Henry Valder in New Zealand; the results of the Lincoln Incentive System and the McCormick Multiple Management in U.S.A.; and similar examples? There is something to be learnt from them surely, not only from their financial but their human results. If they went into the discussion with 'prayer and fasting', with a full consciousness of their supernatural responsibility, perhaps a Catholic view of the common good would evolve, which Catholics could place before their own party candidates and party organisations, and before the public whenever necessary or appropriate, and insist upon its receiving full consideration. *And in such conditions it would get it.*

This has ended in a defence of ownership, where indeed any political discussion must end, for the materials of politics are the social and economic needs and activities of men. So it may be appropriate in conclusion to emphasise the one prime requisite of any Catholic approach to the question of property and its expounding to the world at large—the necessity of poverty. 'The paradox of the Catholic position today', wrote the Editor of BLACKFRIARS just a year ago, 'is that while the Church has to defend the natural right to ownership she may not preach property but poverty. . . . The defence of property must be guaranteed by the preaching of poverty.'[26] This poverty, this being 'poor in spirit'[27] which is detachment from material things, is of universal application to rich and poor alike, and without the conscious practising of it in industrial relations all our efforts and our preaching will be vain.

It is a colossal task, impossible of accomplishment in our own time perhaps, but surely one all the more urgent to be begun. And surely it is a task worthy of Catholics 'to build a new world, to define and prepare the structures which will permit man to be fully man, in a City worthy of him, to transfigure all things in order to make of them a Christian world'[28].

CHARLES GRAHAM HOPE.

CATHOLIC SOCIOLOGY

CATHOLIC sociology may perhaps best be described as the mind of the Church on social questions. It is the application to social life (man in society) of the universal concepts of the faith. This is the first thing to be grasped about Catholic sociology, that it is essentially an inference from Catholic theology, and such as could be made therefore by anyone having a perfect knowledge of the faith.

26 *Ibid.*, July, 1948, p. 307.
27 *Matthew*, v., 2.
28 Cardinal Suhard, op. cit., p. 83.

As a matter of fact, however, the social implications of Catholic theology have been worked out at a very high level, so that there is in existence today a code of social principles which may be correctly described as the authoritative teaching of the Church on social questions. The corpus or main body of such teaching is to be found in various Papal encyclicals from the time of Leo XIII.

The nature and scope of Catholic sociology are well indicated in the following passage from *Quadragesimo Anno* in which Pope Pius XI asserts the right of the Church to pontificate on social questions:

> We must lay down the principle long since clearly established by Leo XIII, that it is Our right and Our duty to deal authoritatively with social and economic problems. It is not, of course, the office of the Church to lead men to transient and perishable happiness only, but to that which is eternal; indeed the Church believes that it would be wrong for her to interfere without just cause in such earthly concerns. But she never can relinquish her God-given task of interposing her authority, not indeed in matters of technique, for which she has neither the equipment nor the mission, but in all those that fall under the moral law. With regard to these, the deposit of truth entrusted to Us by God, and Our weighty office of declaring, interpreting and urging, in season and out of season, the entire moral law, demand that both the social order and economic life be brought within Our supreme jurisdiction.

The Church therefore stands pre-eminently for the primacy of the spiritual, and the subordination of all human activities to the moral law. Whilst specifically disclaiming authority in matters of mere economic organisation or technique, she asserts very clearly her right to interpret the entire social and economic order in the light of those immutable principles which we call the moral law. The social question is in fact largely a moral question, and the Church's mission here as in other spheres is the promulgation of truth, and the correction of error.

A large part of Catholic social teaching is devoted to exposing the philosophy underlying the social system known as Industrial Capitalism. By Capitalism is here meant the economic aspect of that philosophy of liberal individualism which was the religion of the nineteenth century. To quote Mr Christopher Dawson:

> This creed—and the social and economic order which arose from it—is entirely inconsistent with Catholic principles and was in fact the most dangerous enemy and rival that the Catholic Church had to meet in modern times. It is a philosophy of separation and irresponsibility which breaks up the moral organism of society into a chaos of competitive individualism. It denies the sovereignty of the moral law in the economic world, the principle

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of authority in politics and the existence of an objective divine truth in religion. It makes self-interest the supreme law in economics, the will of the majority the sovereign power in the State, and private opinion the only arbiter in religious matters. (*Religion and the Modern State.*)

The heresy of Capitalism lies in its assertion of the primacy of economics, making self-interest the guiding principle of economic life. If, it is argued, individuals are left free to pursue their own economic advantage not only will this lead to the maximum creation of wealth, but also ultimately to the common good. The Church on the other hand teaches that all economic activities must be tempered by the virtues of Justice and Charity, and the entire social and economic order must be conducted within the framework of Christian morality.

The socialist solution for the evils of capitalist society is condemned as being a gross simplification; a crude attempt to circumvent the moral problem by concentrating economic power in the hands of the State.

The truth is that the Christian solution to the social problem (in so far as it is permissible to use such language) is nothing less than the transcendence of social and economic life by Christian morality. The Christian social order can only be the fruit of Christian thought and practice, and consequently any merely human or technical remedy such as for example Socialism, or the Beveridge scheme for a centrally planned economy, is essentially inadequate. In the words of M. Maritain—

A Christian political order in the world is not to be artificially constructed by diplomatic means; it is a product of the spirit of faith. It presupposes a living practical faith in the majority, a civilisation with the impress of theology and the acknowledgement of all the rights of God in the life of the State. (*The Things that are not Caesar's.*)

The first principle of Catholic social teaching is concerned with that moral or religious attitude towards work which we call vocational. 'As regards bodily labour', writes Pope Leo XIII, 'even had man never fallen from the state of innocence, he would not have remained wholly unoccupied; but that which would then have been his free choice and his delight, became afterwards compulsory, and the painful expiation for his disobedience. "Cursed be the earth in thy work; in thy labour thou shalt eat of it all the days of thy life".'

Work therefore has a religious significance which is entirely beyond the scope of Capitalism. Fundamentally, work should be considered not as a means to economic advantage, but as a burden to be borne; a means whereby a man must vindicate himself; a

part of the way of redemption. Consequently it follows that the social order is not a rich field awaiting exploitation, but a divine order in which a man must humbly and responsibly find his proper place.

All this may perhaps sound very idealistic, but let anyone consider the alternative, which indeed is not far to seek. If the social question is not solved at the spiritual level it will be solved at the political level, and instead of the divine transcendent order of Catholic theology we shall be offered the closed order of the State-planned society.

The enthusiasm for the planned society is easily explained. Order and intelligibility are a permanent aspiration of the human mind, and this Capitalism by its nature is manifestly unable to fulfil. Capitalism is today a thoroughly discredited system; not so much hated for its injustice as despised for its meanness, and it is obvious that a solution of some kind is to be found.

However, *Nemo dat quod non habet*, no one can give that which he has not got, and it was not to be expected that a secularist society could aspire to the God-centred spiritual order of Christian sociology. Instead we are offered the spurious political alternative of the Planned Society, in which Charity (the love of God) is replaced by political allegiance, and Justice (the rendering to each according to his due) is to consist of statutory obligations and benefits, largely in the form of social services.

It ought to be sufficiently obvious that it is quite inadequate to oppose such a solution on a mere negative defence of the present system. Anyone who has studied for example Professor Hayek's book *The Road to Serfdom* will realise how inadequate a textbook it is for the Catholic sociologist. 'Coincidence of individual ends' is apparently Mr Hayek's equivalent of the natural law.

The Catholic vocational order carries with it certain practical implications which it was precisely the purpose of the Encyclicals to indicate. It is not of course the function of the Church to work out the implications of Catholic theology down to the last detail, but there are certain inferences from Catholic teaching which are so strong that they can themselves be erected into secondary, or social principles, and these are clearly laid down in the Encyclicals. The great practical implications of Catholic social teaching are expressed in the doctrine of Subsidiary Function, and its corollary, Ownership.

Subsidiary Function is described by Pius XI in the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* as follows:

It is indeed true, as history clearly proves, that owing to changed

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circumstances much that was formerly done by small groups can nowadays only be done by large associations. None the less, just as it is wrong to withdraw from the individual and commit to a group what private enterprise and industry can accomplish, so too is it an injustice, a grave evil and a disturbance of right order, for a larger and higher association to arrogate to itself functions which can be performed efficiently by small and lower societies. This is a fundamental principle of social philosophy, unshaken and unchangeable. Of its very nature the true aim of all social activity should be to help members of the social body, but never to destroy or absorb them.

Ownership is expressed quite simply by Leo XIII as follows: 'The law, therefore, should favour ownership, and its policy should be to induce as many as possible of the people to become owners'.

It is perhaps insufficiently realised that these principles of subsidiary function, and ownership are not a mere arbitrary taste in size, but the very test and condition of the Catholic vocational order. A society in which subsidiary function and ownership flourish is a society in which economic activities are conducted within the context of, and subordinate to the Catholic doctrine of the human person, and where the social pattern is not therefore distorted by wrong ideas and practices, such as for example Capitalism, or its false antithesis, Socialism. Consequently the extent to which subsidiary function and ownership are practised is a fair criterion of the element of vocation in any particular society.

These tests have of course to be applied intelligently, for, as Pius XI says, 'much that was formerly done by small groups can nowadays only be done by large associations'. Applying these tests to modern society, however, I do not think it can be seriously contended that these principles are followed to any appreciable extent.

What element of subsidiarity, or vocation, is there for example in multiple milling, brewing, tailoring, etc.? Or take the following extract from a recent annual report of a well-known furnishing company:

> Since the close of the year under review your subsidiary company . . . has acquired at a cost of £823,071 a 57 per cent holding of the ordinary capital of the old-established business of the B—— Furniture Co. Ltd., which company in turn controls the C—— Furniture Co. Ltd., and W—— and Co. Ltd., Canada. This brings a further 159 shops and warehouses within our group, making a total of over 400 shops and warehouses dealing in furniture in the United Kingdom and the Dominions. The total cost of this acquisition has been provided and paid for out of the financial resources of the —— and —— group of companies.
>
> I am also pleased to report to you that your board has in the

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current year acquired over 90 per cent of the ordinary share capital in the T—— P—— Works Ltd., one of the largest manufacturers of plywood in the country. The purchase has been carried out on an exchange of shares basis which has received the sanction of H.M. Treasury and which has involved the issue of some 159,500 new G—— 5s. ordinary shares since the date of the accounts under review. In addition your company has agreed to guarantee the principal and interest on 105,000 5½ per cent preference shares of £1 each in T—— P—— Works Ltd.

It is the intention to extend our furniture-manufacturing business in conjunction with this company. The purpose of the acquisition is to provide us with a very large quantity of plywood for our furniture-manufacturing activities. Your board consider that both these acquisitions will prove to be most suitable and profitable investments.

What is there vocational about that?

The failure of the Catholic social movement must be attributed in part at least to the unwillingness of Catholic societies and individuals to face the practical implications of Catholic sociology. The economic assumptions of Capitalism were considered so strong as to be unassailable, and consequently much Catholic effort has taken place within the constricting framework of a false secularist philosophy. We have had in fact the highly incongruous position of Catholic sociology being transcended by Capitalist economic theory.

There is really no excuse for this defeatism today, because Capitalism is being challenged very heavily on its own ground—that of production and efficiency. It is becoming increasingly realised that the prosperity of nineteenth century industrial capitalism was literally based on sand, and that the economics of exploitation are finding their nemesis in the dust-bowls of the Middle West.

In the words of Lord Northbourne, 'What is required today is a more humble attitude towards the elemental things of life'. These words should be pondered by every Catholic sociologist, for they contain practically the whole of the philosophy underlying the Catholic idea of vocation. In fact anyone who wishes to supplement his reading of the encyclicals cannot do better than study the work of the school of writers headed by Lord Northbourne, the Earl of Portsmouth, H. J. Massingham, etc., where he will find the economics of vocation advocated not as an ideal, but as a matter of necessity.

J. A. Riley.

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