

the Socialist, the Catholic Church has set her face like flint. She bans and condemns it. She may, like her Divine Master, say strong things to the capitalists; she may, like the Fathers and Medieval Doctors, insist upon the duties and responsibilities of wealth. But, in the midst of the utmost corruptions of capitalism she has never denied the right to own private capital. Nay, she has strongly upheld and vindicated it as inextricably bound up with human welfare, as a condition of normal civic freedom. According to Catholic teaching the right to own private property is a natural right, prior to society, and based on the will of God, the Founder of society. God wills that man should own property and even productive property. Private capital is not the result of mere social conventions; it is part of a natural and divine plan. Man has been brought into the world in order that he may develop his material, intellectual, and spiritual capacities. With the duty comes the right to so develop them. Now the possession of property (including capital) is a normal condition of this development. To develop according to God's designs man must own property. Hence the Catholic Church desires that as many men as possible should be proprietors; not only to secure their daily needs, but to provide their permanent possession.

Man, as an individual, is no mere cell in the social organism. As a citizen he has duties to society; but that by no means exhausts his personality. He does not exist for the State, nor is he in every particular subordinate to the State. As an individual, as the member of a family, he has rights and duties independent of and prior to the State. He has an immortal soul created directly by God; he has a direct mission from God; and hence he has certain duties and rights with which no State may interfere. As an individual man he has certain needs and requirements, and hence certain duties. He is bound to preserve his life, for that life is not his own, but lent him; it is God's. Hence he has a right to acquire, keep, control, and use whatever is necessary for the permanence of that life. This is a primary right, before which all other rights must give way. Man has a right to live, and therefore to procure and own the necessities of life, not present only but future. He cannot be secure, he cannot be able to meet recurring needs unless he can control the source of the supplies. Nature bids him provide himself with the means of production. Further, he has to make ready for accidents, illness, old age; he ought to store up provision for it and not depend on a pension. Again, man is endowed with intellect and free-will, and is therefore no mere machine destined to a definite and limited measure of work. He has faculties to cultivate, potentialities to develop. And with this God-given power of self-development comes the right of self-development. Man does not exist merely that he may labor. He is no slave of his fellow men or of society. He has a right to cultivate his mind, to adorn his life intellectually, artistically, and morally. But this requires a certain economical independence. And when we consider man as the father of a family, the justification of the ownership of capital is immensely more complete, as Pope Leo XIII. so cogently shows: 'That right of property, therefore, which has been proved to belong naturally to individual persons, must likewise belong to a man in his capacity of head of a family; nay, such a person must possess this right so much the more clearly in proportion as his position multiplies his duties. For it is a most sacred law of nature that a father should provide food and all necessities for those whom he has begotten, who carry on, so to speak, and continue his personality, and should procure for them all that is needful to keep them honorably from want and misery amid the uncertainties of this mortal life. Now in no other way can a father effect this except by the ownership of lucrative property, which he can transmit to his children by inheritance. A family, no less than a State, is, as we have said, a true society, governed by a power within its sphere, that is to say, by the father. Provided, therefore, the limits, which are prescribed by the very purposes for which it exists, are not transgressed, the family has at

least equal rights with the State in the choice and pursuit of the things necessary to it for its preservation and its just liberty.'

#### V. RELIGION.

Heedless of the assertion often made by a certain party of Socialists, that Socialism is no foe of religion, let us examine dispassionately but unsparingly the Socialist attitude towards religion. How does Socialism regard morality and religion, those pillars of the State, 'those buttresses,' as Washington calls them, 'of human life'? I am asking whether Socialism in the concrete, as a going concern, 'as a philosophy of human progress, as a theory of social evolution, as an ethical practice,' is or is not an irreligious movement, is or is not a movement hostile to Christianity. Now the spirit which has characterised the living, energising thing known as Socialism is as antagonistic to Christianity as darkness is to light. Read the deliberate and reiterated utterances of its founders and its leaders in every land and in every stage of its progress—no alliance, no union can be recognised between them and religion. Take Marx and Engels, who are still classical even in the New World. They are both—as Socialists—antagonistic to Christianity. And no wonder, for Socialism is built on a conception of the universe wholly materialistic, which of course leaves no room for religion. Marx boasted that he would deliver man's conscience from what he called 'the spectre of religion.' John Spargo says: 'The founders of modern scientific Socialism took the dogmas of Christianity and held them up to intellectual scorn.' Socialism, *de facto*, offered itself as a substitute for religion, and intended to stand on the ruins of Christianity. 'We have simply done with God,' cries Marx's henchman, Engels. 'We must face and wipe out,' shouts another, 'those two curses, the curses of capitalism and Christianity.' More quotations would be wearisome. In short Socialism, which is not intent on rooting out all religion (revealed) and a personal God, is only a diluted Socialism—fit for novices. 'Socialism of the present day,' says Professor Schaeffel, 'is thoroughly irreligious and hostile to the Church. It says that the Church is only a police institution for upholding capital and that it deceives the common people with "a cheque payable in heaven," that the church deserves to perish' (*Quintessence of Socialism*, page 116). The *Social Democrat* sums up the situation by saying: 'Christianity is the greatest enemy of Socialism. When God is expelled from human brains, what is called Divine Grace will at the same time be banished; and when the heaven above appears nothing more than an immense falsehood, men will seek to create for themselves a heaven below.' It will be a second Babel. Hostility to Christianity is, then, no sporadic growth in Socialism: it is the very stuff and substance of the actual movement.

No doubt some of the Socialist programmes, as a good propaganda move, have declared religion to be a private affair. So, for instance, in Germany and elsewhere. But the German Socialists lose no opportunity of attacking the Christian religion and doing their best to uproot it. Hence, when English Socialists declare that they would have religion to be a private affair, we look not to words but to their practical interpretations; and we find the practical interpretations to be the same in both countries. The visible Catholic Church is disliked and maligned equally in Italy and France, and in England and America no less. Truth to tell, in conclusion, Socialism and Christianity cannot come together; they move in opposite directions; they are as much apart as earth and heaven. The two antagonistic systems stand before you; which will you have? Which of the two cries must it be: 'On to Socialism,' or 'Back to Christianity'? Choose between the two; it is a choice between life and death.

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