

SOCIALISM AND THE CHURCH ;

OR,

HENRY GEORGE VS. ARCHBISHOP CORRIGAN.

BY

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But it was an unsuccessful assault, in which the doughty knight of the Socialists only revealed the weakness of his armor. For the letter of Mr. Henry George is full of sophistry and false statements. Mr. George, evidently, has never occupied himself much with St. Thomas Aquinas or Thomistic methods, otherwise he would not have committed so many sins against logic and common sense.

Nothing brought more to my mind the timely counsel of Pope Leo XIII., to fall back on St. Thomas and scholastic methods, than the confusion of ideas this letter betrays. I shall at once proceed to discuss the points at issue.

I. PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECT OF THE QUESTION.

According to Thomistic teaching, substances, or existing things, are composed of matter and form. This dualism pervades the entire philosophy of St. Thomas and the scholastics, and marvellously aids in analyzing and resolving all questions, however difficult they may be.

The matter, they say, is the substratum of things existing, a something undetermined; whilst the form narrows down the matter to species, determines it, and makes it actually subsist in a certain mode. The matter has a passive inclination; the form is an active principle; they are in relation to each other as potency and act. Neither the one nor the other is the thing or

substance, but both together form the substance or thing existing.*

The theory of matter and form is profitably applied not only to real substances but also to abstract ideas. Let us apply it, then, to "property," to land-property, about which there is now so much controversy. According to the premises, we have *property material* and *property formal*. *Property material* is indifferent and undetermined in its nature, inasmuch as the whole globe can be possessed or owned, to use the phrase of Mr. George. This *property material* is God's creation, is given by God to all mankind (Gen. i. 28): "Increase and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it, and rule over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and all living creatures that move upon the earth."

* "Distinctio autem rerum secundum speciem est per formas" (*Contra Gent.*, lib. ii. cap. xl.)

"Unde in compositis ex materia et forma, nec materia nec forma potest dici ipsum quod est, nec etiam ipsum esse; forma dici tamen potest, quo est, secundum quod est essendi principium" (lib. ii. cap. liv.)

"Materia est illud, ex quo res fiunt, ac proinde in ordine entis nihil aliud est quam pura potentia versatilis in omnes entium naturalium modos. Per formam materia fit ens actu et quælibet res in sua specie constituitur. Quapropter forma generalissime sumpta est id, quod dat esse, ut dicit D. Thomas, opusc. 31, seu id, quo res est id, quod est. Dicitur etiam *actus*, eo quod constituat et determinat rem ad aliquem certum essendi modum, sicut materia dicitur *potentia*, eo quod sit de se indifferens ad omnes essendi modos" (Gloss. Billuart, etc., in St. Thom. *Summa*, i. quest. iii. art. ii.)

Now, to this *material property*, which comes directly from God, is added *formal property*, which comes directly from man, and originates in bringing *material property*, something of God's creation, under the *form* of industry, culture, or art. These two kinds of property unite like matter and form, and constitute *one individual property* for the person adding the *formal property* to the *material*. Or, in other terms, the world, as the material object of ownership, by attachment of the form of any subject is brought out of its indifferent, undetermined state of property, and determined and made proper to the one attaching the form: material property, *potential to any man*, is made *actual, individual to this man—ad hunc hominem seu individuum*. The intrinsic reason of this is because property material, or God's creation, and formal property, or man's product, are physically and inseparably united, and the one goes with the other. So that a human individual owns *per se* the property *formal*, but *per accidens* only the property *material*. There is nothing against this from the part of *property material* itself because of being undetermined and indifferent in regard to ownership; nothing from the part of God, who in general gave the dominion over it; nothing from the part of man, who is capable of *owning*, as Mr. George himself admits in the case of the products of human labor.

Besides, the highest authorities in philosophy and theology admit the right of individual property. St. Thomas Aquinas,* though not directly teaching that such right to property originates in the natural law, as I have defended above with Archbishop Corrigan, denies that individual proprietorship in God's creation is against the natural law. His assumption is, that the distribution and determination of land and the things in this world took place by human authority and by positive human law. Of the same opinion is St. Augustine, † who retraces the legal title of individual property to God himself, inasmuch as the legal authority is instituted by God, and acts, therefore, in the name of God and according to his will. However, these opinions of the Fathers of the Church may be well combined with the statement of the archbishop making labor the natural cause of individual ownership in God's creation. They do not exclude each other, for the positive human law in some way must have a basis in natural law. In fact, the determination and distribution of land and of similar things in the first ages of mankind may very likely have been effected by

* "Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod communitas rerum attribuitur juri naturali, non quia jus naturale dicitur, omnia esse possidenda communiter, et nihil esse quasi proprium possidendum, sed quia secundum jus naturale non est distinctio possessionum, sed magis secundum humanum conditum, quod pertinet ad jus positivum" (*Summa*, ii. 2, lxvi. art. ii. ad. 1).

† In S. Joh., tract. vi.

the patriarchs, as was done later on by Josue, the leader of the Israelitic people, and as it is done even in these United States by the government through the so-called "Homestead Law." Let no one say that only of what a man is the direct author may he claim the ownership. Is Mr. George aware to what ridiculous consequences, battling thus against common sense, he is driven? Parents, for instance, are the authors of the bodily existence of their children, whose souls are directly created by God. Now, although the soul is of more worth than the body, parents nevertheless claim their children, with body and soul, with matter and form, *as their own*, and say, "This child is ours," or "These children belong to us." Besides that, if *only* the *production* of a thing gives a title for claim to ownership, how will Mr. George defend the ownership of land for all mankind in general? Did all men together do anything towards the creation of land? Just as little as any individual!

A human *individuum* may, therefore, come to individual ownership, into full possession of something of God's creation and the enjoyment thereof. This *individuum* may be *physical*, that is, a single man, who stands independent and acts with personal responsibility; or it may be a *moral individuum*—*i.e.*, several men—or a whole community working in common.

Now, what is the cause of *formal property*

which, intimately and inseparably attached and united with *property material*, accrues to property individual? Or, in philosophical terms, what is the *causa formalis* of individual ownership, by which God's creation comes into the possession and ownership of the *individual*?

Archbishop Corrigan pointed it out in his pastoral letter—it is the labor of the *individuum*. If this labor has produced *formal property* in an object of God's creation, be it land, or a marble block, or anything else, by culture, art, or similar agency, the *individuum* has a right to it. Because he by his labor is the cause of the *form*, he has evidently a right to the effect. And the effect of his labor, being intimately connected with the object of God's creation, like matter and form, like body and soul, *naturally* determines this object *to him*—brings it out of its state of *indifference* and general *potency* into *actual, proper, and special* possession of the laboring *individuum*.

This is also what Archbishop Corrigan asserts, saying: "Such determination [of individual property, namely], judging from the facts of history, the sanction of law, etc., has been, and is, that man can by lawful acts become possessed of the right of ownership in property, and not merely in its use. The reason is because a man is strictly entitled to that of which he is *the producing cause*, to the improvement he brings about in it, and the enjoyment of both."

In holding this distinction of property *material* and property *formal* it is not difficult to find that the false syllogism Mr. George extracts from the archbishop's pastoral is not contained in it. Let us take the syllogism and analyze it, to make this plain. I put the syllogism as it runs in Mr. George's letter, and place the analysis in parentheses :

The results of human exertion are property (*formal*) and (if attached to property *material*) may (both together) rightfully be the object of individual ownership ;

Land is property (*material*) ;

Therefore land is rightfully the object of individual ownership (if property *formal* is attached to it !)

This is the drift of the archbishop's position, and is there any falsity about it? The falsity comes from Mr. George, who does not considerably distinguish, assigning a sense to the words of his Grace quite other than the meaning which they really convey. I opine that I do not mistake here, and that there has all along been given such a "distribution of the middle" as lays bare Mr. George's "minor" misconception.

In Mr. George's right solemn truism, "God creates, man produces." Ay, indeed, God creates—*i.e.*, summons the really non-existent into existence ; man produces out of something of God's creation which was *given* to man that he might so *produce*. Poor man cannot create, and

therefore, forsooth, cannot come into a full ownership! He has a warrantee deed to his product, according to the *Georgian* theory, but a mortgage of God, the Creator, is annexed to it! Whilst we contend that man has a warrantee deed to his product in fee-simple and a quit-claim deed from God for the object on which he produces. If any prudent man buys property, will he take it with a mortgage on it? No; he is afraid lest, the mortgage being sooner or later foreclosed, he might, in case of insolvency, lose not only the cow he bought but the calf also! And if man owns only what he himself produces, another one may in the name of God touch the property of God whence the produce was derived, and the producer will lose not only the material but also the product of his labor, which cannot be separated from it.

The artistic form of a statue, according to Mr. George's deduction, belongs to the artist, but the block itself is God's creature, and can, therefore, belong to any one, inasmuch as all men have a common right to God's creation! How, then, can the poor artist protect his work, when the material in no way belongs to him? He would be in the same uncertainty and anxiety as a man with a heavy mortgage on his property. Who would care for so poor a title of ownership?

Mr. George claims to have not only reason but also the express will of God on his side.

But did God make such subtle distinctions

when he declared in the Decalogue: "Thou shalt not steal—thou shalt not steal the *form* of a statue, but you may seize on the *material* of it" ? or, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, inasmuch as it is man's production ; but you may covet the matter of which it is constructed, because that is God's creation" ? He simply said : "Thou shalt not steal ; thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, field," etc., such as it *is*, in its *matter* and *form*, in its *material* and *improvements*. On which side is God ? How does Mr. George's scheme tally with the Seventh and Tenth Commandments, as just cited ? Is it not expressly claimed therein that a neighbor (*i.e.*, an *individuum*) can own a house, a field, which another has no right to seize ? So, therefore, not only natural law but also positive divine law favors unrestrictedly a full ownership in things of this world created by the Omnipotent God.

But, as in the Tenth Commandment God also forbids coveting the neighbor's servant and handmaid, Mr. George may conclude that they or a human individuum in general would then be a matter of individual ownership, just as a house and a field, because of the promiscuous prohibition ! Our opponent actually tries thus to bring the right to property into an absurdity in this canto of his Georgics. For he says in his letter assailing Archbishop Corrigan's position : "Property in human beings has been longer

and more widely recognized than private property in land." He quotes a case of the time of the union of Scotland with England, when the hanging of men and the burying of women alive were held to be done by right of property. I might add more such cases. The history of the ancient times tells us that the Romans, Grecians, and other pagan nations kept slaves, which, like any other object, were possessed and owned, bought and sold, as the expression "*mancipium*" implies. Lucullus, the Roman Cræsus, fattened the fishes in his pond with slaughtered slaves; Parrhasius, a celebrated Grecian artist, caused a slave to be nailed on a rock to study his painful features for a picture of Prometheus. But what can all this prove? Simply this: that the right of property may be abused just as anything else. Christianity never sanctioned *such* right of property; that was an error, an outgrowth of heathenish peoples who, according to St. Paul, were *sine misericordia*—without mercy.

And in proportion as Christian doctrine and Christian life made progress slavery of this kind vanished. "The slavery of the Gentiles, in the sense of *mancipium*," says Cornelius à Lapide, commenting on the Epistle to the Ephesians, "almost died out among Christians. The Church, that calls all men to Christian liberty, wants all her children to be like brothers, and so she abolished slavery, lest even one brother-Christian

might serve the other as a *mancipium* ; for this were altogether unbecoming." Neither did God give such right. He said : Rule over the earth, the fishes, the fowls, etc. ; but he did not mention man as included in such dominion.

For every man, as such, is physically independent of the other, and has, by this fact, rights which he cannot alienate and which another man cannot take from him. However, as a social being he may be stripped of certain rights for justice' sake, as a punishment ; or he may bring himself into a kind of dependency by his own free will, by free contract. By this another man may gain a certain claim upon him which is protected in the Commandments as being based on justice. But this is not the right of property, of which we are treating here.

Another sophistry of Mr. George is this : that his conclusions reach farther than the premises of his opponent allow. "Granted," says he, "to follow your illustrations, that, if a man hew a statue out of marble, he is entitled to the possession of the marble ; does that justify him in claiming the quarry and forbidding any one else from taking marble from it ? Or, by congealing water into ice, can he claim the whole river and hinder others from slaking their thirst ?" (I may here ask, in passing, does not Mr. George venture too near the *water* without a life-preserver ?)

In the name of honest logic, I may ask, where is such an inference contained in the arch-

bishop's pastoral? It is one of those exaggerations calculated to throw dust into the eyes of the people.

Qui nimium probat, nihil probat—He who proves too much proves nothing.

Yet a man may come to the ownership of a quarry by legal title—by way of emption, for instance. Emption is effected by capital, and capital is generally amassed by labor. In most instances, and essentially, capital is nothing else but the surplus of labor. A laborer, for instance, earns two dollars a day, but uses or expends daily only one dollar. One dollar remains as capital, as surplus from labor. He is an incipient capitalist; and, in fact, nearly all our capitalists have begun in this way, either by themselves or through their ancestors. And so we are coming back again to the first producing and formal cause of property—to labor.

“And let me ask you,” continues Mr. George, “to look a little closer (*sic*) into the origin of property rights. It is not the carving of a statue which gives ownership to the block of marble, else any one who carried off a block of marble from your cathedral and carved it into a statue would become its owner.”

Mr. George evidently imagines he makes a palpable hit by this argument. But he strikes in a direction where the archbishop is not found! Archbishop Corrigan evidently understands, in his exemplification, property which is not yet

individualized, or *res nullius*—property *material*, as I have styled it ; whilst Mr. George brings an example of property *individual* !

But such extravagances are not allowed, according to the laws of logic, and every critic is required to do justice to the views of his opponent without twisting and modelling them to his own idiosyncrasies.

II. HISTORICAL ASPECT.

Not happier than the philosophical comments are the historical references of Mr. George. He thinks that ownership in land is but an outgrowth of modern culture and civilization. There is a grain of truth in that. But what is the cause of this effect—why did rude nations like the Arabians, Indians, the Germans of old, seem not to realize individual proprietorship in land, as civilized nations, like the Romans, certainly did ? The reason is because they did not give the *form* of culture to land-property ; and thus the property *material*—*i.e.*, the land yet undetermined—was not individualized by special labor, and, therefore, must remain in common. On the contrary, civilized nations apply themselves to agriculture ; agriculture entails special and individual labor, and this secures special and individual proprietorship of land. *Nihil sine ratione-sufficiente*—There is nothing without sufficient reason. And just this land-communism of those thriftless, uncivilized nations, far

from being a proof against individual ownership of land, rather forcibly argues in its favor. It would be preposterous to enhance individual ownership, especially of land, in the minds of such rude nations. But from the time a nation identifies itself with agriculture, just from that very time begins also the individual ownership of land. This coincidence is quite natural, as I have proved above, on the part of philosophy ; it is linked together like cause to effect. It would be interesting to trace up history also in this line. Though that is not the scope of this treatise, yet I will give one interesting and striking illustration found in Cæsar's book *De Bello Gallico*, lib. vi. cap. 22. Treating on the old Germans, the author says : "*Agriculturæ non student*"—"They do not apply themselves to agriculture, and most of them live on milk, cheese, and flesh-meat. None of them have a fixed land with proper boundaries, but every year the people and relatives come together, and then the magistrates and rulers assign such quantity and situation of land to them as they deem proper. In the following year they are forced to move to another place. For this they [the Germans] give many reasons : lest the people might get used to settled homes, and, instead of leading in war, might apply to agriculture ; lest they might strive to purchase broad territories, and thus the mightier should drive the weaker ones from their possessions ; lest they

might build so commodiously as to screen themselves from heat and cold ; lest there might arise cupidity for money, which is the cause of factions and dissensions ; finally, in order to maintain contentment among the people, because every one would then see his fortunes equalized with the fortunes of those who were most powerful.”

At first blush this looks very much like Socialism ; and the ideal of land-communism, which Mr. George is contemplating and striving for, seems to be realized ! But note well the words with which Cæsar begins this paragraph : *Agriculturæ non student*—They do not devote themselves to agriculture ; they do not live like really civilized people, and hence land and the products of land have little interest for them. They in their primitive ways may realize such a type of communism ; but even to this they are forced—*Magistratus ac principes . . . cogunt*.

Does not this passage from Cæsar confirm the truth of what I have demonstrated above, that agriculture almost necessarily involves the ownership of land, and that non-ownership is an unnatural, an abnormal condition, which only by force can be kept up, as among the old Germans ? Besides this, Cæsar does not, strangely enough, make the old Germans adduce that reason for land-communism which Mr. George is urging and so vigorously pressing forward. They did not say that they were *against* the in-

dividual ownership of land, as an injustice in itself or because they had no right *to own* land, it being God's creation! Too bad, alas! that Mr. George was not one of those cheese-eating Teutons to furnish Cæsar with *one* more reason, and that the most important of all! But all the motives they give show simply that they deemed an individual possession of land *not expedient* for them as a warlike people, and who, as such, could not engage in regular agricultural pursuits. From the same source it can easily be shown that individual ownership in land is a prerequisite for those who build or seek to build up *homes*, permanent dwellings, as every head of family must rationally desire to do.

Again, take the instance of non ownership found in early Church history. The first Christians renounced *their* property and had everything in common, *not* because it seemed wrong to them to own anything, but because they thought it more *expedient* to try thus to save their souls for life eternal. The Germans of old and the primitive Christians practised a kind of Socialism, the former out of natural, the latter out of supernatural, motives; both thought under the circumstances the non-possession of land a matter of *expediency*, but not of *necessity*, as though individual ownership of land would include a flagrant injustice against God and man. I shall recur to this later on.

But Mr. George argues not only from profane

but also from sacred history, and, like a veritable "*peregrinus in Israel*," tackles the books of Moses ! These are his words : "By the Mosaic code the ownership which attaches to the things produced did not attach to the land. 'The land shall not be sold for ever, for the land is mine, saith the Lord,' is the declaration that, in one form or the other, is reiterated throughout the sacred books. Their constant teaching is that the land is a free gift of the Creator to his children."

. Certainly the land, with everything else, belongs to God in the last instance, because he is the Creator and supreme Master and Lord of all things. The creature never can fully and absolutely divert itself or its legal titles from the Creator. But this does not preclude that the things (*none* of which man created) of this world may be possessed or owned by man according to the will of God.*

The Lord says also, according to the sacred books : "Mine is the gold and mine is the silver." Nevertheless, Mr. George, I presume, claims the gold and silver in his pocket as his own !

Besides, everybody even slightly acquainted with sacred history knows that the Jewish people were an exceptional nation in every respect. Their government, their laws were theocratic. God disposed of everything with them ;

* Conf. *Summa Theol.*, ii. 2, quæst. lxvi. art. 1.

hence also with their land. He first promised it to them, afterwards handed it over to them, but only, so to say, conditionally, always with the restriction, *Si mandata mea servaveritis*—If you keep my commands. When they did not comply with this condition God gave this promised land to their enemies—to the Philistines, or, later on, to the Babylonians and Assyrians.

In fact, the nature of land tenure among the “chosen people” rather forcibly militates against Mr. George’s Biblical position; for whereas the holding of land was granted to the Israelites, as a nation or as separate tribes, only *conditionally, full and simple proprietorship* in land was given to *individuals—i.e., to the heads of families*. For the land assigned by Josue to the Jewish tribes and families remained *theirs in perpetuum*. Though they had no right to sell it, they had an *exclusive* right to *claim* it, as the requirements of the Jubilee year abundantly prove. Besides, the liberty of selling is not necessary to insure ownership; there are laws in European countries, especially the old Saxon laws, according to which the legal heir of a patrimony cannot sell any parcel of the domain or even divide it with younger brothers. This is for good reasons, but it in no way impairs the rights of ownership for the occupant of such domain. These old Saxon laws prohibiting alienation of the hereditary domain much resemble the Jewish land-laws. They are based, we may say,

on the same principle—on the principle of concentration—and therefore they have not the least in common with Socialism, either in tendency or in nature. For, according to the Socialists, the land can *neither be owned nor sold!* These two points, according to their theory, even necessarily follow from each other, as effect follows cause—*i.e.*, one does not and cannot own ; *therefore*, one cannot sell. The selling, according to their supposition, would be an injustice. With the Jews the non-selling is a *condition* separate from ownership ; with the Socialists the non-selling is a *consequence* intimately connected with their land theory. Any impartial reader may perceive that there is a radical difference between these two systems.

Again, even this law providing the redemption of land in Jubilee year had binding obligation for the Jews, only for Judea. Thus asserts Cornelius à Lapide, and he cites authorities for it. “For,” says he, “when the Jews bought land outside of Judea, even from other Jews, they obtained such land for ever, and were not bound to return it to the first heir in the Jubilee year.” In plain words, they enjoyed *full* and *unrestricted* ownership of such land.

Now, if the foregoing arguments merely frustrate the attempt of Mr. George to squeeze the socialistic land theory out of the code of Moses, this last argument makes his Scripture thesis utterly untenable. Among other data of Jewish

history I would here refer my readers to the Third Book of Kings, chapter xxi., where King Achab offers to buy a vineyard *owned* by Naboth, his subject. Naboth flatly refuses to sell *his land-property*. Confiscation follows only when the *owner* has been vilely calumniated and unjustly put to death.

This much is certain, and also expressed in the sacred books, that God had reserved to himself the "promised land" in general, and therefore also might impose upon the Jewish nation, which occupied this territory as colonists of God, certain conditions in regard to contracts of land and its usufruct. For this God had special reasons. Cornelius à Lapide, treating of the law of redemption in the Jubilee year, and commenting on the words, "*Revertetur homo ad possessionem suam*" (Lev. cap. xxv.), says: "This return of goods to the first master, in the Jubilee year, God sanctioned, first, in order that the tribes might not be confounded, and that it might be easy to find out, by inheritance and by hereditary succession in things possessed by every tribe, to which tribe every one of the Jews belonged; second, that honest and respectable families might continue to be such, and that no one by squandering might bring the family to ruin; third, to set a bar to avarice and cupidity, that nobody by purchasing everything might get too rich; fourth, that there might be kept up a certain

equality among the Jews, lest one should become too rich and another too poor, and so, without envy, pride, or murmurs, every one might be content and lead a sociable and friendly life ; fifth, that the Jews might remember that they held the land, not in proprietorship, but for their use, inasmuch as God reserved the *dominion* of it to himself." That is to say, God reserved a general dominion of the Jewish land to himself, but left a special dominion, or right to possess, to the individual Jew. At least, the land once assigned to him was proper to him, and no *other Jew* or *other man* had a right to take it away against his will; and this is what we call *property*. Or, in other words, God was the landlord of Judea, but not of every farm in Judea. As landlord of Judea he made land-laws for the whole country, but did not impose special stipulations upon every single Jew for the parcel of land he held. Thus monarchs and legislative powers make special laws regarding land ; but by this they in no way claim ownership of the land every individual holds, for such laws affect more the condition of the land-tenants than the condition of the land itself. It may be seen by this that the good effects Cornelius à Lapide enumerates in connection with the land-laws of the Jews would by no means also follow from Socialism or Communism ; for the Jews had Communism neither in respect to land nor to other possessions.

But granted even that they had, should it follow that all men and nations must adopt what God has prescribed for the Jews? Nobody can prove by this exceptional nation, with its exceptional mission and laws corresponding, that such laws are, or should be, a rule for all men, under binding obligation. If so, the Socialists might also be bound to keep the Jubilee year, which stood in close connection with the Jewish land-laws.

Yet methinks that the Socialists, or at least not a few of them, would prefer the inverse order of years, having forty-nine Jubilee years, and only the fiftieth year for laboring!

Granted, moreover, that there was once inaugurated a communistic state by positive divine law, for reasons of expediency; would this prove anything against the teaching of the Church? The Church of Christ has also its phases of Socialism. We find it in religious communities. But this Socialism of the Church is quite *essentially* different from modern Socialism. The former means free, voluntary renunciation of earthly goods, of land or any property, on account of higher, supernatural motives. This renunciation is made for the benefit of relatives or for the benefit of some community, the individual transferring the ownership to the same. However, such individuals do not condemn others for owning property; they do not think it a matter of necessity for all men, but a matter of convenience for themselves.

It is *Socialismus congruentiæ*, or congruent Socialism, in contradistinction to *Socialismus necessitatis*, or necessary Socialism, the form defended by modern Socialists in one or other way. I call it *necessary* Socialism because, from its very nature, all men would be bound to embrace it. For if it is an injustice towards God and towards man to own anything, or, in Mr. George's limitation, to own land, then certainly all men are bound in conscience, bound by moral necessity, to disavow all such ownership. I point to these kinds of Socialism, because a great many writers, perhaps also some Catholic writers, seem to confound them, like Mr. George, who, in modestly instructing the archbishop, says: "I may perhaps be permitted to call your attention to the fact that the very opinions which you stigmatize as opposed to the teaching of the Catholic Church are openly avowed not only by Catholic laymen and priests, but by prelates of official dignity not inferior to your own."

Without any doubt, if such laymen, priests, and prelates adhere to any form of Socialism, it is this *Socialismus congruentiæ*, as I have styled it, not the Socialismus of Mr. George—*i.e.*, *Socialismus necessitatis*. They cannot safely adhere to any other kind, because this last sort, I may boldly assert, is indeed opposed to the teaching of the Church. The gloss on *Summa Theol.*, quæst. lxxvi. (edition Drouix and Billuart), says

in a foot-note: "Ad fidem pertinet licere aliquid possidere tamquam *proprium*, quod patet ex Scriptura et Traditione"—"*It is a matter of faith* that it is allowed to possess *something* as *one's own*—*i. e.*, as *property*; as this is plainly proved in Scripture and Tradition." Land may just as well be understood by this "something"; at least we have, from the tenor of the sentence, no right to except it. Besides, Supreme Pontiffs of our day, sickening of Socialism, have more than once condemned it; and so the present Pope, Leo XIII., in his encyclical letter "*Quod munus apostolicum.*" Mr. Henry George tries, indeed, to find an argument in the words of Leo XIII. against the archbishop, for his land theory! Now, who understood the words of Leo XIII. better, Mr. George or the archbishop? If the archbishop misunderstood the encyclical, and thereby drew false conclusions in regard to ownership of land, Rome ought to have him censured and corrected. But Rome did not gainsay, though Rome is so much on the alert and the present Pope is so very watchful, as New York has already found out.

Neither does Mr. George point out any prelate infected with Socialism. Or shall perhaps Bishop Nulty, of Meath, be one of them? Mr. George quotes him saying: "There is a charm and peculiar beauty in the clearness with which the great social fact that the people are and always must be the rightful owners of the land

of their country reveals the wisdom and benevolence of the design of Providence in the admirable provision which was made for their wants and needs in that state of social existence of which he is the author.”

These words are simply approving nationalism, as the Church has always acknowledged the rights of nations. They imply no more nor less than what we read in Irish journals, in pastorals of Irish bishops, etc. : Ireland for the Irish, as France is for the French, Germany for the Germans. But in no way must these words be taken in a modern socialistic sense, inasmuch as a nation may possess some country as a nation, while individuals in such nation may own land as well as what the land produces. Thus do the Germans possess Germany, the French France, and thus should the Irish possess Ireland. And I may confidently presume that this is the meaning of Bishop Nulty in the above-quoted passage, which consequently does not bear out Mr. George in his contention.

Yet a social state may be planned in *sensu congruitatis*. For if the Socialism may be that of religious communities, which sometimes number thousands of members, why cannot we also transfer it to a state, of which we suppose the inhabitants and citizens freely renounce their property and individual rights for the sake of trial and expediency ? But this supposition includes the individual right of property *de jure*, although sus-

pended at the time *de facto*. This supposition respects the individual right and ownership at the very start of such Socialism, inasmuch as no one can by violence be deprived of his individual rights. It respects the right of individual ownership all through the duration of the socialistic compact, inasmuch as such state, after an unsuccessful trial, may fall back at any time to individual ownership. But these two points modern Socialists expressly deny. First, they do not wish to respect the right of individual ownership at the outset. For any one that does not freely acknowledge the socialistic state may be violently deprived of his right in individual property. Second, modern Socialism being once successfully inaugurated, Socialists do not deem it right and permissible to return to individual ownership. Therefore there is a difference between Socialism and Socialism; yet such a *congruent* socialistic state, as construed above for argument's sake, has a fitter place in the regions of the imagination than in the realms of reality.

It might have done for the old Germans, who lived on cheese, milk, and flesh-meat, but it would hardly answer nowadays, when cupidity and luxury are so much cherished and fostered. But if all the men of a nation, or even of the whole world, could reach that perfection of the apostles and of the first Christians, or of our religious communities; if a nation, or all men, so to say, would be nothing but a great and

universal convent, then it might work, and the Church would not gainsay it either theoretically or practically, but would say, Amen—*fiat*. But to reach that stage of perfection is only a privilege of a few—*qui potest capere, capiat*. And if there be Catholics—laymen, priests, or even prelates—who are dreaming, not, indeed, the wild dream of Mr. George and other Socialists, but the mild form I have sketched, let them dream ; they will wake up some time to the prosaic reality of to-day, which, at least in this respect, is yesterday's brother and to-morrow's also !

III. SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECT.

Mr. George sees great difficulties arise from the theory of individual ownership. "See in this city [New York] the results of individual property in land. Not half the area of New York City is yet built upon, yet hardly one family in ten can enjoy the comfort of a separate home ; while the poorer are huddled together under conditions which make health of body impossible and health of soul a miracle."

This is sadly true. But is the system of individual property and ownership of land the responsible cause of this deplorable condition of the many, especially in larger cities ? Is it the only cause for this lamentable state of affairs, and is the only remedy for a change to the better to be found in the tinkering of Socialists ?

Hoc post hoc, ergo propter hoc, is one of the sophisms of superficial thinkers. The answer I shall give at the close of this paper. For the present I take the liberty to point to some difficulties under which the theory and practice of modern Socialism labor. It will then appear that Mr. George and his colleagues are sitting in a glass house and should be careful not to throw stones.

Socialism and socialistic states are no novelty; they are almost as old as history. Lyncurgus introduced a sort of communistic education at Sparta. Plato, the great philosopher, excogitated the system of a communistic state; but Aristotle, no less a philosophical genius than his master, tears down the communistic building erected on sand. According to St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.*, ii. 2, quæst. lxvi. art. ii., he gives three reasons for the lawfulness of property individual: "It is necessary to have property for three reasons. First, because anybody is more solicitous to take care of anything that belongs to him alone, and not to all or many; else every one would shirk labor and leave to another one to do what concerns the common welfare, as it also happens when there are many servants in a house.

"Second, because the work is done in a better manner when the care of anything devolves on those intimately interested in it.

"Third, because by this men may be preserved in a more peaceful condition when every one is content with '*re suâ*'—with what is *his*.

Whence we see that amongst those who possess things in common and undivided very frequently disputes and strifes arise."

If I mistake not, these, or some of these, reasons are also given against Communism and Socialism in the archbishop's pastoral. Truly, the archbishop is not in bad company when he has Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas on his side. At different times in the past three hundred years, also, such errors have been broached by men who wrote their names on water, not on land.

Let us not only look from afar at the socialistic state, but let us enter it right away and see how weak is its foundation and how fragile its framework.

Mr. George would make the state the owner of the land. But the great and important questions are, Has the state, the socialistic state, a right, nay, a possibility to exist, according to his premises? And if, *per fas aut nefas*, it dare exist, would it have a right to own?

Queer as these questions may appear at first sight, they are quite justifiable here. If Mr. George admits a socialistic state, how large must that state be? How many inhabitants may it have? Perhaps fifty millions? Why not ten? And if ten millions, why not one million? And if one million, why not a hundred thousand? And if a hundred thousand, why not ten thousand, or one thousand, or a tribe? Why not a hundred,

or ten, or a family, the foundation of society? If a family, why not two persons? If two persons, why not *one* person, or an *individual*, who stands and acts independently—the social integer? Thus we come down to individual ownership, and we are forced to it, because the “state” is nothing but an *individuum morale*; and if a certain state *owns*, ownership, be it of land or anything else, is thereby *individualized*, is *property individual*.

And as the land is of God's creation, and therefore, according to Mr. George, for *all men* by equal right, whence has a nation or state, according to his theory, an exclusive right to the ownership of the land? For let us suppose there be a socialistic state formed out of these United States, and all at once, in California or some other State, rich gold-mines are found as in 1848-49; can the socialistic state here claim the exclusive ownership of such mines? May not any and every Socialist come over from Europe or from any nation, and have the same claim as any citizen of this country? And if Mr. George (as future President?) should attach the land and the mines in the name of the socialistic state, could not the gold-seekers justly retort his argument and say: “Why, the land and the gold contained in the land are God's creation, and God's creation is for *all men*”?

Moreover, can any socialistic state exclude immigrants, if all men have a right to God's

creation anywhere and at any time? So much is certain, that Socialism, in its last analysis and consequences, is radically and completely destructive of national rights and claims, for these are already in some way *individual*. A *socialistic state* is what philosophers call a *contradictio in terminis*. For Socialism, in its very nature and tendency, is and must be *international*: it knows only *one nation*, that is *mankind*; only *one state and territory*, that is this *terrestrial globe*! But the government, the man, to rule the whole world, must yet be found. The Roman emperors had a substantial portion of the world at their feet, and still they could not succeed. But without government there would be anarchy — *anarchy for the entire world*!

But granted that a socialistic state may have its rightful existence, how may the land be held by the individual? There is another difficulty to be met. According to Mr. George, every man has a claim to the land *à priori*, land being God's creation. All right; but then if every citizen of a socialistic state has a claim to the land, every one has also a claim to the *best land*. Now, in no country is the soil everywhere of the best, nor even of good, quality; there are also "bad lands." It is a physical impossibility to satisfy applicants on this head. And why, then, place Tom on a sand prairie, whilst Jerry gets good wheat-land for his share? Is the former not a citizen with equal rights as Jerry? And

will he not, perhaps, some year, after hard and unsuccessful labor, come to Jerry with his big sons, every one having a gun on his shoulder, and say to him: "Jerry, you have had the benefit of this good land about long enough; now, by George, you *must* take my farm out there on the sand-prairie, and I *shall* occupy yours" ? And so crowbar-brigades and wholesale evictions, even worse and more numerous than in Ireland, would be the order of the day. But may be the state will take matters in hand. What will it do? Perhaps what Cæsar relates the old Germans did—make them change place every other year? But Cæsar adds: "*Coguntur alio transire*—*They are forced to take every year another place.*" For this purpose the state would need a special army to evict stubborn land-tenants. And if, as it may be well presumed, many should not be willing, but, on the contrary, would resist with arms in hand, continual revolution and chronic warfare would ensue as a consequence. Yet Mr. George knows another way. He suggests it in his letter to the archbishop in the following words: "All we have to do, to secure the equal right to land and the exclusive right to improvement, is to make the community the virtual ground-landlord. And the easy and simple road to this is by abolishing all the taxes we now levy upon industry and the fruits of industry, and collecting our public revenues by taxation levied ultimately upon ground-values."

So the land would be taxed, according to his scheme, and presumably the possessor of good land taxed higher than the one holding inferior land. Good so far. But the levying of taxes involves assessment. This may work about as well as it does in non-socialistic governments! But when the produce fails, not only on account of the quality of the soil but from other causes, what then? What if a land-tenant has no crop, or only half a crop, on account of climate, of want of rain, or of too much sunshine? Then also this must be ascertained and assessed, to be just in collecting taxes. And this flexible sort of assessment is in the hand of officers who, in appraising reasonable and just rates, naturally depend on the declarations of those to be assessed. Would not such system give rise to fraud, bribery, perjury, and corruption, just as well as, and even more than, "the methods by which civilized governments at present collect the bulk of their revenues"? But then those very "ground-values" would be enhanced (and *appraised* accordingly) by *man's improvements*—*i.e.*, when built upon by those palaces and establishments with many apartments to which Mr. George refers with all the vulgarity of true socialistic rant and rot!

And granting there were no difficulty in the distribution and possession of land, there would still be a difficulty concerning its products. Mr. George makes a sharp distinction between them.

The land cannot be owned by an individual, but only held or possessed, as he terms it, as with a man who rents a farm. However, in a proper sense, the products of man may be "*owned.*" The reason is, because the former is God's creation, the latter man's production. "Man does not create," Mr. George is quite sure; "God alone creates. What man does is to produce or bring forth, and his production of material things consists in changing the place or form of what he finds already in existence. What individual labor produces, to that the individual right of ownership attaches, but it cannot justly attach to the reservoirs of nature. It attaches to any improvement that man makes, but it cannot attach to the substance and superficies of the globe."

According to this statement, land cannot be owned individually, but the improvement and productions of the land may be owned. A land-tenant may own the crop, because he is the producer of it by his labor. Now, is this really so? I ask, in the name of common sense, has God, the Creator, nothing to do with it? By whose power was the grain, sunk as a seed in the ground, brought forth, if not by God's power? By whose power, *mainly* and *principally*, is a crop growing? By man's power and by his labor? Holy Scripture, which Mr. George cites now and then, gives the answer to this: "So then neither he that planteth is anything,

nor he that watereth ; but God who giveth the increase ” (St. Paul, 1 Cor. iii. 7). Therefore, to be consequent, man has no right to own fully such produce. Advanced Socialists who follow out principles to their last conclusions do not admit such distinctions, but proclaim equality *in all things*, be it land or the products of men.

And, besides, land is not the only thing of God’s creation on which man produces. Some men, and a great many, have to do mental work. And for this they use their intellects, with many or few talents, just as God has endowed them. And certainly their mental faculties are also of God’s creation.

Now let us take two men, the one gifted with great talents—a genius ; the other one less endowed, or even stupid. Both, let us suppose, have made their preparatory studies in equal time and with equal diligence. They compose a poem or a treatise on some subject. The genius turns out a better composition and gets twenty-five dollars for it ; the other one, his work being inferior, only ten dollars, though perhaps he has worked longer and harder at it than the former. It can be seen the genius evidently sells his genius ; at least in this instance he has brought fifteen dollars by it. Has he a right to them ? Not according to Mr. George, because the genius is also of God’s creation. A similar instance will hold in the domain of art.

To make things right, and to be just to the laborer, only time and toil should increase the value of work in literature, science, and art, without reference to scientific attainments or artistic skill. Such arrant twaddle a great many Socialists really defend, yet they are not inconsequent in so doing, as I have demonstrated.

But the realization of such ideas would mean nothing if not the *complete destruction of art and science*. The thinker, the literary man, will not trouble himself to put good and deep thoughts into his books, nor the artist to form a masterpiece. Neither will they give close application to study; they simply need to work very long and hard, no matter what monstrosity of a product may come forth! Indeed a bitter fruit from the socialistic tree!

And not only human reason but also Holy Scripture—which Mr. George claims to be with him!—is adverse to the distinction between land, or God's creation, on the one side, and man's production, or the result of human effort, on the other.

Thus we read in Deut. vi. 10-18: "And when the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land, for which he swore to thy fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: and shall have given thee great and goodly cities, *which thou didst not build*; houses full of riches, which thou *didst not set up*; cisterns which thou *didst not dig*; vineyards and olive-yards, which

thou *didst not plant* ; and thou shalt have eaten and be full : take heed diligently lest thou forget the Lord, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. . . . And do that which is pleasing and good in the sight of the Lord, that it may be well with thee ; and going in thou mayst *possess the goodly land*, concerning which the Lord swore to thy fathers." In this passage land created by God, and things produced by man, are placed on the same level and in the same category when transferred by God to the Jews. Why, according to Mr. George, God ought to have said : " You may possess the land, but let the products in the vineyards and oliveyards, etc., be taken by the producers, for ' he who erects a house or improves a farm has a clear title to the building or improvement.' " But the Lord says : " The land is mine, and also the houses and cisterns and vineyards, every product and improvement mine." The " Lord " makes no distinction like Mr. George's ! And, therefore, the sacred books bring Mr. George to this dilemma : if they prove his land theory, making God alone the owner of land to the exclusion of man, they are thereby against his produce theory, inasmuch as human productions are treated in the same way by God—taken from the Chanaanites and given to the Jews. Or if they prove his produce theory, giving man a clear title distinct from that to the land, God

would have committed an injustice in some way by taking away man's produce, together with God's creation, land, with the improvement thereof. But this cannot be admitted. God owns everything by principal dominion, by supreme and general title. "*Domini est terra et plenitudo ejus*—The earth with its plenitude is the Lord's." Now, if God assumes *supreme dominion over both*, over *man's produce* as well as *His own creation*, why shall man have *no inferior dominion over both*, over *God's creation* and *his own produce*? This is the intrinsic objection against making such sharp distinctions between ownership of land and the productions of man. But there are extrinsic objections besides. Mr. George fancies that, by severing land from individual ownership, the miseries of this world will be diminished; that they may even cease! The evil of the day is monopoly, and this powerful and voracious monster grows out directly from the present notion of property, of land-property especially! But *his* land scheme cuts the head off the hydra trying to wind its crushing coils around the whole world! Thus says Mr. George: "It is because we discard the admirable provision of the Creator, and permit individuals to take what was manifestly intended for *all*, and thus put a premium upon the monopolizing of natural opportunities, that invention and discovery bring curses instead of blessings, and all our prodigious advances in art serve but to

widen the gulf between the very rich and the very poor.”

Mr. George serenely promises a golden era, freeing mankind from the iron shackles of monopoly. Still, a close observer may well doubt of such a consummation, and suspect that at least the *Georgium Sidus*, beam it never so brightly, will not herald that dawn. Monopoly will not be swept away by giving all men an equal access and right to the land; it will be simply transferred to another field, from land to products, which may be owned with “clear title,” according to Mr. George. Now, if they can be owned, they can be stored up, can be bought and sold, can be speculated upon, like immovable things. There we have the capitalist, the speculating millionaire, before us again. In fact, monopoly nowadays wields greater influence in the produce-market than in the land-market. It is on produce especially—on wheat, on cotton, etc.—where the “bulls” and the “bears” do revel, “cornering” each other and pressing the “lambs” to the wall to be “fleeced.” It is by speculating on produce chiefly that our millionaires have gathered their fortunes. Will this be done away with by Mr. George’s scheme? Any one may *own* produce; this gives him the title to *gather* produce or an equivalent in money, as much as he likes. And if his heirs do the same for generations, will “the gulf between the very rich and the very

poor" be narrowed? May be Mr. George annuls the right of inheritance as a means against accumulation of riches. At least he would be consequent in doing so; for if an individual may have a clear title of ownership to that *only* which he produces, heirship may be questioned; for the heir owns, not *his* produce, but the produce of the *bequeather*. It is, therefore, against all sound reasoning to divide ownership the way Mr. George does. It would not do for him to stand with one foot on individual and with the other on common property; he is compelled either to place both feet upon individual land—*i.e.*, to adopt individual ownership *for land and produce*—or he must set both on Communism, and proclaim the right of equality not only for land but also for its produce. The Socialists commonly disavow ownership in regard to both, and they are consequent in this, as I have shown. I doubt not that Mr. George has drawn the last consequences to his theory—he is logician enough for that—but he may not deem it opportune to publish them at present and so let the cat out of the bag too soon. He does not want to give too great a dose of poison at once, but to administer it drop by drop to make its deadly effect more certain and more general. To what exorbitant consequences full-fledged Socialism is leading is not the object of this article to portray. I leave that to the Socialists themselves, to whom properly such a

task belongs. Besides, it were a kind of herculean labor to attempt a refutation of such socialistic systems in their last details. They are like the Lernean hydra: when you cut off one difficulty, a number of others will crop out at once. These systems are like the famous Labyrinth of Crete: if any one attempt to wind his way through them, he cannot find a road to get out. They are like the *Fata Morgana*—fascinating the multitude by visionary fortunes; and, alas! only too many are deceived and follow blindly to the social abyss.

Better that we stay in the old social building, which is no air-castle; which has been a practical, a living reality for thousands of years; which is plain in its architecture and based on a solid foundation. It is shattered, indeed, and in need of repair; but let it be renovated, or even rebuilt, according to the old plan, and it will be an agreeable dwelling again.

IV. THE ROOT OF SOCIAL EVILS.

“There is something rotten in Denmark”—there are social evils even amongst civilized nations; no one can deny this, or he must be struck with threefold blindness. But the old theory of property is not the cause of the wide gulf existing between the rich and the poor; that is not the root of the social plant which is said to thrive on the misery of the oppressed class of men. Mr. George admits this himself, in remarkable words

which I shall quote later on. The real cause is not an *error of understanding*, running to false conclusions about property, as Mr. George imagines; the cause is an *error of the heart* by cherishing its insatiate greed for property. St. Paul tells it in simple yet striking language: "*Radix enim omnium malorum est cupiditas—The root of all evils is cupidity*" (Tim. vi.) Of *all evils*—then certainly also of the social evils; also of the social evils of our time, which Mr. George so feelingly and justly enumerates—all honor to him for that!

Yes, *cupidity* is the feeder to the extravagance of the so-called "upper classes" dwelling in palaces, driving around in princely carriages, or walking haughtily in silk and velvet; *cupidity* is the fever that consumes those of lower station who burn to be ranked with the "quality"; *cupidity* is the unhappy mother of Dives and his brethren; of their cruel oppressions, their grasping monopolies, spinning like spiders their nets to entice helpless victims; *cupidity*, thence, is the cause for the existence of the poor Lazaruses who are dwelling in unhealthy tenement-houses and subsisting on what can scarcely be called diet; *cupidity* is a very canker-worm that gnaws and gnaws at the vitals of the body politic and social—*cupidity is the root of all evils!* There the axe must be laid. But I am afraid our time may be apt to fall into such an error as was committed at the time of the so-called Reforma-

tion. Religious reform was necessary and the cry for it was echoed on all sides. But the remedy was not applied by the would-be Reformers in the right place. Religion needed not reformation by man, but man by religion. "Homines per sacra immutari fas est, non sacra per homines," are the words of Ægidio di Viterbo, a man who well knew the distemper of his time. And in a similar way these words, *mutatis mutandis*, may be applied to our day, when the cry for social reform is sounding from one end of the civilized world to the other. *The property of man is not to be reformed, but the man of property!* Take avarice out of the heart and the social evils will cease of themselves.

Socialism does not do away with this evil root, and therefore the tree with bitter fruits still grows.

V. SOLUTION OF THE SOCIAL QUESTION.

The flood of social evils is swelling continually. Day by day mankind is submerged deeper and deeper. Now, are there no means to rescue mankind from this deluge? Is there no axe sharp enough to destroy the root of such evils? Is there no medicine with sufficient sanative power to heal the gaping wound, is there no balm in Gilead? Yes, there *is* help for poor, suffering mankind, if man wishes to help himself. But this help is not to be sought in Social-

ism, which has only drastic counter-irritants and violent narcotics to beguile and to stifle with a vengeance the woes and complaints of society for a time, but which has no efficient remedy for healing the social wound itself. The ulcer, if cured only superficially, would fester, ay, soon break out in another place and with greater virulence. There must be had a radical cure, and, thanks be to God! there is a radical means to accomplish it; it is contained in the Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy. I have read several treatises and articles on the social question, but, strange enough, nowhere have I found these words even alluded to. And yet if St. Paul had been writing for our times, to tell us, in the short and terse way peculiar to him, how to proceed to save mankind from social calamities, he could not have written more pointedly. They are wonderfully adapted to the present wants of society, and worthy of being unearthed and brought out of their obscurity. I shall give the text first in full, and afterwards analyze it: "But piety with sufficiency is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and certainly we can carry nothing out of it. But having food, and wherewith to be covered, with these let us be content. For they who will become rich fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For covetousness is the root of all evils; which some desiring

have erred from faith and have entangled themselves in many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, fly these things : and pursue justice, piety, faith, charity, patience, meekness" (1 Tim. vi. 6-11).

St. Paul is doubtless a good teacher—a physician of souls prescribing for their cure by his inspired teachings. He is called "*Doctor gentium*"—a doctor for all people ; good enough also for our times.

Now, he sets to work like a doctor who has a wounded patient before him. First he makes the diagnosis : " You have the dangerous wound of cupidity, of covetousness, O mankind ! " he says, " which deprives you of happiness, temporal and eternal ; but a great *gain* is piety with sufficiency." Then washing the sore and removing the irritations which keep it open, he draws out the thorn which rested deep in the wound. " For we brought nothing," he continues, " into this world, and certainly we can carry nothing out." Mark how softly and deftly he draws out the thorn, that craving in the heart of even the poorest man which allows him no rest and the wound of cupidity no healing. " But having food, and wherewith to be covered, with these *let us be content.*" He proceeds gradually and probes the wound—and oh ! it is a gaping wound. " For they who will become rich fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men in

destruction and perdition." A deep wound, indeed, ever spreading farther and farther, is this cupidity ; other vices are as its ill-omened progeny—luxury, injustice, impiety, hard-heartedness, drunkenness, and God knows how many other temptations and snares of the devil. And many useless, even noxious, desires spring forth from it—desires to grasp together everything possible by combination of capital, by monopolies, corners, pools, syndicates, and similar means, which finally drive their poor human victims to despair, ruin, and perdition. Is it not as if St. Paul had in view all these unjust and hazardous, though at the same time fascinating, modes of money-making employed in our day, which wreck the fortunes, the welfare of thousands? Alas! cupidity is truly a deep, a very deep wound, reaching down to the very core of social life, to the mainspring of the social fabric. "*For covetousness is the root of all evils.*" There the doctor detects the prime source of the social malady. With this is closely connected another evil, no less pernicious than the first—loss of faith. "Some desiring have lost faith." Are not the thousands of lukewarm Christians, of fallen-away Catholics, a sad proof of these words of St. Paul? They were avaricious for the things of this world, they heaped up riches and gained earthly goods ; but, alas! at the same time, forgetful of their duties towards God and man, they lost the most precious gift—they lost faith. And

their appetite became greater, but with this also their troubles : "and desiring they have entangled themselves in many sorrows."

So it was in the time before Christ, as ancient history attests, especially the history of Rome, where between the richer and poorer classes a continual warfare was going on, ending only with the downfall of the empire. And so, in many woes, the victims of cupidity have been worried in our time by strikes and boycotts, by popular upheavals and scenes of destruction of the most alarming kind. And if the wealthy classes do not curb and even suppress their greedy propensities, their cupidity, the last state of society will be worse than the first under pagan civilization. This wound of cupidity will bring direr evils upon the actual body politic of civilized mankind.

Now, the great apostle, making the prognosis for the patient, prescribes as a skilful physician, in strong and solemn words, and orders the patient to diet himself : "Flee these things." Then he applies a sixfold plaster to close and heal the wound : "But thou, O man of God ! fly these things : and pursue justice, piety, faith, charity, patience, meekness."

These six virtues are so many means to cure wounded society. They are sufficient ; there need not be one more ; there should not be one less. All should *pray* for these and sincerely *seek* where they may be found. Let us note the order in which St. Paul places them.

In the foreground are faith and charity. Indeed, these are the fundamental virtues even in social life. "For all our sufficiency is from God," and without him we "can do nothing." If he does not build, the workmen build in vain; if he does not help to reconstruct and reform society, all endeavor is of little or no avail.

Society, says Mr. George, is divided into two classes, the very rich and very poor; in fact, the so-called middle class is reduced year by year, and the gap between them is widened every day.

Now, let us place these two divine virtues, faith and charity, in the breach, in this widening gulf, and see how they will work towards the very rich. First they will produce piety—piety towards *God*. For faith will teach the rich one that he also has been created by God; that he has received from the hands of God all the goods he possesses. "Oh! why dost thou glory, as if thou didst not receive; for every good gift comes from God, the Father of lights." Therefore faith will make the rich man bow down in gratitude to God, with whom there is no distinction of persons, but who will rigorously judge the rich according to their great responsibility.

Faith united with piety will produce *justice towards man*; for faith teaches, and piety sweetly attracts to the benign teaching, that before the throne of God we are all alike; that we have all the same Father in heaven, to whom we pray daily: "Our Father, who art in heaven."

Faith united with piety will make man understand that not only are all men equal before God, but that they are also *brethren* amongst themselves, created and redeemed by the Almighty, who extends his love to all alike. It will teach Dives that the poor man, though clad in rags, has also *his* rights, which cannot be ignored, much less trodden under foot ; that he has a right to just wages for the work he has done—"For the laborer is worthy of his hire" ; that it is even a sin, crying to Heaven for vengeance, to withhold the just earnings and wages of the poor. Moreover, faith with piety will bring the rich man to take compassion on the poor, in not only dealing justly but also charitably with them, as Christ urges on almost every page of the Gospel, and as those types of Christian life, the saints of God, have always done.

Let us see, next, how faith and charity will work towards the opposite class, the poor. First, they will produce the virtue of *patience towards God*—*i. e.*, patience for God's sake. Faith will teach the poor man that for everything he suffers in this world he will receive a hundred-fold reward in eternity, "for the sufferings of this world are not to be compared to the glory to be manifested on us." And how abundantly God rewards the poor ! Christ vividly brings this to mind in the parable of the poor Lazarus, who, after a miserable life, reaped eternal joy and happiness. Faith, moreover, will teach the

poor laboring man that labor in the sweat of his brow is indeed a curse, inflicted upon every man since the fall of the first man ; but that this curse was changed into a blessing by our Saviour, who, by his example in laboring himself, makes this yoke sweet and this burden light ; who, by his life of labor, made labor honorable, and whose toil-roughened hands are no less a sign of honor for the laboring class than his Five Wounds are a sign of glory for the faithful in general. In both these things, also, did the great apostle glory—in the wounds of Christ and in the labor of his own hands !

Finally, it is the laboring class Christ invites to himself : “Come ye all who labor [labor in its literal sense, also] and are burdened, for I will refresh you.” He never spoke such words to the rich, who seek to make their heaven in this world, like Dives in the Gospel ; on the contrary, for such he has very alarming words.

Such faith, if it has some lively hold on the hearts of the poor, will make them bow down in resignation before God, and say : “Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread ; we are content with that.”

Faith, with patience towards God, will also bring the poor and suffering man into harmony and sympathy with his fellow-men, even though they be rich. These two virtues will produce another virtue, which St. Paul mentions last, though it is not the least—*meekness towards*

man. Faith, in union with patience, will draw out that thorn of cupidity which sticks in the heart of even the poorest man, of one who cannot call a cent's worth his own.

These virtues will do away with that insatiable craving of the human heart which causes envy and hatred against the rich—passions which, when aroused to fury, end in destruction of life and property, as we have many times witnessed. Patience and meekness lost, wrath and resentment and revenge rankling in the heart of the Lazaruses soon burst out in the form of pillage and bloodshed. It is true, the dissatisfied laborers are mostly embittered by the possessing-class; yet, as I have said before, if the rich be imbued with faith, fear of God, and piety, and in consequence should exercise justice and charity towards the poor, would it be promising too much for the poor to say that they would then be patient and meek? And what special reason have the poor, after all, to envy the rich and to antagonize society, when they may be contented, like St. Paul, with food and where-with to be covered? Can not the poor man earn just as much reward by being virtuous as the rich man? "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Now, if wounded society is treated with the medicine prescribed by St. Paul, I may venture to say that it will be cured radically, and the social aches and woes will cease and the social

question be solved to satisfaction. But may not Mr. George answer to all this, with Shakspeare: "I have a smile"? Will he not take this for a mere dream to be smiled at? Perhaps not. Perhaps he knows that history speaks for my arguments. Perhaps he remembers his own interesting words, which I have promised to give. "Practically, however," says Mr. George, "we do in these modern times treat land as something which individuals may own almost as fully as they own things produced by labor; and this is the reason that, with all our unquestionable advances, we are cursed with pauperism and want unknown in that ruder state of society which existed in what are sometimes called the 'dark ages'—those dark ages in which, without labor-saving machines, our fathers built cathedrals beside which yours is but a pretty miniature; those dark ages in which *no one feared the inability to make a living*, and in which, save when caused by war or famine, *absolute want was unknown*." Ah, so! I am very much obliged to Mr. George for this declaration. "Iniquitas mentita est sibi." Mr. George knows of a time when there was no "social question"; he pronounces a eulogy on those "dark" or middle ages which need not, in this connection, be stronger. And it is true, true to the letter, what he has said of those ages. If any one takes time to read the first volume of the celebrated historian, J. Janssen, *History of the German*

People from the end of the Middle Ages, he will find ample proof for it. But does Mr. George also know that during those "dark" ages Socialism, Communism, and similar "isms" were also things absolutely unknown? Does he know, further, that in those times individual property was held and land owned under tenures like our own? Yea, in the worst form even—in the form of monopoly! For, as Janssen the historian relates, in the middle ages land was owned mostly by aristocrats, by dukes, counts, bishops, abbots. Free peasants owning land were in the minority. This state of things obtained not only in Germany, adds the historian, but in most of the European countries of that time. Now, what was the cause of the blissful condition of those dark ages, so conspicuously absent from our times?

Certainly, not the theory of Communism; that was unknown. There was individual ownership in land, sanctioned by civil and ecclesiastical law. Therefore, individual ownership cannot be such a curse as Mr. George represents it, or the sole cause of poverty in our time and country. If it were it should have been so in the time of the middle ages. Mr. George mistakes. The causes of the social welfare of those "dark" ages are the same as I have enumerated above—the six social virtues: Faith and Charity amongst all; Justice and Piety amongst the rich; Patience and Meekness amongst the poor. With these six

social virtues, which are the conservative forces of society, those ages were permeated, as to all classes of people, as every one acquainted with the history of the middle ages should know. It was a time of lively faith combined with profound piety, as the splendid cathedrals and other church monuments, to which Mr. George refers, prove to this very day. And springing from this there was a strong sense of justice towards everybody, particularly the poor and laboring class, evidenced by innumerable works of charity, the shadows of which project into our time by the traditional existence of hospitals, asylums, hospices, and other institutions for the public welfare dating from the "dark" ages. Those times were animated by the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi, who with his spiritual sons, the Franciscans, so vividly exemplified the six social virtues mentioned by St. Paul. And if our time does not return to these principles—to faith and charity, to justice and piety, to patience and meekness—society will crumble to pieces. Legislatures may help a great deal, but they as well as governments must be pervaded by this spirit, else the blind will be leading the blind, to the fatal detriment of both. Organizations are very useful, and nowadays, as an antidote, they are even necessary; but they, too, must make these six virtues their platform of principles. Otherwise, instead of helping to solve the social question, they will help to dissolve society and

hasten the social catastrophe feared by all, and even predicted by some.

Shall it come ? Well, anybody having read the foregoing pages may form the answer for himself. But whether this catastrophe may be averted or not, it is the duty of every man and of every Christian to lend a helping hand to abate our crying social evils by his talents, his means, and his position in life. Thus, if it cannot be averted altogether, its time, at least, might be shortened and its fury diminished. The Church of Christ will surely throw open her door to the poor sufferer, Society, since she has always sided with the poor and the suffering, as her Founder commanded her to do : “ Have care for the poor ; the poor you have always with you ” ; even as he commissioned her to preach the Gospel to the poor—*Evangelizare pauperibus*. So the Church has ever complied with this mandate. By real *Catholic charity* she has lavished attentions upon the poor, in every country and of every time. Indeed, if a detailed history was written on this subject, the words of St. John might be verified, “ that the world could not contain the books ” relating what the Church, in her pontiffs, in her priests, in her religious orders, in her charitable institutions, in her Saints, has done for poor, suffering mankind. Yet there is no need of this ; all the world not yet blind in hatred against God and God’s Church knows and acknowledges it. And so also, in future, the Church will

move on without fear, and teach society, though shaken to its very foundation, the true way to social happiness, by reminding every man, *the rich* and *the poor*, of those salutary words of St. Paul: Flee those systems of Naturalism and Socialism and Communism: but thou, O man of God, O Christian, follow justice, piety, faith, charity, patience, meekness.

“ Under which king, Bezonian ? Speak, or die ! ”