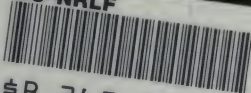


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# WHY NO GOOD CATHOLIC CAN BE A SOCIALIST

BY

KENELM DIGBY BEST

*Priest of the Oratory*

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1909



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FIFTH EDITION

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## NOTICE.

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THE following pages were read to the Brothers of the Oratory. Several of those who heard the lectures asked me to have them printed. I should hardly have ventured to act on the suggestion had I not known that the pamphlet would be little more than a compendium of doctrines and decrees against Socialism, which in these days of dispute may be useful.

KENELM DIGBY BEST

PRIEST OF THE ORATORY.

THE LONDON ORATORY,  
April 16, 1890.



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## PREFACE TO THE FIFTH EDITION

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It is pleasant to learn that the last edition of this little pamphlet has been exhausted in a few months : this shows that a want is supplied by it. But, I fear that it also shows the evil which it protests against to be still too prevalent. More than twenty years ago, the treatise was written in order to dissuade Catholics from calling themselves Socialists. Its title gave great offence to many, who vented their displeasure in an angry correspondence. That correspondence enabled the author to correct one or two inaccuracies, but it did not induce him to alter the title ; and now the same words are repeated in warnings which Episcopal authority finds it necessary to utter to the faithful. Del Vecchio's definition of Socialism, given in the treatise, is unassailable as ever ; and it inspired the method in which these pages try to uphold the rights of Authority, and Proprietorship, and to show that Catholics should not call themselves what the Church forbids them to be.

K. D. B.

*The Oratory*, 1909.



## WHY NO GOOD CATHOLIC CAN BE A SOCIALIST

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IN his edition of Scavini, Del Vecchio declares Socialism to be a mixture or fusion of Communism and Radicalism. The edition of Scavini's work in my possession is that of 1880, and I must say I have never before seen the word Radicalism in a theological book. He defines what he means by it; but I hope and believe that some who call themselves Radicals in this part of the world would say, "That is not what we understand and mean by Radicalism." According to Scavini's editor, *Radicalism* asserts the right of every one to share and share alike in power and authority, in making and enforcing laws. *Communism* proclaims the right of every one to share and to share alike in everything; it substitutes for private property a community of goods. Hence, Socialists are those who would abolish all rights of authority, all rights of ownership, who maintain that all men ought to be equal in power and property.

In the famous Syllabus of Errors drawn up by Pius IX. we do not find the word Radicalism, but we find Socialism ; and it is called a plague or pestilence ; and it is dealt with in the Allocutions and Encyclicals there referred to in such sort that it becomes impossible for a well-instructed Catholic to advocate and encourage Socialism without contradicting the teaching of the Church.

In the Allocution pronounced at Gaeta, 1849, speaking of the Roman revolutionists and their instigators, Pius IX. says, " The demands for new institutions and progress, so loudly uttered by men of this sort, only tend to stir up perpetual trouble, to destroy totally and universally the principles of justice, virtue, honour and religion, to propagate far and wide, to the detriment and ruin of all human society, the domination of that horrible and deplorable system, opposed to reason itself and the law of nature, which is called Communism and also Socialism."

In the same year, Pius IX. writes, in his Encyclical Letter to the Italian Bishops: " The few perverse Italians who conspire to deprive Italy of the glory of the Papacy, with the authors of this most detestable machination, have for object to urge on the peoples, swayed by every wind of perverse doctrine, to subvert the whole order of human affairs, and to commit themselves to the criminal systems of Socialism and Communism." He speaks

of "the pernicious inventions of Communism or Socialism." "It is evident," he says, "that the teachers of Communism or Socialism, though employing various methods and different means, have one common end of keeping up continual agitation, and gradually leading to greater crimes workmen and the lower classes, deceived by their artful language, and seduced by their promise of a happier lot, in order to have their help afterwards in attacking every kind of supreme authority, in pillaging, wasting and invading first the property of the Church, and then of all other private individuals, to violate at last all rights divine and human, to bring about the destruction of the worship of God, and the overthrow of all order in civil society." Again, "If the faithful, despising the fatherly warnings of their pastors and the precepts of the Christian law, which we have invoked, allow themselves to be deceived by the promoters of the machinations of these days, if they agree to conspire with them in the perverse system of Socialism and Communism, let them know and seriously consider that they heap up for themselves before the Divine Judge stores of vengeance in the day of wrath, and that meanwhile no earthly advantage will come to the peoples from this conspiracy, but much rather an increase of miseries and calamities. For it is not granted to them to establish new societies and communities opposed to the natural condition of human affairs ; and this is why the

result of such schemes, if they spread in Italy, would be this: the existing order of public affairs would be utterly shattered and overthrown from top to foundation by the strife of citizens with citizens, by usurpations, by murders—and then, some few, enriched with the plunder of the greater number, would seize on power in the midst of the common ruin.”

The Holy Father, Leo XIII., in the Encyclical *Quod Apostolici Muneris*, Dec. 28, 1878, teaches thus: “The wisdom of the Catholic Church, resting on the precepts of natural and Divine law, is most careful for the preservation of public and domestic peace in the doctrine which she lays down on the subject of the dominion and the divisions of the possessions which are provided for the necessities and the conveniences of life. For, while the Socialists falsely hold the right of property to be merely a human invention, repugnant to the natural equality of men, and, claiming a community of goods, contend that poverty should not be borne with patience, and that the rights and possessions of the wealthy may be violated with impunity, the Church with far greater justice and utility, acknowledges that the inequality amongst men, which is seen in the natural distribution of mental and bodily gifts, exists also in the possession of property, and she enjoins the inviolability of the right of property and ownership, which has a natural foundation: for she knows that theft and

rapine have been so strictly prohibited by the Divine Author and upholder of all right, that He has forbidden us even to covet the goods of our neighbour, and that thieves and spoilers, no less than adulterers and idolaters, are excluded from the Kingdom of Heaven. Nor does she on this account neglect the care of the poor, for whose necessities she provides as a mother, embracing them with natural affection, and seeing in them the person of Christ Himself, who considers that what is done for the poorest is done for Him, holds them in great honour: she relieves them by every means in her power, she causes homes and hospitals to be raised in every part of the world to shelter, nourish and support them, and extends her protection over them. She earnestly admonishes the rich to obey the command to give up their superfluities to the poor; and she holds up to them the terrors of Divine justice which will punish them eternally if they do not relieve the wants of the needy. And she ever seeks to cheer and solace the hearts of the poor, either placing before them the example of Christ, *who being rich became poor for our sake*, or recalling the words in which He declared the poor to be blessed, and bade them hope for the reward of eternal happiness. Is it not evident that this is the best mode of composing the difference which has ever existed between the rich and the poor? For, as the evidence of actual facts demonstrates, if this

principle is rejected and set aside, it will necessarily follow, either that the greater part of mankind must relapse into a condition of the most abject slavery such as long existed among the heathen, or human society must be agitated by never-ending commotions, and afflicted by violence and rapine, such as we have witnessed with grief even in recent times."

In the Society of Freemasons there are outside, inside, inner and innermost circles, and a central council, hidden and unseen though not inactive; and I am willing to admit that here in England a Protestant who became a Freemason might never come across anything worse than the silliness of admission celebrations, might never have any suspicion of evil aroused, might live and die a Mason, without doing more than give his name and his money to the Society as an act of benevolence. And yet the Church condemns and forbids even this amount of participation in Freemasonry;—and no good Catholic questions her wisdom herein. But I mention the fact, in order to explain that Socialists also will vainly try to excuse and defend themselves by saying that there are different kinds of Socialists, and that we are not asked to sympathize with Nihilists, Anarchists, but only with the orderly, harmless, philanthropical, speculative Socialists, whose theories and doctrines, they aver, clash neither with the teaching of the Church, nor with the revealed law, nor with the natural



law of God. Indeed, they claim to find in the spirit of the Gospel and in its words a justification for their innocent programme of universal benevolence. I say, it will not do—"it won't wash"—*ubi lex non distinguit nec nos distinguere debemus*, where the law does not distinguish we may not distinguish—Socialism, rough and smooth, violent and gentle, practical and theoretical, is condemned by the Sovereign Pontiffs Pius IX. and Leo XIII. It offends against the principles of reason and justice which rest on eternal law.

In 1889, "The quintessence of 'Socialism' was translated and published in England. It originally appeared in articles of the *Deutsche Blätter*; its accuracy has remained unchallenged." Professor Schäffle is its author. No one could give a clearer or better account, to which the name of the translator, Bernard Bosanquet, M.A., also lends importance. Dr. Schäffle says: "We will first concentrate our attention on the economic kernel of Socialism, setting aside for the moment the transitory aspect it bears in the hands of agitators, its provisional passwords, and the phenomena and tendencies in politics and religion by which it is accompanied." What is set aside has, however, to be gone through—the nutshell must be cracked to get at the kernel, eggs must be broken to make omelettes! He continues: "The economic quintessence of the Socialistic programme, the real aim of the international

movement is as follows—To replace the system of private capital, by a system of collective capital that is, by a method of production which would introduce a unified (social or collective) organisation of national labour on the basis of collective or common ownership of the means of production by all the members of the Society. This collective method of production would remove the present competitive system, by placing under official administrations such departments of production as can be managed collectively (socially or co-operatively), as well as the distribution among all of the common produce of all, according to the amount and social utility of the productive labour of each. . . . Private business, individual enterprise, would be no more.” . . . He continues, “The leaders of the international movement, especially Karl Marx, are very cautious in enunciating their positive programme, but every intelligent reader and logical thinker will recognise in the above sentiment the fundamental idea and aim of Socialism; . . . critically, dogmatically and practically the cardinal thesis stands out—collective instead of private ownership of all instruments of production (land, factories, machines, tools, &c.), public organisation of the labour of all on the basis of the collective ownership of all the working materials of social labour—and finally, distribution of the collective output of all kinds of manufacture in proportion

to the amount and value of the work done by each worker." No profit, no wages, only a share in the national produce proportioned to the labour performed. They do not say, Property is Robbery, in Proudhon's sense. They do not count the present private owners as personally criminal—they plan to expropriate them, it is true, but "to compensate them for the right of which they deprive them by instalments of the common commodities for their maintenance till they shall have grown accustomed to the new state of things." . . . .

"Socialism forbids the future use of property as a private source of income, and thus necessarily puts an end to all inequalities of income which are not the result of pre-eminent labour performed. Inequality is then, as a Socialist has expressed it, *organically* impossible." . . . .

"State credit, private credit, interest bearing capital and loan capital are to cease. So also, national debts, private debts, tenancy, leases, shares negotiable in the Bourse; . . . . The aristocracy of wealth is ended—the aristocracy of personal merit is alone allowed." . . . .

"Agricultural rents, private loans, mortgage, ground rents, house rents, shares, stocks, partnerships, are at an end." . . . . "Coinage also; for labour-money, *i.e.*, certificates of labour, would be presented for articles of consumption corresponding to the hours of work indicated. The amount of work, again, the number of hours recognised as hours of production, to be decreed and regulated—more

would be valueless so far as remuneration went. Trade would disappear. The average labour-day would replace money as a standard of value, the normal social workday would become the real unit of value."

Such is Socialism in its essence, and practically it amounts to the destruction of private ownership and property.

Imagine the revolution, the strife, the excesses through which alone such a state of things could by any possibility be reached. Imagine how soon such a state of things, were it begun, would expire, if for no other cause, for its dull monotony and slavery. Socialism prohibits all profitable ownership of anything except a man's corporal and mental powers, of which he may make gain only to a certain regulated amount. He may amuse himself, tire himself to any amount, but he shall get nothing for what he does over and above the value fixed by the Social time-table of labour, and then he shall be paid only in that sort of goods provided by the community.

We will now examine the nature of the right of property or ownership.

But let me first give the definition of a word for which unless men mend their ways there will at length be no use in the present life—justice. *Justice is the virtue which renders to every one that which is due to him, that which is his.\**

\* This and other definitions are taken from Scavini, *De justitia et iure*.—De Legibus.



Proprietorship or ownership is defined, *the right of possessing, using, and freely disposing of what is one's own, unless prohibited.* I explain the prohibition. A minor is prohibited by law to alienate his goods, evidently in order to protect his weakness and inexperience. A man is left a legacy : it is his, but the testator forbids him to make use of it for a year.

We are told that in the beginning of the world all things were in common : and we may give some Socialists credit for thinking that, in wishing to revert to the earliest conditions of human life, they are aiming at what is most in accordance with human perfection. They will listen to the words of a philosopher probably much more readily than to the teaching of the Church. "The evils of existing institutions are due, not to the want of a community of property, but to the depravity of human nature. For experience teaches that disputes are far more likely to occur among people who possess property in common and live as partners, than among those who hold their estates in separate tenure. The life proposed appears to be altogether impossible."\*

I venture to think that not only the Paradise in which Adam was placed, but the outlying earth from pole to pole was Adam's. The absolute Owner is the Creator of heaven and earth ; but God gave the earth to man to hold and possess. "Let him have dominion over

\* Aristotle, as quoted by the Rev. Joseph Rickaby, S.J.

the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, *and the whole earth.*"\* I think we may say that Adam shared his right with his sons, and practically yielded them, as the human family multiplied, to those who first took possession either of the earth to till it, or build cities on it, or of beasts which they domesticated as did Abel the shepherd, or of wild animals which they chased and captured for food and raiment. I will add, that I see nothing in the Scripture narrative to justify the assumption of Rousseau and modern infidels who hold that man in primitive time was but a naked savage, not much above the level of the brute, wild and ungregarious, and utterly uncivilised. All this is wild nonsense; we have Adam's third son, Henoah, building a city; we have another, Jubal, "the father of them that play upon the harp and the organ;" another, Stella, whose son Tubalcain was "a hammerer in every sort of brass and iron." It is incredible that Adam and his family and immediate descendants, fresh from the hand of God, and given dominion by God over the whole earth, should not have been gifted with what is best and noblest in religion and civilisation. I look later on in the world's history for human decadence, and the presence of the savage. It is quite conceivable that, after the Deluge, when Noe and his sons re-peopled the earth, man gradually deteriorated, though not at first, nor rapidly, if we remember

\* Genesis i. 26.

the huge monuments and marvellous ruins which abound, and testify to the skill and splendour of mankind in former ages. Still, suppose that man here and there became an explorer and a castaway, too careless and indifferent to keep up or regain such talents as he had, such arts as he had known, we should soon have races of men lapsed into savage life, too listless to attempt more than elude defeat and destruction in the warfare waged on them by wild beasts or the elements. Man's true history would, therefore, be recession from civilisation, and then attempts, more or less successful, to regain his former social state.

However, for all this I must ask indulgence ; it is but a digression ; and the principles assailed by Socialists are equally available to defend the right of a savage to the stag he has captured and of the farmer to the cattle he has reared ; they protect alike the cabin of the peasant and the palace of the king.

The first right of ownership in every town and country is acquired by occupation—that is *the taking possession of a thing which belongs to none with the intention of making it one's own*. Thus, *finding* things that are hopelessly lost, and *catching* wild beasts, birds and fishes, were amongst the earliest and at present are lawful means of acquiring property. This acquisition once effected, the ownership, according to Catholic theology, is inviolable and sacred—1, by the law of Nature—since otherwise there

would be only confusion and conflict, and no human society could exist—2, by the Divine law, which says Thou shalt not steal—3, by human law both Ecclesiastical and Civil.

Let me draw your attention to the force of the expression, "Possession is nine points of the law"—so strong a right is possession alone admitted to be.

A writer\* of the last century has said, "Those who have reasoned on Property are the only persons who make any difficulty regarding its nature. Thieves and robbers perfectly understand that, when they take away by fraud or force what is occupied by another, they commit a wrong action. Natural Reason teaches that he who is in possession has a right to that which he possesses, and that no right to dispossess him can subsist unless derived from prior possession; the innate sense of Right compels assent. A man comes to another who has taken possession of an unowned piece of land, and says, 'This land which you have tilled is as much mine as yours, since the Creator gave the earth to all its inhabitants,'—the answer will be, 'Before this field was appropriated as a share in the great grant, it belonged equally to both of us; it was the possible right of either, the actual right of neither of us; had you then taken possession of it before me, would you now admit my equal pretensions, were I to

\* Henry Best, M.A., Fellow of St. Mary Magdalen Coll.; Oxford.



urge them? Your claim is not prior to mine but only cœval: it is therefore not better than mine. I have made mine good by occupancy—a title the validity of which you would acknowledge were it in your own favour. It would have been just for you, it is just for me; if it were just for neither of us, it would be just for no one of the sons of men, and it would follow as a consequence that the Creator intended the surface of our globe to continue a wild waste. An absurdity revolting to human reason, and to justice in accord with reason.’”

The same writer elsewhere adds, “Oft have we indulged the day-dream, dear to the lover of his kind, and by no means displeasing to the fancy of one not over careful for his own interests—the scheme of equal partition of the products of the earth, equal labour, equal enjoyment; we are awakened to the stern and severe reality of life, remediable only by the submission of the poor and the benevolence of the rich.” A most sensible reflection, this last! I will venture to add that submission should not be made distasteful to the poor, nor should benevolence be made difficult to the rich, as is now the case in nearly every country, by the abuse of power on the part of the State, by the oppressive laws and the oppressive taxes everywhere imposed. This and more I dare to say, for am I not, however unworthy, a son of the

Saint who scrupled not to present himself before a Pope with bread in one hand and in the other a sword? For thus did St. Philip warn Gregory XIV. of the need there was even in the Papal States of abundance and justice.

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## II

### SOCIALISM AND AUTHORITY

Evidently, the realization of the Socialistic scheme cannot take place whilst any degree or portion of authority as at present constituted lasts. Socialists do not tell us, perhaps cannot say just yet, whether they mean to wait for a universal abdication on the part of "the powers that be," or to bring about a general revolution, which shall depose every ruler, magistrate and master, reduce them to the ranks, and allow them only their one vote apiece in the universal suffrage. Even now, they count as gain all strikes, conspiracies, rebellions and revolutions; they are to be found fomenting every kind of discontent with the existing order of things; and they have the hardihood to avow sympathy and proclaim fraternity with

Anarchists and Nihilists who have committed the most treacherous and inhuman crimes. It may then, without unfairness, be assumed that their red cap of liberty retains all the ominous meaning of its symbolical colour, and that Socialism will one day start its shambles. But even the most sanguine of them seem to consider that the ultimate triumph of their cause can be only in the far future.

Meanwhile they are not idle, and besides their perverse doctrines about Property, they are spreading doctrines equally perverse and false in order to subvert authority. We will again consult the Syllabus, to discover what these errors are which are being disseminated wherever Socialists obtain a reader or a listener.

None of the following propositions can be held by a good Catholic.

1. *The Church ought to be separated from the State, and the State from the Church.*

2. *The laws of morality have no need of divine sanction, and it is not at all necessary that human laws should conform to the natural law or receive their obligation from God.*

3. *The Sciences of Philosophy and Ethics, as also Civil Laws, can and ought to be exempt from divine and ecclesiastical authority.*

4. *Right consists in the material fact: "the duties of men" is a phrase without sense: and all human achievements have the force of right.*

5. *Authority is nothing but the sum of numbers and material forces.*

6. *An unjust deed if successful is not detrimental to the sanctity of right.*

7. *It is permissible to refuse obedience to legitimate rulers, and it is even lawful to revolt.*

8. *The violation of an oath, however sacred, and any criminal and wicked act contrary to the Eternal Law, not only should not be blamed, but is quite lawful and worthy of highest praise when the deed is done for love of country.*

Such are some of the modern Errors enumerated in the Syllabus, errors which evidently have been acted on, especially in Russia and America, by misguided Socialists of the extreme sort. In the assassination of the late Czar, in the outrages at Chicago, we have had specimens of the character of the forlorn hope of Socialism.

We will now consult Catholic theology, to understand distinctly and precisely the duties of citizens and subjects towards law and authority.

But what is Law? Reasonable regulations for the common good, promulgated by him who has charge of the community or society. Now, as man has a twofold society—one with the God who made him, the other with his fellow mortals—each society must be maintained by its own laws. Hence we have:—

1. Eternal Law in God Himself, whereby God wills that man should not swerve from what is right and reasonable.

2. Natural Law in man himself, whereby that will of God is made known to man's reason and sense of right.

3. The Divine Positive Law, whereby man is guided to the supernatural end for which he is created.

4. Human Law, Ecclesiastical and Civil, whereby public order is provided for in the world.

These definitions are self-explanatory. I will only make two remarks in connection with them. The Divine Positive Law is divided into the Old and the New. The Old was abrogated, and yet reaffirmed by being in essential respects incorporated into the New. The Legislator of the Old Law was Moses, the Legislator of the New Law is Christ our Lord and King, and, according to the Council of Trent, "If anyone shall say that Jesus Christ was given by God to man as the Redeemer in whom they must trust, and not the legislator whom they must obey, let him be anathema."\*

Again, the Law of Nations is a phrase which perhaps requires explanation. This law belongs to the natural law rather than to human law; for in its true and proper signification, it is the universal and immutable law of nature applicable alike to private individuals and to states and empires.

I proceed to lay down further Catholic doctrines.

\* Sess. vi. Can. 21.

It is certain that the Supreme Civil Power has the right to make laws concerning matters purely civil, and, if the ends are just, the right to oblige the consciences of its subjects to obedience. "He that resists the power resists the ordinance of God, and they that resist purchase to themselves damnation."\* So wrote St. Paul to the Christian subjects of the heathen Roman Emperors. Suarez considers this doctrine, which is confirmed by Holy Scripture, to be *de fide*, or at any rate proximately *de fide*. Instead, then, of authority being nothing but the sum of numbers and material forces, it descends from God as directly on the Civil Ruler as on the Ecclesiastical Ruler, and resistance to one or the other, when they are acting justly, is resistance to the ordinance of God, and deserves damnation.

When once a united portion of the human race has designated and appointed those who are to command, the elected are consecrated, if I may so express it, by being endued from on high with the power and authority of God, and the community once having exercised its choice, has nothing left but to show its obedience and submission to all just regulations.

This Supreme Civil Power is vested in Emperors for Empires, in Kings for Kingdoms, in Presidents and Assemblies for Republics. In representative governments the power is shared by the Sovereign and the Delegates or

\* Romans xiii. 2.

Parliaments. The Holy Father Leo XIII. in his Encyclical *Immortale Dei*, says, "The right of sovereignty in itself is not necessarily united with any particular form of government: it can rightly assume now one form, now another, provided only that each of these forms does in very deed secure useful results and the common good."

What if the ruler be a wicked tyrant? He must still be submitted to, and obeyed in all his legislation that can be complied with without sin. "Be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle but also to the froward."\* S. Thomas says, "The people must pray to God, because often they are given a wicked ruler in chastisement of their own sins."

S. Thomas teaches the duty of insurrection in certain rare cases, in his Commentary on Aristotle's Politics,—“But if these things were to concur—that they had a just cause, and the requisite strength, and that it would not be detrimental to the common good, they” (*i.e.*, the wise and virtuous) “would reasonably make a sedition and would sin if they did not.”† In the *Summa* the Saint states the same doctrine. *Ad tertium dicendum quod regimen tyrannicum non est justum, quia non ordinatur ad bonum commune, sed ad bonum privatam regentis, ut patet per Philosophum (Polit. I iii. c. 5, et Ethic. lib. 8, c. 10). Et ideo perturbatio hujus regi-*

\* I Peter ii. 18.

† Com. Pol. v. I. § 2.

*minis non habet rationem seditionis ; nisi forte quando sic inordinatè perturbatur tyranni regimen, quod multitudo subjecta majus detrimentum patitur ex perturbatione consequenti quam ex tyranni regimine. Magis autem tyrannus seditiosus est, qui in populo sibi subjecto discordias et seditiones nutrit, ut tutius dominare possit : hoc enim tyrannicum est, cum sit ordinatum ad bonum proprium præidentis cum multitudinis nocumento. (Sec sec. quæst. xlii. Art. 2).*

A doctrine this which it would be dangerous to preach to a mob, but which it is consolatory to bear in mind while reading the world's history! Practically, the just cause may exist, but the other conditions would hardly ever be also present, the means would be wanting—especially in the large States of these days, and the detriment to the common good would be so great, even were success to crown the undertaking. Prayer to God would be nearly always the only available remedy. But I am led on to make another remark, and to bring to recollection the salutary practice of olden times, when the virtuous invoked the Deposing Power of the Sovereign Pontiffs against unjust and wicked rulers. In 1871, Pius IX., addressing the Academia, said in substance, “No one in these days thinks of the deposition of princes by the Pope, and no one does so less than the Pope.” But, if the world has so completely turned its back upon the Papacy, if Christendom no longer desires to be dealt with on



Christian principles, it is easy to understand that in prudence the Popes would not give occasion of fresh offence to the perverse by an act of whose benefits both princes and peoples seem unworthy, and which they have made themselves unfit to receive. The world has deprived itself of a huge benefit. In Scriptural language the Popes may say, "Why should I strike you any more, you who multiply transgressions? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is sad."

What if the Ruler be an Usurper? Theologians say, in his act of invasion he must if possible be resisted. And this resistance may be a prolonged resistance, though those who make it may be styled insurgents. But if he succeeds in his usurpation and maintains himself in it, then the people are bound to submit to his just laws which are for the common good. However, it is not by his unjust usurpation that he acquires rights, the subjects are bound to obey only to avoid the scandals and evils which must necessarily come on a society without some sort of ruler.

On whom is the law obligatory? On all subjects without exception who have the use of reason. "Let every soul be subject to higher powers." The laws of Church therefore do not bind unbaptised persons, they are not her subjects. Neither are children and lunatics, until they acquire the use of reason, amenable to the civil law.

The writer whose views on Property I have quoted in the first chapter, supplies me with the following passage on the present subject. "Political states in some form or other are necessary, they are constituted for the good of mankind, and are confirmed by the moral sense and right reason, and have the sanction and support of true religion. The government may be monarchical, aristocratic or democratic, hereditary or elective, for it can in any of these forms fulfil its end. The Government with which each is in relation has a claim on his relative duty; a right to change the form at will would be equivalent to a negation of civil or political duty."

The clearest, the best and the most authoritative teaching of all is that of the Sovereign Pontiffs, to which all "will do well to attend;" and I will delay no longer in quoting the words of Leo XIII. in defence of public authority against the Socialists of these days.

"These are they who, as the divine oracles testify, 'defile the flesh, despise dominion, and blaspheme majesty.' Nothing which has been wisely enacted by human and divine laws for the security and adornment of life is left by them intact and entire. They refuse obedience to the higher powers to which, according to the admonition of the Apostle, every soul ought to be subject, and which derive right of governing from God, and they preach the perfect equality of all men in rights and offices. . . . Allured

moreover, by the desire of present goods, *which is the root of all evil, and which some coveting have erred from the faith*, they impugn the right of property sanctioned by the law of nature, and by a monstrous crime, while they appear to meet the wants and satisfy the desires of all men, they aim at seizing and holding in common whatever has been acquired by lawful inheritance, or by the intellect, or the labour of the hands, or by frugal living. And these portentous opinions they publish in their meetings, inculcate in pamphlets, and scatter among the lower orders in a cloud of journals. From this it results that the revered majesty and rule of Kings has so incurred the hatred of a seditious populace, that nefarious traitors, impatient of every restraint, have more than once within a short space of time in impious daring turned their arms against the Princes of the realm themselves.

“But this audacity of perfidious men, which threatens greater ruin to civil society, and strikes the minds of all with anxious fear, derives its cause and origin from those poisonous doctrines, which scattered in former times like corrupt seed among the peoples, have borne such pestilential fruit in their season.

“For you, venerable Brethren, very well know that the object of the war, which ever since the sixteenth century has been waged by innovators against the Catholic Faith, and which has every day increased in intensity

down to the present time, has been that setting aside of all revelation, and subverting every kind of supernatural order, that entrance might be cleared for the discoveries, or rather, the delirious imaginations of mere reason. This kind of error, which wrongly usurps the name of reason, as it entices and sharpens the desire of superiority naturally implanted in man, and gives a loose rein to desires of every sort, has spontaneously penetrated to the widest extent not only very many minds but civil society itself. Hence it has come to pass, that by a novel impiety unheard of even among heathen nations, States have been constituted without taking any account of God and of the order established by Him: it has moreover declared that public authority derives neither its principle nor its majesty, nor its power of command from God, but rather from the multitude of the people—which, thinking itself absolved from all divine sanction, has determined to acknowledge only those laws which itself has framed according to its own good pleasure. The supernatural verities of faith having been impugned and rejected as if they were inimical to reason, the Author and Redeemer of the human race has been Himself forcibly banished from the Universities, the Lyceums, and Gymnasiums, and from every public institution connected with the life of man. Finally, the rewards and punishments of the future life

being relegated to oblivion, the ardent desire of happiness has been confined within the space of this present life. These doctrines having been disseminated far and wide, this great licence of thought and action being everywhere introduced, it is no wonder that men of the lowest class, weary of a poor home or workshop, should desire to invade the palaces and fortunes of the rich ; it is no wonder that there now exists no tranquillity in public or private life, and that the human race has nearly reached its lowest depths.

“ But it is to be lamented that those to whom has been committed the care of the public good, deceived by the machinations of impious men, and terrified by their threats, have harboured suspicions, and even hostile dispositions towards the Church, not perceiving that the attempts of the sects would be powerless if the teaching of the Catholic Church and the authority of the Roman Pontiffs both among princes and among peoples had ever remained duly honoured. *For the Church of the living God, which is the pillar and ground of truth,* hands down those doctrines and precepts whose first object is to provide for the safety and tranquillity of society, and by which the fatal plant of Socialism is torn up by the roots. . . . They indeed are constantly asserting, as we have implied, that all men are by nature equal, and they therefore maintain that no honour or respect is due to authority nor any obedience

due to laws unless to those enacted by themselves at their own good pleasure. But, on the contrary, according to the teaching of the Gospel, men are equal in the sense that having all inherited the same nature, they are called to the same exalted dignity of the sons of God, and that as one and the same end is set before all of them, each and all are to be judged by the same law, and will receive punishment or reward according to their deserts. But an inequality of rights and power proceeds from the very Author of nature Himself, from whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named. And according to Catholic doctrine and precept, the dispositions of princes and subjects are so bound to each other by mutual duties and rights that the lust of arbitrary rule is restrained and obedience is rendered easy, stable and most honourable." . . . "He who created and governs all things has in His wise Providence ordained that all should occupy their proper places, the lower beneath the middle, the middle below the highest. As therefore in the heavenly kingdom itself He has decreed that there should be distinct orders of angels some subject to others, and as in the Church He has instituted various orders and diversity of offices, not all being Apostles, or doctors, or pastors; so also has He appointed that there should be in civil society many orders distinguished by their rank, privileges and power; so

that the State like the Church should be one body comprising many members, some more noble than others, but all mutually necessary and all concerned for the common good.

“But that the rulers of nations may use the powers confided to them to save and not to destroy, the Church of Christ seasonably recalls to the minds of Princes the severity of the Supreme Judge: and using the words of divine wisdom, calls upon all in the name of God, ‘Give ear you that rule the people, and that please yourselves in the multitudes of nations; for power is given you by the Lord and strength by the Most High, who will examine your works, and search out your thoughts. . . . For a most severe judgment shall be for them who bear rule . . . for God will not except any man’s person, neither will He stand in awe of any man’s greatness, for He hath made the little and the great, and He hath equally care of all. But a greater punishment is ready for the more mighty.’ (Wisd. vi.) And if it sometimes happens that the power of the State is unwisely and unduly exercised by Princes, still the teaching of the Catholic Church does not authorise rebellion against them, lest public tranquillity be still more disturbed, and society be exposed to still greater calamities; and when no other ray of hope appears, she teaches that a remedy is to be found through the virtue of Christian patience and earnest prayer to God.

But if the mandate of legislators and princes sanction or order aught repugnant to the divine or natural law, the dignity and duty of a Christian as well as the precept of the Apostle teach that *God is to be obeyed rather than man.*"\*

Yes, indeed, if the Civil Government abuses authority, exceeds the limits of its jurisdiction, it also is guilty, whether one or many have to bear the guilt. And it is well that all should remember that God is no respecter of persons, and that the powerful offender shall be the more powerfully tormented. We are commanded to obey both God and Cæsar. How often it is Cæsar's crime that we can only keep this divine precept by an act of disobedience to Cæsar! We are supplied with innumerable examples of this by the roll-call of Christ's Martyrs.

The depositaries of power, especially delegates—who have ample means of being well informed—associated with the Ruler, as in Representative Governments—have personally and individually a fearful responsibility in the making of laws, the imposing of taxes, the voting of supplies for warfare. These things are constantly done with hardly any other reason or motive than party spirit, ambition, vain-glory, negligence, the thirst for fame. The pressure always falls ultimately on the

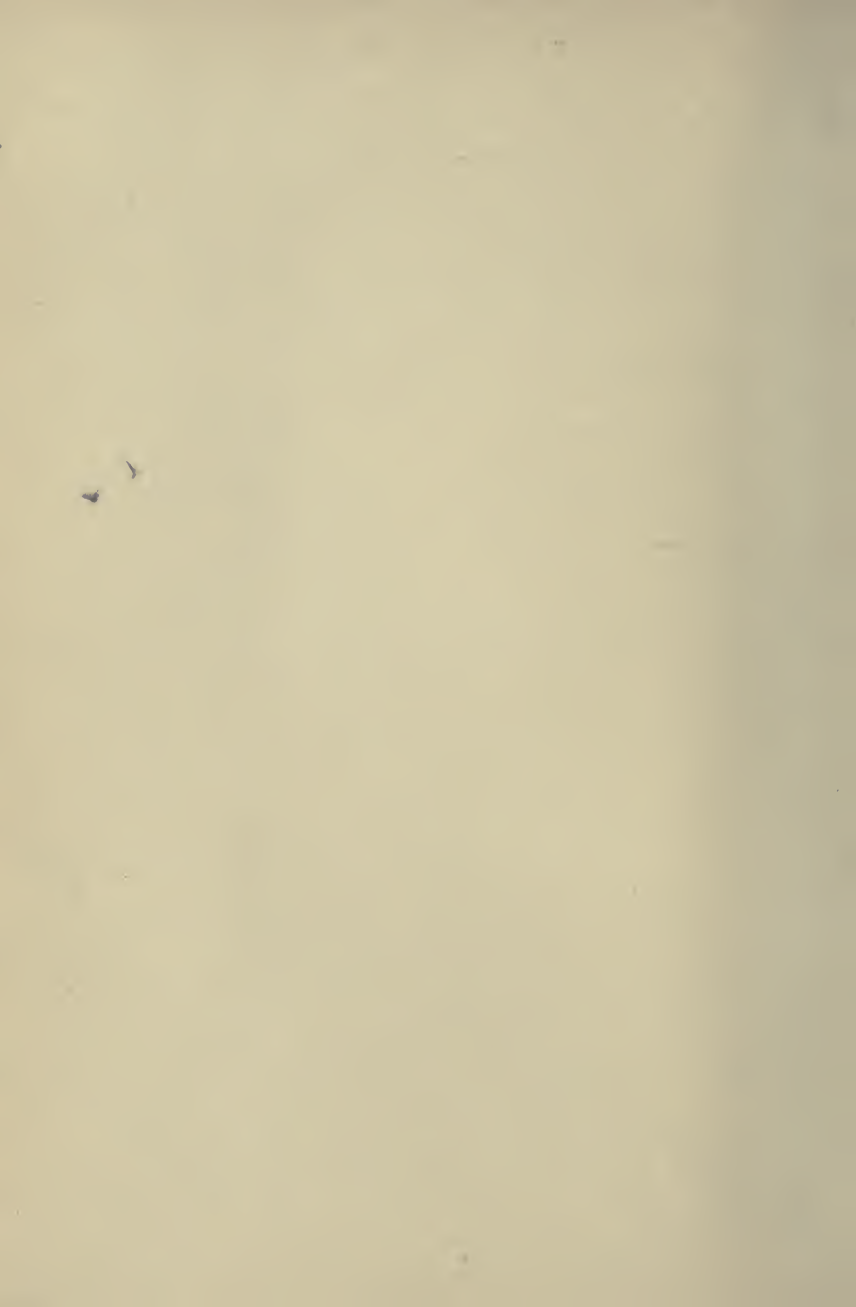
\* Extracts from the Encyclical, *Quod Apostolici Muneris*, Dec. 28, 1878.





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