality had hitherto been contested. In 1927 an Act of Parliament outlawed all general strikes.

The history of the labor unions in the *United States* centers around the following dates: 1) *Up to 1869* we find sporadic attempts at union on the part of various local bodies as well as attempts at a national federation of these local units, but nothing lasting came of these endeavors. 2) *1869: Founding of the Knights of Labor*. This organization admitted both laborers and employers, but excluded lawyers, bankers, and rum sellers. In trying to improve working conditions it relied more on educational methods than on strikes. It declined rapidly after 1886 when it reached its highest membership

of 700,000. 3) 1881: *Organization of the American Federation of Labor* (A.F.L.), a federation of trade unions, each of which cooperates voluntarily with the others in procuring improved working conditions, while managing independently its own individual internal policies. 4) 1905: *Founding of the Industrial Workers of the World*, an American Socialist movement, which though well organized, exercised little influence. 5) 1913: *Establishment of the U. S. Department of Labor*. 6) 1935: *The Wagner Labor Relations Act* guaranteed to the workers the right to organize and to bargain collectively. 7) 1936: *Establishment of the Committee for Industrial Organization* (C. I. O.). While the A. F. L. is organized on craft lines (carpenters, bricklayers, electricians) the C. I. O. is organized on industrial lines (coal mining industry, steel industry). The A. F. L. and C. I. O. have each a membership of about four million.

The Church and Labor Unions

1) In 1891 *Pope Leo XIII* declared that the right of workers to form unions is a natural right: "To enter into a 'society' of this kind is the natural right of man; and the State must protect natural rights, not destroy them; and if it forbids its citizens to form associations, it contradicts the very principle of its own existence; for both they and it exist in virtue of the same principle, viz., the natural propensity of man to live in society" ⁽¹⁾.

"The experience of his own weakness," the same Pontiff writes, "urges man to call in help from without. We read in the pages of Holy Writ: 'It

(1) "On the Condition of Labor" in "Four Great Encyclicals" (Paulist Press), pp. 28-29. cf. Pius XII, "To the Church in the United States" ("Sertum Laetitiae") (N. C. W. C., 1939.)

is better that two should be together than one; for they have the advantage of their society. If one fall he shall be supported by the other. Woe to him that is alone, for when he falleth he hath none to lift him up' ⁽²⁾. And further: 'A brother that is helped by his brother is like a strong city' ⁽³⁾. It is this natural impulse which united men in civil society; and it is this also which makes them band themselves together in associations of citizen with citizen" ⁽⁴⁾.

Pope Leo urges that workmen's associations be "adapted to the requirements of the age in which we live—an age of greater instruction, of different customs, and of more numerous requirements in daily life. It is gratifying to know that there are actually in existence not a few societies of this nature, consisting either of workmen alone, or of workmen and employers together; but it were greatly to be desired that they should multiply and become more effective" ⁽⁵⁾.

2) In 1919 the *American Bishops* reaffirmed the right of workingmen to organize and declared: "It is to be hoped that this right will never again be called in question by any considerable number of employers" ⁽⁶⁾.

3) The teachings of Leo XIII, so frequently confirmed by his successors, was condensed in the following propositions contained in a letter which the *Sacred Congregation of the Council* addressed in 1929 to Cardinal Leinart of Lille:

(2) Eccles. IV, 9, 10.

(3) Prov. XVIII, 19.

(4) o. c. p. 28.

(5) *ibid.*, p. 27 cf. pp. 129-131.

(6) Bishops' Program of Social Reconstruction (N.C.W.C., 1939).

1. The Church recognizes and affirms the right of employers and of workers to form industrial (syndical) associations, whether separate or mixed, and sees in them an efficacious means for the solution of the social question.

2. Under existing circumstances the Church considers the formation of such industrial unions as morally necessary.

3. The Church urges the formation of such industrial unions.

4. The Church desires that the industrial associations be established and governed according to the principles of Christian faith and morality.

5. The Church desires that industrial unions be instruments of peace and concord, and with this object in view she suggests the institution of joint committees as a bond of union between them.

6. The Church desires that industrial unions, established by Catholics for Catholics, be formed among Catholics, without denying, however, that particular needs may demand a different course of action.

7. The Church recommends the union of all Catholics in a common endeavor in the bonds of Christian Charity ⁽⁷⁾.

4) In 1931 *Pope Pius XI* again restated the right of the worker to form unions, and proposed the establishment of a more perfect and harmonious social order—of an occupational or guild society. "The demand and supply of labor," says Pius XI, "divides men on the labor market into two classes, as into two camps, and the bargaining between these

(7) *Acta Ap. Sedis*, 1929, pp. 494-504.

parties transform this labor market into an arena where the two armies are engaged in combat. To this grave disorder which is leading society to ruin a remedy must evidently be applied as speedily as possible. But there cannot be question of any perfect cure, except this opposition be done away with, and well ordered members of the social body come into being anew, vocational groups namely, binding men together not according to the position they occupy in the labor market, but according to the diverse functions which they exercise in society. For as nature induces those who dwell in close proximity to unite into municipalities, so those who practice the same trade or profession, economic or otherwise, combine into vocational groups. These groups in a true sense autonomous, are considered by man to be, if not essential to civil society, at least its natural and spontaneous development" (8).

Conclusions

The pronouncements of Church authorities make it clear that legitimate unionism is worthy of encouragement. Whether any particular labor union will merit the Church's approval, will depend upon the principles and methods of the union in question. Some unions are actuated by principles which are strongly tainted with Socialism and Communism. Others are maintained on the theory that the relation between employers and workmen is one of warfare in which each side is free to strive for all it can obtain. Racketeering and dishonesty in handling union funds are not unknown in labor history. Conscious of their organized strength, the leaders of the workers often resort to force as an instrument of combat. They resort to strikes with-

(8) o. c. p. 145.

out first making use of peaceful methods. Aggressive tendencies and a tyranny of labor thus gradually develop. The consequent lack of discipline cripples seriously the factors of production. The uneducated masses often fail to grasp the prudent policy of the directors. They insist on their rights and forget their duties. While labor unions arose to protect the workers against the headstrong power of economic individualism, the doctrine of economic liberalism is now creeping into the labor unions. The leaders of the unions using their monopolistic power to curtail production, demand excessive entrance fees, create a labor shortage by artificial methods, and demand wages without any regard of the laborers' skill.

This arrogant attitude of certain leaders of labor unions clashes with the attitude of employers who combat the unions on both theoretical and practical grounds. The employers urge the following objections against labor unions: united workers are becoming more and more vociferous in their claims; they seek an independence which will mean the disorganization and ruin of industry; the employer must remain free and be his own master; the employee should also remain free and seek apart from unions guarantees of an equitable remuneration for labor. These objections, however, have little cogency; in the first place, the worker has often failed to obtain equitable conditions of labor where he dealt individually with the employer. The independence which the worker seeks is an independence in drawing up the terms of the labor contract; once the contract is concluded, the employee is strictly bound by it, and any infraction of it is condemned both by the principles of ethics and the proposed

policies of the labor unions themselves. The employer, it is true, must remain master of the establishment, but the worker must remain master of his person and cannot cede to the employer the right to dispose arbitrarily of the laborer's personality. Besides there are certain claims of strict justice the fulfillment of which the worker has a right to demand. The liberty which the employer often wishes to preserve for the worker is the liberty to accept arbitrarily low wages or to starve. The employee cannot transport his family hither and thither in quest of a family living wage.

Frequently the employer does not stop with theoretical considerations but combats labor unions with concrete weapons. He carries on a systematic discrimination against all workers whom he knows to belong to the union. Or he forces them to relinquish their membership in a union, and makes them promise not to join a labor union while they are in his employment. He makes use of the press, of blacklists, of paid spies and speakers in his campaign against labor unions. Or he moves his establishment to a rural section where cheap labor is plentiful and where unionization would be difficult and ineffective. Frequently he establishes for his employees dwellings, stores, halls, etc., and thus makes their existence more completely dependent upon himself. Unfortunately the employer's work is frequently made easier by the acrimonious disputes between labor organizations, by the desertion on the part of labor leaders, and by the inertia of many of the workers.

Yet a labor union properly organized and prudently guided cannot but be productive of much good. It enables the mass of workers, who come

from varied walks of life and who differ vastly in education and ability, to be represented by experts in the labor world. These representatives of labor are in a position to do their utmost to procure better working conditions for the workers and protect them against unjust treatment. By stabilizing working conditions in a region or section of the country, they will stabilize the population itself, since the laborer will not experience any desire to transport his family to another district in quest of better living conditions. These uniform conditions of labor will strengthen the establishments of the employers themselves who will thus be protected against unjust competition.

The closed shop has serious reasons in its favor. If in a given establishment labor enjoys certain advantages because of organization, the non-unionists should be willing to help defray the expenses of this organization. The "open shop" usually means supplanting of union employees, discord, disunion and lack of discipline, the impossibility of collective bargaining, reduction of wages, and ultimately injustice to the workers. The "closed shop" is guilty of injustice when it charges an excessive membership fee to non-unionists, in order that it may itself monopolize the work in the particular establishment, and when it uses physical or moral violence to deprive a man of his freedom to gain employment for a livelihood essential to the existence of himself and his family.

Discussion Aids

1. Define a labor union. What are the various kinds of labor unions? What is the difference between the A. F. of L. and the C. I. O.?

2. What is the difference between the "open" and "closed" shop?
3. Give a brief history of labor unions:
1) up to 1800; 2) from 1800 to our own day.
4. What are the principal dates in the American Labor Movement?
5. Summarize briefly the teaching of Church authorities on labor unions.
6. What criticisms may one level against some labor unions?
7. What methods do employers use in combating labor unions?
8. What are the good effects of unionization?
9. What is to be said of the "open" and "closed" shop?
10. An employee of a large firm said: "Why should I join a union? I am getting enough to live on now. I know that if I join the union the others will get higher wages, but that is not my worry." What do you think of his attitude?
11. What is the Social Action Department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference.
12. Is all poverty among workers due to industrial conditions?

Application to Conduct

1. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."
2. I shall always see in my neighbor a brother in Christ and a co-heir of the heavenly kingdom.
3. I shall do unto others as I wish them to do unto me.

Chapter VI

THE MORALITY OF STRIKES

Preliminary Explanations and Definitions

1) A *strike* is a simultaneous and concerted quitting of work by laborers in order to obtain or resist—by constraint exercised on the employer, on the public, and on the power of the State—a change in the conditions of employment. It is *direct* when the employees suffering from the same grievance cease working in order to obtain from their employer a remedy of this grievance. It is *sympathetic* when the laborers cease working for their employer, not because they have a grievance against him, but in order to make him bring pressure against employers of workers who are on strike. In a *sit-down strike* the employees occupy the shop, refuse the employer access to it and sometimes hold him imprisoned in it, tie up the machinery and the buildings, and occasionally continue the work but for their own benefit. A *general strike*, which is a cessation of work on the part of all employees, aims at the suppression of private property and at placing the means of production in the hands of the proletariat.

2) *Scabs and blacklegs* are non-union workers who strive as *strike breakers* to occupy the positions vacated by the strikers.

3) A *boycott* is a concerted action to withhold, and induce others to withhold business or relations with an employer or a corporation. It is primary when it is directed against the person against whom the boycotters have a grievance. It is *secondary*

when it is directed against a person who continues to deal with a boycotted person.

4) *Picketing* is the posting of labor-union agents near a place affected by a strike in order to persuade non-union workers and other laborers from taking the places vacated by the strikers. Occasionally picketing means posting workers' agents with large and appropriately worded signs near a boycotted establishment in order to turn business away from it.

5) *Injunction*: An issuing of an order by the court requiring certain persons to abstain from certain actions until the grievance has been examined by the court and rights finally determined.

6) *Lockout*: A closing down of shop by an employer or employers in order to force the workers to accept their terms or otherwise face unemployment.

7) *Sabotage*: Interference with, injury to, or destruction of the equipment, instruments of production and stock of an employer.

History of the Strike

The history of strikes is intimately bound up with that of labor unions. In a general way it may be asserted that strikes were forbidden up to the middle of the nineteenth century. Strikes ceased to be unlawful in France only in 1864; in Belgium, in 1866; in England, in 1824; and in Germany, in 1869. At the end of the nineteenth century the strike was recognized generally throughout Europe except in Russia. In the United States strikes occur on the average of ten a day.

The Right to Strike

When their contract has expired, the laborers

have a right to resign their employment, if they have a reasonable cause. If an employer treats his employees justly, they would do him an injustice if they withdraw from work *en masse*. But if the employer's demands are unreasonable or if the working conditions are unjust, then one or several or all workers may quit work. This concerted refusal to renew the contract for a new term is often the only means which workers have of procuring for themselves equitable conditions of employment and of safeguarding their legitimate interests. "When work-people have recourse to a strike, it is frequently because the hours of labor are too long, or the work too hard, or because they consider their wages insufficient" (1).

The fact that workers make use of an organization to obtain their ends does not make the strike immoral. For the right of association, as Leo XIII points out, is a natural prerogative, and is a means of procuring happiness and safeguarding human nature. Secondly, as long as their cause is just, the workers are justified in persuading others not to occupy the places temporarily vacated and in pointing out to them that any such interference would be an injury to the just cause of labor. Finally, it is beside the point to say that the higher wages sought by the strikers will ultimately have to be paid by the consumers of the goods produced by the workers. The laborer has a right to a family living wage. If the consumers' clamoring for cheaper goods results in the underpaying of the laborers, the former are guilty of an injustice towards the latter. As long as the objectives and methods of the strikes are

(1) Leo XIII, "The Conditions of Labor" in "Four Great Encyclicals" (Paulist Press), p. 22.

just, the inconveniences which may accompany a strike are not an injustice wrought on the public at large.

Occasionally workers may go on strike even though a contract exists between themselves and the employers. The contract may be invalid from the beginning because of lack of liberty or because of error or because of some unjust clause in the contract. Again a contract which originally was valid may lose its obligatory force because the employer fails to carry out its stipulations or no longer treats his employees justly, for example, by introducing them into working conditions harmful to life and morals. It is doubtful, too, whether contracts which do not beget a living wage are binding on the worker. However, contracts should be considered as valid until the contrary is conclusively proved. If the workers can prove that no valid contract exists, they may lawfully cease to work provided they conform to local and professional customs.

Conditions of a Lawful Strike

In order that the right to strike may be lawfully exercised, it is necessary that the following conditions be observed:

1) A strike must be undertaken for a just cause. The object sought by the strike must be one to which the laborers have a claim in justice. In others words, the workers may not use their organization to extort from their employer all that they can get. A just cause includes such claims as the following:

a) Protection of life, health and morals; protection against accidents, unsanitary conditions, disease, etc.

b) Recognition of labor unions. Collective bargaining is frequently the only means by which workmen can safeguard their interests and protect themselves against injustice.

c) Reasonable hours of labor: "It is neither justice nor humanity so to grind men down with excessive labor as to stupefy their minds and wear out their bodies. Man's powers, like his general nature, are limited, and beyond these limits he cannot go. His strength is developed and increased by use and exercise, but only on condition of due intermission and proper rest. Daily labor, therefore, must be so regulated that it may not be protracted during longer hours than strength admits. How many and how long the intervals of rest should be, will depend upon the nature of the work, on circumstances of time and place, and on the health and strength of the workman. Those who labor in mines and quarries, and in work within the bowels of the earth, should have shorter hours in proportion as their labor is more severe and more trying to health. Then, again, the season of the year must be taken into account; for not infrequently a kind of labor is easy at one time which at another is intolerable or very difficult. Finally, work which is suitable for a strong man cannot reasonably be required from a woman or a child" ⁽²⁾.

d) A minimum living wage: "There is a dictate of nature more imperious and more ancient than any bargain between man and man, that the remuneration must be enough to support the wage-earner in reasonable and frugal comfort" ⁽³⁾. Some theologians hold that workers not receiving a mini-

⁽²⁾ o. c. pp. 23-24.

⁽³⁾ *ibid.* p. 25.

imum wage may strike, even though a contract exists. If no contract exists, they may strike for a maximum living wage; to strike for more than this, however, would be to commit an injustice against both the employer and the consuming public.

2) The second condition of a lawful strike is this: The advantages anticipated must outweigh the evil effects which inevitably accompany the strike. During a strike the employer's business is not only at a standstill but is frequently seriously undermined and even destroyed, the laborers are in want for lack of wages, charity is violated, etc. "Such paralysis of labor," says Leo XIII, "not only affects the masters and their work-people, but is extremely injurious to trade, and to the general interests of the public; moreover, on such occasions, violence and disorder are generally not far off, and thus it frequently happens that the public peace is threatened" ⁽⁴⁾. All these evils must be compensated by the greater good to be realized by the strike. However, an apparently insignificant wrong may assume very grave proportions later on if left uncorrected, and hence may justify a strike. Again, in stressing the evils which befall the community as a result of the strike, it is important also to emphasize the evils from which the worker suffers and which he strives to remove by the strike.

Some functions, however, are so necessary for the common good of society that one can scarcely conceive of any situation where a strike in these departments would be justifiable. Such would be the strike of the police, of the postal service, of railroads, of undertakers, of hospitals, of ambulance

⁽⁴⁾ *ibid.* p. 22.

trucks, of the producers and conveyors of the necessities of life—especially for children, the weak and the sick. Society, however, should furnish to these workers other means of defending their legitimate interests.

3) Thirdly, since the strike is a drastic measure, recourse should be had to it only after all peaceful solutions of the difficulty have failed—only after all means of settling the difference and of securing justice have been exhausted.

4) Fourthly, there must be a reasonable hope that the strike will succeed. The present grievances of the worker are a lesser evil than the losses and sufferings which accompany an unsuccessful strike. The second state of the laborer would in that case be worse than the first.

5) Lastly, only lawful means may be used in the conduct of a strike. "Religion," says Leo XIII, "teaches the laboring man and the workman to carry out honestly and well all equitable agreements freely made, never to injure capital, nor to outrage the person of an employer; never to employ violence in representing his own cause, nor to engage in riot and disorder; and to have nothing to do with men of evil principles, who work upon the people with artful promises, and raise foolish hopes which usually end in disaster and repentance when too late"⁽⁵⁾. The use of physical violence—or even the threat of physical violence—is a violation of man's natural rights and liberties, and is never permitted. Some may object that if physical violence be not used, the strike becomes a useless weapon. However forceful this contention may appear, the fact remains that it

⁽⁵⁾ *ibid.* p. 10.

is never lawful to do evil (here, to destroy man's inherent right to freedom) that good may come of it. All that the worker may use is persuasion (not intimidation), for moral suasion is an attempt to direct another man's judgment and influence his will but is not a violation of human liberty.

Special Principles

1) The *sympathetic strike* is a violation of the workers' contract with the employer. If the contract is just and if the employer abides by its terms, the laborers are guilty of an injustice when they cease working. A sympathetic strike, by spreading the evil of strikes and the area of dispute is out of all proportion to the grievance which the initial strike strives to remedy. In a sympathetic strike workers go on strike not because they are convinced of the justice of the strike—which is one of the prime requisites for striking—but simply because their fellow-laborers have launched out on a strike. There seems to be only one instance where a sympathetic strike is permissible: the workers within an establishment may go on strike out of sympathy for a group of workers within that *same* establishment who are suffering from a serious injustice. In this case the strike is directed against the one guilty employer and not against innocent employers.

2) The conditions for a lawful *primary boycott* are the same as those for a strike. A boycotted person must never be denied the necessities of life and the common signs of civility. The conditions for a lawful *secondary boycott* are much the same as those for a sympathetic strike.

3) What about *scabs* and *blacklegs*? If they

are in grave need they may occupy the places vacated by the strikers. If they are not in grave need—and this would seem to be the case with the professional strikebreakers—they violate justice because they cooperate in returning the old employees to their former unjust conditions. If however, the employer is willing to treat the old employees justly, and if they nevertheless persist in the strike, their jobs are forfeited to others.

4) In *picketing*, workers may not resort to lying, fraud, intimidation, or physical violence but only to moral suasion.

5) A *lockout* is lawful under the following conditions: if the employers are not bound to their employees by an explicit or implicit contract; or, if the workers are the first to renounce the contract and cease to observe its conditions; or if they plot unjustly against the employers; or if, even though the contract is observed, the lockout is the only way of avoiding serious harm or ruin. However, even though employers may have a right to the lockout in strict justice, they in charity will not lightly expose the workers and their families to privation and misery.

7) The *sitdown strike* is unlawful because it is: 1) contrary to the right of private property as determined in our present social order; 2) because it is opposed to the laws of the land which codify this right of private property, and 3) because it frequently resorts to physical violence and destruction of property.

Discussion Aids

1. Enumerate and explain the various kinds of strikes.
2. What is the difference between a strike and a lockout? Between picketing and a boycott?
3. What are "scabs" and "blacklegs"?
4. Outline briefly the history of strikes.
5. What is the basis of the right to strike?
6. Is a strike unethical because sponsored by a union? because of picketing? because of inconveniences suffered by the public?
7. When may laborers cease working even though a contract exists?
8. Enumerate and explain the five conditions required for a lawful strike?
9. What are some of the just causes for a strike?
10. In what departments are strikes never justifiable?
11. Can physical violence be justified on the plea that otherwise the strike will be reduced to *nil*?
12. Explain the morality of sympathetic strikes, of sitdown strikes, of lockouts.
13. Choose any recent strike and examine it in light of the five requisites for a lawful strike.

Application to Conduct

1. In vindicating my own rights I shall be careful not to injure the rights of others.
2. In remedying injustices I shall refrain from all sins against charity.
3. I shall never use evil means in order to obtain a good result.

Chapter VII

THE SOCIAL APOSTOLATE

"Economic life must be inspired by Christian principles" (1).

Both Leo XIII and Pius XI insist that all attempts at social reconstruction must be preceded by a moral transformation and renovation. "If society is to be cured now," says Leo XIII, "in no other way can it be cured but by a return to the Christian life and Christian institutions" (2). And Pius XI adds: "This longed-for social reconstruction must be preceded by a profound renewal of the Christian spirit, from which multitudes engaged in industry in every country have unhappily departed" (3).

Before specifying what principles of the Gospel need especially to be stressed and applied in the modern and paganistic world, Pius XI briefly describes the genesis of the moral deterioration in the contemporary economic domain and of that "excessive solicitude for transitory things, which is the origin of all vices" (4).

1) The fundamental reason for the failure to observe the Christian law in social and economic matters "is the disorderly affection of the soul, a sad consequence of *original sin*, the source of these

(1) Pius XI, Ency., "Reconstructing the Social Order" in "Four Great Encyclicals" (Paulist Press), p. 161. cf "The Church and Social Order" (N. C. W. C., 1940) : Statement of the American Bishops.

(2) o. c. p. 16.

(3) o. c. p. 158.

(4) *ibid.*

and of all other evils" (5). By the fall of our first parents, the marvellous harmony which prevailed in man's being was broken, with the result that the lower faculties, no longer fully subordinated to the higher rational faculties, tend to and seek inordinately the perishable things of this world.

2) Because life is so hard, because economic matters are so changeable and because one's amassed fortune is nowadays so unstable, men seize at any and all opportunities for gaining wealth, and gradually turn a deaf ear to the voice of conscience within them. This *hardening of conscience* has given rise to the worst frauds and injustices in corporative firms, while it has led others to appeal to man's lowest passions for the sake of gain.

3) As a result, *economic science was divorced from the moral law*. With the leaders of industry no longer responsive to considerations of the religious and moral order, workers soon sank to unheard of depths: "Many employers treated their workmen as mere tools, without any concern for the welfare of their souls, indeed, without the slightest thought of higher interests—and so bodily labor, which Divine Providence even after original sin decreed for the good of man's body and soul has everywhere been changed into an instrument of strange perversion; for dead matter leaves the factory ennobled and transformed, where men are corrupted and degraded" (6).

The Remedies

1) "Our first and most fundamental principle," says Leo XIII, "when we undertake to alleviate the condition of the masses, must be the *inviolability of*

(5) *ibid.* p. 159.

(6) *ibid.* pp. 160-161.

private property—Humanity must remain as it is. It is impossible to reduce human society to a level—There naturally exist among mankind innumerable differences of the most important kind; people differ in capability, in diligence, in health and in strength; and unequal fortune is a necessary result of inequality in conditions" (7). Pius XI demands that "the right of property must be distinguished from its use" and rejects the view that "the very misuse or even non-use of ownership destroys or forfeits the right itself." "It is a grievous error," he adds, "so to weaken the individual character of ownership as actually to destroy it." (8).

The abuse of private property, to which the Popes refer, are due to the exclusion of religious and moral principles from the domain of economics, to the greed and avarice of the rich, and to the indifference of the State. As a result of these manifold abuses, the goods of the earth, which the Creator intended to supply the needs of all men, have fallen under the control and domination of a few. The rights of the laborers, who have contributed their share in amassing this wealth, have often been disregarded and violated. The Communists consider this inequality of wealth as the very source of all evil and demand the extinction of all private property. They would remove not only the abuses of private property but would destroy the very right to property. They would remedy injustice by injustice, and would introduce robbery, violence, confiscation and the destruction of the present social order. The Church rejects the cures advocated by Communism and proposes to remedy the system of

(7) o. c. pp. 8-9.

(8) o. c. p. 134.

private ownership as it exists at present. She contends that these remedies must be introduced without delay if we are to escape the forces of revolution ⁽⁹⁾.

2) Secondly, our economic life must be "rationalized." This means placing God as the "first and supreme end of all created activity" and considering "created goods as mere instruments under God, to be used only in so far as they help toward the attainment of our supreme end" ⁽¹⁰⁾.

3) Labor, suffering, and hardships are inseparable from the lot and existence of fallen man. They are the consequences of our sin, and must be borne with patience and resignation. Christ has sanctified and sweetened all pains by His own sufferings, and by His example, by His grace, and by His promise of an eternal recompense has made pain and suffering more easy to endure. If there are men who promise to others constant enjoyment and freedom from sufferings, they lie and only make others more unhappy.

4) It is a gross error to contend that "class is naturally hostile to class; that rich and poor are intended by nature to live at war with one another." The contrary is true: "Each requires the other: capital cannot do without labor, nor labor without capital." Now Christianity, "by reminding each class of its duties to the other, and especially of the duties of justice" exercises a special efficacy in bringing the two classes together" ⁽¹¹⁾.

5) Man is only a steward of his earthly possessions which he must use to work out his supreme des-

(9) *ibid.* p. 140.

(10) *ibid.* p. 161.

(11) *o. c.* p. 17

tiny and to alleviate the needs of the poor. "It is one thing," says Leo XIII, "to have a right to the possession of money, and another to have a right to use money as he pleases" ⁽¹²⁾. In this connection, Leo, following the teaching of St. Thomas, lays down the following principles in regard to the use of one's wealth: a) One may keep "what is required for his own necessities and those of his household"; b) He may retain "what is reasonably required to keep up becomingly his condition in life"; c) Apart from this, "it is a duty to give to the indigent out of that which is over."

6) Dignity of labor: "In God's sight poverty is no disgrace, and there is nothing to be ashamed of in seeking one's bread by labor. This is strengthened by what we see in Christ Himself 'Who whereas he was rich, for our sakes became poor'; and Who, being the Son of God, and God Himself, chose to seem and to be considered the son of a carpenter—nay, did not disdain to spend a great part of His life as a carpenter Himself" ⁽¹³⁾.

7) Christianity alone can unite the rich and laboring classes in brotherly love: it points out to them that they were all created equal in the possession of a soul and body; that they are all children of a common Father; that they were all redeemed by Jesus Christ, being made adopted sons of God and brothers and sisters in His Blood, and that they are all destined for the inheritance of the kingdom of God. This universal charity must embrace Fascist and Communist, for while a Catholic can never be tolerant of error he must never be intolerant of persons. God "hates none of the things that He

⁽¹²⁾ *ibid.* p. 13.

⁽¹³⁾ *ibid.* p. 14.

made" and while "we were as yet His enemies," He loved us and died for us.

Application

The first step in the process of social reconstruction must be the reform of the individual. The first duty of a Catholic—especially of one who holds a prominent position in the community—must be to acquaint himself thoroughly with the Church's social teaching.

Secondly, the Catholic must put these teachings into practice in his daily life and conduct. He must apply these teachings in his home, in his profession, in his business, in his work. To accept and proclaim the teachings of the Church without practising them would be to play the role of the Pharisees who "say but do not."

Thirdly, after regulating and properly orientating his own life, the Catholic should then bring his influence to bear on specially chosen groups (study clubs), on opinion forming agencies (newspapers, radio, cinema), and upon lawmaking and governmental departments, agencies and boards. Leo himself indicates some of the measures which a government should be influenced to enact; protection of the wage-earner and of private property; a living wage; the Sunday rest; proper hours of labor; protection of children and women-laborers, etc. The Catholic must by word and example enlighten non-Catholic public opinion, point out what is wrong and how it is to be remedied, and in this way gradually correct the evils of our social system.

The ultimate aim must be nothing less than the reform of the whole of society. Dechristianized and laicised society must be rechristianized. Christian

principles must replace the immoral principles which have long held sway in economics. They must penetrate all departments of life—civil, professional, political, commercial, and industrial. Not only principles of strict justice but also of Christian charity must be applied in all walks of life.

The leaders of this moral regeneration of society, according to Pius XI, are to be, first of all, the bishops and priests, who by their very office are responsible for the religious orthodoxy and moral integrity of those subject to their care. Secondly, seminarians must be carefully selected and adequately prepared for this task by an intense study of social questions. Pius XI speaks with special satisfaction of those countless young workers—true representatives of Catholic Action—who are striving to win others to Christ; of leaders of workingmen's organizations who are laboring so valiantly to establish the reign of social justice; of the young men who are shortly to occupy positions of prominence and who are devoting themselves to an earnest study of social problems. He demands that the "first and immediate apostles of the workingmen must themselves be workingmen, while the apostles of the industrial and commercial world should themselves be employers and merchants" (14). In the training of these leaders the Pope recommends especially the use of study clubs and spiritual retreats.

In recalling the benefits of the Encyclical, "Rerum Novarum," Pius XI indicates the methods by which the doctrine of Leo XIII penetrated into human society: 1) The elaboration of a social and economic science in which the unchanging and un-

(14) o. c. p. 164.

changeable teachings of the Church were adapted to modern needs and conditions; 2) The diffusion of these correct sociological principles by "well-frequented courses founded in Catholic universities, academies and seminaries, by social congresses and weeks held at frequent intervals and with gratifying success, by study-circles, by sound and timely publications spread far and wide" ⁽¹⁵⁾. 3) Incorporation of these principles into non-Catholic books and journals; 4) The drafting of a program of social reform, in harmony with the principles of the Encyclicals, by the leaders of the nations after the World War; 5) Courses of popular education in which workmen were aroused to a sense of their true dignity; 6) The establishment of works of beneficence and charity and of institutions "by which workingmen, craftsmen, husbandmen, wage-earners of every class could give and receive mutual assistance and support" ⁽¹⁶⁾.

In this work of social reconstruction an important role must be played by our Catholic schools, for it is in them that are developed the germs of sacerdotal vocations and an elite leadership which will stem the tide of modern paganism. Secondly, the Christian spirit must be intensified by the various agencies of Catholic Action—the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade, the Legion of Decency, the National Organization for Decent Literature, etc. These organizations must detect error and vice, promote the practice of virtue, and spread the divine truths of the Gospel. Thirdly, while various groups in the world are striving to gain control of the young, the Church

⁽¹⁵⁾ *ibid.* p. 126.

⁽¹⁶⁾ *ibid.* p. 127.

must strive to preserve her youth for Christ the King by a well-organized and diversified Catholic Youth Movement. Lastly, a militant Catholic press must combat modern irreligion and give to society the correct Catholic viewpoint on the perplexing problems of the day. "In vain will you found missions and build schools," says Pius X, "if you are not able to wield the offensive and defensive weapons of a loyal Catholic Press." Catholic newspapers, writes Benedict XV, "are an effective auxiliary to the pulpit in spreading the faith."

A final word concerns the methods to be followed in the work of social reconstruction. Pope Pius XI clearly warns us that there can be no collaboration between Catholics and Communists. Catholics have nothing to expect from those who plan their destruction. If Communists extend to us the right hand of fellowship it is only to have us eventually at their mercy. Secondly, Catholics should laudably imitate the zeal and tactics of the enemy. Our enemies are not attacking us so much through recreational and social agencies, as through intellectual agencies. They make use of pamphlets, newspapers, radios, motion pictures, etc. This approach is psychologically correct because a line of action is determined by ideals and convictions, and these in turn are fostered by educational agencies. Finally, Pius XI stresses the necessity of union and harmony among all Catholics. He bids us learn a lesson from the Church's enemies. "We see these men cunningly select and train resolute disciples, who spread their false doctrines daily more widely amongst men of every station and of every clime. And when it becomes a question of attacking more vehemently the Church of Christ, we see them lay

aside their internal quarrels, link up harmoniously into a single battle line, and strike with united forces toward this common aim" ⁽¹⁷⁾. Catholics must then line up behind their leaders, and in exemplary unison contribute their share to the renewal of human society.

⁽¹⁷⁾ *ibid.* p. 166

Discussion Aids

1. What do the Popes consider as fundamental in the problem of social reconstruction?
2. What reasons does Pius XI assign for the moral deterioration in the domain of economics?
3. What are some of the Gospel truths which must be stressed in the modern paganistic world?
4. How does the Church differ from Communism on the right to private property?
5. Has one a right to use his possessions as he pleases?
6. Name the various steps by which the Gospel truths are to be introduced into society at large.
7. Who are to be the leaders of this moral regeneration of society?
8. What were some of the methods of spreading the doctrines of Leo XII's Encyclical on Labor?
9. What other agencies must be used in this work of social reconstruction?
10. What methods should be employed in our apostolate among non-Catholics?
11. A Catholic asserted that he desired to see the abuses in the social order remedied, but that

he would do nothing more than pray for the conversion of others. Do you think that is enough?

12. A graduate of a Catholic College said that he was thoroughly grounded in his religion and that consequently he had no obligation to take part in works of Catholic Action. What do you think of his attitude?
13. Irene O'Brien feels that the work of social reform is meddling with other people's opinions and way of living. What do you think?

Application to Conduct

1. I shall gladly accept the sufferings and hardships of life as a penalty of my sins.
2. I shall practice the spiritual and corporal works of mercy whenever opportunity presents itself.
3. I shall zealously promote works of Catholic Action.

Chapter VIII

OUR CIVIC DUTIES

Man tends by a natural instinct to associate himself with his fellow beings. The first union which arises out of this innate natural tendency is the family. Families in turn unite to form a community, communities unite to form a state, and states unite to form a nation. The superior unit is formed in each case to do for the subordinate unit what the latter cannot do for itself. City authorities,—to mention only one example—provide schools for the children of the community; the state supervises the construction of highways between the communities; and the nation protects the country by the maintenance of an army and navy. The civil authority which government officials exercise over citizens comes to them from God. For God is the supreme Ruler over the universe, and if anyone exercises authority over others, he derives this authority ultimately from God. "Let every soul be subject to higher powers: for there is no power but from God: and those that are, are ordained of God" ⁽¹⁾. In return for the security, protection, and welfare which civil authority procures for him, the citizen must manifest an active interest in government and assume certain burdens and responsibilities. These obligations are principally three: to vote, to pay taxes, and to undergo military service.

Voting

A vote is the expression of one's will in a recognized and authorized way—either vocally or by bal-

⁽¹⁾ Rom. XIII, 1.

lot—in regard to a candidate for office or in regard to a proposed political measure. The votes of the people determine the character of the legislators and executives of the country as well as the character of the laws themselves. Voters are truly the depositaries of authority because they designate those who wield authority in the community.

The obligation of voting flows from the fact that we are not mere isolated individuals but social beings, that is, beings destined by an innate tendency to associate ourselves with others and to live in society. Hence we must all take an active interest in public affairs and cooperate for the common good of the social body of which we are organic members. We must all work for the upbuilding of that common social good from which we ourselves derive or wish to draw so many benefits. In the supernatural order the obligation of voting is based on our common membership in Christ's Mystical Body, so that "if one member suffer anything, all the members suffer with it, or if one member glory, all the members rejoice with it" ⁽²⁾.

Voters are guilty of neglecting their duty in God's sight, if through their ignorance, indifference, and failure to acquaint themselves with political candidates and political measures, unjust laws are passed, dishonest and bad men are placed or continue in office, and grafters and corrupt cliques obtain the control of government. They are equally guilty of sin if they sell their votes or vote for those from whom they have extorted selfish promises. Voters should not cast their vote indiscriminately but should carefully acquaint themselves with the

(2) I Cor. XII, 26

candidate for office, with his moral character, and with his program. They should carefully ascertain if his program is in any way opposed to the rights of God and of conscience. If they are unable to obtain this information by their own industry, they should seek aid from others.

The advice given in this regard by the American bishops to the Catholics of this country in 1840 is as appropriate and timely today as it was then: "The periods which precede our great elections are usually marked by extraordinary excitement. Associations are formed, committees are appointed, clubs are organized, party spirit is excited, the tongue and the pen are embittered by virulence, truth is disregarded, and—more melancholy and more censurable still—freemen of every religious denomination, electors upon the proper exercise of whose judgment we depend, statesmen who may save our republic from ruin, or who may degrade it in the eyes of the world, and may destroy our peace and our liberty, voters upon whose virtues and prudence our dearest rights depend, are brutalized by pampering their meanest passions, are by vile bribery debased to the lowest grade of infamy and recklessness; and thus what was meant to be a blessing is turned into a curse. Beloved brethren, flee this contamination, keep aloof from these crimes, reflect that you are accountable not only to society but to God for the honest, independent, and fearless exercise of our own franchise, that it is a trust confided to you not for your private gain but for the public good, and that if yielding to any undue influence you act either thru favor, affection, or the motives of dishonest gain against your own deliberate view of what will promote your country's good, you have vio-

lated your trust, you have betrayed your conscience, and you are a renegade to your country" (3).

Taxes

The State, which is a creation of nature, has the right and duty to direct society to its proper end. It must safeguard the common good, preserve peace and order, assure security and progress, promote prosperity, and maintain the good name of the people. Hence it has the right of demanding of its subjects whatever is necessary for attaining this end. It can exact taxes, that is, contributions for defraying the expenses of promoting the public welfare. Since the citizen shares in the various advantages supplied by the community, he is bound in conscience to pay taxes in exchange, and in this way contribute his share toward the maintenance of the common good.

This teaching on taxation is in conformity with Christ's doctrine and with His mode of action. When the Pharisees and Herodians asked Him whether it was lawful to give tribute to Caesar, He answered: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's" (4). His own example confirmed His words, for He bade Peter to pay the tribute both for himself and for His Master (5). St. Paul also inculcates this doctrine: "Render therefore to all men their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom (taxes) to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor" (6).

In order that a tax be just and bind in conscience, it must have the following qualities. First,

(3) National Pastorals of the American Hierarchy (1792-1919), edited by P. Guilday (N. C. W. C., 1923), pp. 142-143.

(4) Matt. XXII, 17-21.

(5) Matt. XVII, 23-26.

(6) Rom. XIII, 5-7.

it must be imposed by a legitimate authority, that is, by that authority which safeguards and is responsible for the common good of the people who are being taxed. Second, it must be exacted for a just cause, that is, it must contribute immediately or mediately to the common good; thus, authority must not use taxes to favor one group of citizens to the detriment of another, to buy the votes of the people, to maintain a "pork barrel," to recompense its partisans and party workers, or to pension the unworthy and the lazy. Third, taxes must be proportioned to the State's needs: if rulers impose taxes in excess of what is needed for the common good they are guilty of injustice and fraud.

Lastly, the taxes must be proportioned to the citizens' ability to pay. Taxes should be drawn from the superfluities and not from the necessities of life. Leo XIII tells us that the benefits of property ownership "can only be expected on the condition that a man's means be not drained and exhausted by excessive taxation. The right to possess private property is from nature, not from man; and the State has only the right to regulate its use in the interests of the public good, but by no means to abolish it altogether. The State is, therefore, unjust and cruel, if in the name of taxation, it deprives the private owner of more than is just" (7). The question of the proportionality of taxes brings us to the progressive income tax and to the sales tax.

In the *progressive income tax* system there is, first of all, at the very basis of the progression, an untaxable minimum set aside for the absolute or conventional (social) necessities of life. This un-

(7) *Encycl. 'Condition of Labor'* in "Four Great Encyclicals" (Paulist Press), p. 27.

taxable minimum varies with the number of dependents: whereas for a single person it may be \$1,000, for a married couple it is \$2,500, etc. The percentage of tax levied on the surplus is increased step by step as the income becomes larger. These steps become less and less until a fixed maximum is reached at which the progression ceases; thereafter all the incomes are taxed on the same rate. For at this point men live on approximately the same social level and spend the same amounts for necessities and luxuries. Besides, if the tax rate increased indefinitely, confiscation would ultimately be the result. From the viewpoint of its basic canons the progressive income tax seems to be just. It is also a simple and practical way of preventing concentration of wealth in the hands of a few.

A *sales tax* is a levy made upon receipts from sales of goods, and is usually a definite percentage of the price paid for the object. The sales tax has several advantages: first, it covers every conceivable branch of business, and obtains a large yield with only a small tax; second, it touches all people—even those who seek legal loopholes to escape taxes or who have their wealth invested in intangible, un-taxable properties; lastly, since interest in government grows in proportion to the sacrifices we make for it, a sales tax ought to quicken interest in the laws and law-makers of the country. And yet the sales tax, according to Catholic principles of taxation, seems to be unjust. According to the dictates of common sense taxes should be based not on what a man needs but on what he earns. Taxes must not be applied to spending but to earning. Taxes should be proportioned to the ability to pay. The sales tax is unjust because it does not equalize the burden of

taxation in accordance with the income, but charges every consumer at about the same rate no matter what his earnings. If the sales tax does not exempt the necessities of life, it is unjust and unfair to the large masses of the people; in fact, even the unemployed man walking the street would have to pay his share. In this way the buying power of people is also greatly weakened.

Military Service

The civil authority has the right to provide for the necessary preservation and defense of the state. This protection of the state against internal and external enemies cannot be obtained without military force. Hence the state has a right to make military laws which the citizen is bound to obey as long as they are just. However, only that number of soldiers should be maintained which is necessary for the security of the state; otherwise the resources of the citizens are spent unnecessarily and the soldiers are needlessly exposed to the moral dangers which usually accompany military training. Again the state should not resort to compulsory conscription where a sufficient number of volunteers can be had, the state should not interfere unnecessarily with man's liberty to embrace a state of life of his choosing and to marry and establish a home. The civil law should likewise exempt those who are already exempted by the divine and natural laws—namely, clerics and the young men necessary for the support of their parents.

What about obligatory military service? Can the state compel its subjects to risk their life for the community? Catholic theologians lay down the following principles in regard to this problem: 1) The only interest for which citizens can be compelled to

sacrifice their lives is the defense of the state itself. 2) Even in this case, the state must first call for volunteer soldiers and use other available methods. Some military experts contend, however, that the successful prosecution of a war demands a selective draft from the very beginning. 3) The state cannot impose obligatory service in a war which is just but which is concerned with secondary interests, e. g., colonial wars.

Are the soldiers obliged to enlist and march if a state undertakes a military expedition for other purposes than for a national defense? Catholic moralists, though they grant that a soldier has a right to try to exempt himself from this obligation, do not admit the right of open resistance. Their attitude in this regard is determined by the demands of the social order. Society would be in a state of perpetual disorder if a citizen could refuse obedience everytime he disagrees with the government. Citizens should strive, however, to develop a strong public opinion—against which the State will ultimately be powerless. The only time that a citizen not only may but must refuse obedience is when he is commanded to do something contrary to God's law.

Military service in any form is opposed by the so-called "conscientious objectors" who have rapidly grown in numbers since the World War. Their claims have been recognized by such countries as Denmark, Finland and Norway where in such instances civil service is substituted for military service. The horrors of the World War and the savagery of prospective wars; the failure to make the world safe for peace and democracy, the mad race for armaments—all these circumstances make the

“conscientious objectors” feel that there can be no good sought by war which will outweigh the evils that result. Yet it is this very point which Catholic moralists dispute. They contend that national independence is a good which cannot be overestimated. A violent annexation of a country is tantamount to reducing a country to slavery. Again, a conquering country may have political principles destructive of the present social order, of all religion and morality, of education, of the family, and of all human liberties (e. g. Russia). In such an instance, war, no matter what its nature may be, would not be too great a price to pay for the preservation of these liberties.

The Church does not condemn all wars. She claims that there is no text in the Old or New Testament declaring war to be intrinsically evil. She recognizes that just as the natural law permits an individual to repel—even by violence—an unjust aggressor who plots against his life, so also that same natural law permits a state to repel—by violence, if necessary—the unjust aggression of a neighboring state.

The Church contends that certain conditions must be fulfilled before a war is just. These conditions are the following: 1) The war must be declared and waged by the supreme authority of the state, that is by that authority which is responsible for the common good. 2) There must be a right intention: thus it is not lawful to go to war for the glory of a ruler or a nation, to enlarge one’s territory, to gain commercial advantages over a rival, etc. 3) There must be a just, certain and sufficient cause, for example, a threat to a nation’s independence and existence. Subjects called to the colors

should fight for their country, even though they may be in doubt concerning the justice of the cause, for the presumption is in favor of the government. 4) War should not be declared until pacific means—such as direct negotiations, mediation, arbitration, diplomacy, pressure through boycott and embargoes—have been tried and have failed. 5) The authority declaring war should have a reasonable hope of victory; otherwise the nation is committing suicide, and its last state shall be worse than the first. 6) The war should be conducted with due regard for the commandments of God and for the regulations of international law. 7) There must be a proportion between the good to be obtained and the evils resulting from the war. When two effects—one good and one evil follow from one act, there must be a proportionately grave reason for permitting the evil before acting. 8) Finally, the conditions of peace must be just. The Church's theologians establish these criteria for the sole purpose of determining the character of a conflict that is to be waged or has been waged. The Church's aim and consuming desire is the "peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ." Her doctrines on the Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man, her doctrines on the Incarnation, Redemption, Eucharist, Mystical Body, and common heritage of the heavenly kingdom, are all calculated to establish the reign of peace among men.

Suppose a powerful nation unjustly conquers a weak nation and annexes it, will it ever be able to exercise legitimate authority over it? An unjust act, of course, cannot of itself give rise to a lawful right. But certain conditions may arise in virtue of which an illegitimate government will by the natural law

tend to become legitimate. If the former ruler is unable to return and govern, and if the invader is in quiet possession of government, Nature will tend to legitimize the actual government. Why? Because of the needs of the people. It is their need of a government, of security, order and tranquility—and not the satisfaction of the invader's ambition—which constitutes the chief natural ground of legitimation. The consent of the people, expressed by a plebiscite or in practice by cooperating with the new government, will hasten this legitimation.

Rebellion, that is, the use of violence against a ruler who is a tyrant, is never permissible. Subjects may not inflict war on a tyrant because he is still the legitimate ruler: "He that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God" ⁽⁸⁾. The early Christians obeyed the emperors—even in the days of persecution—in all civil matters. They resisted only when bidden to deny their religion, since in such a matter "We ought to obey God rather than men" ⁽⁹⁾. The subjects of a tyrant may resist passively, that is, by steadfastly denying obedience to the unjust laws of the tyrant.

Conclusion: Patriotism

Our duties to our country are all summed up in the word patriotism. In 1884 American Bishops asked that this virtue be specially fostered by the Catholics of the United States:

"Teach your children to take a special interest in the history of our country. We consider the establishment of our country's independence, the shaping of its liberties and laws as a work of special Providence, its framers 'building wiser than

⁽⁸⁾ Rom. XIII, 2.

⁽⁹⁾ Acts V, 29.

they knew,' the Almighty's hand guiding them. And if ever the glorious fabric is subverted or impaired it will be by men forgetful of the sacrifices of the heroes that reared it, the virtues that cemented it, and the principles on which it rests, or ready to sacrifice principle and virtue to the interests of self or party. As we desire therefore that the history of the United States should be carefully taught in all our Catholic schools, and have directed that it should be specially dwelt upon in the education of the young ecclesiastical students in our preparatory seminaries; so also we desire that it form a favorite part of the home library and home reading. We must keep firm and solid the liberties of our country by keeping fresh the noble memories of the past and thus sending forth from our Catholic homes into the arena of public life not partisans but patriots" (10).

(10) National Pastorals of the American Hierarchy (1792-1919, edited by P. Guilday (N. C. W. C., 1923), p. 250.

Discussion Aids

1. What is the source of all authority? Through what channels is it exercised? How do our obligations to the state arise?
2. Give five reasons why you should vote at every election. Should Catholics always vote for Catholics?
3. Why has the state the right to levy taxes?
4. What qualities must a tax have in order to be just?
5. Is the progressive-income tax just? The sales tax?

6. Why has the state a right to demand military service? How is this right to be limited?
7. When is obligatory military service just?
8. What do you think of the claims of the so-called "conscientious objectors"?
9. Does the Church consider war intrinsically evil?
10. What are the conditions of a just war?
11. Can an unjust invader ever exercise a legitimate rule over the conquered people?
12. Is rebellion ever permissible?

Application

1. I shall carefully acquaint myself with the character and program of candidates before voting.
2. I shall make an honest declaration of my income in paying taxes.
3. I shall by word and example foster obedience to the just enactments of civil authority.

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9. The New York Times Magazine

10. The New York Times Magazine

11. The New York Times Magazine

12. The New York Times Magazine

13. The New York Times Magazine

14. The New York Times Magazine

15. The New York Times Magazine

16. The New York Times Magazine

17. The New York Times Magazine

18. The New York Times Magazine

19. The New York Times Magazine

20. The New York Times Magazine

21. The New York Times Magazine

22. The New York Times Magazine

23. The New York Times Magazine

24. The New York Times Magazine

25. The New York Times Magazine

26. The New York Times Magazine

27. The New York Times Magazine

28. The New York Times Magazine

29. The New York Times Magazine

30. The New York Times Magazine

