

ROME AND THE SOCIAL QUESTION

PREFACE

THE documents contained in this collection are now for the first time presented in an English dress.

The Instruction of the Sacred Congregation of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs is of considerable importance as showing the mind of our Holy Father Pope Pius X on the direction of social activity.

The subsequent extracts present aspects of the social question from the point of view of the Christian workman.

Throughout the entire series the religious and supernatural elements in social work are prominent. The efficacious power of this God-given remedy is proclaimed with an energy and confidence which should encourage all Catholic social workers or students.

A final word. These instructions are not to be read lightly and then cast aside. They have been drawn up with extreme caution and a keen sense of responsibility. They ought, therefore, to be carefully studied as the formal guidance of our supreme religious authority.

HENRY PARKINSON.

I

INSTRUCTION OF THE SACRED CONGREGATION OF
EXTRAORDINARY ECCLESIASTICAL AFFAIRS ON
CHRISTIAN POPULAR ACTION OR CHRISTIAN DEMO-
CRATIC ACTION IN ITALY.

It is well known that there have been differences of opinion, especially in these latter days, as to the

methods of developing and promoting Christian democratic action in Italy ; and these differences have, in no small measure, disturbed the union and harmony so ardently desired and recommended by the Holy Father.

For this reason, wishing to remove all causes of misunderstanding and disagreement among Italian Catholics, and at the same time to answer the many questions proposed in various quarters, his Holiness has ordered the present Instruction to be sent to the Bishops of Italy.

I. In his Encyclical *Graves de Communi* of January 18, 1901, his Holiness (Leo XIII) said : "*It is not lawful to give a political meaning to Christian democracy ; all political meaning must be discarded ; (the precepts of nature and of the Gospel) are and remain outside the sphere of parties and the changeableness of events ; the plans and action of Catholics ought by no means to aim at the preference and preparation of one form of government rather than another.*"¹

These words ought to be understood as follows :—

(a) Christian democratic institutions, whatever be their character, should be looked upon as manifestations of Christian popular action, based on the natural law and on the precepts of the Gospel. They must, therefore, not be regarded as means for the attainment of political ends, or for changing any form of government.

(b) Christian democratic action, founded on justice and evangelical charity, covers so vast a field that when understood and practised according to the letter and the spirit of the instructions issued by the Holy See, it answers to the most far-reaching activities of Catholics, and contains, in all due proportion, the very action of the Church among the people. The letter *Permoti Nos*, addressed to the Cardinal-Archbishop of Mechlin on July 10, 1895, points out the scope of Catholic popular

¹ *The Pope and the People*, p. 271. C.T.S., 1s.

action as follows : " The social question presents more than one aspect to any one who seriously examines it. It relates, doubtless, to external goods, but above all, to religion and morality ; it is also naturally so closely connected with the rules of civil legislation that, in a word, it embraces the rights and duties of all classes of society. Thus the evangelical principles of justice and charity—which we have recalled to your minds—when brought to bear on the practical side of life, must necessarily affect the numerous relations existing between individuals."

(c) Consequently in Christian democratic programmes, conferences, and newspapers, all questions may be dealt with which tend to the triumph of justice and to the practice of charity in favour of the people, and which form the real object of Christian democracy.

(d) Christian democratic newspapers may give information and criticism on political facts and opinions, but they must not pretend to speak in the name of the Church, nor impose their particular view in questions which are still open, as though such as think differently from themselves were not sincere Catholics.

(e) It is not enough that Christian democrats should not speak in the name of the Church when they treat of purely political matters ; in Italy they must refrain from participation in any particular action whatever, following the spirit and the letter of the two following Pontifical pronouncements : " Just as the participation of Catholics in administrative elections is praiseworthy and more than ever to be recommended, so must it be avoided in political elections as not expedient, for reasons of the highest order, one of the principal being the treatment of the Sovereign Pontiff which, assuredly, is not compatible with the full liberty and independence of his apostolic ministry." ¹ " In the present state of

¹ Letter to his Eminence Card. Parocchi, May 14, 1895.

things, the action of Italian Catholics, holding aloof from politics, concentrates itself on the social and religious ground. Its object is to raise the moral tone of the people, to make them obedient to the Church and to its Head, to withdraw them from the dangers of socialism and anarchy, to teach them respect for the principle of authority, finally, to relieve their poverty by the numerous works of Christian charity." ¹

(f) It is the duty of all Catholic journalists, and consequently of all Christian democrats and of any one who wishes to take part in Catholic action, ever to maintain in the people a lively sentiment and conviction of the intolerable condition to which the Holy See has been reduced since the invasion of its States. They should let slip no opportunity of making known, and of recalling, the solemn and unceasing protests of the Holy Father, as well as the very lofty motives by which they are prompted. True Catholics should be ever mindful of the numerous and weighty documents issued by the Sovereign Pontiffs, Pius IX and Leo XIII, claiming the sacred rights and the independence of the Apostolic See. Along with the Vicar of Christ they should remember that "it is useless to misrepresent the character of this struggle by introducing *human interests* and *political ends*, as though, even while We claim pontifical sovereignty in order to safeguard the independence and liberty of the Head of the Church, it were not a question of eminently religious interests." ² It is right, moreover, to remember the decrees and declarations of the Sacred Congregations, and especially the rules given on various occasions by the Sacred Penitentiary concerning practical cases which have reference to the invasion of the States of the Church.

¹ Letter to the bishops, clergy, and people of Italy, August 5, 1898.

² Allocution to the Sacred College, December 23, 1890.

· II. In the foundation and direction of periodical journals, including those of Christian popular action, the clergy must faithfully observe the regulations of Article 42 of the Apostolic Constitution *Officiorum*, January 25, 1897.¹ Christian democratic journalists, like all Catholic journalists, ought to put into practice these admonitions of the Holy Father: "Let the rule of conduct for writers be to submit with docility to their bishops, *to whom the Holy Ghost has entrusted the direction of the Church of God*. Let them respect episcopal authority, and undertake nothing without their approval; for they are the leaders to be followed in the combat for religion."² "The duty of journalists, in all that concerns religious interests and the action of the Church in society, is to submit fully in mind and heart, like all the rest of the faithful, to their bishops and to the Sovereign Pontiff; to carry out, and to make known their orders, to second their initiative loyally; to respect their decisions, and to make others respect them."³ "It must not be thought that those alone fail in their duty as Catholics, who openly reject the authority of their chiefs; they also are wanting in it who oppose this authority by astute evasions, by an equivocal and insincere policy. True and straightforward obedience is not content with words: it consists above all in the submission of the mind and of the will. . . . In the event of journalists infringing these regulations, and following their personal views (whether they forestall the decision of the Holy See, or prejudice the authority of the bishops, or assume an

¹ "The secular clergy should not publish books, even such as treat of purely natural arts and sciences, without consulting their Ordinary. By so doing they will set an example of obedience towards him. They are equally forbidden to undertake the direction of newspapers or periodicals without the previous consent of the Ordinary."

² Encyclical, *Nobilissima Gallorum gens*, February 8, 1884.

³ Letter, *Epistola tua*, to the Archbishop of Paris, June 17, 1885.

authority to which they have no right), they must remember that they cannot retain the glorious name of Catholic, or further the interests of the sacred and noble cause which they have undertaken to defend and to exalt." ¹ Catholic journalists should strive never to deserve the serious reproach "of attacking one another in their newspapers by daily and public abuse ; of interpreting in their own fashion the clear documents in which ecclesiastical authority may have blamed their manner of acting ; of always astutely putting off their submission to these grave admonitions ; finally, of refusing their confidence to their own pastors, and while obedient in words, in point of fact despising their authority and guidance." ²

III. When Christian democrats treat specially of questions concerning religion, Christian morality, and natural ethics, they are subject to the previous censorship of the Ordinary, according to Art. 41 of the Apostolic Constitution *Officiorum*.³

Ecclesiastics must also, in accordance with the regulations of Art. 42 of the same Constitution quoted above, obtain the previous consent of the Ordinary even for the publication of writings of a purely technical character.

IV. In the foundation of Circles, Societies, &c., the following points should be carefully observed: (1) Their rules, prospectuses, manuals, and other documents must be clearly Christian in their wording and spirit. (2) Their banners and other insignia must have nothing in common with those of Socialistic origin.

¹ Letter, *Est sane molestum*, to the Archbishop of Tours, December 17, 1888.

² Letter, *Cum huic*, to the Bishop of Urgel, March 20, 1893.

³ "All the faithful are bound previously to submit to ecclesiastical censorship those books at least which treat the Sacred Scriptures, Theology, Church History, Canon Law, Natural Theology, Ethics, and other religious or moral sciences of a similar kind, and in general all writings which deal specially with religion and morals."

(3) Their statutes and rules must be previously examined and approved by the Ordinary ; without such approbation, none of these institutions may call themselves or be considered Catholic institutions, worthy of the confidence of the clergy and of the laity. (4) All their documents and addresses must be full of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Before all things they will have the kingdom of God for their aim, they will effectively promote the temporal welfare of working people and of the poor, and also the progress of Christian civilization. In all the matters requiring the previous sanction or permission of ecclesiastical authority, due notice must be given to allow time for the consideration of the measures and precautions which may be needed. To sum up : the Holy See wishes—and the very idea of the ecclesiastical hierarchy demands—that the Catholic laity should not go before, but should follow, their pastors, who, on their part, will not fail to promote with earnestness and particular care Christian popular action—so necessary in these days, and so frequently recommended by the Holy Father.

V. Subscriptions and collections for Christian social and democratic objects are subject to the authority and supervision of the Ordinary. As in certain circumstances and in particular cases such collections might become a cause of trouble or unrest in seminaries and other schools subject to the Ordinary, and even in the houses and colleges of religious, their directors must not allow any of these collections or subscriptions to be made without the previous and express consent of their Bishop or of their respective religious superior.

VI. No journal, even though Catholic and an organ of Christian popular action, may be introduced into seminaries, colleges, and schools dependent on ecclesiastical authority, without the express permission of their immediate superiors. These superiors are strictly bound to obtain the authorization of their Bishop for

each newspaper and review. As a general rule, it is not desirable that the time destined for ecclesiastical training and study should be spent in reading newspapers, particularly those which demand in their readers the safeguards of experience and a spirit of Christian piety. The Superiors of Orders and of Congregations must not forget these rules, and must see that they are observed in their religious families.

VII. As conferences on Christian democracy must often, both as to form and substance, be a defence of Catholic doctrine against Socialistic errors, they require serious study and considerable tact. No priest, therefore, nor cleric may give a conference without the permission of the Ordinary. The following rules on preaching, from the Instruction of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, July 31, 1894, apply to these Conferences: "In the case of priests of their own diocese, the Bishops will never entrust to them so august a ministry without having tested them by examination or some other suitable method: *Nisi prius de vita et scientia et moribus probati fuerint.*¹ When it is a question of priests from another diocese, they will not allow them to preach, especially on more solemn occasions, unless they bring letters from their own bishop or from their own religious superior, testifying to their good conduct and capacity for this office. Religious superiors of whatever Order, Society, or Congregation, will not allow any of their subjects to preach, and still less will they present them with testimonials to the Ordinaries, before being thoroughly convinced of their good behaviour, and of their competence in preaching the Word of God. If, however, the Ordinaries, after having accepted a preacher with satisfactory testimonials, should subsequently find that he has departed from the rules and recommendations given in this letter, they will promptly recall him to a sense

¹ Conc. Trid. Sess. V. Cap. II. De Reform.

of his duty by a suitable admonition ; should this not suffice, let them withdraw him from his charge, and even use canonical penalties should the circumstances of the case require it." The reason of these precautions is clearly indicated in the same document in the following terms : "Conferences which aim at defending religion from the attacks of its enemies are necessary from time to time. Still, they are not a task suitable for all, but only for the strongest, and even the most skilful orators are bound to use great prudence in this respect. Apologetic discourses of this nature should only be delivered when, place, time, and audience being considered, there is a real need of them, and when real profit may be hoped from them. Of the existence of these circumstances the Ordinaries are obviously the most competent judges. Conferences of the kind referred to must be constructed in such a manner that the argument is based upon sacred doctrine rather than upon purely natural reason. They should be drawn up with such clearness and solidity as to avoid the danger of leaving some minds more impressed by the objections than by the answers."

In order that these rules may be the better observed, no priest or cleric may take part in any gathering which is not subject to the pastoral vigilance and control of the Bishop.

VIII. Since Socialistic doctrines, taken as a whole, contain undoubted heresies, public discussion with Socialists falls under the decrees of the Holy See with reference to public discussions with heretics. The decree of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, of February 7, 1645, thus sums up the legislation which is always in force on this point :—

"I. Public conferences and discussions between Catholics and heretics are allowable whenever it is hoped they will produce a greater good, and when

they are accompanied by certain other circumstances, mentioned by theologians : as, for example, the discussions held by St. Augustine with the Donatists and other heretics.

“ 2. The Holy See and the Roman Pontiffs, seeing that these discussions, conferences, and meetings often produced no fruit, or had even an undesirable result, have frequently forbidden them, and ordered ecclesiastical superiors to try to suppress them ; and when that is impossible, to see at least that they shall not take place without the consent of apostolic authority, and to arrange that the orators shall be persons capable of vindicating Christian truth.” On many occasions the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda has given the self-same orders in writing to missionaries, enjoining them not to enter into public discussions with heretics.

One of the reasons of the Holy See for forbidding these public debates is pointed out in another decree, dated March 8, 1625, in words which are but too true at the present day : “ Because it often happens that, either on account of clap-trap eloquence, or the overbearing manner of the speaker, or the character of the audience, error triumphs over the truth.”

IX. Some writings and speeches have not unfrequently been marred by inaccuracies and by a tone ill suited to the moderation and charity of a Christian. Consequently, Catholics who wish to merit the blessing of God and the confidence of ecclesiastical authority, will allow themselves to be guided by the following principles :—

(a) Christian democratic action must not be looked upon as something new. It is as old as the precepts and teachings of the gospel. Jesus Christ ennobled poverty, and imposed on the rich grave duties with regard to the poor and to the working class. “ It was necessary to draw the two classes together, to establish a religious and indissoluble bond between them. This

was the work of charity. It created a social tie, giving it a strength and sweetness unknown before. It discovered, by multiplying itself, a remedy for every ill, a consolation for every sorrow, and by its innumerable works and institutions, enkindled a noble emulation in zeal, generosity, and self-denial" (*Discourse of the Holy Father to French Working Men*, October 30, 1889).

"Always and at all times, We are pleased to repeat it here, the Church has been preoccupied with a jealous care for the lot of the poor and the working classes. . . . When her words were listened to and obeyed by the nations, when her liberty of action was less hampered, and she had at her disposal more ample resources, the Church came to the aid of the poor and of the working class, not alone with charitable gifts, but also by raising up and promoting the great Associations called Guilds, which contributed so largely to the progress of the arts and crafts by obtaining for the workmen themselves an improvement in their economic condition, and a greater well-being. What the Church has taught and put into practice in former times, she still proclaims and seeks to realize in these latter days." ¹

Holy Church may justly boast of having ever been the promoter of all those sociological studies which some would wish to represent as new. "It is the glory of the Church to have perfected the science of Law; it can never be denied that, by her teaching, her example, and her institutions, she has greatly contributed to the solution of the complex problems over which specialists in economic and social sciences spend so much time and labour."

(b) It must be remembered how absolutely repugnant to the true spirit of charity, and consequently even to

¹ Discourse of the Holy Father to French working men, October 18, 1887.

² *Motu proprio, Ut mysticam sponsam Christi*, March 14, 1891,

Christian democracy, is the use of any language which might inspire the people with aversion towards the upper classes of society. Jesus Christ desired to unite all men in the bonds of charity, which is the perfection of justice, so that, animated by mutual love, they may work for each other's good. On this duty of mutual help which rests with all classes of society, listen to the teachings of the Sovereign Pontiff in the Encyclical *Graves de Communi* :—

“Christian democracy must repudiate the other ground of offence, which arises from paying so much regard to the interests of the lower classes as to seem to pass over the higher, which nevertheless are of no less importance to the preservation and development of the State. . . . Wherefore, because of the natural co-ordination of the common people with the other ranks of society, which is made more intimate by the law of Christian brotherhood, it surely follows that whatever diligence is bestowed upon assisting the common people must extend to these other classes—the more because it is clearly proper and even necessary, if the work is to be successful, that they should be invited to take part in it” (pp. 271-72). . . . “In especial, the kind assistance is to be invited of those whose rank and wealth and superior culture carry with them more influence in the State. If this assistance is not given, scarcely anything can be effected of real avail towards the improvement which it is sought to introduce in the life of the people. Doubtless, the path of improvement is better assured and more quickly traversed, the more we have the co-operation of leading men, with their wide opportunities of effectual aid” (p. 278).

(c) It would be most unjust to represent those Associations and Catholic works which have existed for some time, as having done but little for Christian popular action. On the contrary, when the Congregations were condemned the Holy Father spoke of them in

terms of high praise to the Bishops, the clergy, and also to the institutions themselves at the time they were being attacked: "By your generous efforts, Venerable Brethren, and by those of the clergy and faithful under your charge, gratifying results have been obtained, which seemed to foreshadow still more satisfactory results in the near future. Hundreds of Associations and Committees arose in different provinces of Italy. Their unwearied zeal provided rural banks, economic stores, night-shelters, circles for holiday recreation, catechism classes, societies for helping the sick or for protecting widows and orphans as well as many other benevolent institutions."¹

(d) Catholic publications could not be approved which, with an unhealthy craving for novelty, scoffed at the piety of the faithful, and proposed a new direction of Christian efforts, a new policy for the Church, new aspirations for the modern mind, a new social vocation for the clergy, a new Christian civilization, &c. To avoid any such dangerous tendency, all Catholics will remember and apply to their own case the serious warnings given by the Holy Father to the French clergy: "There are no doubt advantageous novelties, well fitted to advance the Kingdom of God in souls and in society. But the gospel tells us,² it is the *householder*, and not the children or servants, who has authority to examine them, and if he thinks fit, to admit them to a place beside the old and venerable customs which form the other part of his treasure."³

It is well known that "the Church has always been accustomed to moderate her discipline in such a way that, the rights of God being secured, the customs and ways of thinking of the various nations which she embraces have never been neglected. And who doubts that she will continue to do so, when-

¹ Enc. *Spesse volte*, August 5, 1898.

² Matt. xiii 52.

³ Enc. *Depuis le jour*, September 8, 1899.

ever the salvation of souls demands it? But such cases are not to be determined by the judgement of private persons who are liable to be deceived by an appearance of right. The judgement must be left to the Church, and in that all must acquiesce who would avoid the reproach of Our Predecessor, Pius VI, who declared that the 78th proposition of the Council of Pistoia was 'injurious to the Church and to the Spirit of God, in that it submitted to examination the discipline established and approved by the Church, as if the Church could establish a discipline either useless or too heavy for Christian liberty to support.' . . .

"Of grave danger and detriment to the discipline and doctrine of the Church is the opinion of those partizans of every novelty, who maintain that a certain liberty should be introduced into the Church, so that, the vigilance and authority of the ruling power being in a way limited, the faithful might be allowed to act somewhat more in accordance with their own feelings and inclinations." *

(e) Priests, and especially the younger clergy, ought, yet more than the laity, to have a horror of this spirit of novelty ; and although it be very desirable for them to go among the people, conformably to the wish of the Holy Father, they must nevertheless act with the necessary subordination to their ecclesiastical superiors, thus putting in practice the very important cautions given by the august Pontiff even to those who have already justly deserved praise for their great activity and spirit of sacrifice in Christian popular action : " We know well, and the whole world likewise knows, the qualities which distinguish you. There is not a good work of which you are not the inspirers or the apostles. Obedient to the advice given in Our Encyclical *Rerum*

* Letter, *Testem benevolentiae* to the Cardinal Archbishop of Baltimore January 22, 1800.

Novarum, you go among the people, the working men, and the poor. You seek by every means to help them, to improve their morals, and to render their lot less hard. To this end you arrange meetings and congresses; you found patronages, circles, rural banks, offices for helping and finding employment for the working class. You labour to introduce reforms into the economic and social order, and for so difficult a task you do not hesitate to make considerable sacrifices of time and money. For the same purpose you write books and articles in newspapers and periodicals. All these things are in themselves very praiseworthy, and you thereby give evidence of your good will, and your intelligent and generous devotion to the pressing needs of modern society, and of souls. At the same time, dearest sons, we deem it Our duty paternally to call your attention to some fundamental principles, to which you will not fail to conform if you wish your action to be really fruitful. Remember before everything, that to be profitable for good and worthy of praise, zeal must be 'accompanied by discretion, uprightness, and purity.' Thus speaks the grave and judicious Thomas à Kempis. . . . But discretion in good works and in the choice of means is so much the more indispensable, because the present times are full of trouble and crowded with difficulties. An act, a measure, a zealous practice, may be excellent in itself, but in certain circumstances will only produce unfortunate results. Priests will avoid this difficulty and misfortune if, before and while acting, they conform themselves to established order and to the rules of discipline. Thus, ecclesiastical discipline requires union among the different members of the hierarchy, respect and obedience from inferiors to superiors. . . .

"If, then, dear sons, as is certainly your case, you wish the victory to be for God and His Church, in the terrible warfare which is being waged by anti-Christian

sects and the powers of darkness, it is absolutely necessary that you should all fight together, in perfect order and with exact discipline, under the command of your hierarchical leaders. Do not listen to those dangerous men who, calling themselves Christians and Catholics, scatter cockle in the Lord's field and sow division in His Church by attacking, and often even by calumniating Bishops 'placed by the Holy Ghost to rule the Church of God.'¹ Do not read their pamphlets nor their newspapers. A good priest should in no way countenance their ideas, nor the license of their language. Can he ever forget that on the day of his ordination he solemnly promised, at the holy altar, *obedience and reverence* to his Bishops? Above all, dear sons, remember that the indispensable condition of true priestly zeal, and the best pledge of success in the works to which hierarchical obedience may commit you, are purity and holiness of life."²

(f) Similarly, when priests engage in Christian popular action, let them do so with dignity, and without detriment to that ecclesiastical spirit from which come all their prestige and their strength. The teaching and decrees of the Council of Trent as to the life and conduct of the clergy are even more necessary now than in the past. "These recommendations of the Holy Council," said the Holy Father in the letter to the French clergy quoted above, "that we wish, dear sons, to engrave on your hearts, would certainly not be followed by priests who in their preaching were to adopt a style little in harmony with the dignity of the priesthood, and the holiness of the Word of God; who should assist at public meetings where their presence would but excite the bitter feelings of their opponents and of the enemies of the Church, and where moreover they would expose themselves to gross

¹ Acts xx 28.

² Letter to the French clergy, September 8, 1899.

insults without profit to any one, and to the amazement, not to say scandal, of the pious laity ; and who should adopt the style, conduct, and tone of the laity. The salt must of course be mingled with the mass to preserve it from corruption ; but at the same time it must itself be preserved from corruption, under pain of losing all savour, and of being good for nothing but to be cast forth and trodden under foot.¹ In a similar manner the priest, the salt of the earth, must in his necessary intercourse with society, preserve decorum, gravity, and holiness in his bearing, actions, and words ; nor must he allow himself to be infected by the frivolity, dissipation, or vanity of the worldly-minded."

In sending the present Instruction to the Right Reverend Ordinaries of Italy, his Holiness is confident that if all work together in Christian popular action, the older by their experience, and the younger with their holy enthusiasm, those salutary results of peace and harmony will be obtained which his Holiness has so much at heart, as He again repeated in the Brief addressed to the Congress of Taranto in August, 1901, and in the discourse spoken to the Sacred College on December 23rd of the same year. "We invite," said the Holy Father, "the help and harmonious co-operation of all good hearts. Let us have the young with the energy and activity of their age ; let us have those of riper years, and let them bring confidently besides their faithful allegiance the prudence and sagacity they have acquired by long experience. The object we have in view is one and the same for all. Equally ardent should be the zeal of all. There should be no mistrust, but mutual confidence ; no unkindly criticism, but Christian forbearance ; no coldness, but fraternal charity."

M. CARD. RAMPOLLA.

ROME, *January 27, 1902.*

¹ Matt. v 13.

II

I. THE CHURCH AND THE WORKING CLASS.

THE following passage is taken from the address delivered by Pope Leo XIII to a pilgrimage of French workmen whom he received in Rome on October 18, 1887:—

“Always and at all times, We are pleased to repeat it here, the Church has been preoccupied with a jealous care for the lot of the poor and the working classes. She has, by the preaching of the doctrines of which she is the faithful depositary, ennobled labour by elevating it to the level of human liberty and human dignity; she has rendered it meritorious before God by teaching the worker to sanctify it by supernatural views, and to bear with resignation and in a spirit of penance the privations and fatigues which it entails upon him. The Church, on the other hand, has ever recalled to the rich and powerful the obligation which is incumbent upon them to succour their brethren who are in a more humble condition, and to respect in them their character of men and Christians. . . . She will continue to concern herself with you, dear sons, with your true interests and with your legitimate claims. From the commencement of Our Pontificate, We Ourselves had you in Our thoughts when we were recalling to the mind of the nations the fundamental principles of the social order. Since then We have followed with attention the labours of the congresses successively held in France, Italy, Germany, and recently in Belgium and in Switzerland, and We shall not cease to do all that Our office and Our paternal heart can suggest for the amelioration of your lot.”¹

¹ *Works of Leo XIII*, vol. iii pp. 13-15.

2. ST. JOSEPH THE PATTERN OF THE WORKMAN.

The following passage is taken from Leo XIII's Encyclical letter of August 15, 1889, exhorting the faithful to invoke the aid of St. Joseph:—

“The people, workmen, all those of humbler fortune, should have recourse to St. Joseph, and seek in him something which they may imitate. For though he was of Royal blood, joined by marriage bond with the holiest and highest of all women, and regarded as the father of the Son of God, he yet spent his life in labour and provided by his own hands and humble calling whatever was needed for the support of his family. Therefore the condition of the poor, if we have regard to the truth, is not degraded. Not only is all labour of working men free from dishonour, but if associated with a virtuous life it may be greatly ennobled. St. Joseph, content with what he possessed, little as it was, bore with quiet and noble resignation the privations necessarily entailed by his slender worldly resources: bore them, that is, after the example of his Son, Who, having assumed the form of a servant though He was Lord of all, voluntarily accepted the utmost poverty and want.”¹

3. RELIGION AND THE TOILERS.

On October 30, 1889, Leo XIII received in audience a number of French workmen who had come on a pilgrimage to Rome. In the course of his address, in which the Holy Father insisted that it was from religion that a remedy for social troubles must be sought, he said:—

“It is religion alone which can awake in your souls an immortal hope. Religion alone can ennoble your

¹ *Op. cit.*, vol. iii pp. 275-76.

labour by raising it to the level of human dignity and liberty. . . . Paganism, as you know, claimed to have solved the social problem by robbing the weaker part of humanity of its rights, by stifling its aspirations, by paralyzing its faculties both intellectual and moral, by reducing it to a state of absolute impotence. This was slavery.

“Christianity came to make known to the world that the whole human family, without distinction of nobility or people, was summoned to enter upon its share in the divine heritage. It proclaimed that all were by an equal title sons of the Heavenly Father, redeemed at the same price. It taught that upon this earth labour was the natural condition of man, that to accept it with courage was for him an honour and a proof of wisdom ; that to wish to evade it was both to exhibit cowardice and to betray a sacred and fundamental duty.

“In order still more effectively to strengthen the workers and the poor, the Divine Founder of Christianity condescended to combine example with teaching. He had not where to lay His head. He suffered the pangs of hunger and thirst. He spent His life, both public and private, amid fatigue, anguish, and suffering. According to His doctrine, the rich man, as Tertullian expresses it, is created to be God’s treasurer upon earth. To him are addressed the warnings as to the good use of temporal goods ; against him the dire threats of our Saviour should he harden his heart against the poor and unfortunate !

“But all this was not enough. It was necessary to bring the two classes together, to establish between them a religious and indissoluble bond. That was the task of charity. She created this social tie and gave to it a strength and sweetness unknown before. She discovered as she enlarged her sphere a remedy for all evils, a consolation for all sorrows. And she

knew how, by means of her works and institutions without number, to excite a noble rivalry of zeal, generosity, and self-denial on behalf of the distressed.

“Such, in the inevitable inequality of human conditions, was the only solution capable of securing to every one an enduring existence. For centuries this solution was universally accepted and acted on by all. No doubt acts of revolt and insubordination have been witnessed, but they were only partial and circumscribed. The roots of faith were too deep to permit of a general and definite eclipse. No one would have then ventured to question the legitimacy of that social basis; no one would have dared to harbour the vast project of perverting, on this point, the spirit and the heart of the people, and seek the total ruin of society. What were the fatal doctrines and events which, later on, shattered the social edifice raised with so much patience by the Church? We have explained this elsewhere; We do not wish to return to it here. What We ask is that that edifice should be re-established by a return to the doctrines and the spirit of Christianity; by reviving, in effect at least, in their manifold and beneficent influence, and in such forms as the new conditions of the age will permit, those guilds of crafts and trades which, formerly, moulded by the Christian ideal and inspired by the maternal care of the Church, provided for the material and religious needs of the workmen, helped them to find work, took charge of their savings and economies, defended their rights, and supported, within the requisite limits, their legitimate claims. What We ask is that, by a sincere return to Christian principles, there should be re-established and consolidated between employer and employed, between capital and labour, that harmony and that union which are the sole safeguard of their reciprocal

interests, and on which depend at the same time private well-being and public peace and tranquillity.

“Around you, dear sons, are thousands of other workers in a state of agitation, who, seduced by false doctrines, imagine that they can find a remedy for their evils in the overthrow of that which constitutes, as it were, the very essence of political and civil society, in the destruction and annihilation of property. Vain illusions! They will come into collision with immutable laws which nothing can suppress. They will stain with blood the roads over which they pass, encumber them with ruins, and spread discord and disorder; but in so doing they will only aggravate their own miseries and draw upon themselves the maledictions of honest people. No; the remedy is not to be found in the projects and perverse and subversive agitations of the one side nor in the seductive but erroneous theories of the other. It is to be found wholly in the faithful accomplishment of the duties which are incumbent upon all classes of society, in the respect and maintenance of the functions and attributes proper to each one of them in particular. These truths and these duties it is the mission of the Church to proclaim aloud and to inculcate upon all.

“The governing classes should possess sympathy and compassion for those who earn their bread by the sweat of their brow. They should restrain the insatiable desire for wealth, luxury, and pleasure, which, below as above, is unceasingly spreading farther and farther. In every grade, in fact, there is a craving for enjoyments; and as it is not given to all to be able to satisfy it, there results a widespread restlessness and discontent, which will have for their result permanent revolt and insurrection.

“It is incumbent before all things upon those in power to be penetrated with this truth: that to

conjure the peril which threatens society neither human laws, nor repression by judges, nor the arms of soldiers will suffice. That which is required above all, that which is indispensable, is that the Church should be left at liberty to revive in souls the divine precepts, and to extend her salutary influence over all classes of society. By means of wise and equitable regulations and measures the interests of the labouring classes are guaranteed; youth, the weakness of woman and her wholly domestic mission, the right and duty of Sunday rest, are protected; and thus are promoted, both in the family and in the individual, purity of manners and the habits of an orderly and Christian life. Public welfare no less than justice and natural right demand that so this should be.

“Employers are enjoined to look upon the workman as a brother, to sweeten his lot as far as possible, and, by equitable conditions, to watch over his interests both spiritual and corporal, to edify him by the good example of a Christian life, and above all never, with regard to him or his injury, to depart from the rules of equity and justice, in seeking for quick and disproportionate profits and gains.”¹

4. A CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY.

Addressing another group of French workmen whom he received on October 8, 1898, his Holiness in the course of his speech said:—

“As regards yourselves, very dear sons, who are the France of labour, you are not unaware that upon you also are incumbent grave and important duties, which concern the whole of society. And since you have just made allusion to the democracy, this is what I must impress upon you with regard to that

¹ *Op. cit.*, vol. iii pp. 280-84.

subject. If the democracy derives its inspiration from the teachings of reason illuminated by faith ; if, being on its guard against fallacious and subversive theories, it accepts with religious resignation and as a matter of necessity the diversity of classes and conditions ; if, in the search for possible solutions of the numerous social problems which present themselves daily, it never loses sight for an instant of the rules of that superhuman charity which Jesus Christ has declared to be the characteristic mark of His followers ; if, in a word, the democracy desires to be Christian, it will give to your country a future of peace, of prosperity, and of happiness. If, on the contrary, it surrenders to the revolution and to socialism ; if, deceived by foolish illusions, it yields to demands which are destructive of the fundamental laws upon which the whole civil order rests, the immediate effect for the working class itself will be servitude, misery, and ruin. Far be from you, very dear sons, a prospect so dark as this ! Faithful to your baptismal vow, it is by the light of the faith that you judge and appreciate the things of this life, a true pilgrimage from time to eternity. While elsewhere social questions trouble and torment the men of toil, you will possess your soul in peace, confiding in those Christian employers who direct your labours with so much wisdom, provide your wages with so much justice and equity, and at the same time instruct you in your rights and duties by explaining to you the great and salutary teachings of the Church and of her Head.”²

² *Op. cit.*, vol. vii p. 197.