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The Contrast

Between Roman Catholic and Protestant Economic Ethics,

with especial reference

to the Papal Encyclicals and the Max Weber Thesis

being a Thesis presented by

Hillis Spilman McKenzie

to the University of St. Andrews

in application for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy



2162

I hereby declare that the following Thesis is based on the results of research carried out by me, that the Thesis is my own composition, and that it has not previously been presented for a higher degree.

The research was carried out in :

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## INTRODUCTION

It is probably trite to assert that in these days of the "cold war" the economic ethics of capitalism are on trial before the uncommitted peoples of the world. But the Christian Church -- at least the Church of the western world -- is also on trial for the institutions associated with capitalism have grown within a Christian frame. While the Christian churches can neither accept all the credit nor receive all the blame for the morality which capitalism entails, there can be little doubt that Christian Doctrines have been influential in its formation. To examine that influence and to see the contrast between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant views of the economic order -- from the background of their historical theological perspectives -- is the purpose of this study.

The method that has been followed owes much to James Hastings Nichol's excellent analysis, Democracy and the Churches. As in that work, I have attempted to piece together, however imperfectly, the growth of a body of thought by looking first at one set of opinions, and then at the other.

Chapter I attempts to give some of the historical antecedents of Christian economic concern before the rise of definitely capitalistic influences. In Chapter II the groundwork for Roman Catholic Ethics is seen both in the light of Thomistic Theology and in the face of a changing social order which never attained the permanency which St. Thomas visualized as part of its ideal.

Turning to the economic thought of the Reformers, Chapter III discusses the differences between Luther and Calvin, as well as the wider separation between them and the established Church. Included within this Chapter is an analysis of the famed "Max Weber thesis" -- a discussion which incorporates both what I believe Weber really did say (and not what others have interpreted him as saying) and an opinion of the real values (as well as the mistakes) in Weber's insight.

Chapter IV is an extensive study of modern Roman Catholic thought in economic matters, with source material drawn from the Papal Social Encyclicals and other authoritative documents issued between the Pontificates of Leo XIII and the late Pius XII.

It is, obviously, much harder to "pin down" modern Protestantism and its economic concerns. Chapter V attempts only to give a survey by indicating the extent of Protestant criticism as seen in certain of the docu-

ments of modern Ecumenical bodies, and then by turning to analyze briefly the views of some of the modern Protestant writers who appear to be, if not "typical" or "representative", at least "influential" in moulding current Protestant thought in economic matters.

Chapter VI outlines some of the more significant conclusions which have come to me during the research for this study; The Appendix gives a list of the Social Encyclicals and the more important of the ecumenical "Statements"; and the Bibliography includes all the volumes used in the preparation of this thesis, many of which were not noted in the text itself.

To conclude this Introduction, I should comment that I well recognize that this type of presentation produces obvious deficiencies. The greatest problem I encountered in my research was where to draw the line between that which was absolutely essential, and that which was only relevant. The end result of those countless private decisions is this study, and its deficiencies are mine. If there is much that is unnecessary, if there is something decisive that should have been included, if the conclusions are wrong or inadequate -- the fault is entirely my own, and should not be ascribed to either of my advisors, Dr. William R. Forrester or Dr. Edgar P. Dickie, to both of whom I am greatly

indebted for their time, counsel, insights, and patience. The only excuses that I can offer for the deficiencies of this work are that the literature is vast, and the subject, by its very nature, is related to "everything in Heaven and on earth, time, and even eternity itself".

Yet, because of this relation, this kind of study is, I believe, most significant and timely. The point at which Christianity and Economic Science converge is where most dedicated Churchmen spend most of their lives. For those that would be Christians in our day, economic concerns have vital ethical implications. Whether men work or rule in the Kremlin, the Vatican, or on Wall Street, the truth in Lord Keynes' statement applies to them:

"....the ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than commonly understood..... Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influence, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist."

Jesus did not overlook the claims of this world on the hearts and minds of his followers, but recognized in them the tension of the Kingdom of God. Some dedicated Christians may insist that those claims have no ultimate reality, and are not worthy of study. But Christian ethics cannot.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE GOSPEL AND THE WORLD

#### I. The Absolute Character of the Christian Ethic

In his article, "The Biblical Idea of Property", J. V. Bartlet quotes David's prayer given in I Chron. 29:11-13 :

"Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power... and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou rulest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now, therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name..."<sup>1</sup>

and uses it to characterize the Hebrew view of property.<sup>2</sup>

In their eyes, he goes on to state,

"... property rights are purely relative, derivative, conditional, in the presence of God's sovereign overlordship of all He has produced, and is still producing, through the subordinate agencies of nature and man. None on earth has absolute or indefeasible rights, but all only in so far as they fulfill the terms of the stewardship entrusted to them by God and the duties to others which flow therefrom."<sup>3</sup>

This theme was lost in later Judaism<sup>4</sup>, but it is undeniably

1. I Chron. 29:11-13

2. This is no doubt an oversimplified view, as can readily be seen in the contrasting ethics of Job and Proverbs. For a description of the ritual of worship which derived from the Hebrews' sense of dependence on God see: Chapter VII ("Firstfruits, Tithes, and Sacrificial Meals") of Smith, W. Robertson; The Religion of the Semites; A.&C. Black; Edinburgh; 1889; pp. 226-251.

3. Bartlet, J.V.; "Biblical Idea of Property" in Property -- Its Duties and Rights; Macmillan; London; 1913; p. 88.

4. See: Uhlhorn, Gerhard; Christian Charity in the Ancient Church; S. Taylor, Trans.; T. & T. Clark; Edinburgh; 1883; pp. 44-55.

the root idea in the property ethic of Jesus.

According to C. J. Cadoux, "Jesus recognized in a certain sense the need, utility and rightfulness of personal property"<sup>5</sup>, and this can be seen in the Sermon on the Mount for as far as food, drink, clothing, etc. are concerned "your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things"<sup>6</sup>. Thus, personal necessities are relegated to a decidedly inferior place in the hierarchy of values. But this is not all. Here, as everywhere else, Jesus turns to the Kingdom of God and translates normal worries into spiritual potentials, for he continues, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."<sup>6</sup>

For Jesus, the world and all in it are and ever will be God's.<sup>7</sup> Man is but the steward of God's possessions, not the owner;<sup>8</sup> and, even then, his tenure is short.<sup>9</sup> But if the possessions in themselves are not important, the stewards are<sup>10</sup> for they are the children of God,<sup>11</sup> the inheritors of His Kingdom.<sup>12</sup> For men to enter the Kingdom

5. Cadoux, C. J.; The Early Church and the World; T. & T. Clark; Edinburgh; 1925; p. 61.

6. Matt. 6:32-33.

7. Matt. 6:28-30.

8. Matt. 25:14-30.

9. Matt. 6:19; Lk. 12:16-20.

10. Lk. 12:7.

11. Matt. 5:3-11; 6:9.

12. Matt. 5:3.

they must possess the Christian virtues,<sup>13</sup> and Jesus condemned everything that would divert men from this goal or detract from their God-given destiny.<sup>14</sup> When material considerations went to this length, they and the Kingdom became mutually exclusive interests.<sup>15</sup> Men were the raw material of which the Kingdom was made, and in man's relation to his fellow creatures, personal rights were always to take precedence over property rights.<sup>16</sup>

"In short, his categories of social judgment are not those of wealth and poverty. His thought is directed toward the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God. Whatever type of character he discovers which seems contributory to that ideal, he spontaneously and often abruptly accepts, and whatever circumstances, on the other hand, appear to hinder that great consummation must be, according to his teaching, at any sacrifice escaped or overcome."<sup>17</sup>

But while all this is true, it does not imply that Jesus was unconcerned with economic relations. The poor were continually comforted by Him,<sup>18</sup> while their care was made an elementary demand of Christian discipleship.<sup>19</sup>

Rather, He spiritualized all of the economic order. In

Peabody's estimation:

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13. Lk. 14:15-24.

14. Matt. 13:1-8, 15:18-20; Mk. 4:19, 10:23,28; Lk. 12:15.

15. Matt. 6:24-25.

16. Lk. 16:19-31.

17. Peabody, F. G.; Jesus Christ and the Social Question; Macmillan; New York; 1900;p. 205.

18. Matt. 11:28, 5:3-5; Lk. 6:20; John 6:37.

19. Matt. 19:21; Lk. 18:22; John 12:8.

"Jesus is not a social demagogue; he is a spiritual seer. He is not concerned with the leveling of social classes, but with the elevating of social ideals. He welcomes a life for its own sake, not for its circumstances of wealth or of poverty."<sup>20</sup>

It is in this concern for souls and its resultant esgimation of men that the idea of property is made known in the Gospels. Men are users of, and not slaves of, the material world. In a striking paragraph, Bartlet writes,

"While accepting the institution of private property as a condition of social life, Christianity changed the whole perspective and emphasis of men's thoughts about it, and, what is still more difficult, their instinctive feelings towards it, by teaching the incomparable value of manhood. In the light of Christ's idea of humanity, viewed in and through the high and indeed divine possibilities latent even in those of least account with their fellows, property underwent a radical transvaluation."<sup>21</sup>

Thus, it can be seen that Jesus was no mere social reformer. His concern was for the Kingdom and its citizens, and only for and about property in relation to personality and its development. As Troeltsch succinctly put it:

"It is of course true that Jesus promises that the poor and the suffering shall have their tears wiped away and all their desires satisfied; but, after all, this is only natural in a message addressed to the poor; it is not the chief point. The centre of His message was the glory of God's final victory, and the conquest of demons."<sup>22</sup>

This is a religious radicalism, in that it saw ethical value only in connection with religion; but it is not an

20. Peabody, op. cit., p. 258.

21. Bartlet, op. cit., p. 95.

22. Troeltsch, Ernst; The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches; O. Wyon, Trans.; Allen & Unwin; London; 1931; p. 61; (Vol. I).

asceticism. It is positive in that it accepts rather than rejects the meaningfulness of human life in the world, even though its standards of meaning are other-worldly. Its concern for the kingdom and those in it is unconditional. Therefore, its ethic is absolute love.

But, as this simple faith was translated into action, the difficulty of applying an absolute within a relative sphere became clear. If the chief doctrine was that of the coming Kingdom, then all human relationships were, at best, but temporary; and the first-century church, without the guidance of Jesus, himself, and His spiritual penetration, found less and less meaning in moral dicta in the light of the impending "parousia" or "Day of the Lord". In the New Testament,

"...all the emphasis is rightly put on evangelism. And similarly, though we have a great deal of discussion especially in the Epistles of matters of conduct, there is a good deal to be said for those who maintain that such rules as were laid down were only an 'interim-ethic' till the forthcoming 'day of the Lord'. It is an urgent 'morality of crisis', mobilized if you like, based on the example and sayings of Jesus. It is fascinating to see in the Epistles the way in which the little groups of Christian believers are trying to translate these principles into policies, to insert their new kind of faith and its new patterns of conduct and fellowship into the intricacies of heathen social and political life in the Graeco-Roman world."<sup>23</sup>

In Paul we find many expressions of this impending

23. Forrester, W. R.; Christian Vocation; Lutterworth Press; London; 1951; pp. 37-38.

"end of the world"<sup>24</sup>; but it would be a mistake to rely entirely on the doctrine of the "Parousia" for an understanding of the first-century ethic. While the early Christians were not "social Actionists", in the modern sense, they were not, nevertheless, socially unaware or unconcerned.

"Such 'holy indifference' to all merely earthly conditions tended naturally..... to concentrate Christian effort upon rooting the eternal boon of spiritual liberty in the souls of men, to the comparative neglect of social and economic conditions which had to do primarily with bodily comfort and welfare. Yet it is a mistake to suppose that Christians were ever indifferent to actual bodily distress or hardship in others, even if they believed these things could be overruled to their own good or to needed discipline."<sup>25</sup>

Rather, the spontaneous love incited by the Master still remained even after the death of His immediate followers.<sup>26</sup> Their charity, though seldom in the early days extending beyond the immediate circle of believers,<sup>27</sup> was sincere, unprovoked, and uncalculating. Uhlhorn dramatically calls the first and second century charities outbursts of "First Love".<sup>28</sup> In the sharing of what little

24. I Cor. 6:13, 7:29,31; Gal. 1:4, 6:14; II Tim. 2:4.

25. Barthet, op. cit., pp. 108-109.

26. Acts 3:6, 9:36, 20:35; Heb. 3:16, 13:3; For Paul, cf. Rom. 12:8; Eph. 4:28; I Tim. 6:18.

27. In this connection, see Cadoux, op. cit., p.131, 199.

28. Uhlhorn, op. cit., pp. 120-140 (see also his references to Justin, Shepherd of Hermas, and Clement).

they had, the idea of the Gospel was retained -- only the necessary should be kept, the superfluous was to be given away.

"Only the necessary! This is everywhere accounted a principle in the use of earthly possessions. Simplicity, contentment, moderation, are required of every Christian..... The Christian family was distinguished from the heathen by the great simplicity which prevailed in furniture, in domestics, in eating and drinking. This corresponded to the earnestness of the Christian life."<sup>29</sup>

But the high attainment of the early Christians who led the simple, faithful life in spite of social ostracism and persecution was not to last. As early as the second century, there appeared the glimmerings of a legalism that was later to supplant the simple Christian charity of the earlier day. Writing of that period, Cadoux states,

"Almsgiving tended to become more and more important on its subjective side, as the practice of a virtue or the performance of a duty; and we can discern in this period the seeds of the idea which later became so prominent, namely, that almsgiving as a meritorious act is of itself a means of earning Divine favour. What was dangerous in this idea was not the belief that God rewards almsgiving (that was the belief of Jesus himself -- Matt. 6:2-4) but that the quantitative element in the act rendered it so fatally easy to perform it mechanically and ostentatiously to the detriment of its moral quality."<sup>30</sup>

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29. Uhlhorn, op. cit., p. 131. (In this connection, it might be well to note that the early, so-called, "Communist experiments", as seen in Acts 2:44-45, were probably not universal throughout the early Christian communities. Paul, at least, never mentions them. What we can infer from his writings is that the devout Christian of his day was noted for his liberality. See especially I Cor. 16:1-3.)

30. Cadoux, op. cit., pp. 198-199.

But not only in its idea of charity did the second and third century church gradually relinquish the strict and single purposive ethic of the Gospels. The persecutions took their toll in "lapses", and increasingly the awareness came to the mind of the church that the "Parousia" was still afar off. With these conditions, must not the church come to some kind of terms with the secular society which encompassed it? Uhlhorn explains:

"Of course what was feasible so long as the churches were small, and the Christians almost without exception belonged to the lower classes, became impossible when the churches grew large and numbered some members among the nobility. It was easy for an artisan to retire from the world, but how could a knight, a senator, or a member of some distinguished family break with all his previous connections when he became a Christian? And was such a course likely to prove advantageous for the Church? Did not the hope of the further spread of Christianity among the educated classes depend mainly on these very connections?"<sup>31</sup>

For these reasons and others<sup>32</sup> third century Christians called into question the absolute ethics of the Disciples. The first reaction against such a drift was Montanism, but its defeat made some kind of a compromise inevitable. It is to the credit of the Christians of the third century that the opposite extreme, complete lack of identification with

31. Uhlhorn, Gerhard; Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism; E.C. Smyth and C.J.H. Ropes, Trans.; Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington; London; 1879; p. 340.

32. One of the striking features of the society of the post-republican Roman Empire was the almost complete disappearance of the Middle class. The church was forced to expand from the poor to the rich, with few converts coming from an intermediate strata. For an analysis of the implications of this fact, see: Angus, S.; The Environment of Early Christianity; Duckworth; London; 1914; pp. 35 foll.

the world (an attitude well known in Gnosticism), was not allowed to prevail; yet, even in the middle course, the church found itself slowly discarding the older "interim ethic" in favour of a newer and more compromising set of social ideals.

## II. The Problem of Compromise : Its Solution and Effects

The consciousness of the impending "Parousia" was replaced in the mind of the church by another hope. In the middle of the third century, the "Kingdom-conscious" Christian became "world-conscious" as well.

"But in the time of Cyprian the hopes of the Christians are directed towards another victory: they begin to grasp the idea that Christianity will vanquish Heathenism from within, and become the dominant religion in the Roman Empire."<sup>33</sup>

This sight of victory over the formerly despised evil power brought to the church a new sense of her vocation, and a realignment of her relationship to the secular world. In point of fact, the Christian faith became the official religion of the Empire after 313 A.D.; but, even before that, in the time of Origen and Cyprian, particularly, the new views were taking shape.

In his analysis, Troeltsch, with his characteristic genius for oversimplification, crystallizes the new outlook into two distinct and yet complementary theories -- the

33. Uhlhorn, Conflict, op. cit., p. 353.

theory of Relative Natural Law and the theory of Theocratic Absolutism. He writes:

"With the aid of theory of relative natural law she learned, on the one hand, how to tolerate the actual social situation -- which in itself was opposed to her fundamental principles, but which the very fact of her sense of sin and her orientation toward the future life led her to depreciate -- and, on the other hand, how to regulate it according to her theories of Natural Law. The theocratic absolutist theory enabled the church to adopt the position that the Emperor and the State might act freely in earthly matters, but that in everything which concerned religion and the Church, the Church must have the upper hand.... More and more, however, the attitude of the Church towards social problems coincided with that of the State, as the support and the substance of the whole life of Society. Over against that, however, there was the aloofness of the Church from the world, and its opposition to unredeemed humanity; in these circumstances all that the Church could attempt to do was to Christianize the State and the world indirectly, by ascribing their origin to the Law of Nature, which was identical to the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ, but which, owing to the Fall, was now only a relative Natural Law. All that this 'Christianization' amounted to in the end was that everything was left outwardly exactly as it had been before."<sup>34</sup>

Perhaps the best illustration in this change of attitude would be the contrast in the property ethic of Clement of Alexandria (late second and early third century) and Origen (middle and late third century). Writing of the refusal of the "Rich Young Ruler"<sup>35</sup> in his "What Rich Man Shall Be

34. Troeltsch, op. cit., pp. 158-159.

35. See: Matt. 19:16-30; Mk. 10:17-31; Luke 18:18-30.

Saved"<sup>36</sup> Clement of Alexandria states,

"The Lord commanded the rich young man to sell all that he had. But what does this mean? He does not command him, as some too hastily conclude, to throw away his present property, to separate himself from his possessions, but to get rid of false opinions concerning wealth, the desire and pursuit of it, the cares of life, the 'thorns which choke the good seed'.... For it is not great and a matter worthy of emulation to suffer want of property.... The Son of God does not demand that which is an object of sense. He demands something greater, more divine, more perfect, the cleansing of the soul, the disposition from all that proceeds from passion.... They who renounce property still retain passion in the soul. They walk in pride and vanity and in contempt for other men, as though they were themselves something supernatural."<sup>37</sup>

By way of contrast, Origen<sup>38</sup> is discussed by Uhlhorn in the following:

"How very differently from Clement of Alexandria does Origen already expound the history of the rich young man! It is true that he too acknowledged that wealth does not prevent salvation; but, he adds, that it makes it in many respects more difficult, and is then inclined so to understand the passage, that he, who gives his goods to the poor, is for this supported by their prayers, and thus the more easily brought to the perfect virtue -- to perfection. The renunciation of earthly goods is thus at least made a way to perfection."<sup>39</sup>

Here it seems that Origen is but anticipating the rise of the "counsels of perfection through renunciation.

This idea, in time, became pure asceticism; and brought

36. Clement of Alexandria, "Quis dives salvetur?" (c. 205)

37. Clement of Alexandria, as quoted by Uhlhorn, Charity, op. cit., p. 129.

38. Origenes ad Matt. xv. 15 (c. 240)

39. Uhlhorn, ibid., p. 208.

with it its corollary, the doctrine of merit.

"Thus everything came to be regarded from the standpoint of the contrast between the Church and the world. The religious reference in particular, of all moral commands towards fellowship with God which could only be won through obedience, developed very largely into asceticism, or the breaking of the natural will simply for the sake of destroying it and for the merit which was thus acquired. From that time forward the Church was only able to unite these two elements by proclaiming a double standard of morals, by making a clear distinction between an ethic which was semi-ascetic and an ethic which was an asceticism pure and simple."<sup>40</sup>

Thus, by accepting a "relative natural law", the compromising Church unwittingly also accepted a double standard of morality -- the "normal life" spiritually controlled and guaranteed by a doctrine of merit, and the "Counsel of Perfection" for the ascetic or would-be-saint. Troeltsch continues,

"Under these influences the whole ethic of the Church became entirely changed. It lost the certainty of aim which was contained in the twofold idea of self-consecration for the love of God and the brethren, and it was broken up into varied combinations of particular spiritual commands, unscrupulous borrowings from the ethics of Stoicism and Cynicism, ascetic regulations and regulations of church order; it confused worship and ethical behaviour, and connected good works, fasting, and almsgiving with the idea of merit and the assurance of personal salvation. The Christian nature of morality seemed to lie no longer in the direct specific content of the Ethos, but in the supernatural character of Christian behaviour, which is due to grace alone; and the difference between it and heathen morality seems to consist no longer in opposition to the order of the State and the spirit of eudaemonism, but in opposition to the use of natural powers."<sup>41</sup>

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40. Troeltsch, op. cit., pp. 109-110.

41. *ibid.*, p. 110.

This solution of the double ethic to the problem of the Church's relation to the world was also the solution applied to the property ethic. In the ascetic, which became the monastic, way of life the Rich Young Ruler would give up all that he had -- not alone to show concern for people, but also for the sake of acquiring merit.

"In monasticism the difficulty was removed by doing away with private property altogether; the real motive for this, however, was no longer love but asceticism; but in the love exercised within the monastic community, and in intercession for those who are living in the world, love still comes into her own. Thus the principle of a double morality, by means of which the Church solved the problem of the relationship between the world and the ethic of the Gospel, was also the solution of the problem of property."<sup>42</sup>

Thus, if Troeltsch is correct,<sup>43</sup> a dualistic ethic was the Church's answer to the problem of Compromise. Its effect was fourfold: 1) It meant that the Church accepted as impossible the "Christianization of the Social Order" and thus prevented the establishment of a universal wholesome ethic; 2) It meant that charity came to be recognized as the one valid means of social action, and that the social function of the Church was only that of a charitable institution; 3) As mentioned before, it meant that the doctrine of merit assumed an ever greater place in the

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42. Troeltsch, op. cit., p. 118.

43. Professor Troeltsch is not without his critics, particularly in regard to his view of "Relative Natural Law" which Emil Brunner considers to be his own invention: "Further, it must be said against Troeltsch that his notion of the relative law of nature was of his own devising, and there is documentary evidence for it nowhere." -- Brunner, E.; Justice and the Social Order; M. Hottinger, Trans.; Lutterworth; London; 1945; p. 228.

thinking of the Church, and, resultingly, faith and works became increasingly separated; and 4) It meant the rise of a Monasticism which set the pattern for heroic Christianity until the time of the Reformation.

In examining these effects, it is clear that the formulations of the Christian Property Ethic many hundreds of years before the Reformation contributed mightily to both its character and the measures of the Counter-Reformation which it inspired.

As we have seen, the early Christians were not "social actionists", but with the rejection of the world on the part of the nobler souls, the way was temporarily closed for a thoroughgoing transformation of the social order, and this at a time when the Church, as an official agency of the Empire, might well have demanded it. Comparing the Christian spirit to yeast which failed to leaven society in the period following 313, Uhlhorn writes,

"The leaven of Christianity never thoroughly penetrated the mass. A transformation of national life by the spirit of Christianity was never attained. Now it is a law of Christian life that if the leaven of the gospel cannot penetrate the national life, it will draw back. The more public life proves itself impenetrable with respect to the Christian spirit, the greater is the tendency to separation."<sup>44</sup>

Writing in the same vein, Bartlett concludes:

"Retreat from the normal social order on the part of the most zealous souls, in the interests of a monas-

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44. Uhlhorn, Conflict, op. cit., p. 340.

tic ideal which meant despair of the leavening of society, was disastrous both in practice and in theory. It meant a virtual dualism between true religious life and duty, on the one hand, and civic and economic life on the other. The latter sphere was thus in principle left to go its own way according to its own secular and selfish laws, as a system outside the redemptive control of Christian motives and methods, yet a system in which Christians were involved and for the human issues of which they could not but be largely responsible. Such a concession of 'the religious' par excellence could not but hinder the growth of a truly constructive theory of society, and of property as relative thereto; and could not but prevent the rise of a Christian public opinion adequate to originate and maintain any far-reaching economic reform."<sup>45</sup>

But if the Church was unwilling to tamper with the social reorganization of humanity on the larger scale, still something had to be done to alleviate the conditions of the great mass of impoverished souls in the later Roman Empire. It might be recalled that Jesus assumed charity on the part of His followers, but for Him it was strictly a secondary concern: the poor demanded love, and love brought forth charity.<sup>46</sup> While some of this motivation must have carried through, yet its spirit had been changed.

"Men gave with full hands, but more and more lost sight of the purpose for the sake of which they gave. Giving was itself esteemed a virtue. The more anyone gave, the more perfect was he. In saying this, nothing is further from my intention than to depreciate the charity of this period. On the contrary, I stand admiring before the exalted figures which it produced, before those bishops daily opening their hands to feed the hungry and to clothe the naked, while themselves living

45. Bartlett, op. cit., p. 115.

46. For a further elaboration of the ideas of Jesus as they related to charity, see the excellent chapters in Peabody, op. cit., pp. 226-266.

simply and sparingly; before those men, who gave away millions and themselves chose poverty; before that band of noble women, whose whole life was a series of good deeds. It would be doing them the greatest injustice not to acknowledge that it was indeed genuine Christian love, shed abroad in their hearts from the Cross, which acted in them."<sup>47</sup>

Still, this charity led to excesses and abuses. One author insists that the pre-Reformation charity was merely the method employed in the distribution of wealth:

"The excessive and unreasoning alms-giving of European countries, and Monastic associations of the Middle Ages, are not due to the legitimate and logical influence of Christianity. They are a natural reaction from the selfishness of the classic period, and sprang from the fearful economic condition in which Europe found itself at the destruction of the Roman Empire... The world of the Roman Empire seemed perishing.... Charity is not the best form of the distribution of the profits of labour, but it is certainly one form.... The method of distribution will vary with each succeeding age."<sup>48</sup>

The difficulty involved in charity, as an exercise in religion, is that it can be practiced by the uncharitable and irreligious. This was no doubt done, and its resulting depersonalization ushered in a new religious and ethical ideal. Troeltsch writes,

"When.. in the absence of external opposition the Church became co-extensive with the whole of Society and bore in her bosom the differences of all, then the work of charity became a different thing altogether. Relationships between the brethren became abstract and general, and giving became impersonal -- to the Church, to institutions. Charity became depersonalized; the bishops allowed it to be carried out by their officials on the basis of the registers; in the hands of wealthy bishops and landowners it often resembled the old Roman

47. Uhlhorn, Charity, op. cit., p. 406.

48. Brace, C.L.; Gesta Christi; Hodder & Stoughton; London; 1882; pp. 104-105.

liberality. On the other hand, private almsgiving was frittered away in indiscriminate charity. In this atmosphere, the whole practice of charity was changed from being a means of help to others into a practice of ascetic self-denial, into 'good works' which acquire merit for oneself and for others, into penances for sin, and into a means of mitigating the fires of purgatory."<sup>49</sup>

Thus, the "establishment" of the Church, coupled with the doctrine of merit, tended to augment and intensify the "double morality" which the Church had already developed in its endeavour to come to terms with the world.<sup>50</sup>

### III. Monasticism and Its Effects

As we have seen, the heroic response to the problem of compromise was greater ascetic stringency.

"The Synod of Gangra prefixes to its recognition of property the sentence: 'We approve of abstinence from worldly occupations, if it is accompanied by humility.' To possess property, to be rich, is quite allowable for a Christian, and does not hinder his salvation. The Church most decidedly rejects the view, that wealth is sinful. Still to be poor is a higher moral condition."<sup>51</sup>

Here, as Dr. Forrester suggests, "Two things seem to have been confused, the view that there are different degrees of progress in the Christian life, and the view that there are two distinct kinds of Christian life."<sup>52</sup>

Morally, monasticism produced a great, if negative, spiritual power. This type of "enthusiasm", if nothing else, indicated a type of unfed hunger in the spiritually

49. Troeltsch, op. cit., p.136.

50. For a further treatment of this idea see; Rainy, Robert; The Ancient Catholic Church; T. & T. Clark; Edinburgh; 1902; pp. 227 foll.

51. Uhlhorn, Conflict, op. cit. pp. 298-299.

52. Forrester, op. cit., p. 49.

sensitive:

"A man became a monk precisely because he felt called to be a monk, and for no other purpose or object whatever, nor as a preparation for anything else --- except Heaven. The monk's object is to satisfy his soul and serve God by leading a life in community in accordance with the Gospel counsels. Works of various kinds will be given him to do; but these are secondary, and no one of them is part of his essential vocation as a monk."<sup>53</sup>

Bartlet finds one of the reasons for the rise of the monastic movement in the "lack of stimulating influence in the corporate Church-life and -fellowship<sup>54</sup> in the ecclesiastical order of the fourth century; but, however this may be, still it is to be recognized that the souls that were "drawn out" were sincere in their beliefs and saintly in their lives. Canon Hamay, writing in The Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, defends the "counsels" as being means for rich and rewarding moral ends. He states,

"It (Protestantism) has not made for, and, except in comparatively rare instances, has not achieved, the production of unique saints, like, for example, St. Francis of Assisi, whose devotion lays hold upon the popular admiration. This failure must be attributed to the denial of the doctrine of 'counsels' and 'precepts', and the consequent unwillingness of Protestant teachers to hold up for admiration lives which must always be rare, and are never imitable, except by those who realize the peculiar glory of very great kinds of renunciation."<sup>55</sup>

While this idea is, of course, open to serious question, there can be little doubt that the Monasteries provided an

53. Butler, Cuthbert; Bededictine Monachism; Longman's, Green; London; 1919; p. 29.
54. Bartlet, J.V.; Church-Life and Church-Order; C. J. Cadoux, Ed.; Blackwell; Oxford; 1943; p. 168.
55. Canon Hamay in the article, "Counsels and Precepts" in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics; Vol. IV; p. 205a;

arena where sturdy and disciplined souls could perform arduous feats of spiritual and intellectual gymnastics.<sup>56</sup>

But besides the moral effect, monasticism, even in its earliest days, produced social and economic consequences. The Monastery was intended to be, primarily, a "reservoir of religion"<sup>57</sup> and any economic utility was to be a secondary consideration. But it was economic pressures alone, and not spiritual goals, that accounted for hundreds<sup>58</sup> renouncing their former lives and joining a religious community.

"In fact, it was freedom that sought in the cell of the hermit and in the monastery, freedom from the misery of a decaying world, from a state which was but an institution for the employment of force, and left no space for free activity, from a society in which only deception and appearance bore rule, from a civilization which had become hyper-civilization and was therefore unnatural. It was this that drove the decurion unable any longer to bear the burden of taxation, the artisan who had become the slave of the State, the impoverished small proprietor, nay, even the aristocratic and wealthy Roman educated in the schools of Athens, into the cloister. For even the possession of wealth, even a liberal education, was in this perishing world a burden which men sought to get rid of. He who built a cell in the desert, who entered a monastery, was released at a stroke from the whole burden, was free from all bonds."<sup>59</sup>

But, even if that somewhat one-sided judgment is accurate, it is not fair to say that the rise of the Monastic Movement was responsible for the downfall of the Roman Empire. It was,

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56. In this connection, see: Forrester, op. cit., pp. 50-53.
57. A phrase used by Butler, op. cit., p. 383.
58. Uhlhorn, in Conflict, op. cit., states on p. 383 that Slaves, with the consent of their masters, were declared free on entering a monastery; and gives estimations as to their numbers.
59. *ibid.*, p. 347-348.

in point of fact, the economic effects of monasticism which drew from the decay of the Empire to become the starting point for the new civilization of the Middle Ages. Dr. Bigg seems to take a balanced view:

"That movement (asceticism) was no doubt open to criticism; and it has been much debated whether the Church did not hasten the downfall of the Empire by calling soldiers from standard, officials from the administration of the state, and large numbers of excellent men and women from their social duties into what may seem the sterility of the cloistered life. I think we may say three things; first, that we must not condemn flight from the world without fully knowing what that world was from which the ascetic fled; second, that a monk like St. Martin of Tours, in the circumstances of the time, probably rendered far greater services to his generation than he could have done in any other capacity; third, that what is true is that the Church did not prevent, nor even retard, the downfall of the Empire. That Christianity, in itself, did not sap the forces of the state is evident from the fact that the victorious Germanic invaders were, for the most part, Christians themselves."<sup>60</sup>

But probably the greatest social effect of the permanent monastic institutions lay in the fact that they, while proclaiming individual poverty and frugality, became corporately wealthy, and began to dominate the new economic scene. While this fact will be dealt with more fully in Chapter II, it might be well to here cite the reasons for such a development.

"But this did in time come about, and inevitably. The mere fact of a body of men working without personal remuneration, living frugally, and pooling their earnings, would of itself in time accumulate wealth. Then

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60. Bigg, Charles; The Church's Task Under The Roman Empire; Clarendon; Oxford; 1905; p. 122. (For the later cultural and social significance of the Monastic movement, especially in England, see: Knowles, David; The Monastic Order in England; Cambridge; 1941; pp. 20 foll.)

came the flood of gifts of all sorts that are constantly made for a permanent community. As a matter of fact, history attests that the great Benedictine abbeys in all lands were rich, and very rich. As Lord Acton puts it: 'The Benedictines, the real inheritors of the old monastic and ascetic spirit, growing with the growth of Christendom, became wealthy and politically powerful.'<sup>61</sup>

Thus, monasticism introduces into the late Roman Empire a new intellectual, cultural, social and economic atmosphere within which the genius of St. Thomas can lay the groundwork for all of Roman Catholic doctrine and thought, not the least of which is economic ethics. Also, it is from this same atmosphere that other men make revolutions -- independent traders who, in seeking repeated personal profits, produce capitalism; and others, like Luther and Calvin, who, in seeking a single ethic for all men by Biblical authority, produce a Reformation.

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61. Butler, op. cit., p. 155.

## CHAPTER TWO

### SOURCES OF THE CONTRAST I : THE MEDIEVAL SITUATION

#### I. The Unitary Emphasis in Medieval Society

Perhaps the most outstanding characteristic of the Medieval Period was the integrated, unitary framework of its social structure. The thousand years between 500 A.D. and 1500 A.D. present a striking contrast in their social rigidity to the fluidity of the periods before and after. That this rigidity can largely be traced to religious influences is generally agreed. Thus, it is necessary first to examine the religious formulations before turning to their economic and social consequences.

In speaking of the Medieval Period, Tawney writes,

"There are, perhaps, four main attitudes which religious opinion may adopt toward the world of social institutions. It may stand on one side in ascetic aloofness and regard them as in their very nature the sphere of unrighteousness, from which men may escape -- from which, if they consider their souls, they will escape -- but which they can conquer only by flight. It may take them for granted and ignore them, as matters of indifference belonging to a world with which religion has no concern;.... It may throw itself into an agitation for some particular reform, for the removal of some crying scandal, for the promotion of some final revolution, which will inaugurate the reign of righteousness on earth. It may at once accept and criticize, tolerate and amend, welcome the gross world of human appetites, as the squalid scaffolding from amid which the life of the spirit must rise, and insist that this also is the material of the Kingdom of God. To such a temper, all activities divorced from religion are brutal or dead, but none are too mean to be beneath

or too great to be above it, since all, in their different degrees, are touched with the spirit which permeates the whole."<sup>1</sup>

As might be expected from the discussion in the last chapter, Tawney finds; "In the Early Middle Ages the ascetic temper predominates";<sup>2</sup> but he refuses to make an exclusive generalization and goes on to state:

"To select from so immense a sea of ideas about society and religion only the specimens that fit the meshes of one's own small net and to label them 'medieval thought' is to beg all questions..... (In the Middle Ages) all are represented in it, but not all are equally representative of it. Of the four attitudes suggested above, it is the last which is the most characteristic. The first fundamental assumption which is taken over by the sixteenth century is that the ultimate standard of human institutions and activities is religion. The architectonics of the system had been worked out in the Summae of the Schoolmen..... Medieval religious thought strains every interest and activity, by however arbitrary a compression, into the service of a single idea. The lines of its scheme run up and down, and, since purpose is universal and all-embracing, there is, at least in theory, no room for eccentric bodies which move in their own private orbit. That purpose is set by the divine plan of the universe."<sup>3</sup>

As we have seen, it was a long way from the "Compromise" of the third-century church to the organic structure of the church and its society of the fifteenth century. In the early Middle Ages,

"Christianity broke up into a host of almost entirely incompatible tendencies: there was the way of ecclesiastical organization, of the monastic effort to preserve the austere and exalted supernatural ideal, and finally, there was the way of life in the world

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1. Tawney, R.H.; Religion and the Rise of Capitalism; Penguin Books; London; 1938; p. 30.
  2. *ibid.*, p. 32.
  3. *ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

which was in accordance with the Lex Naturae -- a way of life which, on the one hand, was obscured by Original Sin, and, on the other, was appointed by God as a remedy for sin."<sup>4</sup>

To trace the development of these divergent tendencies into a synthesized organic structure, Troeltsch stresses the Church's dependence on the methods of Ancient Philosophy:

"The ecclesiastical civilization was shaped far more by the independent logical evolution of the sociological idea of the Church (always, of course, combined with asceticism), which made mankind submit, not to asceticism, but to the sacraments and to the priesthood. Another important element in this ecclesiastical civilization, closely related to the Christian influence upon the world, was the inheritance of ancient civilization which lived on in the Lex Naturae as part of the cultural wealth of the Church and as the basis of all secular social doctrines, and which after the Crusades underwent an extraordinary expansion. The fact remains that even for the Middle Ages the great fundamental development was this: That alongside of the building up of the Church there was a process of rapprochement and fusion with the monotheistic religions and the ethical teaching of the Ancient World which enabled Christianity to develop still further, to work out the theoretical content of its intellectual system, and to develop that side of its life which came into actual contact with the world. In this respect, however, the Mediaeval Church, contrasted with the Ancient World, brought in an actual and theoretical new element. Asceticism, which in the Ancient World was a dangerous element, and a menace both to the Church and to the world of thought, was subdued by the Church, and practically incorporated into the cosmos of ecclesiastical activity, while in theory it made it possible to secure a harmonious relationship between the piety of mediaeval Christian life in the world, and the piety of monasticism."<sup>5</sup>

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4. Troeltsch, op. cit., p. 239.

5. ibid., p. 240.

Thus, if Troeltsch is correct, the Church drew from both the secular light of the Greek philosophers and the fire of its fanatic "high Souls" -- and blended them in an admixture the end of which was the strengthening of its own structure.

How was this done? From the Stoics<sup>6</sup> the Church derived the idea that all social structures, regardless of how corrupt they were, stemmed from the natural law of God. But while stoicism ended in rejection of the natural world and its social patterns, the Church went further in attempting to redeem the world, rather than merely to deny it.

Augustine, drawing on Platonic sources,

".....formulated the idea of the ascending series of ends, and the use of the earthly for the purpose of the heavenly; But, on the other hand again, in his doctrines of sin and predestination, he radically rejected and condemned the natural life of Society as it actually was, without, however, on that account in any way requiring a new and suitable intellectual theory of Society."<sup>7</sup>

In commenting on Augustine's comment that "There is no race more social than man, or more discordant by reason of sin",<sup>8</sup> Principal Burleigh interprets Augustine as recognizing

6. For Stoicism's contributions to Medieval social philosophy see Troeltsch, op. cit., p. 281; also see Albet, Denise, and Peterfreund; Great Traditions in Ethics; American Book Company; New York; 1953; pp. 83-103.

7. Troeltsch, op. cit., p. 282.

8. Augustine, De Civitate Dei; XII, 27

that all mankind is gregarious and stems from a common origin in one man, Adam. This unity is fractured, however, by sin which separates humanity into two distinct classes or groups.

Dr. Burleigh continues,

"Only in an ideal or transcendent world is there clear-cut and ineffaceable differentiation between the good and the bad. And this transcendent world must be one of free rational beings with absolute freedom of choice. It is among the angels therefore that two contrasting 'classes' or 'societies' or 'cities' have their origin. 'The one enjoying God, the other swelling with pride; the one burning with holy love of God, the other reeking with unclean love of its own exultation; the one tranquil in luminous piety, the other tormented with murky desires; the one helping, the other hindering the work of God.'<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the distinction once made can never be effaced. The angels who continued in the love of God remain 'his City', which will attain perfect completeness. Those who fell away in love of self are damned eternally. When St. Augustine insists that no good angel since the angelic fall can ever become bad and no bad angel can ever be restored to goodness, he does not mean to deny their free will, much less to limit the power of grace, so much as to assert that good is good and bad is bad absolutely."<sup>10</sup>

But Augustine's "City of God" is not to be identified with the Church,

"The relation of the Church and the City of God is not, in spite of some ambiguity of language, and perhaps also of feeling, one of simple identity. On the contrary it is highly complex and resolves itself into the relation of Communio Sanctorum or Praedestinatorum and Communio Sacramentorum. The Communio Sacramentorum is the contemporary organized Church, hierarchically governed by bishops and presbyters,

9. *ibid.*; XI 33.

10. Burleigh, J.H.S.; The City of God; Nisbet; London; 1945; pp. 164-165.

participating in the sacraments administered by them, sharply marked off from pagans and heretics. It is not, obviously, a community of saints, though it contains some saints..... On the other hand, before the foundation of the world God predestined a certain number of the human race to become citizens of the Heavenly City, to replace the fallen angels and to share eternal blessedness with the holy angels. Of these the City of God gathers citizens out of all nations and all generations..... Predestination does not mean that the predestined escape the conditions of this earthly life, its temptations, conflicts and duties, but only that they are to persevere through them all faithful to the end. Born of Adam's sinful race they will require and receive supernatural aid to resist temptation and to choose the good and to persevere in it throughout their lives..... The Church therefore with its sacraments, exhortations and disciplines is for the predestined a necessary and God-appointed means of salvation."<sup>11</sup>

As can readily be seen, this doctrine of Augustine does foreshadow the later developments of the Reformation as seen in Calvin, but it does not provide the theological base for the social rigidity which was characteristic of the Middle Ages. If anything, it would seem to provide for, as Calvinism later did, the reverse.

It is not in Augustine, but in the writing of St. Thomas Aquinas that the basis for the unitary character of the medieval social structure is to be found. For him, "human relations take place in a uniform civilization, the complex interrelationships within the universe, are pictured by St. Thomas in two principal spheres: the supernatural and temporal."<sup>12</sup>

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11. Burleigh, op. cit., pp. 180-182; See also Great Traditions in Ethics; op. cit., pp. 106-133.
  12. Williams, M.J.; Catholic Social Thought; Ronald Press; New York; 1950; p. 5.

Thus it is that Dr. Figgis can say:

"In the middle ages the Church was not a State, it was the State; the State or rather the civil authority (for a separate society was not recognised) was merely the police department of the Church. The latter took over from the Roman Empire its theory of the absolute and universal jurisdiction of the supreme authority, and developed it into the doctrine of the plenitudo potestatis of the Pope, who was the supreme dispenser of law, the fountain of honour, including regal honour, and the sole legitimate earthly source of power, the legal if not the actual founder of religious orders, university degrees, the supreme 'judge and divider' among nations, the guardian of international right, the avenger of Christian blood."<sup>13</sup>

That St. Thomas was the chief architect of this Philosophical, Theological, Socio-economic Theory all scholars agree; but to condense and delineate the salient features of his thought is difficult indeed.

"An outline of the ethics of Aquinas is not easy. In the first place they are interwoven with his whole theological system, and in the second place as a positive system they grow out of the doubts and difficulties which Aquinas so bravely and fully faced, and yet into the elaborate discussion of those difficulties space forbids us to go. The student of ethics who begins with 'Pars Secunda Secundae' soon finds himself compelled to take up the primary discussions in 'Pars Prima Secundae' and from thence he will generally be forced back to the theological discussions of the first part."<sup>14</sup>

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13. Figgis, J.N.; From Gerson to Grotius; University Press, Cambridge, 1907; p. 4.
14. Hall, T.C.; History of Ethics Within Organized Christianity; Scribner's; New York; 1910; pp. 321-322. (It should be recognized that while all of St. Thomas' ethical theory is rooted in his theological formulations, not all of his theology contributes to his ethics. It is to be noted in the summary of Thomistic thought which follows that only those passages which have specific relevance to the medieval property and social ethic are cited).

In the first part, Aquinas considers the Supernatural realm. God, Himself, is pictured as a divine Unity<sup>15</sup> of three co-existent, co-eternal, and co-equal persons.<sup>16</sup> He exists<sup>17</sup> as a great One<sup>18</sup> who is the first and final cause of all creation.<sup>19</sup> He is all good and the Creator of Goodness;<sup>20</sup> infinite,<sup>21</sup> immutable,<sup>22</sup> eternal,<sup>23</sup> and omniscient.<sup>24</sup> God is truth itself,<sup>25</sup> omnipotent,<sup>26</sup> and the source of all joy.<sup>27</sup> Full of justice and mercy,<sup>28</sup> His love establishes values.<sup>29</sup>

Thomistic ontology claims that goodness tends toward being; and evil, towards non-being.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, God, as pure goodness, acts as a First Cause, a Creator, and gives all things their being.<sup>31</sup> As Sustainer, He establishes a process of Intermediate Causes which keep them in operation; and, as Final Cause, He is the chief Good toward Whom all creation strives.<sup>32</sup>

Thus, Aquinas' thought answers the problem of evil by

15.	St. Thomas; Summa Theologica; Part I, Quest.	1
16.		33-34
17.		2
18.		3
19.		4 & 44
20.		5-6
21.		7
22.		9
23.		10
24.		14-15
25.		16-17
26.		25
27.		26
28.		21
29.		19-20
30.		49
31.		104
32.		103

asserting that "Evil is neither a being nor a good";<sup>33</sup> and is, rather, the absence of goodness. Evil has only an accidental cause (man); and has no ultimate reality for it does not have a first principle; but is, instead, the absence of it.<sup>34</sup>

Man, an Angel in corporal form,<sup>35</sup> has a fixed status within creation; and is made in the image of God which is to be found in his rational mind (the soul). In some men the image of God is found more than in others; but this is because they have developed the powers of the soul, and live in accordance to the Eternal Reason.<sup>36</sup>

Because of his rational nature, man's end is happiness,<sup>37</sup> but this happiness is not to be found in natural wealth, honours, fame and glory, power, bodily good, bodily delights, physical pleasures, or even in the development of virtue.<sup>38</sup> Rather, man's happiness is found in the rational intellect -- partially in the knowledge of angels, but primarily in the vision of the divine essence, i.e., "the perfect knowledge of the intelligible end", the Beatific Vision.<sup>39</sup>

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| 33. | St. Thomas; <u>Summa Theologica</u> ; Part I, Quest. | 48      |
| 34. |  | 49      |
| 35. |  | 76      |
| 36. |  | 75 & 93 |
| 37. | ibid. Part I-II, Quest.                              | 1       |
| 38. |  | 2       |
| 39. |  | 3       |

A physical body, the possession of things, and friends are necessary for the transient happiness of this life; but, for the eternal happiness that cannot be lost, a special act of God is required. The Grace of God is a Gift, but it ought to be merited in good works through the rectitude of the will.<sup>40</sup>

The will is inviolable<sup>41</sup> and is the power behind all human acts. It is directed by the independent judgment of the intellect<sup>42</sup> and all human actions, with the exception of those unintentional acts done through ignorance, are voluntary and are either morally good or morally evil.<sup>43</sup> A circumstance may change an action from being more or less good or bad, but it will not change the moral character of the act at all.<sup>44</sup>

The goodness of an individual's will depends on the object of his act and the reason behind it; and is ultimately dependent upon the Eternal Law. Since will is dependent upon reason, if it is at variance with reason (either right or wrong reason) it is evil; but if it is in accordance with wrong reason, it is evil, but the evilness is unintentional.<sup>45</sup>

The goodness of the will likewise depends on the intention of the end, but the degree of goodness or malice of an act

40. St. Thomas; Summa Theologica; Part I-II; Quest. 4-5

41. 6

42. 7 & 10

43. 8-10

44. 18

45. 19

is determined not by the interior intention of the will, but by the act itself. The goodness of the will ultimately depends on its conformity to the Divine Will, and it is always necessary for the human will, in order to be good, to will the same as the Divine Will.<sup>46</sup>

The goodness or evilness of an act is first determined in the will, but the last test is that of the act itself. Taken together, they are one moral act; but they must be regarded separately in regard to their moral quality. The act receives little good or malice from the intention of the will, but the will receives good or evil from the character of the act. If the consequences of an act are not foreseen, they cannot increase either the goodness or the malice of the act; but, if they are foreseen, they can, at least in so far as the will is concerned.<sup>47</sup>

Habits are affected by every human act, and every act either increases or decreases the habit. If a man's action is good, he is led toward perfection; but, if it is bad, away from it.<sup>48</sup>

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46. St. Thomas; Summa Theologica, Part I-II, Quest. 19

47. 20

48. 51-52 (St.

Thomas sub-divides good habits into particular habits or "Virtues" (Quest. 55) and lasting habits or "Gifts of the Holy Ghost" (Quest. 68); and good acts into perfect acts (Quest. 69) or "Beatitudes" and virtuous acts (Quest. 70) or "Fruits of the Holy Ghost".)

Aquinas agrees with other rationalistic moral philosophers that evil habits, or sins, are acts contrary to reason; but he finds a better definition in Augustine who "more fitly defines sin by its being against the Eternal Law than by its being against reason, especially since we are regulated by the Eternal Law in many things which exceed human reason, as in matters of faith."<sup>49</sup> Thus, Sin is aptly defined as "any word, deed, or desire against the eternal law."<sup>50</sup>

Therefore, while sins may be distinguished between psychical (sins of the spirit) and physical (sins of the flesh); and another classification might be made according to the punishment they incur: mortal (the soul turning away from its Last End, that is, God, to whom it is united by charity) and venial (the soul turning to the created good which perishes); and still another distinction might be made between whether they are sins of commission or omission (whether the sin violated a positive or negative precept) -- yet, the fundamental difference in species in sin is to be determined by which order they violate. Thus, St. Thomas makes the essential distinction of sins in: 1) Sin against God (contrary to the rule of Divine Reason); 2)

49. St. Thomas; Summa Theologica; Part I-II, Quest. 71, Art. 6

50. 75, Art. 6

Sin against self (contrary to the rule of Divine Law); and 3) Sin against one's neighbour (contrary to the rule of human reason directing the social activities of man).<sup>51</sup>

Thus it can be seen that there are a vast variety of unequal sins varying in the gravity of their malice, and distinct in their species:

"This is a distinction according to objects, which make different species of sins. The virtues also are thus distinguished in species. For it is obvious that by the theological virtues man is put in relation with God; by temperance and fortitude he deals with himself, and by justice with his neighbour."<sup>52</sup>

The differing gravity of sins is determined by a number of factors: their cause, their circumstances, their harm, the condition of the person sinned against, and the greatness of the person sinning.<sup>53</sup>

Sin is a human action coming from a human habit; and the habits of man, as we have seen, are to be found in the principles of human action. Thus, sin is the work of the human will for it is the will that moves man towards or

51. St. Thomas; Summa Theologica; Part I-II, Quest. 72

52. 72, Art. 4

53. 73 (Thus,

the sin of murder is less grievous than the sin of suicide, which, in turn, is less grievous than blasphemy. Or, expressed in another way, it is more wrong to attack a nun (associated with God), than it is to beat one's wife (associated with self); but that, in turn, is more wrong than beating a stranger. Thus, all Catholic ethics are determined in the judgments on the acts of man which contradict the hierarchy of laws -- eternal, natural, or human).

away from God.<sup>54</sup> Ignorance diminishes the gravity of sin in so far as it diminishes voluntariness; but, if it does not diminish voluntariness, it will not diminish sin. Thus, invincible ignorance excuses sin, but vincible ignorance (ignorance through negligence) leads to sins of omission and compounds their gravity.<sup>55</sup>

It is inordinate self-love (a craving after some temporal good) that is the beginning of all sin. Yet, the measure of a sin's gravity is not to be found in this turning to temporal good; but, rather, in its turning away from the higher eternal good.<sup>56</sup>

God is not responsible for human sin as sin is an individual choice of the will; and He cannot be blamed if, in allowing man freedom, He respects man's humanity. God does permit sins according to the ends of His sublime wisdom and justice, and He allows evil that good might come. Even the devil does not cause sin, but man alone; and the only blame that can be attributed to Satan is his temptation of Eve. That was the beginning of the extrinsic cause of sin in mankind, and the sin of Adam is transmitted to man not by his body or his soul, but by the transmission of

54. St. Thomas; Summa Theologica; Part I-II, Quest. 75

55. 76

56. 77

human nature. Original sin, then, is my sin in so far as I have received human nature. Adam, an ancestor, but acting for the whole human race, transmits to each man original sin. It is not voluntary by an act of personal will; but it is voluntary as proceeding voluntarily from the head of the human race. The one exception to escape the contagion of sin was Mary who was never contaminated by original sin (the Immaculate Conception). Christ, Himself, did not have original sin, but He was not an exception for He did not descend from Adam by carnal generation (the Virgin Birth)-- and carnal generation is the instrument of transmission of human nature and thus of original sin.<sup>57</sup>

Original sin, as its opposite, original justice, fell principally on the will. Therefore, it becomes vitally important for man that his will be submissive to reason and thus subordinate to God. Human society has been damaged because human nature has suffered four wounds: ignorance in the intellect, malice in the will, weakness in the irascible appetite, and concupiscence in the concupissible appetite. Or, in other words, man's prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance have been hurt -- but this is not to mean that they have been destroyed. Original sin caused the defects of death, sickness, injury, hunger, thirst, etc. only in so

57. St. Thomas; Summa Theologica; Part I-II, Quest. 79-81

far as it removed the wholly supernatural and original impediments to them by destroying original justice.<sup>58</sup>

St. Thomas then notes the seven capital vices which are unique in the fact that they lead to other sins. These he designates as: pride or vainglory (an unrestrained appreciation of our own worth), gluttony (an unrestrained use of food or drink), luxury or lust (a hankering after impure pleasures), covetousness or avarice (an immoderate desire for earthly goods), sloth (laziness or carelessness in doing right because of the bodily labour attached to it), envy (sorrow over another's good as being a hindrance to one's own pre-eminence), and anger (an inordinate desire for revenge).<sup>59</sup> Because sin stains the soul,<sup>60</sup> it makes men liable to punishment; and, if the sin is against charity, everlasting punishment.<sup>61</sup> Venial sins ("which contain a certain inordinateness, but yet are not contrary to the love of God and our neighbour")<sup>62</sup> are not as bad as mortal sins (which are against charity); but both lead men to unhappiness and social discord.

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58. St. Thomas; Summa Theologica; Part I-II, Quest. 82-83

59. 84 (It

should be noted that the first four of these "deadly sins" have as their root cause man's desire for happiness, which is a good, which includes (excellence-pride), (sufficiency-covetousness), and (delight-gluttony and lust). The last three come to man as an avoidance of good on account of evil -- either his own good (sloth) or another's (envy and anger).

60. *ibid.*

Quest. 86

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But while Aquinas feels that an understanding of the nature of sin is necessary in order for man to overcome its temptations,<sup>63</sup> he also believes that God has ordained that man should have Law to direct his actions and guide him toward the ultimate goal of happiness. He defines "Law" as "a rule and measure of acts, whereby one is induced to act or restrain from action".<sup>64</sup> In Summa Theologica, Part I-II, Question 90, Article 4, he amplifies this definition and gives it as "an ordinance of reason for the general good emanating from him who has the care of the community, and promulgated to its subjects".<sup>65</sup>

Thomas Gilby summarizes this question in this way:

"First, it was a rational ordinance, for though the legislator should be backed by the ability to enforce his ordinance, the initial condition for its acceptance was that it placed a meaning in our social conduct. We were obedient to it in a manner different from our submission to the force of fire and water or to any mere might we could not resist.

Secondly, its meaning lay in its reference to

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63. While much of the foregoing elaboration and treatment of St. Thomas' doctrine of Sin may be considered unnecessary within the context of this study, yet it is at this point that the differences between Roman Catholic and Protestant doctrines begin to emerge. Especially in Calvin's doctrine of Original Sin can this be seen. It is because Calvin's view of sin was different from that of Aquinas that his conception of the Law was different. In this connection, see Chapter III and the Conclusion of this thesis.
64. St. Thomas; Summa Theologica; Part I-II, Question 90, Article 1.
65. *ibid.*, Article 4. (Paragraph 2 : "quaedam rationis ordinatio ad bonum commune et ab eo qui curam communitatis habet promulgata").

to purpose. Why should we obey? Because of the Common Good. Again, an object which required intelligence to perceive.

Thirdly, this purpose could be envisaged only by the commonality in theory and by its representative in practice.

Fourthly, it must be brought to the rational acceptance of its subjects. Law could not bind unless promulgated, and on this head the moralists debated how far subjects were excused from its observance by the accidents of ignorance."<sup>66</sup>

After defining law, Aquinas then turns to its divisions.

The first and most important is Eternal Law:

"A law is nothing less than the dictate of practical reason in the sovereign who governs a perfect community. Now it is manifest, supposing that the world is ruled by Divine Providence, that the whole community of the universe is governed by Divine Reason. And, therefore, the plan of government of things, as it is in God the Sovereign of the universe, bears the character of a law. And because the Divine Reason conceives nothing according to time, but has an eternal concept, therefore it is that this manner of law must be called eternal."<sup>67</sup>

The Thomist, Dr. Walter Farrell, identifies this

Eternal Law with Providence:

"Putting it another way, the world is governed by God and a detailed plan of that government, which we call providence, exists in the mind of God; the root of that providence and government, the universal principles from which providence proceeds to its detailed conclusions and to the execution of those conclusions, we call the Eternal Law."<sup>68</sup>

But then Farrell goes on to identify it with Natural Law in this world. He writes,

"In God that law is the Eternal Law; the same law as it is found in creatures is called the Natural

66. Gilby, Thomas; Principality and Polity; Longmans, Green; London; 1958; pp. 135-136.

67. St. Thomas; Summa Theologica; I-II, Q. 91, Art. 1, Par. 1.

68. Farrell, Walter; A Companion to the Summa; Vol. II; Sheed & Ward; London; 1938; pp. 371-372.

Law. Natural Law is, then, nothing more than a participation of the Eternal Law by creatures. We find a purely passive participation common to all creatures in the form of natural inclinations to proper goals; or, again as passive but proper to men alone, in the light of reason naturally, intuitively knowing first principles; and, finally, in its only active form, we find this participation in the natural dictate of human reason by which man regulates both himself and other creatures."<sup>69</sup>

Thus, as "the reflection of Eternal Law in rational creatures is called Natural Law,"<sup>70</sup> its chief end, good, can be determined by practical reason. St. Thomas writes,

"As being is the first thing that falls under apprehension absolutely, so good is the first thing that falls under the apprehension of the practical reason. For every agent acts for an end, which end has a character of goodness. And, therefore, the first principle of practical reason is one founded on the nature of good, good being that which all things seek after."<sup>71</sup>

As the first precept of Natural Law, then, Aquinas gives the following principle: "that good is to be done and gone after, and evil is to be avoided."<sup>72</sup> From this principle flow forth the fundamental precepts of the Law of Nature according to the order of natural inclinations.<sup>73</sup>

They are three in number:

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69. Farrell, op. cit., p. 372.

70. A phrase used in Rządkiwicz, A.L.; The Philosophical Basis of Human Liberty According to St. Thomas Aquinas; Catholic University Press; Washington; 1949; p. 65.

71. St. Thomas; op. cit., I-II, Quest. 94, Article 2.

72. *ibid.*

73. It should be noted here that it is at this point that Thomistic and Calvinistic ethics are forever divided. According to St. Thomas, man can do good and avoid evil; according to Calvin, man cannot. This difference, as we have seen, stems from their differing views of the nature of man, and the effect of the Fall.

"First of all there is in man an inclination to that natural good which he shares along with all substances, inasmuch as every substance seeks the preservation of its own being, according to its nature. In virtue of this inclination there belong to the natural law ~~the~~ taking of those means whereby the life of man is preserved, and things contrary thereto are kept off.

Secondly, there is in man an inclination to things more specially belonging to him, in virtue of the nature he shares with other animals. In this respect those things are said to be of the natural law, which nature has taught to all animals, as the intercourse of the sexes, the education of offspring, and the like.

In a third way there is in man an inclination to good according to the rational nature which is proper to him; as man has a natural inclination to know the truth about God, and to live in society. In this respect there belong to the natural law such natural inclinations as to avoid ignorance, to shun offending other men, and the like."<sup>74</sup>

He goes on to explain the limitations of Natural Law:

"To the law of nature belongs everything to which man is inclined according to his nature. Now every being is naturally inclined to an activity befitting itself according to its form. Hence, as the proper form of man is his rational soul, there is a natural inclination in every man to act according to reason; that is, to act according to virtue. Hence, from this point of view, all acts of virtue are according to nature: for everyone's own reason naturally dictates to him to act virtuously.

But if we speak of various acts in detail, not all virtuous acts are prescribed by natural law: for many things are virtuously done, to which nature at first does not incline, but rational inquiry has found them conducive to human happiness."<sup>75</sup>

In further elaborating the Law of Nature, Aquinas concludes that in its general precepts "the Natural Law can in no way be blotted out from the human heart in the abstract:

74. St. Thomas, op. cit., I-II, Quest. 94, Art. 2.

75. ibid., Art. 3.

still it is blotted out in its application to a particular question of practice.....but as to its secondary precepts the Natural Law may be blotted out of the hearts of men by evil persuasions, vicious customs, and corrupt habits."<sup>76</sup>

These general precepts may not be subtracted from; but, so that they may apply to particular cases, they may be added to.<sup>77</sup>

Those additions are termed "Positive Law".<sup>78</sup>

St. Thomas justifies positive law by saying, "Man has a certain innate aptitude for virtue, but the perfection of virtue must accrue to him by discipline and training.... and one man must receive from another this training and discipline whereby virtue is arrived at."<sup>79</sup>

76. St. Thomas, op. cit., I-II, Quest. 94, Art. 6.

77. *ibid.*, Art. 5.

78. Thomas Gilby, in a footnote to his Philosophical Texts; Oxford University Press; London; 1951; p. 357; gives this excellent outline of St. Thomas' view:

"Eternal Law is the source and exemplar of all derivative law, which may be divided as follows:

Natural Law;

Positive Law.

Natural Law descends from the primary precepts to conclusions more or less cogent and admitted according to their closeness to moral first principles. Some of these conclusions are approximately equated with the Jus Gentium of Roman jurisprudence, though their legal condition verges into that of positive law. Positive Law can be divided according to the person of the legislator:

Divine Positive Law, e.g. the Law of Moses;

Human Law, which may be subdivided:

Canon Law;

Civil Law.

Precepts of the natural law may be backed by positive enactment..... Ecclesiastical law may include civil law dealing with Church matters."

79. St. Thomas, op. cit., I-II, Quest. 95, Art. 1, Par. 1.

To be a true law, each enacted Positive Law must be derived from the Natural Law.<sup>80</sup>

Positive Law, however, does not repress all vices, "but only those graver excesses from which it is possible for the majority of the multitude to abstain, and especially those excesses which are to the hurt of other men."<sup>81</sup>

The same is true of virtues. "Human law does not enjoin all acts of all virtues, but only those acts which are referrable to the general good, whether immediately or mediately."<sup>82</sup>

As human laws are derived from the Eternal Law (if they are just), they have "a binding force in the court

80. St. Thomas, op. cit., I-II, Quest. 95, Art. 2. (This derivation may come about in one of two ways: 1) as a conclusion -- as the prohibition of killing may be derived from the prohibition of doing harm to any man; and 2) as a determination -- as the degree of punishment to be given to a wrong doer.

The enactments that arrive as conclusions are not merely legal, but have also the force of Natural Law. Determined enactments, on the other hand, have the force of Human Law only.)

81. St. Thomas, *ibid.*, Quest. 96, Art. 2.

82. *ibid.*, Art. 3. (We should note that this is merely an elaboration of Aquinas' original definition of law; "an ordinance of reason for the general good." The further perfection of man is not the concern of Positive Law, i.e. the State, but is the proper work of the Church.)

of conscience".<sup>83</sup>

All men are subject to the law if: 1) they are subject to the authority that frames the law; or 2) they are not under the direction of a higher law. Law, by its very nature, is coercive; and, in this sense, only men who disobey the law are properly said to be subject to it.<sup>84</sup> True laws are ordained for the common welfare of men; but, if they are enacted against the common welfare, they are not truly law. Hence, such false laws have no binding power.<sup>85</sup>

83. St. Thomas, op. cit., I-II, Quest. 96, Art. 4. (The justice of laws is to be determined in three ways: 1) in respect of the end -- when they are ordained to the general good; 2) in respect to the author -- when the law does not exceed the authority of the legislator; and 3) in respect of the form -- "when burdens are laid upon subjects in proportionate equality in order to the general good". Also, laws are unjust in two ways: 1) when they do not meet the requirements of the above in respect to their end, author, or form; and 2) when they are contrary to "the good that is of God".

In the first instance, they are said to be "acts of violence instead of laws" and are not binding on conscience. In the second, "it is no wise lawful to observe such laws."

How these principles apply in modern industrial society will be examined in Chapter IV of this thesis.)

84. St. Thomas, *ibid.*, Quest. 96, Art. 5. (We should note that sovereigns, i.e. legislators, are released from the coercive force of the law for they cannot coerce themselves. On the other hand, sovereigns are subject to the directive force of the law by their own wills. "Hence, in the judgment of God, the sovereign is not released from the law as regards its directive force, but ought voluntarily .... to fulfill the law. The sovereign is also above the law, inasmuch as, if expedient, he can change the law, and dispense in it according to place and season." Thus, by implication, at least, the Pope, as sovereign and interpreter of the law, becomes morally autonomous.)

85. St. Thomas, *ibid.*, Art. 5. (However, he adds, "that if the observance of the letter of the law involves no sudden danger that has to be met at once, it does not belong to every one.. to interpret and decide... but this interpretation is reserved to men in power..".)

Laws ought to be changed if by alteration they may be brought into closer alignment with right reason or if those who are subject to the law have so changed their condition as to make the law inoperable or unjust.<sup>86</sup> But, Aquinas notes, "human law ought never to be changed, unless the gain to the public advantage be enough to balance the loss of the force of custom."<sup>87</sup> Custom, he believes, is a mighty force that tends toward the good "for when a thing is done many times over, it seems to come of the deliberate judgment of the reason. And in this way, custom at once has the force of law, and abolishes law, and is the interpreter of the law."<sup>88</sup>

Because "it sometimes happens that a precept which is to the advantage of the community generally is not adapted to a particular person or to a particular place, either because it would hinder some great good or would even bring on some evil"; Aquinas decrees that "he who has the ruling of a community has the power of dispensing from the human law that rests on his authority."<sup>89</sup> However, here two rules

86. St. Thomas; Summa Theologica; I-II, Quest. 97, Art. 1

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88. 3 (We should note that while St. Thomas would allow that custom may force a change in laws, yet this is only properly done when custom is in accord with reason - Par. 2).

89. St. Thomas, *ibid.*, I-II, Quest. 97, Art. 4.

ought to be observed: 1) that the dispensation ought to be to the advancement of the general good; and 2) that dispensation can only be made for the conclusions that follow from the general precepts of the natural law, and not from the natural law itself.<sup>89</sup>

Following this discussion of human positive law, St. Thomas turns to the Divine Positive Law which is divided into the Old Law ( the Law of the Old Testament ) and the New Law of Christ. As human laws deal with the common good of human communities, the Divine Law deals with the ordering of the community of men by God, either in the present or future life:

"But this is done by acts of all the virtues. And therefore the Divine Law proposes precepts of the acts of all virtues, yet, so that some things, without which the order of virtue, which is the order of reason, cannot be observed, fall under an obligation of precept; while other things, which belong to the well-being of perfect virtue, fall under an admonition of counsel."<sup>90</sup>

Thus, while the "double morality" of the Precepts and Counsels does not fall under the Natural Law, as such; it is given to men for their moral perfection by revelation. The Jesuit professor, F. C. Copleston, gives a lucid explanation

89. St. Thomas; Summa Theologica; I-II, Quest. 97, Art. 3  
 (But we should note here that in Par. 3 Aquinas reserves Divine dispensations to the authority of the Church: "But, in the precepts of the Divine Law, which are from God, none can dispense but God, or the man whom God may empower for that special purpose." That this reservation excited Protestant controversy there can be no doubt.)
90. St. Thomas; ibid., I-II, Quest. 100, Art. 2.

nation of man's need for Divine Law:

"... for Aquinas, the Christian theologian, man has a supernatural final end or supreme good the attainment of which transcends his natural powers. True, human nature is not destroyed or annulled by the fact that man is called to the beatific vision of God, and so the human mind is not rendered incapable of discovering the natural moral law. But it cannot discover by itself either that man actually has a supernatural destiny or the means appointed by God for its attainment. This knowledge is acquired by revelation, and the latter is therefore required not only to make it easier for men in general to know those moral precepts the binding force of which reason is capable of discovering but also to impart to man the knowledge of the supernatural means, like the use of the Sacraments, which God wills him to take in order to receive and grow in supernatural grace. In addition, therefore, to the natural moral law we have the positive divine law."<sup>91</sup>

St. Thomas devotes many pages to the content of this "law of perfection";<sup>92</sup> but we might summarize his teachings by saying that this Supernatural Law, i.e. Divine Positive Law, is, like all other Law, "an Ordinance of Reason (in this case, Divine Reason) for the general good (in this case, perfect good), emanating from Him who has the care of the community (in this case, God and all mankind), and promulgated to its subjects (in this case, to all mankind by the Church)."<sup>93</sup>

Otto Gierke explained the relationship between Divine

91. Copleston, F. C.; Aquinas; Penguin Books; London; 1957; p. 227.

92. In the Summa Theologica, the explanation of the Divine Positive Law can be found in I-II, Questions 100 to 108, inclusive.

93. This summary sentence will be recognized as St. Thomas' definition of Law itself. See page 38, note 65 of this thesis.

Positive Law and the Law of Nature in this way:

"The revealed Law of God stood to the Law of Nature (properly so-called) in this relation, namely, that, while the latter was implanted by God in Natural Reason for the attainment of earthly ends, the former was communicated by God to man in a supernatural way and for a supramundane purpose."<sup>94</sup>

Thus, Divine Positive Law, as interpreted by the Church, falls outside of the concerns of ethics proper, though its existence produces tremendous ethical implications. Because of the gift of Grace, Thomistic ethics become the handmaiden of Thomistic theology:

"In the light of this gift all of human life, all of human action, takes on a new meaning, tremendous significance. There is no poverty, drabness, failure, misery, or despair in human existence that can compare with the poverty, drabness, failure, misery, and despair of sin, for sin means the loss of grace. Anything short of sin is incapable of robbing human life of its high romance, its tense drama, its high hopes. With grace, there is no insignificant human action; nothing can be insignificant that echoes in eternity. There is no unimportant human being. There is no meaningless human life."<sup>95</sup>

It is on the idea of Grace that St. Thomas brings to a close "Pars Prima Secundae". Through the medium of slavishly following the text of the Summa Theologica, it has been shown how he has laid a groundwork for the successful ordering of human society: The source and end of all creation is God (ontological Being). Man, in his striving for happi-

94. Gierke, Otto; Political Theories of the Middle Age; F.W. Maitland, Trans.; University Press; Cambridge; 1900; pp. 75-76.

95. Farrell, Walter; A Companion to the Summa; op. cit.; p. 432.

ness, has been given reason through which he may, by acts of his essentially unimpaired will, reach the perfect knowledge of the intelligible end which is the Beatific Vision of God. To aid man, God has given him the Eternal Law; and to perfect man, the gift of Grace. Natural Law is rooted in the needs of man; and Divine Law, in the nature of God.

Thus, it can be seen, that Thomism is, at the same time, theological, rational, positive, and personal in its ethical formulations.<sup>96</sup>

"The medieval passion for unity drew its inspiration, in no small measure, from the common unity in belief in Christianity. In turn, the theoretical exposition of the social and political order found its basis in the unique conception of the God of Christian revelation as the end of all created things. This conception is fundamental. The characteristic note of scholastic ethics in the widest sense, in which the social, political, and economic are included, is emphatically that of finality. Consequently, all the manifold social and political relationships into which the individual can enter must be regulated by this far reaching principle. We have seen that scholasticism insisted upon a strictly individualistic view of the universe. The individual alone exists and is of value. He alone can merit or can sin. Consequently upon this view, the social and political order into which he enters as an integral part must exist not for itself only, but for the sake of the individuals who compose it. This is at once the metaphysical and the ethical basis of, as it is the psychological outlook upon, the whole Thomistic social and political theory. Man -- the individual -- who is by nature a social animal, must find the end of his nature furthered by the society of which he

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 96. In "Pars Secunda Secundae" of the Summa Theologica St. Thomas elaborates on the theological, intellectual, and moral virtues and their corresponding vices. How these elements of practical ethics (especially his concepts of justice and injustice) make for the proper ordering of human society shall be seen in the examination of the social and political doctrines of the Middle Ages which follow.

necessarily forms a part. The furthering of this natural end, the completing and perfecting of his personality, is the work of the State, or indeed of any social group into which he enters. The State thereby becomes a means toward the realisation of the full natural self-expression of the individual, by making possible a mutual co-operation of activities for the common good. In like manner, it may be remarked in parenthesis, that other perfect society, the Church, is the means for the realisation of the supernatural end of man."<sup>97</sup>

## II. The Unitary Emphasis in Medieval Society : Social and Economic Causes

If it is true, as Dr. D. N. Freedman asserts, that "prophecy carries with it the seeds of its own fruition"<sup>98</sup> the same principle might well be applied to social ethics. St. Thomas drew from the social and economic situation of his own day the facts and data which were embodied in his ethical principles. But, by the writing down of his own formulations, he himself became a directing instrument in the ordering of society. In other words, he was not only influenced by the society of his day; he was an influence on it as well.

The most important social fact of Aquinas' day was that of feudalism:

"Feudalism was a complex phenomenon whose origins

97. Hearnshaw; F.J.C.; The Social and Political Ideas of Some Great Medieval Thinkers; Harrap; London; 1923; pp. 94-95.

98. Freedman, D.N.; in an unpublished lecture, "Prophecy", given at The Western Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, May 1953.

are disputed. It probably arose from the disordered political life of the Dark Ages, in which peasants were compelled to associate themselves with a powerful lord for the sake of personal protection. At any rate, it involved personal and economic service to a lord in return for a grant of land. Here an important social concept was introduced: the idea of the mutuality of rights between classes of society. The serf was unfree; but he was not a slave, for the precise reason that he had rights as well as duties. Political machinery existed to enforce these rights. Serfs were bound to the service of the lord who owned or held the land from which they lived, but they had a right to their livelihood and to protection against violence and injustice."<sup>99</sup>

Thus, as Belloc asserts, the greatest social contrast between the Medieval era and modern times is to be found in the distinction between Status and Contract. Feudalism, he writes,

"... produced a spirit of Status, individuals and the classes of Society being bound one to another not by terminable contract as they are today, but by the conception that every man had his own place and fixed duties which he had inherited and could hand on to his descendants. The serf paying his dues of labor and produce, the small freeman who lived side by side with him in the village and was also bound by custom to certain dues, the lords of the villages receiving their feudal incomes, the overlords above them, the craftsmen in the towns, all these took for granted each his position in an organized society which called from each man certain activities, but guaranteed subsistence and the family.

There was exploitation; there was the institution of one man working for the profit of another; but it worked by fixed rules and inheritance, not by competition; the livelihood of those working was not in jeopardy, the revenues paid to superiors in that feudal society were fixed and known, the class distinctions consecrated by the immense length of time through which they had grown and by the fixity of the succession from generation

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99. Cronin, J.F.; Catholic Social Principles; Bruce; Milwaukee; 1950; p. 12.

to generation.

Christian society had become static -- but static also means stable. It had become an organized thing, the rules of whose life would remain a strong framework preserving the character of the whole and its shape through the coming expansion of energy and knowledge.<sup>100</sup>

But, as in all societies, there were discontented men who were unhappy in their Status.<sup>101</sup> For them, as we have seen, the Church provided an outlet in the Monastic life.

"For monastic vocations and monastic endowments there were two exceptionally strong reasons in the Middle Ages. First, the monastery was an oasis of peace within a wilderness of strife and want and physical suffering such as no modern British reader is likely to have ever glimpsed.... It was a medieval commonplace, which scarcely any medieval writer can be found to question, that the world was steadily growing worse from generation to generation.

Yet,..... even the worst human horrors were pale compared with what was constantly and authoritatively

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100. Belloc, Hilaire; The Crisis of Civilization; Fordham; University Press; New York; 1937; pp. 74-75.

101. R.W. Southern gives a realistic view of the medieval conception of serfdom: "There were many ways of looking on it, but broadly we may distinguish a high religious view, and the view of the ordinary man. As to the first, it is relevant to observe the title used by the head of Christendom in all his acts: servus servorum Dei, which could be translated 'serf of the serfs of God'. There was nothing abhorrent in the idea of servitude -- everything depended on its object. All men by sin have lost the dignity of freedom and have made themselves, in varying degrees, slaves of their passions; the way to freedom lies in a new subjection, the humiliation of selfnegation... But there was another, less elevated view of the matter which was shared by the majority of men, free and unfree alike... To nearly all men serfdom was, without qualification, a degrading thing and they found trenchant phrases to describe the indignity of the condition... Men well knew, however theologians might seem to turn common notions inside out, the difference between the yoke of servitude and the honour of liberty." --- The Making of the Middle Ages; Hutchison's; London; 1953; pp. 103-106.

preached concerning hell fire. St. Thomas Aquinas, with all his balance and moderation, devotes more than six folio pages to the pains of the damned, and proves that the flames which torture them are real, not metaphorical, fire."<sup>102</sup>

But what did those who endowed monasteries (or those who entered them) expect to find? In fact, they found:

".... a busy, efficient, orderly community, maintaining an elaborate sequence of church services, which called for a high degree of skill and expert knowledge. They did not expect to find a body of ascetics or contemplatives, and they would have thought it a poor reward for their munificence if they had found marks of poverty in the buildings, dress, or equipment of the monks. For them, monasticism was not a flight into desert places undertaken by individuals under the stress of a strong conviction; it was the expression of the corporate religious ideals and needs of the whole community."<sup>103</sup>

Thus, even at its best, monastic life in the middle ages was not what was envisaged by Benedict in the sixth century,<sup>104</sup> nor were its ideals the "Counsels of Perfection" as outlined by St. Thomas in the thirteenth.<sup>105</sup>

Yet, however much monasticism strayed from the ideal, it was kept within the confines of the Church. That it

102. Coulton, G.G.; Five Centuries of Religion; Cambridge University Press; Cambridge; 1936; Vol. III, pp.5-6.

103. Southern, R. W.; op. cit.; pp. 160-161.

104. In his "Introduction to Volume III" of Five Centuries, op. cit., Coulton gives an excellent summary of "The Rule of St. Benedict" (especially pp. xxxvi-xxxvii). The contrast between the ideal and the actual life of the monastic houses must have been striking. To what extent the oblates broke their vows (especially of obedience, chastity, and poverty, which were common to all the monastic orders) is, of course, not known. In regard to the widespread disavowal of the Augustine Monks of their vow of poverty, Coulton (pp. 359 foll.) makes an overwhelming, if one-sided, case.

105. See St. Thomas, Summa Theologica, op. cit., II-II, Questions 182-189, especially articles 4, 5, and 6 of Question 186.

could be retained -- in both its idealistic purity and actual perversions -- within the ecclesiastical structure is to the credit of the medieval religious social theorists, not the least of whom was St. Thomas, himself.<sup>106</sup>

Troeltsch identifies this capacity of the Church as one of the end results of the "Patriarchalism of Love",<sup>107</sup> which, when combined with the idea of society as an organism produced the Medieval Social Theory. The importance of this assertion warrants citing his explanation at length:

"The mighty organized structure of the Medieval Church, with its great main divisions into the three classes of priests, monks, and laymen, within which, further, the clergy were fully organized, in a well-articulated system of various ranks and grades, together with the contemporary classified structure of the general life of Society, combine to form the idea of a

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 106. In this connection, Dean Inge writes: "From the time of the martyrs the saint had been very independent of the Church. Mysticism, with the discipline which it involved, had been almost an alternative road to heaven, a rival of Church and Sacrament. To a large extent this has always been and always must be so. Mysticism is independent of time, place, nationality, and creed. . . . . Mysticism is pure religion. For this reason the great Churches have never been able to do without it, and yet have never been able to control it entirely or subordinate it to their aims. It has been throughout a rival to every monopolist claim, a potential enemy to all priestcraft. But the medieval Church was on the whole successful in harnessing this unruly force. We need only think of the scholastic mystics. . . ." - Inge, W.R.; Christian Ethics and Modern Problems; Hodder & Stoughton; London; 1930; p. 121.

107. Troeltsch, Ernst; Social Teachings; op cit.; Chapter II, Section 8; especially "Social Teaching of Thomism: Patriarchal and Organic Idea", pp. 284-296.

general organism which is composed of various classes and groups. The Corpus mysticum with its services and duties, and also with the honours and needs of the individual members, which show the relation of the part to the whole, becomes the theory of the conception of Society in itself, and each social group is characterized as a corpus morale et politicum, or as a corpus mysticum, in which individuals are always described as members of an organic whole. At the same time, however, a voluntary mutual relationship of this kind between all these parts and members, which, in particular instances, owe their position purely to compulsion, and theoretically contain a large element of non-liberty, which, moreover, are maintained in their position by the idea of a kind of caste-tradition is only possible by laying great stress on patriarchal ideas. This patriarchalism, however, is not given any special prominence in most of the presentations of the Catholic Social Ideal. It seems to be implied in the organic idea itself, which indeed for its part emphasizes the variety of the groups and services, and in so doing requires a mutual adjustment of all the inequalities which the organism contains. Out of the organic idea, however, there still follows only the division of labour and service in general, and something which, it is true, is rational, necessary, and harmonious. But in addition to those inequalities which the conception of an organism requires there are some which far transcend the purpose of the harmonious unification of the members into one body -- inequalities which are created purely by the supreme power of force, by the arbitrary power of positive law, by the privileges or accidents of Nature; there are differences of disposition and of destiny which can only be held to proceed from the inscrutable Will of God, and which cannot be explained in rational terms. All this is gathered up into the patriarchal conception, and is overcome by it alone, both in the spiritual and ethical sphere."108

Thus, it would appear in Troeltsch's view, at least, that when the established society both receives the sanction

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108. Troeltsch; Social Teachings; op. cit., pp. 285-286.

of the Church and is incorporated into its Social ideal, it receives the sanctity of the Church as well; and the economic and social inequalities within it are hallowed. To what extent the patriarchal structure of the society of feudalism was dependent on the patriarchal structure of the Church is not at all clear. It may be that other non-religious influences of a political character (clan, tribe, the dictatorship of the Roman Emperors, etc.) may have been more determinative in the development of feudalism than the structure of the hierarchial Church; but the point remains that they were not incompatible. In point of fact, through the conceptions of Aquinas, the Church was willing and able to sanctify the static character and the economic and social inequalities of the feudalistic status quo.

As we have seen, the idea of Society as a Social Organism comes from the principles of Natural Law. Centered in an essentially individualistic idea of man, discoverable by reason, and interpreted through Positive Law, Natural Law produces an Organic Society by establishing the place of each man within it, and protecting his life and property. Ideally, the enactments of Positive Law were self-evident conclusions or expansions of the precepts of Natural Law. (For example, St. Thomas considered the right of private property as a necessary adjunct to Natural Law) Thus, his so-called "Property Ethic" lies in the domain of Positive Law, but comes directly as a conclusion from Natural Law.

As a result, the right to hold private property becomes a bulwark for the ordered society in that it hallows the existent owner's rights to keep, for an ethical reason, that which, in fact, he already owns. But while the Natural Law defends this inequality, it neither insists that a man should gain more than is sufficient for him in his position in society nor does it deny the importance of charity and stewardship in those things which are superfluous to a man and his family.

In analyzing these statements, it would be best to turn first to St. Thomas' illuminating answer to the question, "Is it lawful for anyone to possess anything as his own?"

"Two things are competent to man regarding any exterior good. The one is the power of managing and dispensing it; and, so far as that goes, it is lawful for a man to have property of his own. It is also necessary to human life for three reasons: first, because everyone is more careful to look after a thing that is his own private concern than after what is common to all or many: since everyone avoids labour and leaves to another to do the duty that belongs to a number of persons in common, as happens where there are many persons to wait on you. The same appears in another way, because human affairs are handled in more orderly fashion where every individual has his own care of something to look to; whereas there would be confusion if everyone indiscriminately took the management of anything he pleased. Thirdly, because a peaceful state of society is thus better ensured, everyone being contented with his own lot. Hence we see that disputes arise not uncommonly among those who have any possession in joint stock.

Another thing within the reach of man regarding exterior goods is the use of them. In that respect a man ought not to hold exterior goods as exclusively

his own, but as common possessions, so as readily to share them with others in their need. Hence, as the Apostle says; 'Charge the rich of this world to give easily, to communicate to others'."109

Thus, while the right of ownership is protected by the Law of Nature, the use of private property is subject to the claims of charity. Moreover, its use is determined by Positive Law. He continues, "The marking off of private possessions is not done according to Natural Law, but rather according to human convention, which belongs to Positive Law."110

Also, the dictates of Natural Law not only protect a man's right of ownership, but also protect his "right of belonging" to a social grouping:

"Man is a social animal, having many wants he cannot supply for himself. He is born into a group by nature. By living with others he is helped to a good life. And this on two heads.

First, as regards necessities without which life cannot be lived, he is supported by the domestic group. He depends on his parents for his birth, feeding, upbringing. Each member of the family helps the others.

Secondly, as regards the conveniences without which life cannot be lived well, he is helped by the civil group, both for material benefit, for the State provides public services beyond the means of one household, and for moral advantage, thus public authority can check young criminals when paternal warnings go unheeded."111

As a result, the organic society is composed of natural groupings -- the individual, his family, the state -- which

109. St. Thomas; Summa Theologica; II-II, Quest. 66, Art. 2.

110. *ibid.*

111. St. Thomas; Commentary; I Ethics, Lecture 1.

all work together in the natural realm for the supernatural end of man. Thus, a supernatural monism is served by a natural pluralism.

That there are wide differences in each individual, family, and state, Aquinas readily admits; and he accepts the existing order as being dictated by God. But, before turning to St. Thomas' reasons for accepting the status quo, let us see how Troeltsch interprets Thomistic thought in this matter, especially in light of his assertion of the dominance of the "Patriarchalism of Love":

"The community itself is affected by the various differentiations and hindrances as well as advantages which result from the connection with social institutions outside the Church, and from natural differences.

From the outset, the Christian social ideal applied to these differences the conception of the Patriarchalism of love; it enjoined the voluntary acceptance of, and submission to, these differences, which were to be utilized by some as an opportunity for the exercise of charity and devotion towards their less fortunate brethren, and by others as occasions for displaying the virtues of trust, patience, and humility to those above them; by this means the voluntary relationships of submission and authority produced the peculiar ethical values of mutual personal relationships."<sup>112</sup>

Thus, the differences of wealth and social status, rather than detracting from the social unity, provide the means for the exercise of Christian charity which, in turn, further consolidates the social organism. As a result, it would

112. Troeltsch; Social Teachings; op. cit., p. 285.

appear, if Troeltsch is correct (and from the view of this study, his arguments here seem irrefutable), that the original spontaneous outburst of Christian love in the first century which deteriorated into subjectively oriented, ease-of-conscience charity after the third century, by the time of the late Middle Ages had become, in addition to the other motives which no doubt carried through, a means of confirming and further amalgamating the established social order.

Troeltsch goes on to discuss the effect of this teaching in both the ideal of political stability and the idea of social status:

"It was along this line, then, that the ideas about natural inequalities -- talent and incapacity -- and, above all, the theories about the effect of sin, become important; this latter idea was held to explain why man has to submit to despotic rule -- it is a punishment and a means of discipline; despotisms are regarded as effected by God, as causa remota, just as the systems of government which have been reasonably established by means of treaties and plebiscites. From this point of view, then, the ruling powers appear to have been appointed by the permission and the Providence of God...<sup>113</sup>

To a greater extent than in the sphere of politics, however, this idea gains significance within the social

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 113. For the political doctrines inherent within St. Thomas' writings, see his De Regimine Principis; in the Summa Theologica, I-II, Question 96 ("Of the Authority of Human Law"), especially Article 5; and again, II-II, Question 104 ("Of Obedience"). In the last-named reference, Article 6, Aquinas summarizes: "And therefore the faith of Christ does not excuse the faithful from the duty of obedience to secular princes."

sphere itself. Here it works in the direction of class stability, and encourages the idea of the supreme importance of the idea of social position. In addition to the protection of the individual, and the solidarity of mutual help within the framework of the class organization, it signifies pre-eminently order and stability in social life, contentment within existing circumstances, the cessation of the menacing struggle for existence by recognizing the existing classification of social groups. In close connection there arises economic traditionalism, which secures a livelihood to each group, but which also maintains each group in that higher or lower station in life which is suited to it.<sup>114</sup>

Thus, Thomistic social thought was willing to "freeze" the existing social order and political systems into a permanent, unchanging and unchangable, organic whole. In our own day of social fluidity this feudalistic rigidity seems woefully undemocratic; but, in fact, its rationale was based on St. Thomas' well-thought-out Aristotelian view of Justice.

As we have seen, Aquinas considered justice to be a moral virtue which operated through the right action of the will and properly directed a man in his relations. Following Aristotle,<sup>115</sup> he identified two aspects of justice: general or legal, and particular.

General justice "directs the acts of all the virtues to the good of the commonwealth ..... and may be called legal-----

114. Troeltsch; Social Teachings; op. cit., pp. 291-292. (It is for these reasons that Troeltsch quite rightly claims that within modern Roman Catholic Social Theory there is no adequate idea of "Social Reform" -- see especially pp. 303-305. This claim will be discussed in detail in Chapter IV of this thesis.)

115. See Aristotle; Ethics, Book V, Section II.

justice; and in this wide sense legal justice is identical in essence with all virtue, but differs in the consideration of the mind."<sup>116</sup>

Particular Justice, on the other hand, "is in relation to some private person, who stands to the community as a part to the whole."<sup>117</sup> It, in turn, is to be found in two species: Commutative Justice (justice in the relationship of two individuals); and Distributive Justice (justice in the relationship between one man and society).

Distributive Justice is the justice of proportion, and is the sanction for the differing degrees of social status. St. Thomas writes,

"In Distributive Justice the mean is not taken according to equality of thing to thing, but according to the proportion of things to persons, so that in proportion as one person exceeds another, so also the thing that is given to the one person exceeds the thing that is given to the other."<sup>118</sup>

As can easily be seen, the underlying hypothesis of this concept rests upon the "intrinsic worth" of the agent involved, in contrast to the "intrinsic worth" of the person with whom the relation of justice must be set. What is important is not the simple proportion itself, but the standard by which the value and worth of the agents is determined.

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116. St. Thomas; Summa Theologica; II-II, Quest. 68, Art. 6.

117. *ibid.*, Quest. 69.

118. *ibid.*, Quest. 66, Art. 2.

Hence, it is not pure equality that St. Thomas is seeking; but, rather, equality of rights as determined by status.<sup>119</sup>

This type of justice would appear to be based upon the respecting of persons, but Aquinas claims that it is not:

"The respecting of persons is opposed to distributive justice. For the equality of distributive justice consists in this, that to different persons different things are assigned in proportion to their several dignities and deserts. If therefore one has regard to that attribute in a person, which makes the thing conferred due to him, there is no respecting of the person but a regard for the cause..... But if in the person on whom you bestow some emolument you consider, not the reason that makes the bestowal appropriate or due him, but only the fact of his being this man, Peter or Martin, that is a respecting of persons, because the honour is awarded, not for any cause that makes the receiver worthy, but it is awarded simply to the person. That consideration must be held to be purely a personal consideration, which is not in respect of any cause rendering the party worthy of the gift in question."<sup>120</sup>

It should be noted that the principles of distributive justice are to be applied to social benefits and burdens as well as to honours and respect.<sup>121</sup>

St. Thomas affirms the status quo through these principles in that he concludes:

"Honour is a testimony to the virtue of him who is honoured; and therefore virtue alone is a due cause of

119. In Aristotle, Distributive Justice is expressed in a simple, geometric proportion of four terms:  $A:B::x:y$ ; then  $A:x::B:y$ ; therefore,  $A \text{ plus } x : B \text{ plus } y :: A:B$ . -- Aristotle, Ethics, Book V, Section II.

120. St. Thomas; Summa Theologica; II-II, Quest. 63, Art. 1.

121. While St. Thomas meant that the principles of Distributive Justice should be applied in the enactment of Positive Law, modern Catholic theologians have applied its principles to modern industrial relationships. Again, See Chapter IV of this thesis.

honour. But it must be observed that a person must be honoured, not only for his own virtue, but also for the virtue of another; as Princes and Prelates are honoured, though they may be of evil life, inasmuch as they bear the person of God, and of the community over whom they are set..... Thus also the fool is honoured, who is set in place of God and in place of the whole community!<sup>122</sup>

Commutative Justice, on the other hand, is the justice found in the proper relationship of two persons irrespective of their social class or station and "is obtained by weighing thing against thing."<sup>123</sup> This sense of justice comes into focus when the original harmony between two individuals has been fractured by some wrongdoing on the part of one of them. Its guiding principle is restitution.<sup>124</sup>

At first glance, it would appear that this is a simple reciprocity, a case of lex talionis, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth."<sup>125</sup> But St. Thomas insists that such is not the case:

"There are two things to consider in a case of one man taking that which belongs to another. There is first the disturbance of equilibrium of possession, which disturbance may be without injustice, as in loans.

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122. St. Thomas; Summa Theologica; II-II, Quest. 63, Art. 3.

123. *ibid.*, Question 62, Art. 1.

124. *ibid.*, Question 62, Articles 4, 5, 6, and 7. In Aristotle, this species of Justice is discussed in his Ethics; Book V, Section IV. Expressed Arithmetically, if A comprises both x and y and equals B which equals M -- all things are equal and in harmony. If, however, B takes x from A; then B exceeds M by 1 x and A by 2 x. Commutative Justice demands that x be taken from B so as to make B equal to M; and then that x be restored to A, so that A will also equal M.

125. Cited from Leviticus 24:20.

Then there is the crime of injustice, which may exist even where equilibrium of possession is undisturbed, as when one seeks to do violence, but prevails not. On the first count a remedy is applied by restitution, whereby the equilibrium is restored; and for this it suffices to restore the exact amount that we have taken of another's property. But to the crime a remedy is applied by a penalty, which it is the Judge's office to inflict. And therefore, before the culprit is condemned by the Judge, he is not bound to restore more than he has taken; but after he is condemned, he is bound to pay the penalty.<sup>126</sup>

While Commutative Justice helps define the proper relationship of two persons, St. Thomas precedes modern jurisprudence in that he recognizes a person to be a legal entity, i.e. a State or a business institution, as well as a private individual.<sup>127</sup> Therefore, it is Commutative Justice that is the moral justification behind the enactments of both civil and criminal law.<sup>128</sup>

As may readily be seen, this view of the nature of justice has many socially significant implications; but, restricting the discussion to the concerns of economic ethics, in the Medieval Period two applications were more significant than any others: the Doctrine of the Just Price, and the Prohibition against Usury.

St. Thomas defines the morality of the Just Price most succinctly:

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126. St. Thomas, Summa Theologica; II-II, Quest. 62, Art. 3.

127. In this connection, see Cronin, Catholic Social Principles; op. cit., p. 105.

128. St. Thomas, op. cit., II-II, Question 73.

"Now a transaction designed for the common advantage of both, should not bear harder upon the one party than upon the other; and therefore the contract between them should proceed on the principle of equality of thing to thing. Now the quantity of a thing that serves human use is measured according to the price given for it; for which purpose we have the invention of money. And therefore if either the price exceeds the quantity of the value of the thing, or conversely the thing exceeds the price, the equality of justice will be destroyed. And therefore to sell a thing dearer or buy it cheaper than it is worth, is a proceeding in itself unjust and unlawful."<sup>129</sup>

This principle affects all business transactions, and Aquinas goes on to explain that any sale is rendered unlawful (being contrary to Commutative Justice) if the article sold has any unmentioned flaw,<sup>130</sup> or if there is any defect in it of kind, quality, or quantity.<sup>131</sup>

However, with these limitations, trade is still necessary, lawful, and even honourable. Trade, within the limits of Commutative Justice, is a service to Society as a whole.

"And thus trade will be rendered lawful; as when one refers the moderate gain that he seeks from trade to the sustenance of his family, or to the relief of the distressed; or once more, when one applies to trade on behalf of the public interest, that the necessaries of life may not be wanting to his country, and seeks gain, not as an end, but as the wages of his labour."<sup>132</sup>

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129. St. Thomas; Summa Theologica; II-II, Quest. 77, Art. 1.

130. *ibid.*, Article 3

131. *ibid.*, Article 2 (These defects might be illustrated in this way: kind -- claiming that an article of brass was really made of gold; quality -- selling a sick animal and claiming that it was healthy; and quantity -- using a short measure.)

132. *ibid.*, Article 4.

Some commentators have claimed that the Just Price is a uniquely Christian doctrine;<sup>133</sup> yet,

"It is to be noted that the medieval Christian teaching was not extremist or partisan. Its standards of economic justice were reasonable standards which might be expected to appeal to the common sense and human conscience of every man apart from any special Christian motive or Christian inspiration. The Church of the Middle Ages did not attempt to impose upon the world heroic standards of virtue which only divine grace could enable them to hold to. The idea of justice embodied in the Just Price was not an attempt to secure to every man everything that a world of ideal Christians would provide him with. It was an attempt to secure him, whatever his station in life, a minimum livelihood not to be snatched from him by the greed of other men."<sup>134</sup>

Thus, the Just Price was socially conditioning as well as socially conditioned. Prices were to be determined by use-value, rather than market value:

"In another way we may speak of buying and selling, inasmuch as incidentally the transaction tends to the utility of one party and to the detriment of the other,

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133. Kenyon, writing on this subject in The Just Price; V.A. Demant, Ed.; Student Christian Movement Press; London; 1930; p. 24 states: "For the Just Price is an economic idea admitted to be peculiar to Christendom. It is sometimes pointed out that the medieval ethic in general was not derived from properly Christian principles, but was in the main an adaptation of Greek and Roman tradition to the circumstances of the time. But here in the doctrine of the Just Price is one case at least where the tradition failed to pass Christian standards, and was unhesitatingly rejected and the Christian principle elucidated. 'the whole conception of a just price appears to be purely Christian,' says Cunningham." (The reference to Cunningham is taken from his Growth of English Industry and Commerce: Early and Middle Ages, p.252.)
134. Spencer, Malcolm; writing in The Just Price; op. cit.; p. 133.

as when one has great need to have a thing and the other suffers by parting with it. In such a case the just price will be arrived at by regarding not only the thing that is sold, but also the loss which the seller incurs by the sale. And thus there will be an opening for the thing being lawfully sold for more than it is worth ordinarily and in itself, though not for more than it is worth to its possessor."<sup>135</sup>

However, he immediately goes on to defend market-value:

"But if one party is much benefited by the commodity which he receives of the other, while the other, the seller, is not a loser by going without the article, no extra price must be put on. The reason is, because the profit that accrues to the one party is not from the seller, but from the condition of the buyer."<sup>136</sup>

Thus, Commutative Justice defines the Just Price; and it becomes a complex of the cost of production, the maximum use-value to the seller, and the minimum market-value to the buyer. That the cost of the article is the most determinative element in its price can readily be seen;<sup>137</sup> but it would be wrong to assume that St. Thomas completely overlooks both use-value and market-value. Hence, while Professor Tawney is fundamentally right, he overstates the Thomistic doctrine when he claims:

"The essence of the argument was that payment may properly be demanded by the craftsmen who make the goods, or by the merchants who transport them, for both labour in their vocation and serve the common need. The unpardonable sin is that of the speculator or middleman, who snatches private gain by the exploitation of public necessities. The true descendant of the

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135. St. Thomas; Summa Theologica; II-II, Quest. 77, Art. 1.

136. *ibid.*

137. *ibid.*, Quest. 67, Art. 4, Par. 2 (St. Thomas states that an article may be sold at a higher price if it has been transported or improved. Thus, labour is a legitimate cost of production and becomes a legitimate part of the Just Price. As modern Catholics interpret this point, transportation, in those days, involved risk. For a further elaboration of this idea, see Chapter IV.)

doctrines of Aquinas is the labour theory of value. The last of the Schoolmen was Karl Marx."<sup>138</sup>

Aquinas recognized the need for money as a medium of exchange, but he was careful to draw a distinction between the need for money gain to support livelihood, and the desire for money for money's sake:

"It belongs to traders to be occupied with the exchange of commodities. But exchange is twofold: one form natural and necessary, whether an exchange in kind, of commodity for commodity, or an exchange of a commodity for money, but in any case having for motive the necessity of living; and such an exchange does not belong to trade, but to domestic economy or to statesmanship, to the art in fact of providing a family or a State with the necessaries of life. There is another species of exchange, either of money for money, or of any sort of goods for money, the object here being not the necessaries of life, but gain; and this trade seems properly to belong to traders. Now the former exchange is praiseworthy, as ministering to a natural want; but the latter is justly blamed, because, so far as in it lies, it ministers to the greed of gain, which knows no bounds, but tends to go to all lengths."<sup>139</sup>

Thus, in categorizing "trade" as natural and unnatural,

138. Tawney, R. H.; Religion and the Rise of Capitalism; op. cit.; p. 48. (In this connection, consider the wisdom Father Watt's criticism of Tawney's interpretation:

"If one of the parties to an exchange of goods receives something of less value than what he gives, he is treated unjustly, since his labour has produced more 'utility' than that with which he is provided as the result of the exchange. To represent this as a 'labour theory of value' is accurate only on condition that labour itself is taken to be measured (not by time, as Marx would say, but) by the utilities it produces; and to do so is to destroy all distinction between the labour theory of value and the utility theory." --- Lewis Watt in The Just Price; op. cit.; p. 63.)

139. St. Thomas; Summa Theologica; II-II, Quest. 77, Art. 2.

St. Thomas has laid a groundwork for declaring usury to be a sin against Commutative Justice. "To take usury for the lending of money is in itself unjust, because it is a case of selling what is non-existent; and that is manifestly the setting up of an inequality contrary to justice."<sup>140</sup>

He amplifies the prohibition by saying, "The use of the thing is not to be reckoned a part from the thing itself";<sup>141</sup> and so even non-monetary loans which involve use and consumption are to be paid back in the same kind and degree with nothing added to them.<sup>142</sup> He does allow payment for use without consumption (such as rent, for instance); but where consumption is involved, no extra price for use may be charged.<sup>143</sup>

Non-monetary favours and considerations may be repaid in kind with a bonus; but this, too, is only allowable if it is done in friendship and there are no money valuations attached to the things involved. This prohibition is absolute in regard to the lender,<sup>144</sup> but Aquinas adds a curious note in regard to the borrower:

"It is nowise lawful to induce a man to sin; but to use the sin of another unto good is lawful; because God also uses all sins unto some good, inasmuch as He draws some good out of every evil ..... So (while) it is nowise lawful to induce a man to lend at usury: it

140. St. Thomas; Summa Theologica; II-II, Quest. 78, Art. 1.

141. *ibid.*

142. *ibid.* (He is here very specific. Loans of food and livestock are to be repaid with items as nearly identical to the original gift as possible.)

143. *ibid.*

144. It must be remembered that we are here dealing with only the Medieval doctrines of St. Thomas, and not his later interpreters. The following chapters of this thesis will endeavour to trace the later development of these ideas.

is lawful however for a good purpose, as for the relief of one's own necessity or that of another, to borrow money at usury of him who is prepared so to transact usuriously."<sup>145</sup>

Thus, the key to all of St. Thomas' economic ethics is the Natural Law. In spite of their moral conditions, every individual, his family, and his State must be protected, and their existence continued. Certainly, it would appear that the end result of Scholasticism's Social Ethic was the sanctification of the status quo. That this would stifle social development and thwart the growth of economic institutions was unimportant. Because the theological assumptions were fixed and ultimate, the Social theory was content to "freeze" the feudalistic pattern and make it an ideal. It hallowed customs; and custom, in turn, protected it -- even to the extent of allowing the deductions of the Church's Social Theorists to dominate its laws, its schools, its courts, and its market places.<sup>146</sup>

But the finality of those theorists was not final.

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145. St. Thomas; Summa Theologica; II-II, Quest. 78, Art. 4. (Thus the Medieval Church was both consistent with Thomism and morally justified in its borrowings from the Jewish Banking Houses which were willing to lend money at interest. That this principle had its effect in the development of the Reformation there can be no doubt.)
146. Latourette adds an interesting note: "The prefix, 'Holy', before the term, 'Roman Empire', hints at the change wrought by Christianity in the theory of that rule which in the West claimed to be in the succession of the Caesars." -- Latourette, K.S.; A History of the Expansion of Christianity; Eyre and Spottiswoode; London; 1939; Vol. II, p. 371.

Both from the outside and from the inside opponents of the established order would attack the Church and its sanctification of feudal traditions. Emergent capitalists would defy its organic structure, and Protestant thinkers would oppose its "Patriarchalism of Love". While neither capitalism nor Protestantism (and they are not the same thing, as this study will attempt to show) could deny the existence of the Social Ethic as a tremendous intellectual formulation, they would both succeed in overthrowing its overwhelming power -- the one by battering at its superstructure of social custom, the other by digging deeply into the presuppositions of its theological foundation. That each was partially successful there can be no doubt; but neither force completely destroyed the great Medieval Idea. That it still exists today and claims millions of dedicated adherents is in no small way a personal tribute to its formulator, by whose name Catholic scholars proudly identify themselves.

But, for the purposes of this thesis, it is the struggle between those contending forces which is more important; and is to that conflict we now turn.

### III. The Dissolution of the Unified Medieval Society : Social and Economic Causes<sup>147</sup>

As we have seen, the medieval feudalistic society, dominated by the Church, and undergirded with religious and philosophic principles, was remarkably stable in character. Not only in theory, but also in practice -- Society was One. However, even before "The Reformation" there was another reformation in progress. Less dramatic, but no less effective, were the changes going on within the unified society, both in the economic activities of its citizens and in their social aspirations. It would probably not be an overstatement to say that the first signs of the decay of the social organism were to be found in its economy.<sup>148</sup>

Pirenne has claimed that feudalism existed because it was "an economy of no outlets".<sup>149</sup> With the rise of the independent merchants outside the monasteries,<sup>150</sup> however, the social rigidity was broken. Because the "Piepowdrous" ("dusty foot") was willing to travel long distances in

147. Strictly considered, this subject falls outside the scope of this thesis. It is briefly dealt with here only as an introduction to the Max Weber thesis which is discussed in the next chapter.

148. This will be recognized as the assertion of Henri Pirenne who believed that the origins of capitalism were to be found in the activities of medieval traders who risked the ire of the Church to seek private profits. Pirenne's assumption seems quite reasonable, and is widely, if not universally, held.

149. Pirenne, Henri; Mohammed and Charlemagne as quoted by Davis, R.H.C.; A History of Medieval Europe; Longman's Greene; London; 1957; p. 180. (While Davis disagrees with some aspects of Pirenne's thesis, he finds most historians in accord with his analysis of the rise of capitalism.)

150. Pirenne, H.; Medieval Cities; Princeton; 1948; pp. 108 foll.

search of large gains, Pirenne claims, civilization itself was affected:

"This rover, this vagabond of trade, by the strangeness of his manner of life must have, from the very first, astonished the agricultural society to all of the customs of which he went counter, and in which no place was set aside for him. He brought mobility to the midst of people attached to the soil; he revealed, to a world faithful to tradition and respectful of a hierarchy, which fixed the role and rank of each class, a shrewd and rationalist activity in which fortune, instead of being measured by social status, depended only on intelligence and energy. And so it is not surprising that he gave offense."<sup>151</sup>

In addition to their social influence, the independent merchants also brought economic change. For venture capital they sought loans at high rates of interest; and, in the fourteenth century, developed insurance to diminish risk and increase profit.

"To avoid the risk involved in transport of money, letters of exchange are invented and largely used even for small payments..... Old instruments of commerce are perfected, the Bill of exchange, the draft, the Bill of lading, are perfected between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and are of great assistance to the increase in trade. Bookkeeping becomes increasingly inadequate to the needs of the time. Inventories, accounts, ledgers are kept, and there is even an attempt, in the first half of the fifteenth century, to establish a scientific system

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151. Pirenne, Henri; Medieval Cities; op. cit., pp. 122-123.

of industrial accountancy."<sup>152</sup>

Yet, more important than their nascent capitalism -- at least insofar as their total effect on the medieval ideal was concerned -- was the fact that these independent merchants brought into existence cities which encouraged commerce and trade, unlike the earlier burghs (the military castellanies and bishopric towns).

"Nevertheless, the burg did not show the slightest urban character. Its population comprised, aside from the knights and clerics who made up its essential part, only men employed in their service and whose number was certainly of very little importance. It was a fortress population; it was not a city population. Neither commerce nor industry were possible or even conceivable in such an environment. It produced nothing of itself, lived by revenues from the surrounding country, and had no other economic role than that of a simple consumer!"<sup>153</sup>

However, the peripatetic merchants needed to have fixed points to store their goods, and to stay when the weather made the sea, the rivers, and the roads impassable. Thus arose the fairs; and, gradually, a merchant suburb grew up as an adjunct to the burg. In time, the suburb encompassed

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152. Fanfani, Amintore; Catholicism, Protestantism, and Capitalism; Sheed & Ward; London; 1935; pp. 161-162. (Coulton, in his Five Centuries of Religion, op. cit., p. 448, suggests that one of the reasons for the inaccuracy of medieval monastery accounts (and this would apply to any business enterprise) is that calculations were carried on in Roman numerals. "Let any reader try, with Roman numerals, an ordinary multiplication or division sum of three digits on each side, and he will at once realize why medieval calculations were done with counters on a board, marked out with such divisions that it resembled a chess board (echiquier, exchequer).")
153. Pirenne, Henri; Medieval Cities; op. cit., p. 75.

the burgh's walls; and the "city" was born, replete with a middle class.<sup>154</sup>

As cities grew more numerous and powerful, freedoms were gained by the townsmen from the local political or ecclesiastical authority; and the new status thus evolved had its own effect:

"Stadtluft macht frei; town-air made a man free. A villein or serf who entered a free town and resided in it for a year-and-a-day was automatically regarded as free, since he had acquired a share in his own lordship. But that did not mean that he was free to work, or buy or sell, as he liked. On the contrary, every commune regulated its own industries and trades with the most scrupulous care, organizing them into guilds which controlled prices, standards, and working-hours. The interests of both consumer and producer were protected, the former by controlling the quality of the materials and craftsmanship employed, and the latter by the elimination of competitive trading."<sup>155</sup>

But the influence of the Guilds may not have been as strong as has been supposed; nor were they, necessarily, unadulterated social goods. Professor Tawney suggests:

"In cities of this kind.....an ethic of mutual aid was not wholly impossible....(but) to suggest that anything like a majority of medieval workers were ever members of a craft gild is extravagant.... Even in the towns it is a question whether there was not a considerable population of casual workers..... who were rarely organized in permanent societies. To invest the craft guilds with a halo of economic chivalry is not less appropriate. They were, first and foremost, monopolists and the cases in which their vested interests came into collision with the consumer were not few."<sup>156</sup>

Despite the question of their numbers, there can be

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154. In this connection, see Pirenne, Henri; Medieval Cities; op. cit., pp. 106 foll. and pp. 167 foll.
155. Davis, R.H.C.; History of Medieval Europe; op. cit., p.393.
156. Tawney, R.H.; Religion and the Rise of Capitalism; op. cit., pp. 39-40.

little doubt that the craft guilds became a socially conservative force; but, because of the very nature of business itself, opportunities, i.e. temptations, besieged the individual members on all sides. They jealously protected their own prerogatives; but, doubtless, standards were not always kept and guild rules not always obeyed. It would appear that city life was simply not conducive to social or economic rigidity.<sup>157</sup>

St. Thomas himself recognized the danger to the ordered society within commercial civic life.

"For since the aim of merchants is wholly one of gain, greed takes root in the hearts of the citizens, by which everything in the city becomes venal, and, with the disappearance of good faith, the way is open to fraud; the general good is despised, and each man will seek his own particular advantage; the taste for virtue will be lost when the honour which is normally the reward of virtue is afforded to all. Hence, in such a city civil life cannot fail to grow corrupt."<sup>158</sup>

Moreover, not only were the ideals of natural trade, the just price, and the prohibition against usury attacked by city life; but also, the whole concept of status. Free labour replaced serfdom by bringing rural serfs into the civic labour supply; liquid capital replaced real estate which heretofore had guaranteed personal liberty and social prestige; and the necessities of commerce demanded that

157. Pirenne, Henri; A History of Europe; B. Miall, Trans.; Allen & Unwin; London; 1939. (While much of this book reiterates his earlier Medieval Cities, within it Pirenne gives an excellent account of gild life in the medieval community. See, especially, pp. 384-390.)

158. St. Thomas; De Regimine Principis, Book II, Chapter III.

education be transformed into a more practical and less ecclesiastical training.<sup>159</sup> Moreover, the "poor", who, since the third century had been only objects of charity, now either began to find a definite place within a working society or they began to be regarded as potentially dangerous to the public peace. In either case, a new social class, the proletariat, was born and took its place beside the bourgeois in the civic society.<sup>160</sup>

In addition, the Medieval Church fell into unbelievable decay and disrepute.<sup>161</sup> In the cities, a newly semi-educated laity protested the corruption of the secular clergy and found it easy to side with sporadic reform movements.<sup>162</sup> In the monasteries, the discrepancy between the reality and the ideal was even more noticeable, especially as it was seen in the notorious "commendam system".<sup>163</sup> Coulton finds the seeds of the monastic decay and the failure of ascetic idealism within monasticism itself. Writing of St. Francis of Assisi, he states:

"He himself lived each life so truly and so whole-heartedly that in him we scarcely see the conflict

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159. See Pirenne, Henri; A History of Europe; op. cit., especially the chapter on medieval education, pp. 219-233.
160. *ibid.*, especially pp. 501-548. (We might add that Pirenne considers the rise of cities so significant that he even makes the somewhat exaggerated claim that their development was the chief factor in the rise of national languages and the whole Renaissance Movement!).
161. This is agreed by even Catholic authors. See Cronin; Catholic Social Principles; op. cit.; pp.15-16; and Fanfani; op. cit.; pp. 154-157.
162. See Pirenne; History of Europe; op. cit.; pp. 240-242; and Latourette; op. cit.; pp. 444-446.
163. See Coulton's analysis of the Commendam System in his Five Centuries; op. cit.; pp.425-447, especially p.429.

of the two ideals; but it came out fatally in his Rule. The friars must teach others, and yet remain too poor to study themselves; they must evangelize the whole world, and yet bind themselves by the lifelong vow which cut them off from all natural intercourse with half of the human race. St. Francis himself was both hermit and apostle, and a few followed him with steps not too unequal; of the rest, the best were those who forgot only one side of the Saint's example. Some became the most ascetic of hermits; others, the most adventurous of missionaries; but vast numbers, who had no deep and enduring vocation for either sacrifice, drifted quietly amid the general uncertainty, and doubtless without realizing clearly how far they were drifting, into a fairly easy routine of life, safe for both worlds. Indeed, medieval conditions were eminently favourable to such rapid degeneration."<sup>164</sup>

Belloc characterized the whole medieval period by saying, "There were no potatoes, but then, also, there were no suicides".<sup>165</sup> But then he lays the blame for the destruction of the unified society not on medieval theory but on medieval practice. The problem, he claims, of the continuing ordered society came not from its intellectual, social, or religious formulations; but from the weakness of human personality. We will close this overlong Chapter with his analysis of its dissolution.

"The sequence which this spiritual decline followed is marked by various characters, of which five are the most important.

(1) Unity, the very principle of life for Christendom -- unity of doctrine and unity of discipline and organization in the field of religion -- was shaken.

(2) The organic structure of the Catholic Church was weakened as a consequence, and, at the same time,

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164. Coulton, G.G.; Ten Medieval Studies; Cambridge University Press; Cambridge; 1930; pp. 172-173.

165. Belloc, Hilaire; The Crisis of Civilization; op. cit., pp. 77-78.

begins, as it were, to 'ossify', to grow old and dead.

(3) The old living restraints which preserved the body of Christendom from decay and dissolution become more and more mechanical; authority finds itself depending more and more upon force and less and less upon agreement.

(4) Doubts and extravagances, two bad symptoms in any religious scheme, grew in the body of Christendom; doubts not only on doctrine, but also on the titles to authority; extravagances in legends and usages.

(5) The period is marked (especially towards the end) by two complementary evils, necessarily following upon the over-reliance of authority upon force. It is marked by the evil of unworthy officers to preside over and conduct the religion of Christendom, and it is marked by the increasing efforts of these officers to prevent the catastrophe produced by their own insufficiency; so that at last in the 15th century and early 16th you get something like a religious reign of terror which is bound to exhaust itself and to break down."<sup>166</sup>

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166. Belloc, Hilaire; op. cit., pp. 92-93.

## CHAPTER THREE

### SOURCES OF THE CONTRAST II : THE CONTINENTAL REFORMERS

#### I. The Social Implications of Lutheranism <sup>1</sup>

As we have seen, the structure of medieval social life, as formulated in the Catholic view of St. Thomas, was directed towards the development of supernatural ends. Each man's destiny was the "Beatific Vision" of God, and he attained this end by becoming a fixture in an ordered, stable society which was seen by Reason, defined by the Church, and controlled by Natural Law. Grace was distinct from Nature; but it was an addition to, and not an antithesis of, the naturally ordered organic society.

"Thus, between the natural and the supernatural there is a graded distinction rather than an abrupt opposition; and the classic system of St. Thomas expresses this in its ingenious stairway of grades or stages from nature up to grace. Indeed, one of his most famous sentences may be said to summarize the architectonic principle of medieval Catholicism in its greatest period: 'Grace presupposes nature

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1. In turning to Luther, it is to be noted that, though he was not the first of the reformers, he along with Calvin provided the most lasting effect on the property ethic of Christendom. However, both on the Continent (the Waldensians, the Franciscans, and the Hussites), and in Britain (Wyclif and the Lollards, Tyndale, and Hooper), other Protestant or semi-Protestant leaders and groups preceded Luther in formulating anti-Catholic opinion.

and does not repudiate it; grace is nature's consummation' (gratia praesupponit naturam: gratia naturam non tollit sed perficit). Whereas for St. Paul and, in a measure, for St. Augustine the heart of Christian theology is the antithesis of sin and grace, for St. Thomas it is the graded distinction between nature and super-nature. The forms and orders of secular life constitute an ascending stairway from the lower level to that higher level which is attainable only by the 'athletes of the Spirit'. Further, this dualism necessarily involves a dual standard of ethics; the precepts of the Law for those at the lower levels; the counsels of evangelical perfection for the 'religious' at the highest attainable level of poverty, celibacy and obedience."<sup>2</sup>

It is at this point that the Protestant Ethic and the Thomistic conception come into conflict. The more liberal and universal view of Luther has as its center a profoundly differing view of Grace. As one Protestant author has dramatically written:

"The difference between Roman Catholicism and the Teutonic religious movement which we call the Reformation was not even mainly about authority. All at that time moved, or thought they moved, in the atmosphere of authority. Nor was it even mainly between the authority of church versus the Bible. The reformers all acknowledged the authority of a church, and Rome might easily have compromised that quarrel. Nor was it on such abstractions as 'justification by faith' or 'transubstantiation'. Here again the Council of Trent leaves little to be desired. The real difference was a different estimate of the really pious life."<sup>3</sup>

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2. Whale, J. S.; The Protestant Tradition; Cambridge; University Press; Cambridge; 1955; pp. 105-106. (We should note in this connection Whale's dependence on Troeltsch. The above quotation is virtually a "rewrite" of Troeltsch op. cit. Vol. I, pp. 379-380).
  3. Hall, T. C.; A History of Ethics Within Organized Christianity; Scribner's; New York; 1910; p. 473.

The pious life, according to Luther, consisted in this:

"What you do in your house is worth as much as if you did it up in heaven for our Lord God. For what we do in our calling here on earth in accordance with His word and command He counts as if it were done in heaven for Him..... Therefore we should accustom ourselves to thing of our position and work as sacred and well-pleasing to God, not on account of the position and the work, but on account of the word and faith from which the obedience and the work flow. No Christian should despise his position and life if he is living in accordance with the word of God, but should say, 'I believe in Jesus Christ, and do as the ten commandments teach, and pray that our dear Lord God may help me thus to do.' That is a right and holy life, and cannot be made holier even if one fast himself to death."<sup>4</sup>

Troeltsch summarizes this view by saying:

"The Lutheran ethic consists primarily in the establishment of a religious relation with God, in that love to God which humbly, joyfully, and thankfully surrenders the self to Him in prayer and self-discipline, and the outpouring of this love of God, which cannot give anything to God, upon one's neighbour. It is an inward impulse which uses to its fullest extent the overflowing happiness produced by justification, making it a means of leading one's neighbour to God and of uniting him with oneself in God.

Since however, as a rule, the Lutheran considered that fulfilling your 'duty to your neighbour' meant the wise use of all the obvious opportunities, stimuli, and forms of the natural life, with the avoidance

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4. Luther, Martin; Works; (Erlanger. ed.), Vol. V, p. 102 as quoted by Forrester, W. R.; Christian Vocation; Lutterworth Press; London; 1951; pp. 147-148. (Thus, J. H. Nichols can write: "For a first generalization, it may be said that Protestantism rejected the double standard in Christian ethics which had been prevalent since Constantine, and once again laid on the consciences of all Christians the full Gospel requirement of perfection." -- Primer for Protestants; Association Press; New York; 1957; p. 110.

of all unbalanced mysticism and all special cliques, this means, then, in the second place, that 'loving one's neighbour as oneself' implies that all the duties and tasks which life brings naturally in its train, especially those connected with the family, the State, the labour and vocational organization, are to be filled with this spirit of love, which makes these forms into methods and means of expression of the Christian love of mankind. The mysticism which centres in love to God and man pours itself into the existing forms of human life: into the life of class and guild, into family and domestic life, into the life of the State and the administration of justice. Sublime religious feeling is clothed in the garb of the most ordinary and everyday forms of service within the home and the ordinary duties of citizenship."<sup>5</sup>

Thus, for Luther, the Love of God produced a doctrine of the "Callings"; and "human work thereby achieved a new dignity".<sup>6</sup> No longer, for the Protestant, was Monasticism an ideal.

"It looks like a great thing when a monk renounces everything and goes into a cloister, carries on a life of asceticism, fasts, watches, prays, etc..... On the other hand, it looks a small thing when a maid cooks and cleans and does other housework. But because God's command is there, even such a small work must be praised as a service of God far surpassing the holiness and asceticism of all monks and nuns. For here there is no command of God. But there God's command is fulfilled, that one should honour father and mother and help in the care of the home."<sup>7</sup>

But this theological innovation carried with it

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5. Troeltsch; op. cit.; Vol. II; pp. 524-525.  
 6. A phrase used by Calhoun, R. L.; God and the Day's Work; Association Press; New York; 1957; p. 21.  
 7. Luther, Martin; Works; (Erlanger. ed.); Vol. V; p. 100 as quoted by Forrester, W. R.; op. cit; p. 148.

certain problems:

- 1) If Grace fell upon each man equally and became the first step in religion rather than the final consummation of it, in what light was the Law; Natural, Positive and Divine, to be conceived?;
- 2) If Grace was dispensed by God directly, what was the resulting conception of the Church, particularly as it is seen in its relations to the State?; and
- 3) If all occupations were viewed as divinely appointed, what would happen to the conception of a divinely ordered organic society as seen in Thomism?

It is to these questions that we now turn.

1) In Luther's thought there existed a tension between Law and Gospel. The "Christian Moral Law", as understood by Luther is explained by Troeltsch:

"The ideal of such a way of life is reflected in the conception of the Christian Moral Law, which here appears not so much as the law which effects conversion, but as the interpretation and the description of the impulse towards activity which is set alongside of the bliss of justification by faith, for which therefore the legal form has only an unreal significance. The Lutheran theory of Christian freedom from the Law is still maintained, but in practice this theory changes into a purely Protestant legalism based on the Catechism. This Law is contained in the Decalogue, which in the usual way is regarded as exactly the same as the Natural Moral Law."<sup>8</sup>

However, the existence of the Law itself provides

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<sup>8</sup>. Troeltsch; Vol. II; op. cit.; p. 525-526.

man with certain necessary religious insights. Luther

"uses the three metaphors of the mirror, the hammer, and the mask to describe its successive functions. First the Law is a mirror. It shows us ourselves, and the mysterious nature and operation of our sin.... In the second place, the Law is a hammer. It breaks us down, at last reducing us to despair..... 'Therefore God must use that hammer, to wit, the Law, to break, beat, pound and, in a word, (sic) that beast....that at length it may learn that it is lost and damned.'.... The Law is a mask, since the sinner's despair is part of God's beneficent intention.... It is the mask behind which God hides. Through His alien activity He works His proper activity. 'His wrath,' says Luther, 'is a wrath of compassion'."<sup>10</sup>

But, the Christian Moral Law, as found in the Decalogue, dealt only superficially with the concerns of Natural Law -- the family, the State, division of labour, and economics. In these areas

"Luther instinctively regards Natural Law as the establishment of an unrestricted positive authority, effected by God through reason..... This is why he opposes every attempt to reconstruct society and mold it on rational lines."<sup>11</sup>

Thus, his essential conservatism produces a new view of Natural Law:

"In rejecting Roman theology and the Canon Law Luther did not need to reject the rest of the tradition as well. All he did was to separate the mediation elements from the rest, making a clear distinction between them and the Scriptural ethic of love; he restricted the former elements to the

9. Luther, Martin; Commentary on Galatians; II, 70 (as quoted by Whale; op. cit.; p. 38.

10. Whale; *ibid.*; pp. 37-40.

11. Troeltsch; op. cit.; p. 530.

'official' sphere, the ordinary 'calling', to law and to the State, requiring that all should adapt themselves to the forms of life thus conditioned which are so harshly opposed to the ethic of love. In so doing, however, Luther had not merely re-ordered the relation of the Natural Law to the Church and the Gospel, but he had reinterpreted the Natural Law itself. From the very outset he explains the Law of Nature in an entirely conservative sense, which emphasizes solely the utilitarian expediency of the concrete order, in which the shaping of Society itself seems to have been produced by Providence in the natural development of history, and all order and welfare depend upon unconditional obedience towards the authorities which have come into being in the course of the historical process. This interpretation glorifies power for its own sake, which in fallen humanity has become the essence of law; it therefore glorifies whatever authority may happen to be dominant at any given time. Even when this power is most scandalously abused its authority still holds good, and every act of resistance to this authority destroys the very conception of the social order based on Natural Law, and thus destroys the foundation of Society in general."<sup>12</sup>

Thus, in rejecting Medieval Patriarchalism, Luther established the morality of the independent state. Because of Luther's view of Natural Law, Dr. Figgis could write: "The unity and universality and essential rightness of the sovereign territorial State, and the denial of every extra-territorial or independent communal form of life, are Luther's lasting contribution to politics."<sup>13</sup>

2) As his view of the Natural Law exalted the rights and prerogatives of the state, in like manner it devalued

12. Troeltsch; op. cit.; p. 529.

13. Figgis; op. cit.; p. 80 (see Forrester; op. cit.; p. 150 on "the unfortunate liaison between Lutheranism and Machiavellianism").

the medieval conception of the Church.<sup>14</sup>

"He had asserted the liberty of the Christian man, the right and duty of every individual Christian to discharge the obligations of his calling within the natural forms of secular society: the Church of the Word had no more right to legislate for a man's secular calling as a husband, merchant, peasant or ruler, than had the Papal Church. All that the Church might do, under God, was to permeate society with the regenerative power of the Word. But in actual practice this meant that over any issue of principle between Church and State a single man, the Pastor, was left to confront a single man, the Prince. And not all princes were like Duke Frederick of Saxony, nor had all pastors the personality and courage of Martin Luther. As a result, the Crown Rights of the Redeemer in his Church were not always vindicated..... But when the administrative efficacy of the preached Word proved to be a dream rather than a working reality; or when a bishop proved to be no true pastor in the evangelical sense, Luther acted as he had done in 1520 when he appealed To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation; he turned perforce to the Christian prince or ruler, and invited him to act virtually as summus episcopus. In this way questions touching the deepest things by which men live often came within the competence of the civil authority. Lutheran churches were organized and ruled through Consistories which Lutheran princes nominated and so controlled."<sup>15</sup>

3) With his views of the State and the Church coupled with his doctrine of Grace and "the Callings", it is not surprising that scholarly opinion does not find within Lutheranism the seeds of a revolutionary Christian ethic. Since, for Luther, "authority must not be resisted"<sup>16</sup> his

14. Figgis; op. cit.; p. 74 : "With his exalted view of the Civil Governor, and with the very low view Luther took of the value of sacerdotal gifts, it is not surprising that Luther's accession to power resulted in those principles known as Erastian."

15. Whale; op. cit.; pp. 114-115.

16. Troeltsch; op. cit.; p. 530.

social view is essentially quietistic. According to his theory, "non-resistance is not primarily a demand of the Gospel, but a requirement of Natural Law, since no one is fit to judge his own affairs, and every power which permits resistance destroys its own being."<sup>17</sup>

Thus, Luther's social conservatism lies in the fact that he accepted a doctrine of Status, but his innovation is seen in that a man's Status is found not within the society (as in Thomism); but, rather, it is found in his relationship to God. Wingren, in writing of Luther's exposition of First Corinthians 12, states:

"In Luther's exposition of this figure, it is of particular importance that no member of the body directs its effort toward becoming a member or sharing in the body. I already am a member! That is effected through the work of Christ; so my effort can now be directed entirely toward serving the body and its members, 'my dear brethren and fellow-members,'<sup>18</sup> i.e. my neighbours. Special emphasis is placed on the fact that a Christian does not select what he will do, nor does he start any divisions. He contents himself with his vocation, even though it be humble and of low esteem. In faith all are alike; for faith is simply the fact that one belongs to the body, and one member belongs to it as much as another. In that they are all alike, even though their functions are different.

Accordingly differences in the earthly realm do not imply factions, for all orders and vocations are bound together from above. Behind all of them is a common point from which they issue -- God -- and they are all 'masks' of His. From this common center

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17. Troeltsch; op. cit.; p. 530.

18. Luther; Works; op. cit.; p. 310.

their functions are directed outward. Man's co-operation with God is not directed towards God, but outward, towards his neighbour."<sup>19</sup>

Therefore, the Christian man will not concern himself over his own or another's "place" in Society nor will he agitate for social or economic reforms. Luther's advice is:

"Therefore, do not follow your own counsels and desires, but do what your hand finds before it. That is, continue in the definite work given you and commanded by God, eschewing such things as would hinder you..... Always pursue that which is present to your hands and belongs to your vocation. If you are a preacher or a minister of the Word of God, continue in the reading of the Scripture and in the office of teaching, not wishing to be carried into something else till the Lord takes you."<sup>20</sup> "Everyone must tend his own vocation and work."<sup>21</sup>

Thus, while Luther's view guarantees theological liberty to each man, no man is allowed to attack the structure of society from a religious motive. As will be seen in Section III of this chapter, this conservatism is applied to economic considerations as well as to the Social Order; but at this point we might summarize the Lutheran Social position in Tawney's words:

"Grace no longer completed nature; it was the antithesis of it. Man's actions as a member of society were no longer the extension of his life as a child of God: they were its negation. Secular interests ceased to possess, even remotely, a religious significance: they might compete with religion

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19. Wingren, Gustaf; The Christian's Calling (C. C. Rasmussen, Trans.); Oliver and Boyd; Edinburgh; 1958; pp. 179-180.

20. Luther; Works; p. 163; as quoted by Wingren; *ibid.*; pp. 226-227.

21. *ibid.*; p. 258; as quoted by Wingren; *ibid.*; p. 173

but they could not enrich it. Detailed rules of conduct -- a Christian casuistry -- are needless or objectionable: the Christian has a sufficient guide in the Bible and in his own conscience..... Luther, himself, was not consistent. He believed that it was possible to maintain the content of medieval social teaching, while rejecting its sanctions, and he insisted that good works would be the fruit of salvation, as vehemently as he denied that they could contribute to its attainment..... Luther's impotence was not accidental. It sprang directly from his fundamental conception that to externalize religion in rules and ordinances is to degrade it. He attacked the casuistry of the canonists, and the points in their teaching with regard to which his criticism was justified were only too numerous. But the remedy for bad law is good law, not lawlessness; and casuistry is merely the application of general principles to particular cases, which is involved in any living system of jurisprudence, whether ecclesiastical or secular. If the principles, are not to be applied on the ground that they are too sublime to be soiled by contact with the gross world of business and politics, what remains of them?"<sup>22</sup>

While Tawney may well be overstating the lack of social dynamic in Luther, it is certainly true that Calvinism provides a more compulsive and activating theology for Social Change.

## II. The Social Implications of Calvinism

As we have seen, many of the conclusions of Thomism may be traced to the life and character of St. Thomas and the cultural influences which surrounded him. The same is no doubt true in all theologies. Whale gives

22. Tawney, R. H.; Religion and The Rise of Capitalism; Penguin Books; London; 1926; pp. 106-107, 109.

this contrast between the two major continental reformers:

"If Luther was a creative genius in religion, Calvin was fitted by birth, temperament and intellect to be a great theologian and a great churchman. Whereas Luther trusted, with magnificent 'naivete', to the Word, saying 'The Word must do it'; and whereas a dangerous tendency to quietism developed within him, especially as a result of the iconoclastic excesses of others, Calvin was a man of precise notions and constructive action. He introduced order, system, and authority into a new world which Luther had opened but had not organized."<sup>23</sup>

But, in contrasting the decisive differences between the two men and their views, it is easy to overlook the dependence in Calvinism on Lutheranism. Dr. Whale continues,

"This must not be taken to imply that there was any fundamental difference, much less any cleavage, between Luther and Calvin. They were different in several obvious respects, of course, and it is true that Luther's noticeably strong influence on his younger contemporary did abate somewhat, as Calvin proceeded steadily to build a system strongly marked by elements which Luther always suspected and sometimes disavowed; namely, law, an elaboration of ecclesiastical institutions, and ecclesiastical discipline. Yet Calvin could never forget what he owed to the great pioneer in reform. Though their ways tended to diverge, he always regarded Luther as virtually exempt from his criticism. On one occasion he said as much: 'If he called me the Devil I would always pay him reverence as the Servant and Messenger of God.'<sup>24</sup>

But, that there are differences in the social effects of Calvinism and Lutheranism all scholars readily admit. In Calvinism is found an urge to social activism which is lacking in Lutheran principles. Dr. Williston Walker

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23. Whale; op. cit.; pp. 120-121.

24. Whale; ibid.; pp. 126-127.

has declared:

"Yet perhaps the crowning historic significance of Calvinism is to be seen in its valuation of character. Its conception of the duty to know and to do the will of God, not indeed as a means of salvation, but as that for which we are elected to life, and as the only fitting tribute to the 'Honour of God' which we are bound to maintain, has made of the Calvinist always a representative of a strenuous morality."<sup>25</sup>

Using Dr. Whale's words as an outline,<sup>26</sup> it may perhaps be shown how Calvinism quite logically developed this "strenuous morality" and how it stands in contrast at the same time to both the Thomistic conception and the Lutheran ideal.

1) At first glance it would appear that the theocentric theology of Calvin, rooted in the doctrine of Predestination, would have as its immediate social effect nothing more than an invitation to moral irresponsibility. If man had no influence on his own ultimate destiny as he had in Thomism, and God's Irresistible Grace was not universal as in Lutheranism, what purpose could there be in social, economic, or even personal righteousness,

25. Walker, W.; as quoted in John Calvin, The Man and His Work by C. H. Irwin; Religious Tract Society; London; 1909; p. 192.

26. See preceding page, note 24 ("....namely, law, an elaboration of ecclesiastical institutions, and ecclesiastical discipline." -- Whale, himself, in his description of Calvinism uses as his outline the following chapter headings: System, Doctrine, Churchmanship, and The Church in the World; but these would lead outside of the particular concerns of economic ethics. To justify this arbitrary method of dealing with Calvin's thought, this truth might be considered; "A comprehensive account of it in a few pages would be either unintelligent or so compressed and technical as to be unintelligible."; Whale; op. cit.; p. 129.

especially as they, by definition, were unattainable? Calvin recognized this ethical need, and, as Troeltsch claims, found it in his own unique conception of Law.

"This ethic, however, needed support in the natural or universal ethic of civilization, such as the ethic of the Catholic Church had already long possessed; all that Lutheranism had done was to regulate afresh the relation between the two. This function was exercised by the conceptions of the moral Natural Law and of the Law of Nature. It is precisely at this point, however, that there emerges an important peculiarity of Calvinism. In the actual wording of this theory Calvin certainly does not seem to be using any different formulas from those employed by Luther and Melancthon about the absolute Natural Law of the Primitive State, and the relative Natural Law of the present day, adapted to the conditions of fallen humanity. Calvin speaks just as they did about the identity of the Natural Law with the Decalogue, in which, not only the Decalogue, but the whole Old Testament Law and the history of Israel appear as illustrations of the Natural Law; of the application of the Christian spirit to the social institutions of the Natural Law, and of the corresponding division of the Decalogue into two tables, one of which concerns spiritual and religious matters, and the other, the concerns of secular morality; the argument that Positive Law is an application of Natural Law, conditioned and altered by time and circumstances, according to which the positive element in the Law of Moses (Mosaic Code) and in Roman Law, and also in the present law of the State, in civil and in criminal law, is to be understood as the evolution of the Law of Nature, conditioned by time and place.... Up to this point Calvin's ideas seem to coincide exactly with the Lutheran conception. Further, Calvin agrees with Luther in a very strict demand for respect for authority, even in cases where those who wield authority are not particularly estimable. The same applies to Calvin's exhortations to frugality, modesty, and adaptation to existing circumstances and situations..... In spite of that, however, it is precisely at this point that we can discern a great difference between Calvin's position as a whole and that of Luther and Lutheranism."<sup>27</sup>

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27. Troeltsch; op. cit.; Vol. II; pp. 612-613.

Troeltsch then goes on to prove this distinction by citing two aspects of Calvinistic thought:

"The first point is that Calvin emphasized the difference between absolute and relative Natural Law far less than Luther. He continually describes the Decalogue and the Natural Law as the eternal unchangeable rules of the Divine Moral Law; the modification of the law by the fact of sin is only alluded to incidentally, it is never dealt with in principle. The State in particular, in the chief passages in which Calvin refers to it is never regarded as a mere antidote to the fallen State and a penalty for evil, but it is always chiefly regarded as a good and holy institution, appointed by God Himself. Nor is there ever any suggestion that the original communism of love had been modified and transformed into the institution of private property; private property likewise seems to be a directly Divine institution..... It is the same thing with the second point: Calvin's conception of the relation between the First and Second Tables of the Decalogue. It is well known that Calvin makes the First Table include four instead of three commandments, by reckoning the command against image-worship as a commandment in itself; to make things right he runs the Ninth and Tenth Commandments into one. This is a feature of every Calvinist catechism. The deeper significance of this change, however, lies in the fact that now the general meaning of the First Table is not the demand for a spiritual union with God, detached from and superior to the world, out of whose interior depths alone goodness streams forth, but it is that of a commandment which inculcates purity of worship apart from pictures, magic, or ritual ceremonies, and lays great stress on strict Sabbath observance. This entirely changes the meaning of the First Table; it places purism of temper and of worship on exactly the same plane as that of unconditional obedience. Hence the Lutheran tension between the absolute religious morality of love of the First Table, and the social demands on justice, compulsion, and force of the Second Table, disappears altogether."<sup>28</sup>

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28. Troeltsch; op. cit.; pp. 613-614.

Thus, even if Troeltsch is only essentially correct, Calvin abolished the distinction between the sacred and the secular in making the institutions of the Natural Law religious in character; and, moreover, made religion profoundly ethical. While accepting the Lutheran doctrine of the Callings, Calvin, through his conception of the Law, gave to it a totally different cause and effect. Whereas in Lutheranism man was liberated by Grace; in Calvinism man is convicted by it, for Grace confirms the Law and makes real that which was only shadow:

"But the Gospel has not succeeded the whole Law in such a sense as to introduce a different method of salvation. It rather confirms the Law, and proves that everything which it promised is fulfilled. What was shadow, it has made substance."<sup>29</sup>

But what of the individual man's individual obligation towards the law?

As in St. Thomas, the Law is threefold: Ceremonial, judicial, and moral;<sup>30</sup> but now only the moral law remains.<sup>31</sup>

For Calvin, the moral law has three uses. He explains

29. Calvin, John; Institutes of the Christian Religion; H. Beveridge, Trans.; Book II, Chap. IX, Para. 4.

30. ibid.; Book II, VII, 1-2.

31. "The use of the Ceremonial Law is repealed, its effect is perpetual. The Judicial or Political Law was peculiar to the Jews, and has been set aside, while that universal justice which is described in the Moral Law remains. The latter, or Moral Law, the object of which is to cherish and maintain godliness and righteousness, is perpetual, and is incumbent on all." -- Pringle, W.; Aphorism 23 of One Hundred Aphorisms.

the first use:

"First, by exhibiting the righteousness of God, -- in other words, the righteousness which alone is acceptable to God, -- it admonishes everyone of his own unrighteousness, certiorates, convicts, and finally condemns him.<sup>32</sup>... Thus the Law is a kind of mirror. As in a mirror we discover any stains upon our face, so in the Law we behold, first, our impotence; then, in consequence of it, our iniquity; and, finally, the curse, as the consequence of both."<sup>33</sup>

The second function of the Law is to curb unrighteousness for the good of society:

"The second office of the Law is, by means of its fearful denunciations and the consequent dread of punishment, to curb those who, unless forced, have no regard for rectitude and justice.... This forced and extorted righteousness is necessary for the good of society, its peace being secured by a provision but for which all things would be thrown into tumult and confusion."<sup>34</sup>

However, it is in the third use of the Law that the individual man feels keenly his obligation to do the Will of God: and it is within this "third use" that much of the social activism of Calvinism can be found:

"The third use of the Law (being also the principal use, and more closely connected with its proper end) has respect to believers in whose hearts the Spirit of God already flourishes and reigns. For although the Law is written and engraven on their hearts by the finger of God, that is, although they are so influenced and actuated by the Spirit, that they desire to obey God, there are two ways in which they still profit in the Law. For it is the best instrument for enabling them daily to learn with

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32. Calvin; op. cit.; II, VII, 6.

33. ibid.; II, VII, 7.

34. ibid., II, VII, 12.

greater truth and certainty what that will of the Lord is which they aspire to follow, and to confirm them in this knowledge; just as a servant who desires with all his soul to approve himself to his master, must still observe, and be careful to ascertain his master's dispositions, that he may comport himself in accommodation to them. Let none of us deem ourselves exempt from this necessity, for none have as yet attained to such a degree of wisdom, as that they may not, by the daily instruction of the Law, advance to a purer knowledge of the Divine will. Then, because we need not doctrine merely, but exhortation also, the servant of God will derive this further advantage from the Law: by frequently meditating upon it, he will be excited to obedience, and confirmed in it, and so drawn away from the slippery paths of sin."<sup>35</sup>

Thus, for the Calvinist, the Law teaches the Will of God and encourages obedience, which is conceived as a dynamic rather than a passive virtue.

"Calvin held an essentially activist view of human life, particularly as opposed to the quietism of the Medieval Church. He vigorously attacked the so-called contemplative life which had not only become an excuse for idleness, but cast a slur upon the ordinary life and work of men.<sup>36</sup> God has not created men to be idle;<sup>37</sup> there is nothing more pleasing to God than that every man should diligently apply himself to his own calling.<sup>38</sup> In other words, Calvin taught the dignity of human labour as part of man's response to the active providence of the heavenly

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35. Calvin; op. cit.; II, VII, 12.

36. Calvin, J.; Commentary on Luke; 10:38 and Sermons on Deuteronomy; 5:12 as cited by Torrance, T. F.; Calvin's Doctrine of Man; Lutterworth Press; London; 1949; p. 64.

37. *ibid.*; Sermons on Job; 29:18, 34:16, 34:33, 35:8, 37:14; Sermons on Deuteronomy; 1:22; Institutes; I, XIV, 2; II, I, 8.

38. *ibid.*; Commentary on Luke; 10:38.

Father. 'Let each of us remember that he has been created by God for the purpose of labouring, and of being vigorously employed in his work; and that not only for a limited time, but till death itself, and, what is more, that he shall not only live but die to God.'<sup>39</sup> The life of faith is a life of active and strenuous obedience."<sup>40</sup>

2) It is this same impulse to obedience, i.e. the the Perseverance of the Saints, that gives rise to the Calvinistic "high-church view" of ecclesiastical institutions. Troeltsch claims that this impulse has as its effect a "Christocracy in which God is glorified in all its activity, both sacred and secular".<sup>41</sup> He goes on to state:

"This idea of a 'holy community', however, has not been evolved out of the conception of the Church and of grace, like the Lutheran ecclesiastical idea; on the contrary, it springs out of the same principle which appears to give independence to the individual, namely, out of the ethical duty of the preservation and making effective of election, and out of the abstract exaltation of the Scriptures.

To Calvin the Church is not merely an organ of salvation which provides the objective means of grace, from which everything else should develop as a logical result, and from the standpoint of which the ungodliness of the world must be supported in patience and humility. The organ of salvation ought rather at the same time to provide the means of sanctification; it ought to prove itself effective in the Christianizing of the community, by placing the whole range of life under the control of Christian regulations and Christian purposes. At the same time it ought to develop the necessary organs by means of which the community can be moulded by the Divine Spirit and the Divine Word, in every aspect

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39. Calvin; Commentary on Luke; 17:7.

40. Torrance; op. cit.; p. 64 ("Nothing is more grateful to Him than obedience." -- Institutio III, XX, 4.)

41. Troeltsch; op. cit.; p. 591.

of life: in Church and State, in the family and in society, in economic life, and in all personal relationships, both public and private."<sup>42</sup>

In his examination of the motivations which led those of the "Holy Community" into economic activity Tawney writes,

"It was natural that so remorseless an attempt to claim the totality of human interests for religion should not hesitate to engage even the economic appetites, before which the Churches of a later generation were to lower their arms. If Calvinism welcomed the world of business to its fold with an eagerness unknown before, it did so in the spirit of a conqueror organizing a new province, not of a suppliant arranging a compromise with a still powerful foe. A system of morals and a code of law lay ready to its hand in the Old Testament..... The first half-century of the Reformed Church at Geneva saw a prolonged effort to organize an economic order worthy of the Kingdom of Christ, in which the ministers played the part of Old Testament prophets to an Israel not wholly weaned from the fleshpots of Egypt."<sup>43</sup>

3) Thus, the "Holy Community" which was comprised of both Church and State existed as a fellowship in which the Calvinist could serve God per vocationem, rather than, as in Lutheranism, in vocatione.<sup>44</sup> But the "Holy Community" was intended not only to provide a theatre for human activity, it was also intended as the safeguard to political order, social stability, and theological purity. Thus, ecclesiastical discipline worked hand in hand with the injunctions of civil law; and this reciprocity is evidenced in the

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42. Troeltsch; op. cit.; Vol. II; p. 591.

43. Tawney; op. cit.; pp. 126-127.

44. See Troeltsch; op. cit.; Vol. II; p. 610 and Forrester; op. cit.; p. 151.

fact that Civil Rulers and Magistrates were to be subject to the Ecclesiastical Discipline,<sup>45</sup> and the Church authorities were to be corrected by the "Sword of the State".<sup>46</sup>

The private individual was subject to both.<sup>47</sup> Yet, within the Disciplines, he was free to "prove" God's election in his own way. Within the community and under its Divine Law his Status was secure -- both vertically and horizontally -- and, within prescribed limits, he was free to enter in the Contract/relationships which Calvinism legitimized. Moreover, all this was insured by the objectivity of the all encompassing Moral Law which operated through, and was defined by, the civil<sup>48</sup> and ecclesiastical courts.<sup>49</sup>

"Calvinism aimed consciously and systematically at the creation of a Holy Community. It co-ordinated the activity of the individual and of the community into a conscious and systematic form. And since the Church as a whole could not be fully constituted without the help of the political and economic service of the secular community, it was urged that all callings ought to be ordered, purified, and enkindled as means for attaining the ends of the Holy Community. Thus the ideal was now no longer one of surrender to a static vocational system, directed by Providence, but the free use of vocational work as the method of realizing the purpose of the Holy Community. The varied secular callings do not simply constitute the existing framework within which brotherly love is exercised and faith is preserved, but they are means

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45. Calvin; Institutes; IV, XII, 7.

46. Calvin; op. cit.; IV, XX, 22-23; IV, XI, 3-4.

47. ibid.; IV, XI, 1-8; IV, XII, 1-14; IV, XX, 1-32.

48. ibid.; IV, XX, 14-21.

49. ibid.; IV, XI & XII.

to be handled with freedom, through whose thoughtful and wise use love alone becomes possible and faith a real thing. From this there results a freer conception of the system of callings, a far reaching consideration for that which is practically possible and suitable, a deliberate increasing of the intensity of labour."<sup>50</sup>

Tawney considers the aims of the Calvinistic Society:

"Human effort, social institutions, the world of culture, are at best irrelevant to salvation, and at worst mischievous. They distract man from the true aim of his existence and encourage reliance upon broken reeds.

That aim is not personal salvation, but the glorification of God, to be sought, not by prayer only, but by action -- the sanctification of the world by strife and labour. For Calvinism, with all its repudiation of personal merit, is intensely practical. Good works are not a way of attaining salvation, but they are indispensable as a proof that salvation has been attained. The central paradox of religious ethics -- that only those are nerved with the courage needed to turn the world upside down, who are convinced that already, in a higher sense, it is disposed for the best by a Power of which they are the humble instruments -- finds in it a special exemplification. For the Calvinist the world is ordained to show forth the majesty of God, and the duty of the Christian is to live for that end. His task is at once to discipline his individual life and to create a sanctified society. The Church, the State, the community in which he lives, must not merely be a means of personal salvation or minister to his temporal needs. It must be a 'Kingdom of Christ', in which individual duties are performed by men conscious that they are 'ever in their great Taskmaster's eye,' and the whole fabric is preserved from corruption by a stringent and all-embracing discipline."<sup>51</sup>

But it is not to be supposed from all this that Calvin preached a theory of democratic order. As St.

50. Troeltsch; op. cit.; II, p. 610-611.

51. Tawney; op. cit.; pp. 117-118.

Thomas had provided for a Patriarchal authority and Lutheran views tended toward Erastianism, the social order in the "Holy Community" was guaranteed by the divine authority invested in the magistrates, both civil and ecclesiastical. In them alone is found the right to rebel against unjust tyrants.<sup>52</sup> Private citizens need not obey the commands of rulers when they are against God;<sup>53</sup> but, "There is no sign however, that we, as private citizens, are to go any farther than passive disobedience; violent action is not open to us."<sup>54</sup> Thus, the discipline of the "Holy Community" rests upon a divinely appointed oligarchic foundation.<sup>55</sup>

Therefore, Calvinism, while retaining a Medieval authoritarianism yet produces a unique theological pattern which eventuates in social activism. Troeltsch summarizes the social implications of Calvinism in what is, for him, an unusually interesting series of paradoxes written in an unusually graphic style;

"This peculiar combination of ideas produces a keen interest in politics, but not for the sake of

52. Institutes; op. cit.; IV, XX, 30.

53. ibid.; IV, XX, 32.

54. Davies, R. E.; The Problem of Authority in Continental Reformers; Epworth Press; London; 1946; p. 136.

55. In this connection Calvin (Institutes; IV, XX, 8) refuses to dogmatically assert that any one form of government is best, though he admits to a prejudice for aristocracy as over against either monarchy or popular government. See also Figgis; op. cit.; p. 122.

the State; it produces active industry with the economic sphere, but not for the sake of wealth; it produces an eager social organization, but its aim is not material happiness; it produces unceasing labour, ever disciplining the senses, but none of this effort is for the sake of the object of all this industry. The one main controlling idea and purpose of this ethic is to glorify God, to produce the Holy Community, to attain that salvation which in election is held up as the aim; to this one idea all the other formal peculiarities of Calvinism are subordinate."<sup>56</sup>

But, perhaps, the best summary of the effects of Calvinism on the social attitudes of its adherents would be these words from Calvin himself:

"The great point, then, is that we are consecrated and dedicated to God and, therefore, should not henceforth think, speak, design or act without a view to His glory.... We are not our own; therefore, as far as possible, let us forget ourselves and the things that are ours.... We belong to God: to Him, then, as the only legitimate end, let every part of our life be directed.... For as the surest source of destruction to men is to obey themselves, so the only haven of safety is to have no other will, no other wisdom, than to follow the Lord wherever He leads. Let this, then, be the first step: to abandon ourselves, and to devote the whole energy of our minds to the service of God. By service I mean not only that which consists in verbal obedience but that by which the mind, divested of its own carnal feelings, implicitly obeys the call of the Spirit of God."<sup>57</sup>

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56. Troeltsch; op. cit.; Vol. II; p. 607.

57. Calvin; Institutes; op. cit.; III, VII.<sup>1</sup> (J. S. Whale calls this particular passage one of "the best and wisest things ever written on the theme 'ye are not your own'. It is a moving Christian exposition of Rom. 12:1." -- Whale; op. Cit.; p. 165.)

### III. The Problem of Economic Advantage in Luther and Calvin

As we turn to the specifically economic questions of usury and the just price, it might be well first to assert that in both Luther and Calvin the right of private property was not questioned.

In Luther, we have seen,

"Above all, the control of the Church in the sphere of economics was removed which had brought questions like the fixing of a just price, and of usury, before the judgment seat of the confessional. All matters of that kind were now handed over to the secular authority entirely, and to Natural Law. The idea of Natural Law itself, however, whose main characteristics had already been regarded as in full harmony with the law of Christianity by the Middle Ages and by the Canon Law, was retained, so far as its positive content was concerned. The only difference was that that which previously had only been recommended to the layman in virtue of Natural Law, was extended to all without exception, without any quarter for beggars or for monasteries. The sphere which the Church had formerly protected was handed over entirely to the secular system of legislation, as something which was connected with the Natural Law in its harmony with the Christian Law."<sup>58</sup>

Thus, it is only natural for Luther to adopt the essentially Thomistic view of private property in which it is justified as a conclusion of Natural Law: "Private property, which is the product of labour, is also ordained by God; it is, however, owing to the Fall only a means of preserving discipline and order."<sup>59</sup>

58. Troeltsch; op. cit.; Vol. II, p. 554.

59. *ibid.*; p. 555.

Moreover, the traditional property ethic of Luther is also found in that,

"The standard of private property ought not to exceed the requirements of one's rank, yet pleasure in possessions, even in gold and silver, is allowed within the limits of a grateful frugality without any scrupulous consideration of the measure of one's needs. Since, however, it is of the very essence of labour and of property to procure a man an income suitable to his rank, but not to exceed it, the traditional character of this economic ethic is obvious. The economic order consists essentially in this: To live within one's own class, according to the social standards of that class, and to regard it as a just claim on the Government to be protected by it within this order. It is against all law, Natural and Divine, to wish to rise in the world, to break through existing institutions on one's own free initiative, to agitate and destroy Society by individual efforts, to improve one's manner of life, or to improve one's social position."<sup>60</sup>

Calvin, too, defended the right of private property but on stronger grounds than the appeal from Natural Law. For him property was not only a divine gift, but also a divine responsibility. His exposition of the eighth commandment is illuminating:

"In substance, then, the commandment forbids us to long after other men's goods, and, accordingly, requires every man to exert himself honestly in preserving his own. For we must consider, that what each individual possesses has not fallen to him by chance, but by the distribution of the sovereign Lord of all, that no one can pervert his means to bad purposes without committing a fraud on a divine dispensation. There are very many kinds of theft.... violence, as when a man's goods are forcibly plundered and carried off.... malicious imposture, as when they are fraudulently intercepted.... (theft) with a semblance of justice,.... and sycophancy, which wiles them away under the pretense of donation.... This

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60. Troeltsch; op. cit.; Vol. II, p. 555

commandment, therefore, we shall duly obey, if, contented with our own lot, we study to acquire nothing but honest and lawful gain; if we long not to grow rich by injustice, nor to plunder our neighbour of his goods, that our own may thereby be increased; if we hasten not to heap up wealth cruelly wrung from the blood of others; if we do not, by means lawful and unlawful, with excessive eagerness, scrape together whatever may glut our avarice or meet our prodigality. On the other hand, let it be our constant aim faithfully to lend our counsel and aid to all so as to assist them in retaining their property.... And not only so, but let us contribute to the relief of those whom we see under the pressure of difficulties, assisting their want out of our abundance.... Moreover, we must always have reference to the Lawgiver, and so remember that the law requiring us to promote and defend the interest and convenience of our fellow men, applies equally to our minds and our hands."<sup>61</sup>

Moreover, private ownership may be rightfully defended in the civil courts:

"Christians should always feel disposed rather to give up part of their right than to go into court, out of which they can scarcely come without a troubled mind, a mind inflamed with hatred of their brother. But when one sees that his property, the want of which he would grievously feel, he is able, without any loss of charity, to defend, if he should do so, he offends in no respect against that passage of Paul. (I Cor. 6:6)"<sup>62</sup>

Thus, in their views of private property the economic ethic of Luther ("to live within one's own class"), which is identical with the Thomist belief, stands in direct contrast to the Calvinistic theory ("to acquire nothing but honest and lawful gain").

The difference in these positions is again seen in

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 61. Calvin; Institutes; op. cit.; II, VII, 45-46.  
 62. ibid.; IV, XX, 21.

their views on usury.

As we have seen, St. Thomas had only recognized labour and risk as being justifiable for gain on owned property,<sup>63</sup> and it was not until long after St. Thomas that the Catholic Church gave any extrinsic grounds (or "titles") for the justification of interest.<sup>64</sup>

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63. See Chapter II, pp. 68 foll. of this thesis.

64. The first of these titles is termed lucrum cessans, or relinquished gain. "It came into existence whenever a person who could have invested his money in a productive object, for example, a house, a farm, or a mercantile enterprise, decided instead to lend the money. In such cases the interest on the loan was regarded as proper compensation for the gain which the owner might have obtained from an investment on his own account. The title created by this situation was called 'extrinsic' because it arose out of circumstances external to the essential relations of borrower and lender." -- Ryan, John A.; Distributive Justice; Macmillan; New York; 1927; p. 151.

"A second title, as valid as the first but less common in practice, was that of damnum emergens -- the theory which held as a possibility the fact that the lender would pay more for a necessary expenditure at a later date than he would if he had spent the money loaned instead of loaning it. The just interest would be that extra expense incurred by him in making the loan.

Other valid titles, extrinsic by nature, which were acceptable to the Church were poena conventionalis, "a fine, agreed on in the contract, to be imposed for delay in the return of the sum lent", and periculum sortis, "the danger to the capital, which could be very real and for which some compensation was reasonable." -- Brodrick, J.; The Economic Morals of the Jesuits; Oxford University Press; London; 1934; p. 123.

"During the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, another title or justification of loan-interest found some favor among Catholic moralists. This was the praemium legale, or legal rate of interest allowed by civil governments. Wherever the State authorized a definite rate of interest, the lender might, according to these writers, take advantage of it with a clear conscience." -- Ryan; op. cit.; p. 151.

For more modern Roman Catholic views on usury -- the interpretation of Res Fructifera Domino, interest as a community service, the argument from abstinence, etc. -- see Chapter IV of this thesis.

In point of fact, however, in Luther's time a method of payment for the use of money was justifiably employed. The means used were those of a triple contract (contractus trinus<sup>65</sup>) in which

"The investor, when making the contract of partnership which everybody considered perfectly legitimate, also entered into, or was supposed to enter into, two other contracts, one of insurance against the loss of his capital, for which he had to pay by agreeing to accept a percentage of the total profits less than he would otherwise have obtained, and a second, also of insurance, by which he agreed to accept a still lower but guaranteed percentage or rate of interest on the profits. All theologians admitted that these contracts, if made with three separate persons, would be quite just and untainted with usury, but numbers of them doubted whether, if made with one and the same person, they could be pronounced innocent."<sup>66</sup>

A Papal Commission was organized to settle the problem, and, as a non-Catholic author writes,

"The only doubt which assailed the commission of 1581 was whether a contract of insurance of the principal could be added to a combination of the other two; for the first combination was approved as a matter certain. The commission approved the addition of the third contract as a matter probable in agreement with Navarrus and other theologians. Not all Jesuitic Confessors were themselves in favour of the contractus trinus; but, as a probable opinion was sufficient to justify an action, the adoption of the Jesuit casuistry meant that the contract was always approved."<sup>67</sup>

However, as we have seen, even before the time of

65. This financial arrangement was so often used in Germany from the 15th century onwards that it came to be called the contractus Germanicus.

66. Brodrick; op. cit.; p. 125.

67. Robertson, H. M.; Aspects of the Rise of Economic Individualism; Cambridge University Press; London; 1933; p. 151.

Luther, "merchant adventurers" had made their appearance and were demanding the moral legitimizing of interest. This was only natural for in the historic change from a natural (or barter) economy to that of a money economy, there was a constant growing need for capital so that the rational organizing of commerce for profit might be ever increased and expanded. Trade ventures demanded original capital,<sup>68</sup> and this capital had to be forthcoming if they were to be instituted. The emerging capitalistic philosophy, with its absolute of economic utility, deemed this demand so urgent that, if necessary, the capital would be purchased, as any other fungible commodity, and for it a price would be paid. Thus, interest, and even usury, were in complete accord with the capitalistic rationale.<sup>69</sup>

But for Luther, as in St. Thomas, this was a direct contradiction of Natural Law. Rather, he agreed with the orthodox Catholic position that

"Usury is and was and ever will be a sin committed in connection with the bilateral contract of loan or 'mutuum.'<sup>70</sup> In the canon and civil law that contract consisted of a transaction whereby one party trans-

68. See references cited in Section III, Chapter II of this thesis; especially Weber's General Economic History, pp. 236-274.

69. In the Oxford Dictionary, usury is defined simply as, "the lending of money at exorbitant interest".

70. "mutuum" - a loan without compensation under Roman Law, see Weber's General Economic History; p. 267.

ferred to another something of his, consumable by use, something, in other words, sterile and unproductive, with the obligation on the borrower's side to return to him another thing of the same kind, exactly equal in amount and value."<sup>71</sup>

Professor H. J. Grimm summarizes Luther's views

"Luther detested avarice in business as much as he did blasphemy in spiritual matters, especially as it was displayed in the taking of interest. He did not refer to the present-day 'rate of interest', but to the canonically acceptable buying of interest which involved a damnum emergens, or damage resulting from a tardy return of the capital borrowed and a lucrum cessans, or profit lost because the creditor could not himself use the money which he had loaned. He believed that this kind of transaction, if continued, would eventually encumber most property in Germany with debts and eventually ruin the country.

Luther made the following suggestions for reforming the credit system of his day: 1) that the buying of interest be permitted only if there was security in the form of productive property, so that the debtor could make the money with which to repay the loan; 2) that both the creditor and debtor share the risk; 3) that the debtor, rather than the creditor, determine the date for the repayment of the loan; and 4) if the above conditions were met, interest of from 5 to 7 per cent might be charged. He would permit the buying of interest without security only to the aged who had no other means of livelihood."<sup>72</sup>

Calvin, on the other hand, did not share the economic conservatism of his German counterpart. Coming not from peasant origins, but from the bourgeoisie, he saw perhaps more realistically the pressures which demanded the influx of new capital. He rejected the canon law prohibition on interest, liberalized investments, and, in Geneva,

71. Brodrick; op. cit.; p. 121.

72. Grimm, H. J.; The Reformation Era; Macmillan; New York; 1954; pp. 579-580.

established a bank and introduced industries.<sup>73</sup>

However, in all this, it must be remembered that Calvin approached the legitimizing of interest with trepidation.

"It is in the light of that change of social perspective that the doctrine of usury associated with the name of Calvin is to be interpreted. Its significance consisted not in the phase which it marked in the technique of economic analysis, but in its admission to a new position of respectability of a powerful and growing body of social interest, which, however irrepressible in practice, had hitherto been regarded by religious theory as, at best, of dubious propriety, and, at worst, as frankly immoral. Strictly construed, the famous pronouncement strikes the modern reader rather by its rigour than by its indulgence. 'Calvin', wrote an English divine a generation after his death, 'deals with usurie as the apothecarie doth with poyson.'<sup>74</sup>

Calvin's own justification of this liberalizing policy is to be found in his letter to Claude de Sachins which was written in 1545. Mindful of the many misunderstandings which might arise from such an innovation, yet he wrote,

"And first by no testimony of Scfipture am I resolved that usuries are altogether condemned..... For indeed the surroundings of the very place in which the Lord had settled the Jews, as also other

73. See Troeltsch; Protestantism and Progress; W. Montgomery, Trans.; Williams and Norgate; London; 1912; p. 132 and also James, Margaret; European Civilization, Vol. V.; p. 44 as quoted in Hudson and Reckitt; The Church and The World; Vol. II; Allen and Unwin; London; 1940; pp. 179-180.

74. Tawney; op. cit.; p. 114 (the quotation is taken by Tawney from Fenton, Roger; A Treatise of Usurie (1612) p. 61).

circumstances pertained to it, so that it was easy for them to trade with one another without usuries. Our conjecture to-day does not entirely correspond. So therefore we do not see usuries simply forbidden to us, unless so far as they are repugnant both to justice and charity."<sup>75</sup>

"His general conclusion was that the question of usury should be judged, not by any particular Scriptural texts, but by the rule of equity and that it was ridiculous to prefer buying a rentcharge to granting a loan to a farmer for which usury was taken, as it was the actual transaction in itself which was important and not the words in which it was expressed."<sup>76</sup>

But while Calvin was an innovator, he was no radical. He continued, "Having laid down the general position, I shall now come to the exceptions. For while I do not condemn usuries in general, I cannot also promiscuously approve all."<sup>77</sup>

"There were altogether seven exceptions. It was wrong to exact usury of the needy. It was wrong to oppress the poor by demanding greater security than they were well able to afford. It was wrong to insert any clause in the loan contract which was contrary to natural justice. It was wrong to take payment for a loan unless the borrower made a gain equal to or greater than that of the lender. It had to be recognised that a practice was not necessarily just because it was in common use. All contracts were illicit which were not more to the advantage of the state than to its disadvantage. It was illicit

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75. Calvin, John; Letter to Claude de Sachins, as quoted by Robertson; op. cit.; p. 115. (Thus, in Calvin's view, usury is seen as being a provision of the Jewish Judicial, not Moral, Law).
76. Robertson; op. cit.; p. 116.
77. Calvin; as quoted by Robertson; ibid.

to take a higher rate than the maximum allowed by the civil power."<sup>78</sup>

But, with the exception of these conditions, interest was justified by Calvin and, later, even encouraged by Calvinists.<sup>79</sup> Amidst all the charges and counter-charges concerning the ultimate effect of this innovation, Tawney's view is incisive:

"The picture of Calvin, the organizer and disciplinarian as the parent of laxity in social ethics, is a legend..... Legends are apt, however, to be asright in substance as they are wrong in detail, and both its critics and its defenders were correct in regarding Calvin's treatment of capital as a watershed. What he did was to change the plane on which the discussion was conducted, by treating the ethics of money-lending, not as a matter to be decided by an appeal to a special body of doctrine on the subject of usury, but as a particular case of the general problem of the social relations of a Christian community, which must be solved in the light of existing circumstances. The significant feature in his discussion of the subject is that he assumes credit to be normal and inevitable incident in the life of society..... He makes, in short, a fresh start, argues that what is permanent is, not the rule 'non faenerabis', but 'l'equite et la droiture', and appeals from Christian tradition to commercial common sense, which he is sanguine enough to hope will be Christian. On such a view all extortion is to be avoided by Christians. But capital and credit are indispensable; the financier is not a pariah, but a useful member of society; and lending at interest, provided that the rate is reasonable and that loans are made freely to the poor, is not per se more extortionate than any other of the economic transactions without which human affairs cannot be carried on. That acceptance of the realities of commercial practice as a starting point was of momentous im-

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79. This Calvinistic emphasis will be further elaborated in the discussion of the Max Weber thesis. At this point, however, it is interesting to note that question 142 of the Larger Catechism lists usury as one of the things forbidden by the 8th commandment.

portance. It meant that Calvinism and its offshoots took their stand on the side of the activities which were to be most characteristic of the future, and insisted that it was not by renouncing them, but by untiring concentration on the task of using for the glory of God the opportunities which they offered, that the Christian life could and must be lived."<sup>80</sup>

As we turn to the question of the Protestant view of the Just Price, it is only to be expected that Luther will reflect the basically Thomistic conception of the ordering of economic affairs through the Natural Law. His view may here be briefly summarized:

"Again the forms of social organization which ought to be maintained, and which, above all, have a right to be protected and morally recognized, are the classes which live most near to the natural order: the main class of feudal and peasant agriculturists who, in direct contact with nature, produce goods without any intermediaries between the producer and the consumer; the class of officials and soldiers who are needed for the natural task of caring for the common weal, to which belong the vassals who were liable to military service, the class of workmen in the towns who produce goods which cannot be made by the peasantry; day-labourers, servants, and other functionaries, who are to be exhorted to frugality and obedience; finally also the merchant, who in addition, to the net cost may raise the price to one which will secure his existence. The Scholastic doctrine of the pretium justum, the recommendation of fixed prices for food-stuffs, the Scholastic doctrine of the unfruitfulness of money, and the impossibility of selling time, were also combined with this point of view."<sup>81</sup>

As we have already seen, the social authority in Calvinism rests in the divinely appointed magistrates of

80. Tawney; op. cit.; pp. 115-117.

81. Troeltsch; op. cit.; Vol. II, pp. 555-556.

the "Holy Community". These magistrates in both the Church and the State were held to be responsible to God for the ecclesiastical and civic order. Thus, while Calvin himself did not disallow interest and was not, per se inimical to business development; yet, as a member of the "oligarchy", he felt himself responsible to God for the economic relationship existing within his jurisdiction. So, too, with all the interpreters of Calvinistic thought.

Thus, where the ideal of the "Holy Community" was even partially realised, the effect was an economic traditionalism which held a tight rein over prices, as well as other economic matters.<sup>82</sup>

"It was in that spirit (prove themselves Christians by holiness of life) that he (Calvin) drafted the heads of a comprehensive scheme of municipal government, covering the whole range of civic administration, from the regulations to be made for markets, crafts, buildings and fairs to the control of prices, interest and rents. It was in that spirit that he made Geneva a city of glass, in which every household lived its life under the supervision of a spiritual police, and that for a generation Consistory and Council worked hand in hand, the former excommunicating drunkards, dancers, and contemners of religion, the latter punishing the dissolute with fines and imprisonment and the heretics with death. 'Having considered,' ran the preamble to the ordinances of 1576, which mark the maturity of the Genevese Church, 'that it is a thing worthy of commendation above all others, that the doctrine of the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ shall be preserved in its purity, and the Christian

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82. Tawney cites the influence of the dominant magistrates in Geneva, Scotland, and Puritan New England.

Church duly maintained by good government and policy, and also that youth in the future be well and faithfully instructed, and the Hospital well ordered for the support of the poor: which things can only be if there be established a certain rule and order of living, by which each man may be able to understand the duties of his position."<sup>83</sup>

However, the total effect of this authority was economically conservative.

"Apart from its qualified indulgence to interest, Calvinism made few innovations in the details of social policy, and the contents of the programme were thoroughly medisevil. The novelty consisted in the religious zeal which was thrown into application. The organ of administration before which offenders were brought was the Consistory, a mixed body of laymen and ministers. It censures harsh creditors, punishes usurers, engrossers and monopolists, reprimands or fines the merchant who defrauds his clients, the clothmaker whose stuff is an inch too narrow, the dealer who provides short measure of coal, the butcher who sells meat above the rates fixed by authority, the tailor who charges strangers excessive prices, the surgeon who demands an excessive fee for an operation..... From the election of Beza in place of Calvin in 1564 to his death in 1605, hardly a year passes without a new demand for legislation from the clergy, a new censure on economic unrighteousness, a new protest against one form or another of the ancient sin of avarice. At one moment it is excessive indulgence to debtors which rouses their indignation; at another, the advance of prices and rents caused by the influx of distressed brethren from the persecutions in France; at a third, the multiplication of taverns and the excessive charges demanded by the sellers of wine. Throughout, there is a prolonged warfare against the twin evils of extortionate interest and extortionate prices."<sup>84</sup>

Thus it is that in Calvin's Geneva Troeltsch can find

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83. Tawney; op. cit.; pp. 125-126.

84. *ibid.*, pp. 127-128.

both an intense individualism and a Christian socialism,<sup>85</sup> the individualism produced by the doctrine of Election and the view of "the Callings", the socialism coming from the responsible Christian concern and the resulting discipline of the civic and ecclesiastical authorities within the "Holy Community".

Whatever else may be said, it certainly was not Calvin's personal fault that his "third Use" of the Law degenerated into social and economic license. However, into a world of Status, he introduced a morally legitimate theory of Contract because he recognized in capitalistic practices problems not dealt with in the Mosaic Law. For an analysis of the relationships between economic development and Protestant religious ethics we must turn to Puritanism and the widely debated Max Weber Thesis.

#### IV. The Problem of Economic Development: The Max Weber Thesis

The famed "Max Weber Thesis" is to be found in the first study of a larger projected work, Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie, which was left unfinished by Weber's death in 1920. As this particular study was first finished and published as an independent paper in 1905-1906, however, its content was well known by 1920 when it appeared

85. See Troeltsch; op. cit.; Vol. II; pp. 587-602.

as the first of a series of sociological treatises. When translated and appearing as The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, it appears as a kind of incomplete study, and though it suggests much, and implies more, it says little that had not already been discussed at the time of its first appearance. In the half-century of its existence, it has aroused much controversy. It would appear, at least, that many of the arguments about it are ill-founded in that most of Weber's many critics have misinterpreted what, in fact, he really did say.

In the preface to his 1937 edition of Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, R. H. Tawney has written,

"Montesquieu remarked that the English 'had progressed furthest of all people in three important things, piety, commerce, and freedom.' The debt of the third of these admirable attributes to the first had often been emphasized. Was it possible, Weber asked, that the second might also owe something to it? He answered that question in the affirmative. The connecting link was to be found, he thought, in the influence of the religious movement whose greatest figure had been Calvin."<sup>86</sup>

Again, writing in the foreword of the English translation of Weber's work, Tawney approached the problem from a different point by saying,

"The question which Weber attempts to answer is simple and fundamental. It is that of the psychological conditions which made possible the

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86. Tawney; op. cit.; Preface, p. x.

development of capitalist civilization. Capitalism, in the sense of great individual undertakings,..... is as old as history. Capitalism, as an economic system,.....and setting its stamp on every aspect of society, is a modern phenomenon."<sup>87</sup>

Weber, himself, stated here,

"The impulse to acquisition, pursuit of gain, of money, of the greatest possible amount of money, has in itself nothing to do with capitalism..... One may say that it has been common to all sorts and conditions of men at all times and in all countries of the earth, wherever the objective possibility of it is or has been given.... Unlimited greed for gain is not in the least identical with capitalism, and still less its spirit. Capitalism may even be identical with restraint, or at least a rational tempering, of this irrational impulse. But capitalism is identical with the pursuit of profit, and forever renewed profit, by means of continuous, rational, capitalistic enterprise."<sup>88</sup>

After defining capitalism in these terms with the inclusion as its specific genius of rationally organized enterprises seeking repeated profit, he goes on to discuss the uniqueness of European capitalism:

"In modern times the Occident has developed a very different form of capitalism which has appeared nowhere else: the rationalistic organization of (formally) free labour. Only suggestions of it are found elsewhere..... Rational industrial organization, attuned to a regular market, and neither to political nor irrationally speculative opportunities for profit, is not, however, the only peculiarity of Western

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87. Tawney; Foreword to Weber, Max; The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism; T. Parsons, Trans.; Allen and Unwin; London; 1930; pp. 1 (b) and 1 (c).

88. Weber; *ibid.*; p. 17 (In this connection it is interesting to note that the motto of Rotary International, as capitalistic a social organization as could be desired, was originally: "He profits most who serves best". In recent years this motto has been found objectionable and has been changed to be, merely: "Service above self!")

capitalism. The modern rational organization of capitalistic enterprise would not have been possible without two other important factors in its development: the separation of business from the household, which completely dominates modern economic life, and closely connected with it, rational book-keeping..... However, all these peculiarities of Western capitalism have derived their significance in the last analysis only from their association with the capitalistic organization of labour. Even what is generally called commercialization, the development of negotiable securities and the rationalization of speculation, the exchanges, etc., is connected with it..... Exact calculation -- the basis of everything else -- is only possible on a basis of free labour."<sup>89</sup>

But this is not enough to explain modern capitalistic development -- merely to define capitalism. The character of the rationalizer, the capitalist organizer, must also be taken into account. His spiritual motivations and his psychological frame of reference also help to account for his rational economic activity. Thus, Weber states,

"For though the development of economic rationalism is partly dependent on rational technique and law, it is at the same time determined by the ability and disposition of men to adopt certain types of practical rational conduct. When these types have been obstructed by spiritual obstacles, the development of rational economic conduct has also met serious inner resistance. The magical and religious forces, and the ethical ideas of duty based upon them, have in the past always been among the most important formative influences on conduct."<sup>90</sup>

It is, then, with the "spiritual obstacles" of the capitalist that Weber is primarily concerned. He is not

89. Weber; op. cit.; pp. 21-22.

90. Weber; op. cit.; pp. 26-27.

attempting to explain capitalism solely, or even primarily, in terms of religious forces, nor is he asserting that theology is the exclusive modifier of the capitalist's actions, but he is merely trying to assess rightly the influence of religious thought and practice on the man who is acting in a rationally economic way.

Turning to the problem that religious affiliation has a corresponding economic reality, Weber discovers,

"A glance at the occupational statistics of any country of mixed religious composition brings to light with remarkable frequency a situation which has several times provoked discussion in the Catholic press and literature, and in Catholic congresses in Germany, namely, the fact that business leaders and owners of capital, as well as the higher grades of skilled labour, and even more the higher technically and commercially trained personnel of modern enterprises, are overwhelmingly Protestant.... The same thing is shown in the figures of religious affiliation almost wherever capitalism, at the time of its great expansion, has had a free hand to alter the social distribution of the population in accordance with its needs, and to determine its occupational structure. The more freedom it has had, the more clearly is the effect shown."<sup>91</sup>

After noting that there are no doubt other causes that play their roles -- education, inherited wealth, the added incentive of being in a minority group, etc., -- Weber concluded that still there is a discrepancy that cannot be understood without a more complete examination of the part played by their theology on Protestants who

91. Weber; op. cit.; p. 35.

possess a higher social and economic status than their Catholic counterparts.

Most of Weber's critics seem to forget that he was perfectly conscious that the economic ethics of the reformers were more stringent than the laxity of the Catholic Ethic which surrounded them. In supporting his definition of capitalism as that of being essentially "rational organization" and not merely "economic greed", Weber contrasts early Protestant and Catholic economic moralities:

"But it is necessary to note, what has often been forgotten, that the Reformation meant not the elimination of the Church's control over everyday life, but rather the substitution of a new form of control for the previous one. It meant the repudiation of a control which was very lax, at that time scarcely perceptible in practice, and hardly more than formal, in favour of a regulation of the whole of conduct which, penetrating to all departments of private and public life, was infinitely burdensome and earnestly enforced..... And what the reformers complained of in those areas of high economic development was not too much supervision of life on the part of the Church, but too little."<sup>92</sup>

He also makes mention of the fact that it is not only a Protestant-Catholic contrast, but also a differentiation can be found between Protestant groups themselves:

"But not all Protestant denominations seem to have had an equally strong influence in this direction, (social ascendancy). That of Calvinism, even in Germany, was among the strongest, it seems, and the reformed faith more than the others seems to have promoted the development of the spirit of capitalism, in the Wupperthal as well as elsewhere. Much more so than Lutheranism, as comparison both in general

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92. Weber; op. cit.; pp. 36-37.

and in particular instances, especially in the Wupperthal, seems to prove. For Scotland, Buckle, and among English poets, Keats, have emphasized these same relationships. Even more striking, as it is only necessary to mention, is the connection of a religious way of life with the most intense development of business acumen among those sects whose otherworldliness is as proverbial as their wealth, especially the Quakers and the Mennonites.... Finally, that this combination of intense piety with just as strong a development of business acumen, was also characteristic of the Pietists, is common knowledge."<sup>93</sup>

At this point, Weber introduces a new note. To interpret properly the causal relationship by which certain Protestant groups attain a higher economic status within a framework of a capitalistic structure, it is necessary to understand the unique spirit of capitalism which directs toward the "capitalistic mentality". To do this, one must grasp the "spirit of capitalism". This is altogether subjective. It is found in certain persons in differing ways at different times. As typical of the capitalistic spirit, he turns to some of the writings of Benjamin Franklin, for his are sentiments "which contain what we are looking for in almost classical purity, and at the same time have the advantage of being free from all direct relationship to religion, being thus, for our purposes, free of preconceptions."<sup>94</sup>

After examining much of the "worldly wisdom" of Franklin in which, it is found, the "summum bonum" of

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93. Weber; op. cit.; pp. 43-44.

94. Weber; ibid.; p. 48.

life is the acquisition of more and more money, Weber writes,

"The earning of money within the economic order is, so long as it is done legally, the result and the expression of virtue and proficiency in a calling; and this virtue and proficiency are, as it is now not difficult to see, the real Alpha and Omega of Franklin's ethic, as expressed in the passages we have quoted, as well as within all his works without exception. And in truth this particular idea, so familiar to us today, but in reality so little a matter of course, of one's duty in a calling, is what is most characteristic of the social ethic of capitalistic culture, and is in a sense the fundamental basis of it. It is an obligation which the individual is supposed to feel and does feel towards the content of his professional activity, no matter in what it consists, in particular no matter whether it appears on the surface as a utilization of his personal powers, or only of his material possessions (as capital)."<sup>95</sup>

This idea of a "calling",<sup>96</sup> a devotion to labour, is essential to the true capitalistic spirit, according to Weber, but it also must precede it into organized life. In the Middle Ages, and even later, much of the economic organization was traditional rather than dynamic. When the capitalistic spirit came, in specific people, and throughout many years of development, it changed the inner complex of the rational organization without necessarily changing its context. In the course of time, however, the context itself was transformed. Organized markets,

95. Weber; op. cit.; pp. 53-54.

96. In this connection see II Peter 1:5-10.

industrial organizations, banks, etc. began to appear. But as these rationalizing processes appeared in society, the man with the calling utilized them to the fullest, but not from any mere notion of self-gratification. His devotion to his work was above the mere charge of self-interest. His work was an end in itself, but not for himself; rather, for a reason. Though a rationalizer of society, he, himself, was, to use Carlyle's phraseology, "irrationally heroic". All this Weber explains by saying,

"Finally, if under practical rationalism is understood the type of attitude which sees and judges the world consciously in terms of the worldly interest of the individual ego, then this view of life was and is the special peculiarity of the peoples of the liberum arbitrium, such as the Italians and the French are in very flesh and blood. But we have already convinced ourselves that this is by no means the soil in which that relationship of a man to his calling as a task, which is necessary to capitalism, has pre-eminently grown. In fact, one may..... rationalize life, from fundamentally different basic points of view and in very different directions. Rationalism is an historical concept which covers a whole world of different things."<sup>97</sup>

This having been made clear he goes on to delineate the rest of the study --

"It will be our task to find out whose intellectual child the particular concrete form of rational thought was, from which the idea of a calling and the devotion to labour in the calling has grown, which is, as we have seen, so irrational from the standpoint of purely eudaemonistic self-interest, but which has been and still is one of the most characteristic elements of our capitalistic culture. We are here

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97. Weber; op. cit.; pp. 77-78.

particularly interested in the origin of precisely the irrational element which lies in this, as in every conception of a calling."<sup>98</sup>

Weber then finds that it was not in Luther's conception of the calling that this particular element was to be found, though in Luther's use of the word, "Beruf", there was a decidedly religious conception. Weber found Luther a traditionalist in terms of economic organization and spirit, more closely akin to the Catholic than the capitalistic spirit that he has just described:

"While his economic traditionalism was originally the result of Pauline indifference, it later became that of a more and more intense belief in divine providence, which identified absolute obedience to God's will, with absolute acceptance of things as they were. Starting from this background, it was impossible for Luther to establish a new or in any way fundamental connection between worldly activity and religious principles. His acceptance of purity of doctrine as the one infallible criterion of the Church, which became more and more irrevocable after the struggles of the twenties, was in itself sufficient to check the development of new points of view in ethical matters."<sup>99</sup>

From Lutheranism, Weber turns to what he calls "Ascetic Protestantism". He finds that, though they are never completely distinct, four such groups can be distinguished: Calvinism, Pietism, Methodism, and the Baptist sects.

In analyzing Calvinism, Weber found that in its

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98. Weber; op. cit.; pp. 77-78.

99. Weber; *ibid.*; p. 85. (In this connection, see Heim, Karl; The Church of Christ and the Problems of the Day; Nisbet; London; 1936; pp. 70-72. "He (Luther) said it was robbery if money possessed by one man increases of itself, while the possessor, as Luther expressed it, sits by the stove and bakes apples. Any profit obtained without work is wrong."-- pp. 70-71.)

chief doctrine of Pre-destination, there was a decidedly anti-social note in that the Calvinist's chief concern was not with life around him, but rather in his own personal salvation. To illustrate this he turned to Bunyan,

"To see the specific results of this peculiar atmosphere, it is only necessary to read Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, by far the most widely read book of the whole Puritan literature. In the description of Christian's attitude after he had realized that he was living in the City of Destruction and he had received the call to take up his pilgrimage to the celestial city, wife and children cling to him, but stopping his ears with his fingers and crying, 'life, eternal life', he staggers forth across the fields. No refinement could surpass the naive feeling of the tinker who, writing in his prison cell, earned the applause of a believing world, in expressing the emotions of the faithful Puritan, thinking only of his own salvation. It is expressed in the unctuous conversations which he holds with fellow-seekers on the way..... Only when he himself is safe does it occur to him that it would be nice to have his family with him."<sup>100</sup>

Weber continues,

"It seems at first a mystery how the undoubted superiority of Calvinism in social organization can be connected with this tendency to tear the individual away from the closed ties with which he is bound to this world.... In the first place it follows dogmatically. The world exists to serve the glorification of God and for that purpose alone. The elected Christian is in the world only to increase this glory of God by fulfilling His commandments to the best of his ability. But God requires social achievement of the Christian because He wills that social life shall be organized according to His commandments, in accordance with that purpose. The social activity of the Christian in the world is solely activity in majorem gloriam Dei. This character is hence shared

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100. Weber; op. cit.; p. 107.

by labour in a calling which serves the mundane life of the community."<sup>101</sup>

But, in addition to the duty to enhance God's glory by service in the world, the Calvinist, while recognizing that he is elected by God's free Grace and has no part in his own salvation, still assures himself of his election by his good works. Thus,

"The exhortation of the Apostle to make fast one's own call is here interpreted as a duty to attain certainty of one's own election and justification in the daily struggle of life. In the place of humble sinners to whom Luther promises grace if they trust themselves to God in penitent faith are bred those self-confident saints whom we can rediscover in the hard Puritan merchants of the heroic age of capitalism and in isolated instances down to the present.<sup>102</sup>... In practice this means that God helps those who help themselves. Thus the Calvinist, as is sometimes

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101. Weber; op. cit.; p. 108 (We should note the lack of any reference to the Calvinistic concept of the "Holy Community" with its divinely ordered Church and State. In a note, Weber explains: "It is tempting to refer to the undoubted importance for the social character of Reformed Christianity of the necessity for salvation, following from the Calvinistic idea of the 'incorporation into the body of Christ', of reception into a community conforming to the divine prescriptions. From our point of view, however, the centre of the problem is somewhat different. That doctrinal tenet could have been developed in a Church of purely institutional character, and, as is well known, this did happen. But in itself it did not possess the psychological force to awaken the initiative to form such communities nor to embue them with the power which Calvinism possessed. Its tendency to form a community worked itself out very largely in the world outside the Church organizations ordained by God." -- p. 224. As a result, Weber can state: "In spite of the necessity of membership in the true Church for salvation, the Calvinist's intercourse with his God was carried on in deep spiritual isolation."-- p. 106.)

102. Weber; *ibid.*; pp. 111-112.

put, himself creates his own salvation, or, as would be more correct, the conviction of it. But this creation cannot, as in Catholicism, consist in a gradual accumulation of individual good works to one's credit, but rather in a systematic self-control which at every moment stands before the inexorable alternative, chosen or damned."<sup>103</sup>

Therefore, thorough rationalization of all the aspects of daily life was demanded by the creed of the Calvinist for, "The God of Calvinism demanded of His believers not single good works, but a life of good works combined into a unified system."<sup>104</sup>

"The moral conduct of the average man was thus deprived of its planless and unsystematic character and subjected to a consistent method for conduct as a whole..... for only by a fundamental change in the whole meaning of life at every moment and in every action could the effects of Grace transforming a man from the 'status naturae' to the 'status gratiae' be proved. The life of the saint was directed solely toward a transcendental end, salvation. But precisely for that reason it was thoroughly rationalized in this world and dominated entirely by the aim to add to the glory of God on earth."<sup>105</sup>

Thus, it can be seen that Weber interprets Calvinism as not only not putting any spiritual obstacles in the way of the capitalistic spirit, but rather adding a tremendous emotional stimulus which, in a very cold and calculating way, aided and hastened the arrival of the aggressive and competitive laissez-faire entrepreneur of a later day.

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103. Weber; op. cit.; pp.115.

104. ibid.; p. 117.

105. ibid.; pp. 117-118.

In dealing with Pietism, he distinguishes between the more rational and the more emotional sects.<sup>106</sup> Of the former, he wrote:

"In so far as the rational and ascetic elements of Pietism outweighed the emotional, the ideas essential to our thesis maintained their place. These were 1) that the methodical development of one's own state of grace to a higher degree of certainty and perfection in terms of the law was a sign of grace; and 2) that 'God's providence works through those in such a state of perfection', i.e. in that He gives them His signs if they wait patiently and deliberate methodically. Labour in a calling was also the ascetic activity 'par excellence' for A. H. Franke; that God Himself blessed His chosen ones through the success of their labours was as undeniable to him as we shall find it to have been to the Puritans."<sup>107</sup>

And of the latter type of Pietism, Weber thought,

"We may <sup>SAY</sup> that the virtues favoured by Pietism were more those on the one hand of the faithful official, clerk, labourer, or domestic worker..... Calvinism, in comparison, appears to be more closely related to the hard legalism and the active enterprise of bourgeois-capitalistic entrepreneurs."<sup>108</sup>

Methodism, in like manner, though closely associated with rational ethical conduct despite its emotionally toned methods of conversion, presented no such clear-cut doctrine of the Calling as did Calvinism. Even though he recognized that the Methodist doctrine of Sanctification was purpose-

106. In this connection, see Troeltsch; op. cit.; pp. 656 ff. Troeltsch, in his division of "Church type", "Sect type", and "Mystic" considers rationalistic pietism as "Neo-Calvinism". See, especially, pp. 688-691.

107. Weber; op. cit.; p. 133.

108. *ibid.*; p. 139.

fully geared to ethical attainments, Weber dismissed Methodism by saying, "We can, in the following discussion, generally neglect Methodism as it added nothing new to the development of the idea of the Calling."<sup>109</sup>

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 109. Weber; op. cit.; p. 143 (In his critique of the influence of Methodism on economic development, J. H. Nichols writes:

"As to the conquest of poverty, and economic ethics generally, the Evangelical Awakening represented a wholehearted acceptance and encouragement of economic enterprise..... It is the Evangelical who gave up Puritan theocracy in both State and economics with complete optimism about the 'natural' course of Providence in these spheres. It was John Wesley, and no Puritan, who gave economic enterprise full freedom, with only the obligation of individual 'stewardship'. The Evangelicals were individualists and opposed to collectivist legislation like the theorists of early capitalism. Individual economic enterprise was a moral responsibility, and by its means whole classes of men in England were raised from degradation.

Wesley himself recognized, however, that this process of releasing religious and moral incentives into 'business' introduced new dangers:

'Wherever riches have increased, the essence of religion has decreased in the same proportion. Therefore I do not see how it is possible in the nature of things for any revival of religion to continue long. For religion must necessarily produce both industry and frugality, and these cannot but produce riches. But as riches increase so will pride, anger, and love of the world in all its branches..... Is there no way to prevent this -- this continual decay of pure religion? We ought not to prevent people from being diligent and frugal. We must exhort all Christians to gain all they can, and to save all they can; that is, in effect, to grow rich. What way then can we take, that our money may not sink us into the nethermost Hell?..... If those who gain all they can and save all they can, will likewise give all they can.'

Wesley's recipe is not impressive, and the whole Evangelical movement which dominated Anglo-American religion in the 19th century was to be conspicuously *weak*.... The individual would be trained to sobriety, faithfulness, industry, honesty, and in the large he would succeed economically. The guards against acquisitiveness

In dealing with the Baptist sects, Weber lumps together such groups as the Baptists themselves, the Mennonites, the Dunkards, the Quakers, etc. Denying as they did the distinctive doctrines that helped to formulate the Calvinistic concept of the Calling, yet there were other distinctive factors which led these groups to a rationalizing of personal conduct. Pointing out their reliance on the individual conscience, Weber states,

"The gift of God's Grace could not be earned, but only one who followed the dictates of his conscience could be justified in considering himself reborn..... (This) again was the equivalent in practice of the Calvinistic doctrine, and was certainly developed under the influence of Calvinistic asceticism which surrounded the Baptist sects in England and in the Netherlands." 110

Because they repudiated everything worldly, the Mennonites and Quakers, at least, refused to bear arms and take any office in the State. Thus, he contends,

"Hand in hand with it in all Baptist denominations went an invincible antagonism to any sort of aristocratic

- 109. (cont.) were very weak, on the other hand, and criticism of the economic order itself was scanty."-- Nichols; J. H.; Democracy and the Churches; Westminster Press; Philadelphia; 1951; pp. 71-72.-- The citation from Wesley (the last sentence is the famed "Wesley's Rule") is taken from Niebuhr, H. R.; The Social Sources of Denominationalism; Holt and Co.; 1929; pp. 70 ff.)  
 110. Weber; op. cit.; p. 148.

way of life. Partly, as with the Calvinist, it was a consequence of the prohibition of all idolatry of the flesh, partly as a result of the afore-mentioned unpolitical or even anti-political principles. The whole shrewd and conscious rationality of Baptist conduct was thus forced into non-political callings".<sup>111</sup>

At this point, Weber turns to a discussion of some of the writings of Richard Baxter whom he takes to be the supreme interpreter of Puritan (that is, later Calvinism) life and morals. Doing this in order to relate the practical workings in Society of Calvinistic Asceticism, he demonstrates how Baxter, a complete Calvinist, came to conclusions which, though qualitatively far removed, were, in fact, not dissimilar to the Social Ethics of Franklin.

In a long discussion,<sup>112</sup> the quotations from Baxter indicate the social ideals of the unadulterated Puritan -- their distrust of luxury and art, the abhorrence of sloth, their appreciation of diligence and education, their Sabbatarianism, their sense of duty to their work, their honesty and their forthrightness, their suspicion of anything enjoyable to the senses.

Weber then concludes his study by pointing out that the worldly asceticism of the Puritan-Calvinist (Baxter) in the course of time became the worldly utilitarianism of Franklin. Nevertheless, the "Capitalistic Spirit" to be understood

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111. Weber; op. cit.; pp. 149-150.

112. ibid.; pp. 155-168.

properly must needs be studied through the course of the worldly ascetic Calvinist. "One of the fundamental elements in the spirit of modern capitalism, and not only that but of all modern culture; rational conduct on the basis of the idea of the calling, was born -- that is what this discussion has sought to demonstrate -- from the spirit of Christian Asceticism."<sup>113</sup> And again, "...Its historical development from the medieval beginnings of worldly ascetism to its dissolution into pure utilitarianism would have to be traced out through all the areas of ascetic religion."<sup>114</sup>

Here then, briefly, is the "Max Weber Thesis" that has inaugurated such controversy! Through the medium of slavishly following the text, it has been shown that Weber did not claim to make Calvinism, or its later development, Puritanism, the cause of modern capitalism, as so many authors have seemed to think. What he did endeavour to show was not a causal relationship; but, rather, that the ethic which was the natural outcome of Calvinism intensified the dynamic conditions in the economic world which were already present. Weber does not claim that there is something decisively Calvinistic about modern capitalism; He does claim that inherent in Calvinism is a spirit of devotion to work as a

<sup>113</sup>. Weber; op. cit.; p. 180.

<sup>114</sup>. *ibid.*; p. 182.

divine appointment (a "Calling") which finds fertile ground for expansion in the capitalistic spirit. In other words, what Weber seems to be saying is this: Not only was Calvinism (Ascetic Protestantism, Puritanism, etc.) a theology and an ethic; it was a psychology which, given a drastically changing social sphere (nascent capitalism vs. the medieval ordered society), produced its own unique sociology.

With this as a background, we may turn to Weber's critics.<sup>115</sup>

H. M. Robertson, in his critical study, The Rise of Economic Individualism, interprets the Weber thesis as trying to establish a causal relationship between Calvinism and the rise of capitalism:

"Max Weber is responsible for the opinion, widely held today, that Protestantism, especially in its Puritan form, has had a very great influence in forming the 'spirit of capitalism', and, therefore, in forming capitalism itself. In 1904-05, he published two articles.....in which this thesis was maintained.<sup>116</sup>....."

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115. In the course of time a large literature has grown up around the claims of (or, rather, what were thought to be the claims of) the "Max Weber Thesis". R. H. Tawney gives an extensive list of books and papers which discuss this subject in his foreword to Weber, op. cit.; pp. 4-5.

While, in the point of view of this thesis, many of the charges levelled against Weber are based on a misunderstanding of what he really did say; yet, these critical observations, in some degree, do help to explain, amplify, and even correct Weber's insights.

116. Robertson, H. M.; Aspects of the Rise of Economic Individualism; Cambridge University Press; Cambridge; 1933; p. xii.

I hope briefly to indicate, therefore, another approach to the problem of the rise of the 'spirit of capitalism' which takes into account factors which religious sociologists have ignored, and gives a truer explanation of the psychological elements in the historical development of economic forms, which I believe have been rightly (though over-) emphasized, but wrongly explained. I wish to show that the 'spirit of capitalism' has arisen rather **from** the material conditions of civilization than from some religious impulse."<sup>117</sup>

To prove his claim Robertson argues,

"If it is true that modern capitalism is the product of a new spirit of capitalism introduced with the Reformation, it must necessarily follow that there was no capitalism before that time."<sup>118</sup>

and goes on to cite many data regarding the economic state of pre- and immediately post-Reformation Europe.<sup>119</sup> However, as we have shown, the existence of nascent capitalism during the medieval period does not in any way deny the essential insights of Weber's essay.<sup>120</sup>

In attacking what he believes to be Weber's contention, however, Robertson does add a corrective note to what in reality the thesis is. As has been illustrated in the examination of the social implications of Calvinism, not only did Calvinism produce an individualism which accepted the world of business as a proper theatre for proving the

117. Robertson; op. cit.; pp. xv-xvi.

118. *ibid.*; p. 33.

119. *ibid.*; pp. 33-110.

120. Párenne, Troeltsch, Tawney and others agree with this view, despite their over-all acceptance of the Weber theory. Weber, himself, recognized pre-Reformation capitalistic practices in his General Economic History; see op. cit.; pp. 275-378. (See also Chapter II, section III of this thesis).

will of God (which is in essence the Weber Thesis); but also it provided a dynamic and authoritative social control in the discipline exercised by the civic and ecclesiastical magistrates of the "Holy Community". As has been noted, Weber chose to minimize the effect of the divinely appointed Church and State.<sup>121</sup>

Therefore, when Robertson cites the stringency of Calvinistic and Puritan divines,<sup>122</sup> especially Baxter,<sup>123</sup> in economic morals; he is supplying a much needed corrective balance to Weber's somewhat one-sided view of Calvinistic sociology.<sup>124</sup>

Also, he does amplify the thesis by explaining more fully than Weber the deterioration of sixteenth-century Calvinism and seventeenth-century Puritanism into eighteenth-century utilitarianism. In a most instructive paragraph, he writes:

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121. See note #101 of this chapter.

122. Robertson; *op. cit.*; pp. 1-32.

123. *ibid.*; pp. 15-27.

124. However, in all this, Robertson overlooks the emotional release towards business activity which Weber rightly insists is inherent in Calvinism through its insistence that one's personal salvation was only known and realized through a complete rationalization of one's social and economic activities coupled with a completely blameless character. It is doubtless true that Baxter and the other Puritans were acutely conscious of moral restrictions in business life. But to assert, as Robertson seems to do, that they were economic medievalists is equally one-sided and incomplete.

"It was only to be expected that Calvinist discipline should have become less strict. Apart from the fact that a Church's practical beliefs in any age are always to some extent unconsciously the product of other influences -- the prevailing political, scientific, and philosophical temper, material conditions and so on -- a Church must often be prepared to make concessions to the spirit of an age if it is to retain any influence at all. The concessions which the later Calvinism made to the commercial spirit were in large part the sacrifice of some part of the Churches' claims in order to be able to retain others. The English had shown themselves unwilling to tolerate Presbyterian discipline; if the Calvinist Churches had refused to temper their claims to control men's everyday actions they would have been rejected as tyrants and reactionaries. Calvinism was not betrayed from within. It lost the power before it lost the will to bind business within the discipline of Christian justice and Christian charity. Catholicism exhibited no greater power on its adherents."<sup>125</sup>

However, the total effect of Robertson's objections to Weber appears to be largely misguided.<sup>126</sup> Few would object to his statement:

"It is rather fantastic to ascribe the growth of a spirit of economic individualism in the sixteenth and seventeenth-centuries to religious causes. On the other hand, it is eminently practicable to trace the real causes of this growth in factors which are concerned purely with trade and monetary conditions connected with discoveries.... thus the spirit of individualism

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125. Robertson; op. cit.; pp. 209-211.

126. To substantiate his thesis, Robertson claims (pp. 88-110, 133-167) that Catholic laxity, especially Jesuitic casuistry, is more responsible for capitalistic development than Calvinistic theology. By refuting Robertson in a masterful analysis of his sources, J. Brodrick defends the integrity of the Catholic position in his, The Economic Morals of the Jesuits; Oxford University Press; London; 1934. Brodrick, of course, cannot deny the existence of capitalistic elements in both pre- and post-Reformation Catholic Europe.

spread, mainly as an effect of trade developments. The rise of the 'spiritus capitalisticus' is largely a matter of opportunity -- and of competition."<sup>127</sup>

Yet, it would appear that he completely underestimated the contributions of a Protestant asceticism to the expansion and development of business life. The Weber Thesis will not support the weight of claimin<sup>g</sup> that economic individualism is a product of Calvinistic men in a "calling". But to deny that Calvinistic theology has no economic implications is *any* another matter entirely:

"Some day the tangled antecedents of the doctrine of economic individualism may be unravelled. But they will not be unravelled by concentrating on religion, or by searching for the clues in greed, selfishness, and the self-centered righteousness of men who work hard in their 'calling'. Perhaps those who are interested in the problems of the rise of modern capitalism and economic individualism will turn to more secular channels for enlightenment."<sup>128</sup>

Another serious critique of Weber and his thesis is found in Amintore Fanfani's, Catholicism, Protestantism and Capitalism. Beginning by drawing the distinction between religion as a doctrine and religion as an institution,

"Religion may influence life in general, and economic life in particular, in one of two ways -- either as a doctrinal system or as an organization. These two

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127. Robertson; op. cit.; p. 206.

128. *ibid.*; p. 213.

aspects of religion are frequently confused.... The two aspects are distinct and should be treated as such... The relations between capitalism and the Catholic religion must not be confused with the relations between capitalism and the Catholic Church as an organization."<sup>129</sup>

Fanfani can explain that, while the Catholic Church may have fostered capitalistic aims in its business dealings, the Catholic faith has remained and is consistently hostile to capitalistic ideals.<sup>130</sup>

After describing and discussing the nature of capitalism, both in itself and as it came into contact with the Catholic world, he states,

"Our investigations have led us to the conclusion... that Europe was acquainted with capitalism before the Protestant revolt. For at least a century, capitalism had been an ever growing collective force.... Once we have ruled out that Protestantism could have produced a phenomenon that already existed, it still remains for us to enquire whether capitalism was encouraged or

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129. Fanfani, A.; Catholicism, Protestantism and Capitalism; Sheed and Ward; London; 1935; pp. 2-3.

130. In interpreting Fanfani, W. R. Forrester in his Christian Vocation, op. cit.; p. 160 finds a corollary in capitalism to this distinction in religion as both doctrine and institution: "He (Fanfani) makes a subtle and acute distinction between the influence of religion as a doctrinal system and its influence as an organization on life in general and economic life in particular. But he altogether fails to observe how this distinction has as its counterpart the corresponding one on the other side between capitalism and industrialism.... When he says that the ethic of Catholicism is anti-capitalistic, does he mean anti-industrial? Or would he go so far as to admit that Catholicism in attempting to restrain capitalism in the ethical interest has discouraged industrialism in all its forms?" (For the answer to this question, see Chapter IV of this thesis.)

opposed by Protestantism"<sup>131</sup>

After determining that Protestantism did encourage the growth of capitalism, he goes on to discuss some of the Protestant leaders and their attitudes toward the economic world.

"Luther's conservatism in economic matters, to which his patriarchal ideas on trade and his decided aversion to interest bear witness, has been proved beyond all question.... With less precision than the Scholastics, but with an equal anti-capitalistic bias, Calvin condemns as unlawful all gain obtained at a neighbour's expense. Nor does the Genevan Reformer say anything that is new for Catholics when, speaking of the use of goods, he remarks that they must be used with moderation, since all that we possess is a deposit for which we shall have to render an account.... Nor did the Scottish Church show itself any more favorable to the first manifestations of capitalism... The ideas on property of the theologians of the Anglican Church in its early days derive from Scholastic doctrines.<sup>132</sup>... Thus, on the whole, save for partial exceptions in the case of the Quakers and the Wesleyans, the letter of Protestant moral feeling and teaching maintains a constantly critical attitude towards capitalism... That Catholic teaching is reiterated by Protestants is indisputable; we find that this is the case even in those expressions by Baxter, in which Weber has sought to find a departure from the Catholic attitude. The demonstrable errors of this writer should make us very cautious in accepting views on the favour shown capitalism by Protestantism, when they are based on a few moral maxims."<sup>133</sup>

How, then, did Protestantism influence the spread of capitalism? Fanfani's answer is by the natural results which follow when the doctrine of Merit is replaced by the doctrine of Justification by Faith. This Catholic accusation, which will be dealt with more completely in the following chapter,

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131. Fanfani; op. cit.; p. 183.

132. ibid.; pp. 191-192.

133. ibid.; p. 196.

reveals itself to be both anti-Protestant and anti-capitalistic. Fanfani writes,

"Calvin, when he allows the lending of money at interest, is not reiterating Catholic social doctrine. But this concession,.... by the very fact of the motives inspiring it, is contrary to Protestant praxis, which seeks a return to the doctrine of the Gospels. For its justification it depends on an idea of fundamental importance to our investigations -- the uselessness of works as a means of salvation. Calvin no longer forbids usury, because he sees it as corresponding to the natural order of events, and in this sixteenth-century Calvinism is truly logical. If in judging other facts the Protestants adopted an attitude more akin to traditional teaching, it was because they did not draw the necessary consequences of their new principle, or else because they did not perceive the real nature of economic phenomena. Where it had this perception, and drew the logical conclusion, Protestantism was faithful to its 'discovery' and showed itself in opposition to Catholic social ethics..... The fundamental principles of Protestantism lead inevitably to the sanctification of the real; the obstinate attempt to prescribe otherworldly limits to the world is a remnant of doctrines that Protestantism seeks to overthrow."<sup>134</sup>

Thus, Fanfani, as well as most other modern Catholic interpreters,<sup>135</sup> finds the truth of Weber's thesis to rest, not on the doctrine of the Calling, but within the nature of Protestantism itself.

"In final analysis, it is not on Protestant anti-capitalistic action that we must base our estimation of the relationship between Protestantism and capitalism. It is the fundamental principle of Protestantism that counts; the limits set to economic life disappear as

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134. Fanfani; op. cit.; pp. 197-198.

135. In this connection, see the next chapter of this thesis, especially the references to John A. Ryan's Distributive Justice.

soon as a more penetrating logic deduces the full consequences of this principle. The fabric of precepts is broken by contact by life, which shows itself more orthodox than the moralists, and in the end leads even these to issue curious ordinances -- like that of the Quakers, who expelled bankrupts from their sect -- through which religious motives became a spur to shrewd dealing; men were led to fear failure more as likely to entail excommunication than poverty."<sup>136</sup>

In this connection, Fanfani may be justifiably accused of overlooking the significance of Calvin's doctrine of the "Holy Community". In this, he follows Weber's error; and, as a result, it logically follows for him that Protestantism exerts no social control whatever, but, rather, releases and sanctifies economic license.

"Protestantism encouraged capitalism inasmuch as it denied the relation between earthly action and eternal recompense. From this point of view there is no real difference between the Lutheran and Calvinistic current, for while it is true that Calvin linked salvation to arbitrary divine predestination, Luther made it depend on faith alone. Neither of the two connected it with works. Nevertheless, Calvin's statement was the more vigorous, and therefore better able to bear practical fruit in a capitalistic sense. Such an assertion invalidates any supernatural morality, hence also the economic ethics of Catholicism, and opens the way to a thousand moral systems, all natural, all earthly, all based on principles inherent in human affairs.<sup>137</sup>... If an action is to have no reward but its results, the rationalizing principle of action will remain that of the maximum result. This is the profound revolution brought about by Protestantism, purely through the doctrines we have mentioned, and which acquire an immense significance inasmuch as they represent the religious beliefs of vast multitudes, for whom they become the

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136. Fanfani; op. cit.; pp. 199-200.

137. ibid.; pp. 205-206.

norm of life..... By instilling this conviction into man, by basing human endeavours on this new rock, Protestantism favoured the dominance of the capitalistic spirit, or, rather, it legitimized it and sanctified it. It transformed capitalistic efforts into religious efforts which, although not meritorious, for otherwise God would be rewarding man, were the sole way in which man could burn a grain of incense to the terrible Lord of Heaven and Earth.... Working in this sense, it (Protestantism) produced no new effects, but facilitated the manifestation, of a movement that had shown perceptible signs of vitality before the Reformation, and which would continue its course after the Reformation, beyond what the informers intended, for, dreaming of a return to the Gospels, they never suspected what would be the fruits of their action."<sup>138</sup>

While this argument may be, and has been, denied and disproved, it is here included as a long quotation to illustrate not only Fanfani's personal opinion, but also the general view of Protestant economic ethics which is widely held by Catholics. Of that view it is a worthy expression.

The Weber Thesis also has kindlier critics. Ernst Troeltsch writes in his Protestantism and Progress of his agreement with the main emphasis in Weber's view,<sup>139</sup>

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138. Fanfani; op. cit.; pp. 207-209.

139. In this connection Troeltsch clarifies the significance of the Weber Thesis in his Social Teachings; op. cit.; p. 645: "The contribution of Calvinism to the formation of the capitalist system itself is not the most important aspect of the question..... Economic traditionalism, interrupted by unscrupulous individuals who are simply out for gain, is much more in line with ordinary human instincts than the concrete and abstract dominion of labour and profit, as ends in themselves, the continual increase of work produced by every fresh profit from labour in business life, and its religious estimate of the earning of money. The Protestant ethic of the 'calling'... made service in one's 'calling', the systematic exercise of one's energies, into a service both necessary in itself and appointed by God, in which profit is regarded as the sign of the divine approval."

though he would add the refinement which Weber did not make, that of separating primitive Calvinism from later ascetic Protestantism. One paragraph should indicate his position:

"Weber has, in my opinion completely proved his case; though perhaps it ought to be more strongly emphasized that the special character of the Reformed asceticism was partly determined by the special conditions of the commercial situation in the western countries, and more especially by the exclusion of Dissent from political life, with its opportunities and its responsibilities just as, on the other hand, the traditional Lutheran view became emphasized during the economic decline of Germany. How far, in detail, the particular developments, as well as the general fact of the capitalistic system, have grown out of the capitalistic spirit of Calvinism, and what other forces have had a share in producing and strengthening it, need not here be made the subject of further inquiry. It is clear enough without this that the contribution of Protestantism to modern economic development, which is, in point of fact, one of the most characteristic features of our modern world, is to be ascribed, not to Protestantism as a whole, but primarily to Calvinism, Pietism, and the Sectaries, and even with them this contribution is only an indirect and consequently an involuntary one."<sup>140</sup>

But perhaps the best analysis and critique of Weber's Thesis has been given by Professor R. H. Tawney. Writing in both the "Foreword" to Talcott Parsons' translation of Weber's Essays and in his own masterly Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, Tawney has considered Weber's insights.

He writes:

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 140. Troeltsch, Ernst; Protestantism and Progress; Williams and Norgate; New York; 1912; pp. 138-139. (For a further analysis of the economic ethics of later ascetic Protestantism by Troeltsch, see Social Teachings; op. cit.; pp. 812-820.

"Weber's essay is certainly one of the most fruitful examinations of the relations between religion and social theory which has appeared, and I desire to acknowledge my indebtedness to it, in particular with reference to its discussion of the economic applications given by some Puritan writers to the idea expressed by the word 'calling'. At the same time, there are several points on which Weber's arguments appear to me to be one-sided and over-strained, and on which Brentano's criticisms of it seem to me to be sound."<sup>141</sup>

Tawney would supplement the Weber<sup>THESES</sup> not only by citing the effect of religion on the rising capitalism, but also by examining the effect on Calvinism of capitalistic influences:

"Thus, as was perhaps inevitable in an essay dealing with economic and social thought, as distinct from changes in economic and social organization, Weber seems to me to explain by reference to moral and intellectual influences developments which have their principal explanation in another region altogether..... of course material and psychological changes went together, and of course the second reacted on the first. But it seems a little artificial to talk as though capitalist enterprise could not appear till religious changes had produced a capitalist spirit. It would be equally true,

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 141. Tawney; op. cit.; p. 312. (Writing in 1937, Tawney modifies somewhat his enthusiasm for Weber's insight on the "Calling"; but he does not deny that it has value. "His gravest weaknesses in his own special field, where alone criticism is relevant, are not those on which most emphasis has usually been laid. The Calvinist applications of the doctrine of the "Calling" have, doubtless, their significance; but the degree of influence which they have exercised, and their affinity or contrast with other versions of the same idea, are matters of personal judgment, not of precise proof. Both Weber and his critics have made too much of them, as I did myself. His account of the social theory of Calvinism, however, if it rightly underlined some points needing emphasis, left a good deal unsaid." -- *ibid.*, p. xi ("Preface to 1937 Edition").

and equally one-sided, to say that the religious changes were purely the result of economic movements."<sup>142</sup>

Secondly, according to Tawney, "Weber ignores, or at least touches too lightly on, intellectual movements, which were favourable to the growth of business enterprise and to an individualist attitude towards economic relations, but which had little to do with religion."<sup>143</sup> In this connection, Tawney would add the influences of the Renaissance, new political theory (especially Machiavellianism); and, also, the new views and practices of the nascent capitalists.

Thirdly, Tawney, as Troeltsch, would distinguish the Calvinism of Calvin, himself, and the varying Calvinisms of later ascetic Protestants:

"He appears greatly to over-simplify Calvinism itself. In the first place, he apparently ascribes to the English Puritans of the seventeenth-century the conception of social ethics held by Calvin and his immediate followers. In the second place, he speaks as though all English Puritans in the seventeenth-century held much the same view of social duties and expediency. Both suggestions are misleading."<sup>144</sup>

However, with these additions, Tawney finds Weber's observations significant. Their importance, Tawney concludes, lies not only in the analysis they give to Calvinism, but also in the fact that Calvinism produced a unique socio-

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142. Tawney; op. cit.; p. 312.

143. *ibid.*

144. *ibid.*; p. 313.

logical effect.

"Both 'the capitalist spirit' and 'Protestant ethics', therefore, were a good deal more complex than Weber seems to imply. What is true and valuable in his essay is his insistence that the commercial classes in seventeenth-century England were the standard-bearers of a particular conception of social expediency, which was markedly different from that of the more conservative elements in society -- the peasants, the craftsmen, and many landed gentry -- and that that conception found expression in religion, in politics, and, not least, in social and economic conduct and policy."<sup>145</sup>

It is no doubt in this last point that the true significance for Protestantism is found in the Weber thesis. Moreover, it is in this respect that modern-day Protestantism is challenged to produce its own unique economic ethic. Thus, J. C. Bennett can write,

"The radical sects did challenge the existing structure of society, but their strategy in dealing with it was usually based either on apocalypticism or asceticism. The Quakers were an exception. It remained for Calvinism to develop a world-changing ethic and then to put its stamp of approval on the new world structure which came with modern capitalism. In effect Calvinism allowed its own ethic to crystallize around the institutions of capitalism very much as the ethic of the medieval church was crystallized around the institution of feudalism."<sup>146</sup>

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145. Tawney; *op. cit.*; p. 313.

146. Bennett, J. C.; *Social Salvation*; p. 106, as quoted in W. R. Forrester, *Op. cit.*; p. 167.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE MODERN ECONOMIC WORLD

In dealing with the economic issues of the modern day,<sup>1</sup> the Roman Catholic Church, while defending the right of private ownership, stands unalterably opposed to the economic order which is modern capitalism. But capitalism, as such, is not unlawful: "The capitalist system is not in itself unlawful, but easily becomes the cause of abuses which the Church unequivocally condemns."<sup>2</sup>

The Catholic historian, Christopher Dawson, explains the Church's antagonism:

"The fact is that the word Capitalism is commonly used to cover two entirely different things and consequently is responsible for an endless series of misunderstandings and confusions of thought. In its strict sense it means the use of private wealth for the purpose of economic production, whether by the individual as in early times, or co-operatively, as

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1. In turning to the present day economic ethics of the Roman Catholic Church, it should be recognized that the Church was not devoid of interest in social, economic or political affairs between the Council of Trent (1545) and the Papacy of Leo XIII (1878). Such influences as the founding of The Society of Jesus by Ignatius Loyola, the "Ultramontane Controversy" which centered around Lamennais, and the "Catholic Liberalism" of Montalembert all had their effect in the formulation of modern Catholic thought. However, a description and analysis of these matters, as well as of the "Conciliar Dispute" of the 19th century, seem to fall outside the immediate concerns of this thesis.
  2. From the definition of "Capitalism"; The Catholic Encyclopaedic Dictionary; D. Atwatter, Ed.; Cassell; London; 1949; p. 73.

in the joint stock company which is the characteristic form of capitalistic organisation in modern times.

Both these forms of capitalism are accepted by Catholic moral theory as lawful and just, and in this sense alone it can be said that the Church approves of capitalism. In the current use of the word, however, capitalism stands for much more than this. Indeed it stands for so much that it is almost impossible to give an exact definition of it. Broadly speaking it may be described as the economic aspect of that philosophy of liberal individualism which was the religion of the nineteenth-century and which found its political expression in parliamentary democracy.

Now 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 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."<sup>3</sup>

Thus, while the Church will accept free enterprise as a system of business organization, it denies the ethical validity of its institutions, motivations, and resulting social philosophy. It is for this reason that in his historic social Encyclical, "The Workers' Charter" (Rerum Novarum), Leo XIII could write:

"....for the ancient working-men's guilds were abolished in the last century, and no other protective organization took their place. Public institutions

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3. Dawson, Christopher; Religion and the Modern State; Sheed & Ward; London; 1936; pp. 132-133.

and the laws set aside the ancient religion. Hence by degrees it has come to pass that working-men have been surrendered, isolated and helpless, to the hard-heartedness of employers and the greed of unchecked competition. The mischief has been increased by rapacious usury, which, although more than once condemned by the Church, is nevertheless, under a different guise, but with the like injustice, still practised by covetous and grasping men. To this must be added that the hiring of labour and the conduct of trade are concentrated in the hands of comparatively few; so that a small number of very rich men have been able to lay upon the teeming masses of the labouring poor a yoke little better than that of slavery itself."<sup>4</sup>

Forty years later, on May 15, 1931, Pius XI in his "Quadragesimo Anno" (which has been called "The Divine Plan for Work and Wealth") expressed the same sentiments:

"You assuredly know, Venerable Brethren and Beloved Children, and you lament the ultimate consequences of this individualist spirit in economic life. Free competition has destroyed itself; economic domination has taken the place of the open market. Unbridled ambition for domination has succeeded the desire for gain; the whole economic regime has become hard, cruel and relentless in a ghastly measure."<sup>5</sup>

And, again, this judgment was echoed by his successor, Pius XII. In a radio address on September 1, 1944, he said,

"Accordingly, where, for instance, 'capitalism' is based on such false concepts and arrogates to itself an unlimited right over property, without any subordination to the common good, the Church has condemned it as contrary to the natural law.

In fact, We see the ever increasing ranks of the workers frequently confronted with this excessive concentration of economic goods which, often hidden under anonymous titles, are successfully withdrawn from con-

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4. Papal Encyclical of Leo XIII; "Rerum Novarum"; Paragraph 2.

5. Papal Encyclical of Pius XI; "Quadragesimo Anno"; Par. 109.

tributing, as they should, to the social order and place the worker in a situation where it is virtually impossible for him effectively to acquire private property of his own.

We see the small and medium holdings diminish and lose their value in human society, and constrained to join in a conflict ever more difficult and without hope of success.

On the one side, We see immense riches dominating public and private economic life and often even civil life; on the other, the countless number of those who, deprived of ever direct or indirect security of their own livelihood, take no further interest in the true and higher values of the spirit, abandon their aspiration to genuine freedom and throw themselves at the feet of any political party, slaves to whoever promises them in some way bread and security; and experience shows of what tyranny, under such circumstances, human nature is capable even in our times."<sup>6</sup>

But, if this is the expressed, official attitude of the Church to "Capitalism", several questions immediately come to mind:

1) From what sources did capitalism arise to gain such a tremendous influence over the modern-day world, and what is it within capitalism that is contrary to the Natural Law?

2) To correct the abuses of unrestricted economic individualism would necessarily involve a modification of laissez-faire capitalism. What measures would the Church recommend?

3) Wherein are the Communist, Socialist, and Protestant Reform movements inadequate or in error, and toward what

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6. Radio Address of Pius XII on September 1, 1944; as quoted by Cronin, J. F.; Catholic Social Principles; Bruce Co.; Milwaukee; 1950; pp. 8-9. (Printed under the "Imprimatur" of the Archbishop of Washington, Patrick A. O'Boyle.)

concrete, social ideal is Catholicism and its economic ethic directed?

It is to these questions that we now turn. They will be answered under the following headings: The Catholic Analysis: Capitalistic Causes and Effects; The Catholic Correctives: A Modern "Just Price"; and The Catholic Ideal: A Neo-Medieval Organic Society.

### I. The Catholic Analysis: Capitalistic Causes And Effects

As we have seen in Fanfani's criticism of The Max Weber Thesis,<sup>7</sup> Roman Catholic opinion is not unwilling to ascribe the rise of the capitalistic system to the dynamic principles inherent within Protestantism. However, Catholicism also asserts that it is not only Protestantism's success, but also its failure that allows the evils of capitalism to flourish. Writing in 1940, the Roman Catholic scholar, Jacques Maritain, gives his analysis of the disintegration of the social order and the spiritual decline from which it stems in the following broad generalizations:

"In fact, if we seek what constitutes in the modern age the spiritual entelechy of Western civilization, we will find, in the first place, Catholicism whose proper form is a transcendent one, that of the Church or the Kingdom of God. But its projections into the temporal sphere are mixed inevitably in this domain -- the domain of the world -- with forces and interests, more or less pure, of a sociological and

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7. See Chapter III, pp. 143-145 of this thesis.

natural order, and have moreover suffered for three centuries now the violent and constant action of adverse forces. These temporal projections of Catholicism have thus seen the structures of the Western world progressively escape, in large areas, from their radius of influence.

We find, in the second place, Protestantism of the Puritan and Anglo-Saxon type, the form of which was originally co-extensive with the British Empire and its zones of influence or spiritual affiliation, and whose force has long been powerful, but now seems to have lost its mastery over human morals, in vast sections of these parts of the world.

Finally, in the third place, we find democracy of the rationalist, Rousseauistic, French type, which represents a lower form, entirely secular and non-religious, of Christian energies, but remains inconceivable without these energies as its source and origin; its emotional and rational force also seems now to have lost mastery over a vast section of civilization long animated by it.

After many changes, the revolutionary dynamism of the forces which first produced the three great ruptures just referred to, has passed principally either into the totalitarian communist movement which has succeeded in taking over as its laboratory a large part of the ancient Christian-Orthodox civilization and which wishes to win the world; or else into the totalitarian-Germano-racist movement which wishes to bring into subjection the ancient Western civilization and the entire world. It seems to me quite remarkable that the two great ruptures in civilization which we see today appear to have taken their direction from the religious ruptures which occurred in earlier times, and which separated from the Catholic community, first the orthodox Oriental world, and then the Protestant Germanic world."<sup>8</sup>

But if, historically, these components of modern social development -- the decline of Catholic authority, the failure of Protestant control, and the inherent weakness of enlightened secular rationalism -- have combined to produce

8. Maritain, Jacques; Scholasticism and Politics; the Century Press; London; 1940; pp. 241-242.

an irreligious individualism which has since activated the twin evils of fascism and communism;<sup>9</sup> spiritually the effects of rampant individualistic capitalism have been equally catastrophic. By its very nature capitalism produces a subjectivism which is anti-religious. Writing in his Freedom in the Modern World, Maritain analyzes this spiritually degrading effect of individualism which he calls "the dialectic of modern culture".

"One may describe the first as a reversal of the order of ends. Instead of directing its proper good, which is a good of the terrestrial order, towards **Eternal Life**, modern civilisation seeks its last end within itself; and the end it seeks is the dominion of man over matter. God becomes the guarantor of this dominion.

The second 'moment' or aspect is a semi-divine imperialism (so to say) over material forces. Instead of accepting natural conditions and controlling these by a process that is itself natural and that qualifies the interior life of man, in other words that tends primarily to inner perfection and a certain wisdom of soul and life, civilisation sets out to alter the conditions of nature, to rule over it by technical and artificial processes; creating with the aid of the science of mathematical physics a material world adapted to the felicity of our earthly life.

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9. We should here note the correspondence between this Neo-Thomist analysis and the conclusions of dialectical materialism. In spite of their wide differences of philosophical position, the conclusion that capitalism would produce class conflict, social decay, and a communist state is found in both views. However, the question as to whether this identical conclusion stems from Catholic sympathy with the Marxian "Labor Theory of Surplus Value" (as seen in "The Just Price" concept) seems to fall outside the scope of this thesis. See Chapter II, pp. 68-69, 141 foll. of this thesis.

God becomes an idea.

The third 'moment' consists in a progressive retirement of man before the forces of matter. In order to rule over nature as a demiurge man is in fact obliged more and more to subordinate his intelligence and his life to necessities not human but technical and to forces of the material order that he sets in motion and that invade our human life. -- God dies: Man now materialist thinks he can only be man or superman if God is not God."<sup>10</sup>

Thus, Catholic opinion holds that capitalism is basically and inherently wrong because it contradicts the nature of man. As we have seen, Thomism, i.e. Catholicism, is profoundly personal; and the social structure which grows out of it organic. But in neither individualism, in which the supreme values are subjective, nor totalitarianism, in which the highest values are found in the objective State, can Thomism be adequately expressed. For the Catholic, the principles of the social order must be theological.

Perhaps no better summary of the disparity which Catholicism finds between the Natural Law and the capitalistic order has been published than the "Introduction" to the Code of Social Principles which was prepared by the International Union of Social Studies and printed by the Catholic Social Guild, Oxford. Entitled, "Man and Society", it states, in part,

1. "....'It is only individual human beings, not any

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 10. Maritain, Jacques; Freedom in the Modern World; Sheed & Ward; London; 1935; pp. 94-95.

association of them, that are endowed with reason and moral freedom. <sup>11</sup> Man, not society, is immortal. It is each separate human being that God has loved and Jesus Christ has redeemed.

This personal destiny bestows on everyone, regardless of origin of race, fundamental and indefeasible rights, which must be respected and observed in practice, and, notable, according to the insistent teaching of His Holiness Pope Pius XII:

- \*The right to maintain and develop physical, intellectual, and moral life, and in particular the right to a religious training and education:
- The right to worship God, both in private and in public, including the right to engage in religious works of charity:
- The right, in principle, to marriage and to the attainment of the purpose of marriage:
- The right to wedded society and homelife:
- The right to work as an indispensable means for the maintenance of family life:
- The right to a free choice of estate of life, and therefore of the priestly and religious state:
- The right to a use of material goods, subject to its duties and to its social limitations. <sup>12</sup>

Individualism does not consist in acknowledging the dignity of the human person, his immortal destiny and his indefeasible rights. This grave error maintains that man's social character is purely accidental, whereas in reality it is essential and permeates his whole nature.

2. It is not true that the individual is self-sufficient. No one, however gifted, can maintain his existence or perfect his mind and heart save in that

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11. Quoted from the Papal Encyclical, "Atheistic Communism" of Pius XII, March 19, 1937.
  12. Quoted from the Papal Encyclical, "The Rights of Man" of Pius XII, 1942. See also the resume of "The Rights of Man" as found in Maritain, Jacques: The Rights of Man; Centenary Press; London; 1945; pp. 60-63. See also the document "A Declaration of Rights" which includes; the Domestic Rights of States, and the Rights of States in the International Community; in the appendix to A Code of Social Principles; Catholic Social Guild; Oxford; 1952; pp. 84-88.

society in which he is called to live. His God-given faculties ordain that he live in society and they can only develop by virtue of his so doing.

3. If individualism exaggerates individual rights, other systems, on the contrary, overrate collective rights, such as Marxist Socialism, especially in its extreme form: Communism, Positive Sociology, National Socialism, totalitarian political systems. They make absolute such relative values as classless society, society, the race, the nation or the State.

Between these extremes, Christian philosophy affirms both the outstanding dignity of the human person and the necessity of society for his complete development.

4. In the legal order, individualism betrays itself in a radical subjectivism which attributes absolute independence to the human person and unconditional value to individual rights.

The political constitutions of the nineteenth-century have fallen more than once into this extreme.

5. Conversely, Positivist Sociology betrays itself in the legal order by a radical objectivism. It claims that society is a reality higher than and prior to its members, so that the latter have no rights but such as social solidarity may require. Such objectivism ends by disregarding the personality of man and in denying the rights that flow from human nature. It makes society the end, man the means.

6. In the same way, Communism and the totalitarian systems ignore the real value and the transcendental destiny of the human person and only allow him, in view of society, such rights as the latter deigns to grant him.

7. According to the Christian philosophy, there exists between the human person and society a correlation and interdependence ordained by nature because of man's destiny. Society is willed by the Creator as the means to the full development of the individual and social attainments, which the individual by a give and take process has to employ to his own good and that of others. Also those higher and more comprehensive values, that cannot be realized by the individual, but only by the community, in the final analysis, are intended by

the Creator for the sake of the individual, for his natural and supernatural development and perfection.<sup>13</sup>

8. As the common good of society is a human good, determined ultimately by man's nature and destiny, society may never defraud man of his fundamental personal rights. It can only regulate their exercise in accordance with the demands of the common good, which must never go against true human good."<sup>14</sup>

## II. The Catholic Correctives: A Modern "Just Price"

Despite its disagreement with the principles upon which both modern capitalism and communism are based, Catholicism does not hesitate to suggest remedies for the economic evils which they have produced. This it does upon the patriarchal authority which, as we have seen in Troeltsch's analysis, undergirds the whole Roman Catholic structure.

"But before proceeding to discuss these problems, 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

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13. Quoted from the Papal Encyclical "Mit Brennender Sorge" (Persecution of the Church in Germany); of Pius XI; March 14, 1937.

14. Except from the "Introduction", Part I, "Man and Society"; A Code of Social Principles (imprimatur of Joseph, Archbishop of Birmingham); Catholic Social Guild; Oxford; 1952; pp. 16-18. (While not a Papal Encyclical, this document is deemed "authoritative", and is widely quoted by Catholic scholars throughout the English speaking world.)

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."<sup>15</sup>

As a result of this view, the Roman Catholic Church, through the medium of the Papal Encyclicals, has sought to correct the economic inequalities which have developed in modern industrial capitalism.

The first and most important of the social encyclicals was "Rerum Novarum" of Pope Leo XIII (May 15, 1891) and this was followed by a number of other documents,<sup>16</sup> of which the lengthy "Quadregesimo Anno" of Pius XI, May 15, 1931, is the most important. It is from these authoritative teachings that the Roman Catholic program of social action can be deduced.

As we have seen, central in the Church's economic ethic is the right of private property which is guaranteed to man by the Natural Law and it is upon this base that

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15. "Quadragesimo Anno, Para. 41.

16. The complete list of the major documents concerned with the social teachings of the Catholic Church as cited by Cronin, J. F.; Catholic Social Principles; op. cit.; pp. xix-xxii will be given in the Appendix.

the Catholic opposition to the totalitarian social structure of communism is founded.<sup>17</sup>

The Encyclicals emphatically reassert this right.

"For every man has by nature the right to possess property as his own. This is one of the chief points of distinction between man and the animal creation for the brute has not power of self-direction, but is governed by.....instincts.....And on this very account -- that man alone among the animal creation is endowed with reason -- it must be within his right to possess things not merely for temporary and momentary use, as other living things do, but to have and hold them in stable and permanent possession; he must have not only things that perish in the use, but those also which, though they have been reduced into use, continue for further use in after time.<sup>18</sup>..... "Hence man not only should possess the fruits of the earth, but also the very soil, inasmuch as from the produce of the earth he has to lay by provision for the future.... Nature remaining always with him from which he might look to draw continual supplies. And this stable condition of things he finds solely in the earth and its fruits. There is no need to bring in the State. Man precedes the State, and possesses, prior to the formation of any State, the right of providing for the sustenance of his body."<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, the natural rights of the family obligate the State to assure the right of personal ownership:

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17. Of course, it is to be recognized that the Catholic opposition to Marxist philosophy stems from theological and not merely ethical grounds. However, it is because of the communist denial of the right to hold private property that the Church has condemned Soviet "collectivization". See the Papal Encyclical, "On Atheistic Communism" (Par. 8-23) of Pius XI (Mar. 19, 1937).
  18. "Rerum Novarum"; par. 5.
  19. *ibid.*; par. 6.

"That right to property, therefore, which has been proved to belong naturally to individual persons, must in likewise belong to a man in his capacity of head of a family; nay, that right is all the more valid in proportion as human personality in the life of the family takes various forms. For it is a most sacred law of nature that a father should provide food and all necessaries for those whom he has begotten; and, similarly, it is natural that he should wish that his children, who carry on, so to speak, and continue his personality, should be by him provided with all that is needful to enable them to keep themselves decently from want and misery amid the uncertainties of this moral life. Now in no other way can a father effect this except by the ownership of productive property, which he can transmit to his children by inheritance."<sup>20</sup>

But what safeguards are there that property will not be used destructively, to the detriment of others? To this, the Church replies,

".....it is one thing to have a right to the possession of money, and another to have a right to use money as one wills. Private ownership, as we have seen, is the natural right of man; and to exercise that right, especially as members of society, is not only lawful, but absolutely necessary. 'It is lawful,' says St. Thomas of Aquin, 'for a man to hold private property; and it is also necessary for the carrying on of human existence.' But if the question be asked, How must one's possessions be used? the Church replies without hesitation in the words of the same Holy Doctor: 'Man should not consider his material possessions as his own, but common to all, so as to share them without hesitation when others are in need'..... True, no one is commanded to distribute to others that which is required for his own needs and those of his household; nor even to give away what is reasonably required to keep up becomingly his condition in life, 'for no one ought to live other than becomingly'. But what when necessity demands has been supplied,

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20. "Rerum Novarum"; op. cit.; par. 10.

and one's standing fairly taken thought for, it becomes a duty to give to the indigent out of what remains over..... It is a duty, not of justice (save in extreme cases), but of Christian charity -- a duty not enforced by human law."<sup>21</sup>

Reaffirming this position -- both the natural right of private property and the distinction between its ownership and its use -- Pius XI stated in "Quadragesimo Anno":

"Let it be made clear beyond all doubt that neither Leo XIII, nor those theologians who have taught under the guidance and direction of the Church, have ever denied or called into question the two-fold aspect of ownership: which is individual or social according as it regards individuals or concerns the common good. Their unanimous assertion has always been that the right to own private property has been given to man by nature, or rather by the Creator Himself, both in order that individuals may be able to provide for their own needs and those of their families, and also that by means of it the goods which the Creator has destined for the whole human race may truly serve this purpose."<sup>22</sup>..... "We reassert.... the fundamental principle, laid down by Leo XIII, that the right of property must be distinguished from its use. It belongs to what is called Commutative Justice, faithfully to respect private ownership, and not to encroach on the rights of another by exceeding the limits of one's own right of property. The prohibition of wrongful use of one's own possessions, however, does not fall under this form of justice, but under certain other virtues, the obligations of which are 'not enforced by courts of justice'. Hence, it is a mistake to contend that the right of ownership and its proper use are bounded by the same limits; and it is even less true that the right of property is destroyed or lost by its mere non-use or abuse."<sup>23</sup>

Thus, from its own principles, Catholicism defines the functions, rights, duties, and limitations placed upon

21. "Rerum Novarum"; op. cit.; par. 19.

22. "Quadragesimo Anno"; op. cit.; par. 45.

23. ibid.; par. 47.

the State by this property ethic:

"It follows from the two-fold character of ownership which, as we have said, is both individual and social, that men must take into account in this matter, not only their own advantage, but also the common good. To define in detail these duties, when the need occurs, and when the natural law does not do so, is the function of the civil ruler. Provided that the natural and divine law be observed, the public authority, in view of the true necessities of the common welfare, may specify more accurately what is licit and what is illicit for property owners in the use of their possessions... It is plain, however, that the State may not discharge this duty in an arbitrary manner. Man's natural right of possessing private property, and transmitting it by inheritance, must remain intact and inviolate, and cannot be taken away by the State; 'for man precedes the State' and 'the domestic household is antecedent, as well in idea as in fact, to the gathering of men into community.'..... When civil authority adjusts ownership to meet the needs of the public good, it acts not as an enemy, but as the friend of private owners; for thus it effectively prevents the possession of private property, intended by Nature's Author in His wisdom for the support of human life, from creating intolerable disadvantages and so rushing to its own destruction; it does not break down private ownership but protects it; and far from weakening the right of private property, it gives it new strength."<sup>24</sup>

Thus, Catholicism would correct Communism by asserting the right of private property and inheritance; and would limit the arbitrary action of the totalitarian State by defining its prerogatives in accordance with the Natural Law.

But what of modern Western capitalism which already asserts the right of private ownership under a non-totalitarian State? As we have seen, the Church would distinguish between the right of private property and its use, the use of property being restricted by Justice to "the Common Good" and by Charity to "others in need" after "necessity's demands"

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24. "Quadragesimo Anno"; op, cit.; par. 49.

have been supplied, this latter "a duty not enforced by human law". Also, as we have seen, Charity is a theological virtue activated by God, and thus not demanded by Society. Justice, on the other hand, is a Moral Virtue, and a requirement upon all men by the Natural Law.

Therefore, the Church would correct capitalism by demanding Justice for all in the name of the "Common Good" under the provisions of the Law of Nature. To show the Church's amplification of this doctrine it will be necessary to show how the Encyclicals apply the idea of "The Just Price" to each of the factors of production and thus indicate how Catholicism would modify the unethical individualism of laissez-faire capitalism.<sup>25</sup>

#### A. "The Just Price" of Land: Rent

"If the right of property is upheld then it follows logically that the property owner must receive the normal return from his possession."<sup>26</sup> Thus, on all owned and useful land, rent is legitimate. In the case of unowned or no-rent land, however, the situation is different and ownership should go to the occupier. Pope Pius XI states,

25. This method, that of applying the concept of "the Just Price" to the factors of production, is the method used by John A. Ryan in his excellent study of Catholic economic ethics, Distributive Justice; Macmillan; New York; 3rd Ed.; 1950.

26. Cronin; Catholic Social Principles; op. cit.; p. 41.

"The original acquisition of property takes place both by first occupancy and by labour, or, as it is called, specification..... Despite unreasonable assertions to the contrary, no wrong is done to any man by taking possession of goods which belong to nobody. The only form of labour, however, which gives to him who labours a title to its fruits is that which a man exercises as his own master, and by which some new form or new value is produced."<sup>27</sup>

In the case of no-rent land, the Government, for the common good of all, is empowered to take action.

"In certain countries in particular there has developed a rural problem, under the following circumstances: i) the existence of estates, untilled or undertilled, whose use and improvement are indispensable to the common good; ii) cultivation which, though technically satisfactory, has by its mass-production led to the birth and growth of a rural proletariat living in misery, forced to leave the land, to emigrate, or to some other alternative hurtful to the common good. In all such cases, the State has the right, when less radical means have failed, to decree the division of cultivation and, if need be, of properties. The exercise of this right is always subject to the granting of a just and well-considered indemnity to all those whose legitimate right would be injured by the measures taken towards division."<sup>28</sup>

Moreover, the State may restrict the rental of land if it is not in accordance with the common good. Therefore, such things as zoning are morally legitimate, and even necessary.

"As far as necessity demands, public authority, taking into consideration the common good, has the right to determine, in the light of natural and divine law, what use owners may or may not make of their possessions."<sup>29</sup>

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27. "Quadragesimo Anno"; op. cit.; par. 52.

28. Code of Social Principles; op. cit.; No. 106.

29. ibid.; No. 104.

In this connection, it might be well to note the Church's concern for the non-owning agricultural workers. Calling on the Governments to assist them toward the ownership of land, "Quadragesimo Anno" states,

"Moreover there is the immense army of agricultural wage-earners whose condition is depressed in the extreme, and who have no hope of ever obtaining 'any share in the land'. These also, unless appropriate and efficacious remedies be applied, will remain perpetually sunk in their proletarian condition."<sup>30</sup>

But if rents, as such, are lawful and morally justifiable, what about that portion of some rents known as "unearned increment"? Does a better location, a higher fertility, or the presence of minerals on his land justify the owner in receiving a higher rent than he would normally be due? To this problem, the Vatican has not addressed itself, and the Church does not speak with a unified voice.

Dr. R. A. L. Smith, in his The Catholic Church and Social Order, speaks to this problem:

"An objective and dispassionate analysis of the social function of royalties and urban ground-rents must, I think, show that they represent the complete divorce of ownership and use. They are therefore shocking anomalies in an Organic society, for they resemble nothing so much as those feudal dues which survived to oppress the French peasants in the eighteenth century.... It is sometimes alleged that these property rights 'secure the fruits of labour': on which the best comment is that 'the fruits are the proprietor's and the labour that of someone else'.<sup>31</sup>

30. "Quadragesimo Anno"; op. cit.; par. 59.

31. Tawney; The Sickness of an Acquisitive Society; as cited by Smith, R. A. L.; The Catholic Church and Social Order; Longmans' Green; London; 1933; p. 37.

Royalties, which most commonly take the form of mineral royalties, are nothing less than a private tax imposed by the owner upon the labour of others.....For not only has the right of property in these cases become completely separated from its social duties, such property also positively militates against the living conditions of the workers, for while royalties are a private tax on their industry and wages, urban ground-rents adversely effect their living conditions. An overwhelming case can be made out for the view that royalties and urban ground-rents are inimical to the common welfare and should therefore be abolished like the feudal dues of the pre-industrial age. The compulsory powers of purchase.... (by the Government)..... subject to the payment of proper compensation... is clearly the solution that should also be adopted in extinguishing all royalties and urban ground-rents.... I should venture to suggest that this policy would be in the fullest harmony with the teaching on property contained in the Papal encyclicals."<sup>32</sup>

However, a contrary view of the justification of the unearned increment is given by other authors. Cyril C. Clump, for example, in his The Economic and Political Life of Man, writes,

"It is, however, no more unjust for the fortunate landowner or landlord to enjoy the increased value of his possessions, than it is unjust for the cloth merchant to enjoy the increased value of his goods due to a natural rise in market prices, though this unearned increment may justly suffer a special tax."<sup>33</sup>

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32. Smith; The Catholic Church and Social Order; op. cit.; pp. 129-131.

33. Clump, C. C.; The Economic and Political Life of Man; ("Imprimatur" of Joseph, Archbishop of Birmingham); Catholic Social Guild; Oxford; 1947; p. 185. (Special taxation on the unearned increment has been suggested by such American Catholic authorities as John F. Cronin and John A. Ryan. Ryan claims that there would be a moral advantage in ownership and long leases by public authorities of urban land. Moreover, he would remove many of the basic inequalities between individuals by a supertax on mineral, timber, and water power lands, and also on rural agricultural land owned by an absentee landlord. See his Distributive Justice; op. cit.; pp. 64-81.)

Regardless of the view taken of the unearned increment, however, the Church's stand that rent must reflect its social use is clear. While refusing to legislate, either by formula or in money terms, what is a just rent, the Popes have spoken with moral assurance on the social obligations of landlords. While condemning the receivers of iniquitous land-rents, they have lauded socially conscious land owners:

"Those, therefore, are doing a work that is truly salutary and worthy of all praise who, while preserving harmony among themselves and the integrity of the traditional teaching of the Church, seek to define the inner nature of these duties and their limits whereby either the right of property itself or its use, that is, the exercise of ownership, is circumscribed by the necessities of social living. On the other hand, those who seek to restrict the individual character of ownership to such a degree that in fact they destroy it are mistaken and in error."<sup>34</sup>

And again:

"At the same time a man's surplus income is not left entirely to his own discretion. We speak of that portion of his income which he does not need in order to live fittingly and becomingly. On the contrary, the grave obligations of almsgiving, beneficence and liberality which rest upon the wealthy are constantly insisted upon in explicit terms by Holy Scripture and the Fathers of the Church."<sup>35</sup>

In this connection, it might be well to note the Church's concern for that owned property which is used as dwelling places, and the effect produced upon society by bad housing conditions. Pius XI regarded the housing situation as one

34. "Quadragesimo Anno"; op. cit.; par. 48.

35. *ibid.*; par. 50.

fraught with difficulty: "We are appalled.... if we recall how the present economic regime and above all the disgraceful housing conditions create obstacles to the family tie and family life."<sup>36</sup> And his successor, Pius XII, pointed out the social and psychological effects on young people of this situation. In speaking to the Women of Italian Catholic Action, he said,

"We repeat now to you what We said to the men of Catholic Action some two years ago. The Catholic Church strongly supports the requirements of social justice. These requirements include provision for the people of the necessary houses, and above all for those who desire to found a family or are already doing so. Can there be conceived a social need of greater urgency? How sad it is to see young people, at the age when nature is more inclined to marriage, forced to wait years and years, merely because of the lack of a place to live, and always with the danger that in this nerve-racking waiting their morals may deteriorate. Encourage, then, as much as you can, with your propaganda and your labours, the provision of houses so that the dignity of marriage and the Christian education of children may not suffer from this need."<sup>37</sup>

To correct this situation, of course, zealous efforts are needed on the part of all socially conscious citizens;

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36. "Quadragesimo Anno"; op. cit.; par. 135; (In the "Declaration of Rights" drafted by the National Catholic Welfare Conference U. S. A. in 1947 and quoted in the Appendix to A Code of Social Principles; op. cit.; No. 7 of Part II of "The Rights Pertaining to the Family" reads: "The right to housing adapted to the needs and functions of family life.")
37. Excerpt from "Address to Women of Italian Catholic Action" by Pius XII, July 1949. (See also the speech, "Rights of Labour", of Cardinal Manning as recorded by Purcell; The Life of Cardinal Manning, Vol. II; p. 647).

but primarily the duty rests with industrial leaders and the State.<sup>38</sup> In this regard one important Catholic industrialist of the United States, Robert Wood Johnson, Chairman of the Board of Johnson and Johnson, Inc., has proposed an industry-inspired program for dealing with bad housing which has met with official Vatican approval:

"The greatest opportunities in this field are open to industries that move from cities to small towns. The day of the company town is passing, but there is no reason why the company which puts up a new and beautiful factory should not lead in the development of attractive residential sections by or for its employees. Man's desire to conform is strong, and once a beautiful, efficient, and reasonably inexpensive pattern is set, human nature will help to do the rest. If necessary, the company may buy enough land to bar speculative builders who are willing to build slums anywhere for the sake of immediate profit."<sup>39</sup>

Of course, the Catholic Correctives to both iniquitous rents and poor housing are both to be found in one solution: a wider diffusion of property ownership. Of all the many references to this ideal, its best expression is probably found in the most significant paragraph no. 35 of "Rerum Novarum":

"If a workman's wages be sufficient to enable him comfortably to support himself, his wife, and his children, he will find it easy, if he be a sensible man, to practice thrift; and he will not fail, by cutting down

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38. See the American Catholic Proposals for State action in regard to housing as suggested by Cronin; Catholic Social Principles; op. cit.; pp. 379-384.

39. Johnson, R. W.; Fresh Deal for Management and Labour; Catholic Social Guild; Oxford; 1951; p. 64. (In its American edition, this book is entitled; Or Forfeit Freedom; Dobuleday; New York; 1957.

expenses, to put by some little savings and thus secure a modest source of income. Nature itself would urge him to do this. We have seen that this great labour question cannot be solved save by assuming as a principle that private ownership must be held sacred and inviolable. The law, therefore, should favour ownership, and its policy should be to induce as many as possible of the people to become owners.

Many excellent results will follow from this; and first of all, property will certainly become more equitably divided. For the result of civil change and revolution has been to divide society into two widely differing castes. On the one side there is the party which holds power because it holds wealth; which has in its grasp the whole of labour and trade; which manipulates for its own benefit and its own purposes all the sources of supply, and which is even represented in the councils of the State. On the other side, there is the needy and powerless multitude, sick, and sore in spirit and ever ready for disturbance. If working people can be encouraged to look forward to obtaining a share in the land, the consequence will be that the gulf between vast wealth and sheer poverty will be bridged over, and the respective classes will be brought nearer to one another. A further consequence will result in the greater abundance of the fruits of the earth. Men always work harder and more readily when they work on that which belongs to them; nay, they learn to love the very soil that yields in response to the labour of their hands, not only food to eat, but an abundance of good things for themselves and those that are dear to them. That such a spirit of willing labour would add to the produce of the earth and to the wealth of the community is self-evident. And a third advantage would spring from this: men would cling to the country in which they were born; for no one would exchange his country for a foreign land if his own afforded him the means of living a decent and happy life."<sup>40</sup>

#### B. "The Just Price" of Labour: Wages

Catholicism has shown much concern for the labour contracts of workers. As private property is esteemed a Natural Law, so too is the right of labour, it being the property of

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40. "Rerum Novarum"; op. cit.; par. 35.

the worker. In this, the Church finds itself in rare agreement with the judgment of Adam Smith: "The property which every man has in his own labour, as it is the original foundation of all other property, so it is the most sacred and inviolable."<sup>41</sup> In explaining this idea and elaborating upon the Church's concern for the labourer, Cardinal Manning stated,

"First of all, I claim for labour the rights of property. There is no personal property so strictly our own. It is altogether and entirely personal. The strength and skill that are in a man are as much his own as his life-blood; and that skill and strength which he has as his personal property no man may control. He has this property in him... The workman carries this property with him as ready money. He can buy with it, and he can sell it. He can exchange it. He may set a price on it."<sup>42</sup>

But the mere assertion that the right to labour is a natural justifiable right, is not to imply that there is unlimited freedom for the worker to sign a labour contract. This limitation on the freedom of contract was not legalized in many modern states until after the turn of the century, but Pope Leo XIII in 1891 explained the Catholic reasoning and its position in the matter in the following terms:

"To labour is to exert oneself for the sake of procuring what is necessary for the various purposes of life, and chief of all for self-preservation. 'In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread'. (Gen. 3:19) Hence, a man's labour necessarily bears two notes or characters.

41. Adam Smith, as cited by Purcell; op. cit.; Vol. II; p. 643.  
 42. Cardinal Manning, as cited by Purcell; ibid.; pp. 643-644.

First of all, it is 'Personal', inasmuch as the force which acts is bound up with the personality and is the exclusive property of him who acts, and, further, was given to him for his advantage. Secondly, man's labour is 'Necessary'; for without the result of labour a man cannot live; and self-preservation is a law of nature, which it is wrong to disobey. Now, were we to consider labour merely in so far as it is 'personal', doubtless it would be within the workman's right to accept any rate of wages whatsoever; for in the same way as he is free to work or not, so is he free to accept a small wage or even none at all. But our conclusion must be very different if together with the personal element in a man's work we consider the fact that work is also necessary for him to live; these two aspects of his work are separable in thought, but not in reality. The preservation of life is the bounden duty of one and all, and to be wanting therein is a crime. It necessarily follows that each one has a right to procure what is required in order to live; and the poor can procure that in no other way than by what they can earn through their work.

Let the working man and the employer make free agreements; and in particular let them agree freely as to wages; nevertheless, there underlies a dictate of natural justice more imperious and ancient than any bargain between man and man, namely, that wages ought not to be insufficient to support a frugal and well-behaved wage-earner."<sup>43</sup>

Thus, the Catholic position was made clear: that there is a natural ethical law of wages which, despite other existing conditions, must be adhered to -- that of a living or just wage. First expounded by Leo XIII, it was added to and affirmed by Pius XI. By him, also, the basic reasoning was enlarged. Not only was it the force of necessity which demanded for the worker a just wage, but also the care and support of his family and its well-being must be considered. The family has, also, a natural right to exist, and anything

43. "Rerum Novarum"; op. cit.; par. 34

that would impede that right (e. g. working mothers and child labour fracture the family as a family) must be considered unjust and unlawful.

"In the first place, the wage paid to the working man must be sufficient for the support of himself and his family. It is right indeed that the rest of the family contribute according to their power towards the common maintenance, as we see particularly in the families of peasants, but also in those of many artisans and small tradesmen. But it is wrong to abuse the tender years of children, or the weakness of women. Mothers should carry on their work chiefly at home, or near to it, occupying themselves in caring for the household. Intolerable and at all costs to be abolished is the abuse whereby mothers of families, because of the insufficiency of the father's salary, are forced to engage in gainful occupations outside the domestic walls, to the neglect of their own proper cares and duties, particularly the upbringing of their children. Every effort must therefore be made, that fathers of families receive a wage sufficient to meet adequately normal domestic needs."<sup>44</sup>

Again, in his Encyclical on Christian Marriage, Pius XI repeats this sentiment,

".... that in the State such economic and social methods should be adopted as will enable every head of a family to earn as much as, according to his station in life, is necessary for himself, his wife, and for the rearing of his children..... To deny him this salary, or to pay him less than is equitable, is a grave injustice and is placed by Holy Scripture among the very greatest of sins; nor is it lawful to fix such a scanty wage as will be insufficient for the upkeep of the family in the circumstances in which it is placed."<sup>45</sup>

And again, Pius XII, on the fiftieth anniversary of "Rerum Novarum", echoed these statements in a radio broad-

44. "Quadragesimo Anno"; op. cit.; par. 71.

45. The Papal Encyclical, "Casti Connubii", of Pius XI, December 31, 1930; par. 66.

cast:

"Human labour is, in its essence, 1) a personal thing and 2) a necessary thing: it is personal, because it is achieved through man's particular forces; it is necessary, because without it we cannot procure what is indispensable to life. And it is a man's natural, grave, individual duty to maintain life. So, to the duty to labour imposed on man by his nature there corresponds the natural right of each individual to make of labour the means to provide for his own life and that of his children. So profoundly is Nature's empire organized for the preservation of man, We must now note that this particular duty of working, and the corresponding right to work, do not come to man, to the individual man, from any act on the part of society. It is not the State, but Nature, that imposes this duty and confers this right."<sup>46</sup>

Thus, the idea of the "Just Price" applied to labour becomes "the living wage"; and, when the living wage is considered within the context of the Law of Nature, it becomes "the family wage". Just how this family wage is to be made available to all is never explicitly stated, but responsibility for it being paid is placed on employers, their competitors, and the State.

The employer, himself, has the chief obligation:

"His (the employer's) great and principal duty is to give everyone what is just. Doubtless before deciding whether wages are fair, many things have to be considered; but wealthy owners and all masters of labour should be mindful of this -- that to exercise pressure upon the indigent and the destitute for the sake of gain, and to gather one's profit out of the need of another, is condemned by all laws, human and divine."<sup>47</sup>

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46. Radio broadcast of Pius XII, "La Solennita della Pentecoste", June 1, 1941; par. 2, section III.

47. "Rerum Novarum", op. cit.; par. 17.

But not only must the individual employer accept the responsibility for a "family wage", so also must those in business with him:

"If the business does not make enough money to pay the workmen a just wage, either because it is overwhelmed with unjust burdens, or because it is compelled to sell its products at an unjustly low price, those who thus injure it are guilty of grievous wrong; for it is they who deprive the workers of a just wage, and force them to accept terms which are unjust."<sup>48</sup>

When the business community is unable to provide the worker with an effective "living family wage",<sup>49</sup> its demands must be met by the State.

"Social legislation and social action must concur to improve man's economic opportunity, to enable him to marry early, to free him from the peril of unnaturally limiting his family, and to afford him some certainty of sufficiently gainful employment and some assurance that death or accident will not reduce his dependants to the status of public charges."<sup>50</sup>

Therefore, Catholicism encourages, and even demands,

#### Minimum Wage Laws:

"The several states should enact laws for providing for the establishment of wage rates that will be at least sufficient for the decent maintenance of a family, in the case of all male adults, and adequate to the individual support of female workers. In the beginning, the minimum wages for male workers should suffice only for the present needs of the family, but they should be gradually raised until they are adequate to future needs as well. That is, they should be ultimately high enough to make possible that amount of

48. "Quadragesimo Anno"; op. cit.; par. 73.

49. A "living family wage", by definition, includes a "saving wage": "A living wage means sufficient income to meet not merely the present necessities of life but those of unemployment, sickness, death, and old age as well." -- The Church and Social Order; a document issued by "The American Hierarchy" in 1940; par. 41.

50. The Christian Family; American Hierarchy; 1949; and cited by Cronin; Catholic Social Principles; op. cit.; pp. 342-343.

saving which is necessary to protect the worker and his family against sickness, accidents, invalidity, and old age."<sup>51</sup>

Moreover, in the discharge of its duties of guaranteeing a Just Wage, the State should adopt the Catholic-advocated programs of Family Allowances and State-supported Industrial Insurance:

"A living wage, providing for the maintenance of the worker and his family, and insurance against risk of accident, illness, old age, and unemployment, is the least wage due in justice from the employer.

Two consequences follow from the foregoing idea of the living wage:

a) The Family Allowance System has in recent years shown a satisfactory development. It is fitting that the payment of such allowances should form a part of all agreements, whether individual or collective, between masters and men.

b) There is also a tendency for social insurance to become legalized. It must necessarily be made general, and is preferably carried on by industrial assurance societies, i.e., societies supported and carried jointly by the masters and men in each industry, under the control and with the support of the public authority.

When the state requires membership in family-allowance or social-insurance societies, or when it subsidizes them, it ought at the same time to discriminate between families where the mother remains at home and those in which the mother works outside the home, and provide a more favorable scale for the former."<sup>52</sup>

Thus, in the discharge of its lawful duties the State must adopt social insurance (industrial accident, social

51. Social Reconstruction; a document issued by the American Hierarchy and cited by Cronin; Catholic Social Principles; op. cit.; p. 346.

52. A Code of Social Principles; op. cit.; no. 152.

security, workmen's compensation, unemployment benefits, etc.) as a demand of social justice:

"But social justice cannot be said to have been satisfied as long as workingmen are denied a salary that will enable them to secure proper sustenance for themselves and for their families; so long as they are denied the opportunity of acquiring a modest fortune and avoiding that pauperism which is so widespread; so long as they cannot make suitable provision through public or private insurance for periods of illness and unemployment."<sup>53</sup>

Therefore, the hierarchy looks with approval upon those States which have adopted socially oriented legislative acts.

"Heartening, indeed, are the beginnings toward the greater security of the people that have already been made through legislative enactment and public policy. The immediate benefits of these laws to working people may be small and some modifications perhaps desirable, but it is highly gratifying that the principle upon which they rest has become a part of our national policy."<sup>54</sup>

But the problem of mass unemployment cannot be solved merely by an active governmental policy of unemployment insurance. That can alleviate suffering; it will not cure

53. Papal Encyclical, "Divini Redemptoris" ("On Atheistic Communism"), of Pius XI, March 19, 1937; par. 52. (Insofar as I have been able to determine, the Papacy has not addressed itself directly to the problem of a State-controlled, Socialized Medicine, as seen in a Nationalized Health Service. However, State-supported Health Services are certainly consistent with Catholic views, and many Catholic writers avowedly approve of them. Municipal Health Clinics for "the poor" have received Vatican approval and wide Catholic support. In this connection see Social Reconstruction; American Hierarchy; as cited by Cronin; Catholic Social Principles; op. cit.; pp. 346-347; and see also "Casti Connubii" of Pius XI, op. cit.; par. 126-127.

54. The Church and Social Order; American Hierarchy; op. cit.; par. 38.

it. The more radical cure for this problem as suggested by Catholicism can be seen in its view of what the ideal State and economy should be. This will be discussed in a later section of this chapter, but we might at this point, at least, note how significant the Church seems this problem to be.

"Another point, however, of scarcely less importance must not be overlooked, in these our days especially, namely that opportunities for work be provided for those who are willing and able to work. This depends in no small measure upon the level of wages, which multiplies opportunities for work as long as it is fixed at a proper amount, and reduces them if allowed to depart from this limit. All are aware that a rate of wages too low or too high causes unemployment. Now, unemployment, particularly if widespread and of long duration, as we have known it during Our Pontificate, causes misery and temptation to the workers, ruins the prosperity of nations, and endangers public order, peace, and tranquillity the world over."<sup>55</sup>

Thus, as can be seen, the Roman Catholic view of wages rests on the principle of a "Just Wage", implemented by the mediums of a minimum wage law, family allowances, and social insurance. It does not stop there, however. Other factors, too, must be included if the labour contract is to be an ethical one. The internal conditions of the contract may be met by the above, but such external conditions; protection of women and children, the right to organize, the right to strike, the justification of boycotts, and the conditions

55. "Quadragesimo Anno"; op. cit.; par. 74.

necessary for work to take place must also be included if the labour contract is to be justified. These, too, take their place in Catholic thought about the remuneration paid to the second factor of production.

As we have seen in connection with the doctrine of the "living wage", the Church is concerned with the employment of women. In 1891, Pope Leo XIII wrote: "Women, again, are not suited for certain occupations; a woman is by nature fitted for household duties, and it is that which is best adapted at once to preserve her modesty, and to promote the good bringing up of children and the well-being of the family."<sup>56</sup> Pius XI expressed the same sentiments in these words:

"We see a woman who, in order to augment her husband's earnings, betakes herself also to a factory, leaving her house abandoned during her absence. The house, untidy and small perhaps before, becomes even more miserable for lack of care. Members of the family work separately in four quarters of the city and with different working hours. Scarcely ever do they find themselves together for dinner or rest after work -- still less for prayer in common. What is left of family life? And what attractions can it offer to children?"<sup>57</sup>

Child labour, too has been repeatedly decried. "Rerum Novarum" states,

"As regards children, great care should be taken not to place them in workshops and factories until their bodies and minds are sufficiently developed. For just as very rough weather destroys the buds of spring, so does too early an experience of life's hard toil blight the young promise of a child's faculties, and render any

56. "Rerum Novarum"; op. cit.; par. 33.

57. Papal Encyclical on "Women's Duties" of Pius XII, Oct. 21, 1945.

true education impossible."<sup>58</sup>

In addition to these external conditions of the labour contract, the Church shows concern in the worker's union and its activities. It has an active interest, both in its organization and intentions, and in the means used to carry out those intentions.

In the first days of the labour movement, the Papacy asserted the moral legitimacy of the right of labour to organize. In 1891, Leo XIII wrote,

"Private societies, then, although they exist within the State, and are severally part of the State, cannot nevertheless be absolutely, and as such, prohibited by the State. For to enter into a 'society' of this kind is the natural right of man; and the State is bound to protect natural rights, not to destroy them; and if it forbids its citizens to form associations, it contradicts the very principle of its own existence; for both they and it exist in virtue of the like principle, namely, the natural tendency of man to dwell in society."<sup>59</sup>

It will easily be seen that this right of organization into private societies may apply equally to managerial or capitalist groups. For the trade union, however, the Pope has special words,

"We may lay it down as a general and lasting law, that workmen's associations should be so organized and governed as to furnish the best and most suitable means for attaining what is aimed at, that is to say, for helping each individual member to better his condition to the utmost in body, soul, and property. It is clear that they must pay special and chief attention

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58. "Rerum Novarum"; op. cit.; par. 33

59. *ibid.*; par. 38.

to the duties of religion and morality, and that social betterment should have this chiefly in view; otherwise they would lose wholly their special character, and end by becoming little better than those societies which take no account whatever of Religion.<sup>60</sup> (For) the foundation of social laws being thus laid in religion, it is not hard to establish the relations of members one to another, in order that they may live together in concord, and achieve prosperity.<sup>61</sup> (And) At the time being, the condition of the working classes is the pressing question of the hour; and nothing can be of higher interest to all classes of the State than that it should be rightly and reasonably settled. But it will be easy for Christian working-men to solve it aright if they will form associations, choose wise guides, and follow in the path which with so much advantage to themselves and the commonweal was trodden by their fathers before them."<sup>62</sup>

But with the promulgation of this Encyclical many earnest Catholics tended to advance the cause of unionism at the expense of church solidarity. To correct their excessive zeal, Leo XIII issued another Encyclical, "Graves de Communi", which was an attempt to clarify this aspect of his social doctrine.<sup>63</sup> In it the Catholic view is seen as patriarchal and not democratic. Labour unions, ideally, exist for religious and not merely economic purposes. He wrote,

".....let no one condemn that zeal which, in accordance with the natural and divine law, aims to make the condition of those who toil more tolerable; to enable them to obtain, little by little, those means by which they may provide for the future; to help them to practice in public and in private the duties which morality and religion inculcate; to aid them to feel that

60. "Rerum Novarum";,op. cit.; par. 42.

61. *ibid.*; par. 43

62. *ibid.*; par. 44

63. See Gilson, Etienne; The Church Speaks to the Modern World; Doubleday; New York; 1954; pp. 313-330.

they are not animals but men, not heathens but Christians, and so to enable them to strive more zealously and more eagerly for the one thing which is necessary; viz., that ultimate good for which we are all born into this world. This is the intention; this is the work of those who wish that the people should be animated by Christian sentiments and should be protected from the contamination of socialism which threatens them.

We have designedly made mention here of virtue and religion. For, it is the opinion of some, and the error is already very common, that the social question is merely an economic one, whereas in point of fact it is, above all, a moral and religious matter, and for that reason must be settled by the principles of morality and according to the dictates of religion. For, even though wages are doubled and the hours of labor are shortened and food is cheapened, yet, if the working man hearkens to the doctrines that are taught on this subject, as he is prone to do, and is prompted by the examples set before him to throw off respect for God and to enter upon a life of immorality, his labors and his gain will avail him naught.

Trial and experience have made it abundantly clear that many a workman lives in cramped and miserable quarters, in spite of his shorter hours and larger wages, simply because he has cast aside the restraints of morality and religion. Take away the instinct which Christian wisdom has planted and nurtured in men's hearts, take away foresight, temperance, frugality, patience, and other rightful, natural habits, no matter how much he may strive, he will never achieve prosperity. That is the reason why We have incessantly exhorted Catholics to enter these associations for bettering the condition of the laboring classes, and to organize other undertakings with the same object in view; but We have likewise warned them that all this should be done under the auspices of religion, with its help and under its guidance."<sup>64</sup>

His successor, Pius X, in one of his typically conservative utterances, reaffirmed this essentially reactionary view:

"Now with reference to working-men's societies, although their object is to secure temporal advantages

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64. Papal Encyclical, "Graves de Communi", of Leo XIII, Jan. 18, 1901; par. 10-12.

for their members, those are to be regarded as worthy of the highest approval, and as the best fitted to promote the real and solid utility of their members, which are founded chiefly on the basis of the Catholic religion and openly follow the leadership of the Church. This We have Ourselves several times declared for different nations, as occasion offered. Hence it follows that such Catholic associations should be established and favoured in every way, certainly in Catholic countries, and in all other places where it appears that through them provision can be made for the various needs of their members."<sup>65</sup>

Thus the Catholic position is made clear: trade unionism has a lawful right to exist as a "free association" as one of the rights of man guaranteed by the Natural Law, but its aims and purposes must be defined by the Church. Catholic usage of essentially democratic social forms does not mean that Catholicism sanctifies democracy. "Vox Populi" is not "Vox Dei". The Voice of God is found, rather, in the Papal pronouncements "ex cathedra".

However, the Vatican is realistic enough to recognize that in many societies (particularly non-Catholic countries) distinctively Catholic trade unions are not possible. In that event, "Quadragesimo Anno" laid down the following conditions:

"Under such circumstances (when there is no specific "Catholic Union") they seem to have no choice but to enroll themselves in neutral trade unions. These, however, must always respect justice and equity, and

65. Papal Encyclical, "Singulari Quadam", of Pius X, Sept. 24, 1912, as cited by Leys, op. cit., Par. 53.

leave to their Catholic members full freedom to follow the dictates of their conscience, and to obey the precepts of the Church. It belongs to the Bishops to approve of Catholic working-men joining these unions, ~~where~~ they judge that circumstances render it necessary, and there appears no danger for religion, observing however, the rules and precautions recommended by Our Predecessor of saintly memory, Pius X."<sup>66</sup>

In explaining how this principle works out in modern society, one Catholic author writes quite simply,

"The Holy See has consistently favoured the formation of trade Unions in the interests of the working-classes and for the establishment of social peace. The Church desires, whenever it is possible, to see Catholic organizations established for Catholic workers; but realizing that this is not always possible, she does not object to Catholic workers joining un-denominational unions, as in Great Britain and the United States of America, when there is no danger in their religious convictions. In some countries, however, where the trade unions are directly under communist or socialist influence, Catholic workers have had to form their own unions, many of which are grouped together in the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions."<sup>67</sup>

66. "Quadragesimo Anno", op. cit., Par. 35.

67. Clump; Economical and Political Life; op. cit., pp. 68-69. (It might be well to note here that this International Federation of the Christian Trade Unions is the Catholic counterpart of the now infamous I.W.W. It is organically related to the I.L.O. (International Labour Organization) which was formed under the auspices of the League of Nations, and is now a segment of the United Nations Organization. The General Principles of the I.L.O. are laid out in Article 41 of its constitution, and are directly along the lines of "Rerum Novarum". For this, Catholics claim credit. Pius XI wrote, "Moreover, when after the great war, the rulers of the leading nations wished to restore peace by an entire reform of social conditions, and among other measures drew up regulations for the just rights of labour, many of their conclusions agreed so perfectly with the principles and directions of Leo XIII, as to seem expressly deduced from them." --- "Quadragesimo Anno", op. cit., Par.22.

The organization of specifically Catholic trade unions not only obviates the danger of Catholics falling away from the faith, but also answers the second problem that arises in connection with the right of unions to exist as free associations, namely that of possible demagoguery and political control by unscrupulous leaders. In writing of this problem, Leo XIII stated,

"There is a good deal of evidence, however, which goes to prove that many of these societies are in the hands of secret leaders, and are managed on principles ill-according with Christianity and the public well-being; and that they do their utmost to get within their grasp the whole field of labour, and force working-men either to join them or starve. Under these circumstances, Christian working-men must do one of two things: either join associations in which their religion will be exposed to peril, or form associations among themselves - unite their forces and shake off courageously the yoke of so unrighteous and intolerable an oppression. No one who does not wish to expose man's chief good to extreme risk will for a moment hesitate to say that the second alternative should by all means be adopted."<sup>68</sup>

The reasons for irresponsible leadership in unions can often be explained, particularly in regard to their relations with management.

"Union leaders, on their part, are likely to maintain an attitude of silent indifference, open skepticism, or forthright hostility.....All too often, they misrepresent the motives of management, distorting sincere efforts into attempts to deceive the employees, undermine the union, and so leave the workers defenceless, as they actually were a half a century ago.....Unions are the accredited representatives and protectors of

68. "Rerum Novarum"; op. cit., Par. 40

their members, who originally banded together in self-defence against predatory employers. This attitude of defence has survived; indeed, there are plenty of businesses in which it is still necessary. Under these conditions it is the duty of union leaders to be suspicious; to look for hidden and hostile motives in seemingly friendly gestures. The fact that this must often be done strengthens and justifies an attitude of suspicion, whether it is needed or not.....As labour's official representatives, union leaders are required to improve the condition of their members. They can do so by co-operating with friendly management, but their record for re-election will be better if they seem to have pried concessions out of unwilling and hostile bosses... Co-operation also might lay them open to the charge of selling out to the boss....Since union leaders want to be re-elected, they are not likely to give such an opening to opposing candidates."<sup>69</sup>

But the leaders of organized labour should not yield to this temptation. They should not engender a spirit of hostility to the "bosses" for this is contrary to the Common Good. Rather, as Pius X wrote, "Those who glory in the title, 'Christian', whether individuals or groups, must not, if aware of their duties, foster enmity and opposition between social classes, but rather peace and mutual <sup>70</sup>friendship."

But besides the dangers of fostering apostacy and class hatred, Labour Unions may also engage, unless controlled, in illicit political activity. "Though specific trade union activity, such as the demand for better wages, working

69. Johnson; Fresh Deal for Management and Labour; op. cit., pp. 152-153.

70. Papal Encyclical, "Singulari Quadam", of Pius X; as cited by Leys; op. cit., pp. 51-52.

conditions, shorter hours and so on, may often require State legislation in order to be effective, the use of trade union activities and trade union meetings for purely political work cannot but harm the interest of the working people." <sup>71</sup>

This it must not do. In an address to Italian Union leaders, Pius XII spoke of this danger:

"Your ultimate purpose is the formation of authentic Christian workingmen, equally distinguished for skill in the practice of their profession and for fidelity in the practice of their religion; men who are capable of reconciling harmoniously the stubborn defense of their economic interests with the strictest sense of justice, and with the sincere disposition to collaborate with the other classes of society toward Christian reconstruction in every walk of social life.... Do not let yourselves deviate from this goal, which is more important than any purely transitory form of union organization. The future of the unions themselves depends on the faithfulness with which you pursue this goal. In fact, if they should ever aim at exclusive domination in the state and society, if they should ever seek to exercise absolute power over the worker, if they should reject the strict sense of justice and sincere good will to collaborate with the other social classes, they would betray the expectations and the hopes which every honest and conscientious worker places in them."<sup>72</sup>

The last danger inherent in unionism of which the Encyclicals make specific mention is that of labour's right

71. Clump; Economic and Political Life of Man; op. cit.; p. 68.

72. Pius XII, "Address to Christian Association of Italian Workers", June 29, 1948; and cited by Cronin; Catholic Social Principles; op. cit.; p. 414.

to strike.

"Under modern conditions, the right to organize in trade unions and the right to strike, under certain defined conditions, are inseparable.

It would be futile to urge the formation of trade unions if the Church did not realize that this involves recognition of the right to strike, as a last resort, and when other measures of achieving social justice have failed.

The Church recognizes the right of individuals to withhold their labor collectively because it regards the prevailing system of industrial capitalism as a diseased growth, born of man's rebellion against Christian principles of social life, and bearing within itself the seeds of social anarchy and chaos."<sup>73</sup>

However, the "strike" is a weapon of economic warfare, and, as such, for the general good, should be employed only rarely, and then only under certain conditions:

"Nevertheless, even where the cause of the workers is just, the Church has maintained that the strike should not be used unless all other methods of settling a dispute have failed.

Four conditions of a just strike have been laid down commonly by theologians: (1) The cause of a threatened strike must itself be just and rightful. (2) There must be sufficient hope of success. It is morally wrong to plunge workers into a strike in which they have no hope of success and from which they will emerge in a worse condition than before. Nevertheless it does not always follow that because a strike is lost it is in vain. (3) The benefit to be gained must not be out of proportion to the harm inflicted. In the case of strikes which seriously affect the entire community, the onus thus placed on those who decide to strike is therefore very great. (4) Before a strike is declared, every effort must first be made to settle the dispute peacefully through conciliation, arbitration, and other more peaceful methods.

The strike is a weapon of industrial war, arising from an unjust and disordered system of society. The rules which regulate it must therefore be carefully

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73. "Peace in Industry", issued by the Australian Hierarchy; par. 1-3.

observed."74

But, whereas, the simple strike may be justified, even though with difficulty, the situation is somewhat different in regard to sympathetic strikes, boycotts, and general strikes. Here again, the concept of the "common good" is employed to assess their morality, and little justification for them can be found. The Papal Encyclicals, as such, have not addressed themselves to this problem; but the "Code of Social Principles" does state:

"The public interest is the first criterion for estimating the lawfulness or unlawfulness of any concerted cessation of work. To this criterion must be added regard for justice and charity.

This public interest is more immediately at stake when it is a question of services directly established for the good of the country and of undertakings, even private ones, that supply the most essential needs. Certain services are even so indispensable to the community that it is difficult to put forward any supposition that would justify a strike."75

Therefore, the Church would recommend the increasing use of present day methods of settling industrial disputes (Conciliation, Mediation, Arbitration, etc.) and would not

74. "Peace in Industry"; op. cit.; par. 7-9. (The 1955 Advent Pastoral of the Scottish Bishops in the Western Province cites six necessary conditions for a strike to be morally justifiable: the four given above and the following: (5) "It **must** not involve the breaking of a just contract, for it is immoral to break one's pledged word. And (6) it must be carried on by just means, avoiding physical violence, intimidation, and evil subterfuge." -- as cited by Andrew Gordon, God's Plan for the Social Order; Catholic Social Guild; Oxford; 1957.

75. "Code of Social Principles"; op. cit.; par. 131-132.

be averse to legislation which would make arbitration compulsory.

"A dispute that cannot be adjusted by direct negotiation between the parties concerned should always be submitted to arbitration. Neither employer nor employee may reasonably reject this method on the ground that it does not bring about perfect justice. No human institution is perfect or infallible; even our courts of law are sometimes in error. Like the law court, the tribunal of industrial arbitration provides the nearest approach to justice that is practically attainable; for the only alternative is economic force, and its decisions have not necessary relation to the decrees of justice. They show which party is economically stronger, not which is in the right."<sup>76</sup>

Thus, while the right to strike is integral to the right to organize, it is a right which should be exercised but rarely. Like the other dangers of unionism it can lead to the atomization of society which is not only contrary to the organic ideal but is also ultimately destructive of the highest aspirations of the workers themselves.

But perhaps of as much personal interest to the worker as his right to organize and strike are the other external factors of the labour contract. In the matter of holidays, the Catholic Church unequivocally stands for "Sundays Off". Explicitly, Pope Leo XIII makes the Church's position clear:

"From this follows the obligation of the cessation from work and labour on Sundays and certain holy days. The rest from labour is not to be understood as mere giving way to idleness; much less ~~must~~ it be an occasion for spending money and for vicious indulgence, as many

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76. "Pastoral Letter of the American Hierarchy", 1919; as cited by Cronin; Catholic Social Principles; op. cit.; p. 407.

would have it to be; but it should be rest from labour, hallowed by religion. Rest (combined with religious observances) disposes man to forget for a while the business of his everyday life, to turn his thought to things heavenly, and to the worship which he so strictly owes to the Eternal Godhead. It is this, above all, which is the reason and motive of Sunday rest....."<sup>77</sup>

In the matter of general working conditions, much has been said by Catholic authors. "Rerum Novarum" insists that, since they are of the Natural Law, they precede the Law of Contract:

"No man may with impunity outrage that human dignity which God Himself treats 'With great reverence', nor stand in the way of that higher life which is the preparation of the eternal life of Heaven. Nay, more; no man has in this matter power over himself. To consent to any treatment which is calculated to defeat the end and purpose of his being is beyond his right; he cannot give up his soul to servitude; for it is not man's own rights which are here in question, but the rights of God, the most sacred and inviolate of rights."<sup>78</sup>  
 ..... "The employer must never tax his work-people beyond their strength, or employ them in work unsuited to their sex or age."<sup>79</sup>

More specifically, Leo XIII laid down these conditions for a labour contract to be considered "Just":

"Man's powers, like his general nature, are limited, and beyond these limits he cannot go. His strength is developed and increased by use and exercise, but only on condition of due intermission and proper rest. Daily labour, therefore, should be so regulated as not to be protracted over longer hours than strength admits. How many and how long the intervals of rest should be, must depend on the nature of the work, on circumstances of time and place, and on the health and strength of the

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 77. "Rerum Novarum"; op. cit.; par. 32.

78. *ibid.*; par. 32.

79. *ibid.*; par. 17.

workman. Those who work in mines and quarries, and extract coal, stone, and metals from the bowels of the earth, should have shorter hours in proportion as their labour is more severe and trying to health. Then, again, the season of the year should be taken into account; for, not infrequently, a kind of labour is easy at one time which at another is intolerable or exceedingly difficult. Finally, work which is quite suitable for a strong man cannot tightly be required from a woman or a child..... As a general principle it may be laid down that a workman ought to have leisure and rest proportionate to the wear and tear of his strength; for for the waste of strength must be repaired by cessation from hard work."<sup>80</sup>

Thus, the Catholic attitude towards the labour contract is autocratic, paternalistic, and based on Natural Law. But it would be completely wrong to assume that it is not benevolent. Its benevolence may well explain Cardinal Manning's oft-quoted comment on the publication of "Rerum Novarum": "None but Vicar of our Divine Lord," he said, "could so speak to mankind."

### C. The "Just Price" of Capital: Interest and Profits

As we have seen in the examination of Thomism, the traditional attitude towards usury was completely negative. Since

80. "Rerum Novarum"; op. cit. par. 33. (Even more specific "Conditions of Labour" are to be found in the Catholic Approved "Constitution of the I. L. O.". Articles 4 and 5 of its "Principles" (adopted in 1919) are as follows: "4. The adoption of an eight hours day or a forty-eight hours week as the standard to be aimed at where it has not already been attained. 5. The adoption of a weekly rest of at least twenty-four hours which should include Sunday whenever practicable." -- cited by Clump; Economic and Political Life of Man; op. cit.; p. 75.)

the advent of modern capitalistic industrialism, however, the Church has found a moral justification for interest and dividends, even though usury is still condemned. This is perhaps best explained by John A. Ryan in his definitive work, Distributive Justice.<sup>81</sup>

81. A summary of Ryan's Distributive Justice and its justification of interest (pp. 121-146) might be given as follows:

After a discussion of the medieval intrinsic "titles" to interest (see pages 70-71, 108 of this thesis), Ryan quotes from Canon Law 1543, approved and promulgated by Benedict XV, Sept. 15, 1917 and concludes "In brief, interest is not necessarily wrong if it does not exceed a reasonable legal rate; nor even if it does exceed the legal rate, provided that it is based upon adequate external grounds." (p. 124)

Ryan then considers modern intrinsic grounds for interest:

1. The Claim of Productivity -- this is found to be invalid for while labour's right to the product may be justified under "res fructificat domino", capital itself is essentially unproductive without labour.
2. The Claim of Service -- this, too, is invalid for while labour can justly demand recompense for services rendered, the capitalist in supplying capital alone is providing what is essentially a costless service and has no right to demand payment.
3. The Claims of Abstinence -- this title has some validity, but only if it involves real inconvenience or sacrifice. Otherwise, since loans of strictly "surplus" wealth involve no real abstinence, interest is not justifiable.

More justification is to be found in the extrinsic "titles":

1. Presumption;-- since, intrinsically, productivity and service are only doubtful titles, they could be overthrown by a more positive title by the consumer or labourer. But no such antagonistic title exists. "Hence, the capitalist has at least a presumptive title. In the circumstances, this is morally sufficient." (p. 143)
2. Analogy -- as there is a difference in the sacrifices of two workers for the same work, by analogy, the investor of surplus wealth can claim the title to interest, on the same grounds, as the investor whose investment entails personal sacrifice.
3. Possession -- as appropriation of "no-man's land" gives title of first occupancy to land, so appropriation of

The Catholic Encyclopedic Dictionary simply defines "usury" as that excessive interest which is not covered in the medieval title of lucrum cessans:

"Usury is strictly speaking profit exacted on a loan of money just because it is a loan. This is unjust, because money as money has no value save in its use. But interest may be justly charged for reasons extrinsic to the loan itself, such as danger of non-repayment or loss of opportunities of other profit. In modern times this latter extrinsic title always exists owing to economic conditions. The amount of interest that may reasonably be charged is determined by the common estimation of intelligent men; in the sin of usury this amount is exceeded. It may be committed by moneylenders, pawnbrokers, and persons selling goods by the instalment system of payment, as well as others."<sup>82</sup>

Thus, by this casuistry, the Church can justify the interest received on loans, bonds, mortgages, etc. "Workless incomes", as seen in modern capitalism, may not be ideal; but the Catholic mind will view them, at least, as being morally acceptable.

On a completely different ethical level, however, are the incomes received from invested capital and known as "profits". Owners of individual business enterprises, partners, and shareholders in corporations are all justly entitled to the proceeds of the business (providing, of course, that a "living

81. (cont.) "no-man's wealth (i.e. the fruits of industry) gives title to interest.

4. Doubtful Titles and Use -- the above doubtful titles to interest are strengthened if the holder applies his surplus wealth to "religion, education, charity", etc.

"The rich man who makes a benevolent use of his interest-income has a special reason for believing that his receipt of interest is justified." (p. 145)

82. Catholic Encyclopedic Dictionary; op. cit.; Article on "Usury"; p. 509.

family wage is paid to all workers"); and this justification stems directly from the Natural Law, as interpreted by the "Principal Canons of Distributive Justice"; arithmetical equality, proportional needs, efforts and sacrifices, comparative productivity, relative scarcity, and human welfare.<sup>83</sup>

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 83. Ryan gives an excellent discussion of these canons in his Distributive Justice; (pp. 180-188). His analysis might be summarized as follows:

1. The Canon of Equality -- Under this canon all men are seen as equal under God, and, therefore, equally entitled to welfare. However, external goods are not to be equated with welfare; they are only means to welfare; and, consequently, their distribution should not be equal, as men themselves are unequal. It would be unjust to treat unequals equally and the needs of men, as well as their capacities, are unequal.

2. The Canon of Proportional Needs -- "To each according to his needs" would be an adequate rule for the distribution of external goods, but it would naturally tend to diminish the productivity of the more energetic and the more efficient. Since distribution is tied to production, productivity, as well as need, must be the basis of remuneration.

3. The Canon of Efforts and Sacrifices -- "To each according to his effort" is likewise incomplete for it overlooks both needs and productivity. "When two men of unequal powers make equal efforts, they turn out unequal amounts of products. Almost invariably the more productive man believes that he should receive a greater share." (p. 182-183)

4. The three above rules -- equality, needs, and efforts -- are formally ethical as they are based upon the dignity and claims of personality. Under capitalistic competition, however, the two following canons are applicable:

4. The Canon of Productivity -- "To each according to his productivity" is likewise incomplete for it excludes both needs and efforts. Moreover, like the other canons it could not be universally enforced, for while differing occupations may contribute unequally to the product, both may well be indispensable.

5. The Canon of Scarcity -- "To each according to his uniqueness" is the operative rule under supply and demand. While not intrinsically justifiable -- in many cases the demand for superior remuneration is claimed by merely the presence of opportunity or superior endowment -- "in neither

Thus, the Church can justify large differences in individual incomes. The capitalist's position may be economically advantage~~ous~~, but that is not necessarily harmful either to the State and its interests or to the Common Good.

"It must be first of all recognized that the condition of things inherent in human affairs must be borne with, for it is impossible to reduce civil society to one dead level. Socialists may in that intent do their utmost, but all striving against nature is in vain. There naturally exist among mankind manifold differences of the utmost different kind; people differ in capacity, skill, health, strength; and unequal fortune is a result of unequal condition..... Such inequality is far from being disadvantageous either to individuals or to the community. Social and public life can only be maintained by means of various kinds of capacity for business and the playing of many parts; and each man, as a rule, chooses the part which suits his own peculiar domestic condition."<sup>84</sup>

Therefore, the State has the obligation of protecting the rights of the rich, as well as those of the poor:

"There is another and deeper consideration which

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83. (cont.) case can the demand for and the receipt of superior rewards be proved immoral". (p. 187)

The ethical justification for profits is most clearly seen in the last canon, Human Welfare, or in the words of Pius XI, "Social Justice".

6. The Canon of Human Welfare or Social Justice -- "Human welfare means the well-being of all persons, considered individually as well as collectively".... [Individually]... "It requires **that** all human beings be treated as persons, as possessed of natural rights (Equality); it demands that all persons receive at least that amount of income which is necessary for decent living and reasonable self-development (Needs); it declares that some consideration must be accorded to manifestations of good will by those who take part in the processes of industry (Efforts); and it gives reasonable recognition to the canons of productivity and scarcity."..... [Socially]... "It **authorizes** payment to every producer of that amount necessary to evoke his maximum net (not absolute) product." (pp. 188-189)

84. "Rerum Novarum"; op. cit.; par. 14.

must not be lost sight of. As regards the State, the interests of all, whether high or low, are equal.... It would be irrational to neglect one portion of the citizens and favour another..... Among the many grave duties of rulers who would do their best for the people, the first and chief is to act with strict justice -- with that justice which is called by the Schoolmen 'distributive' -- towards each and every class alike."<sup>85</sup>

But the duty of Justice on the part of the State is equalled by the duty of Charity on the part of the capitalist, himself.

"Whoever has received of the Divine Bounty a large share of temporal blessings whether they be external and material, or gifts of the mind, has received them for the purpose of using them for the perfecting of his own nature, and, at the same time, that he may employ them, as the steward of God's Providence, for the benefit of others. 'He that hath a talent,' says St. Gregory the Great, 'let him see that he hide it not; he that hath abundance, let him quicken himself to mercy and generosity; he that hath art and skill, let him do his best to share the use and utility thereof with his neighbor'.<sup>86</sup> .... (Thus) if Christian precepts prevail, the respective classes will not only be united in the bonds of friendship, but also in those of brotherly love. For they will understand and feel that all men are children of the same common Father, who is God; that all have alike the same last end, which is God Himself;..... that each and all are redeemed and made sons of God by Jesus Christ;... that the blessings of nature and the gifts of grace belong to the whole human race in common, and that from none except the unworthy is withheld the inheritance of the Kingdom of Heaven."<sup>87</sup>

"Quadragesimo Anno" reaffirms this (as we have seen) traditional Catholic doctrine:

"At the same time, a man's surplus income is not

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85. "Rerum Novarum"; op. cit.; par. 27.

86. *ibid.*; par. 19.

87. *ibid.*; par. 21.

left entirely to his own discretion. We speak of that portion of his income which he does not need in order to live fittingly and becomingly. On the contrary, the grave obligations of almsgiving, beneficence, and liberality which rest upon the wealthy are consistently insisted upon in explicit terms by Holy Scriptures and the Fathers of the Church".<sup>88</sup>

Yet, re-invested profits may constitute charity in certain circumstances:

"However, the employment of a large income in increasing the opportunities for remunerative work, provided the work is devoted to the production of really useful goods, is to be considered, according to the teaching of the Angelic Doctor, an excellent act of liberality, particularly appropriate to the needs of our time."<sup>89</sup>

But the true situation was indicated by Leo XIII.

Referring to him, Pius XI says, "Our Predecessor of happy memory had chiefly in mind that economic regime in which the capital and labour jointly needed for production were usually provided by different people. He described it in a happy phrase: 'Capital cannot do without labour, nor labour without capital',"<sup>90</sup> But for one or the other of these economic forces to superimpose its will on the other is a grievous wrong.

"And certainly it (this economic regime) is not vicious of its very nature; but it violates right order whenever capital employs the workers or the proletariat with a view and on such terms as to direct business and economic activity entirely at its own arbitrary will and to its own advantage, without any regard to the human dignity of the workers, the social character of the

88. "Quadragesimo Anno"; op. cit.; par. 50.

89. *ibid.*; par. 51.

90. *ibid.*; par. 100.

economic regime, social justice, and the common good."<sup>91</sup>  
 ..... "Capital, however, was long able to appropriate too  
 much to itself; it claimed all the products and profits,  
 and left the worker the barest minimum necessary to  
 repair his strength and to ensure the continuance of  
 his class."<sup>92</sup>

On the other hand, as we have seen, Catholicism does  
 not regard the Marxian solution as being in accordance with  
 Justice. Capital does deserve its rightful share of the  
 product, for

"Those who are engaged in production are not for-  
 bidden to increase their fortunes in a lawful and just  
 manner; indeed it is right that he who renders service  
 to society and enriches it, should himself have his pro-  
 portionate share of the increased social wealth, provided  
 always that in seeking this he respects the laws of God  
 and the rights of others, and uses his property in accord  
 with faith and right reason."<sup>93</sup>

Moreover, not only is the capitalist entitled to profits  
 by investment, but he may also extract profit from changing  
 prices in the market. However, the Church recognizes that  
 such speculation is fraught with moral hazards, and would  
 insist on strict State control. Perhaps the best discussion  
 of this aspect of economic life is found in A Code of Social  
 Principles;

"Speculation in shares, exchanges and goods, that  
 is to say, the attempt to make a profit out of changing  
 prices, is not in itself unlawful.

As regards the market in futures and options, when  
 these are neither a mode of investment nor an insurance,  
 it seems that the resulting moral harm outweighs the

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 91. "Quadragesimo Anno"; op. cit.; par. 101.

92. ibid.; par. 54.

93. ibid.; par. 136.

advantages which some, rightly or wrongly, attribute to them.

The law may rightly refuse to protect profits arising from such transactions, although it may enforce penalties against defaulting speculators.

Gambling on the Stock Exchange must be condemned, when it resorts to false news and lies. The concerted buying, and selling of shares and goods, for the purpose of bringing their prices to levels not corresponding to their real values, must also stand condemned.

The law may control and regulate the purchase and sale of foreign money, even with penal sanctions, when these acts are injurious to the national credit.

The action of the public authority must be used to repress gambling on the Stock Exchange, and to make access to financial markets more difficult for the public which is manifestly inexperienced.

In the commodity exchanges, the responsible authorities must take every suitable means to exclude from the business which is done there all who are not by their calling qualified to take part in this market."<sup>94</sup>

But, in addition to his right of profit and his right of free investment, the capitalist also retains other inalienable rights: namely, the right to direct management, the right to retain his property and not to have it confiscated or taxed out of existence by the State, and the right of inheritance which will enable him to pass on his property to his progeny.

The first of these rights was explicitly stated by Pope Pius XII when, in an address to Catholic employers, he said, "The owner of the means of production, whoever he be -- individual owner, workers' association, or corporation, -- must always -- within the limits of public economic law -- retain control of his economic decisions."<sup>95</sup>

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94. A Code of Social Principles; op. cit.; par. 143-148.

95. Pius XII "Address to Catholic Employers", May 7, 1949 and cited by Cronin; Catholic Social Principles; op. cit.; p. 263

In regard to taxation, Leo XIII explained the Church's position:

"The right to possess private property is derived from nature, not from man; and the State has the right to control its use in the interests of the public good along, but by no means to absorb it altogether. The State would therefore be unjust and cruel if under the name of taxation it were to deprive the private owner of more than is fair."<sup>96</sup>

However, this does not mean that taxation is wrong.

"Taxation laws which are just, and justly applied, are binding on the conscience."<sup>97</sup> This applies to both direct and indirect taxation.

Direct taxation should be progressive to be just. Pius XI wrote in his Encyclical on Socialism, "Divini Redemptoris",

"It (the State) should see that the wealthy assume those burdens without which human society cannot be saved, nor the wealthy themselves remain secure; taxation should fall chiefly upon those with more than their share of capital resources and who continue to accumulate such resources to the grievous detriment of others."<sup>98</sup>

Insofar as indirect taxes are concerned, The Code of Social Principles claims that there are three rules which should be regarded by the State:

"i.) To avoid taxes which bring manifestly harmful results and those which admit of fraud, since the latter encourage habits of evasion.

ii.) When imposing new taxes, to tap sources of revenue rather than funds which though otherwise reasonable are economically sterile. In any case, established forms of taxation are generally adjusted by their methods of application, or by reactions that bring about by degrees an equitable distribution of these public charges.

96. "Rerum Novarum"; op. cit.; par. 35.

97. A Code of Social Principles; op. cit.; par. 158.

98. "Divini Redemptoris"; op. cit.; par. 163.

iii) Sumptuary taxes, on luxuries or undue extravagances, deserve to be encouraged. Even if their result is not great, the moral lesson that they teach enlightens and strengthens the public conscience, and serves the common good at least to that extent."<sup>99</sup>

However, unless taxes are just, they will be contrary to the law of nature. The Code continues,

"Justified in exceptional circumstances, such as a very defective division of material resources, excessive taxes and dues undermine the principle of ownership, scarcely differ from confiscation, and hinder the building up of national reserves."<sup>100</sup>

This same principle applies to the laws of taxation on inheritance. Quite simply, Pius XI contends, "Man's natural right of possessing private property, and transmitting it by inheritance, must remain intact and inviolate, and cannot be taken away by the State."<sup>101</sup>

However, this does not mean that the State can say nothing about the right of inheritance, for, "Provided that the natural and divine law be observed, the public authority, in view of the true necessities of the common welfare, may specify more accurately what is licit and what is illicit for property owners in the use of their possessions."<sup>102</sup> Thus, the State cannot deprive a man of the right of inheritance, but it may justly determine who, how much, and when -- if the common welfare is involved. It can control through inheritance laws and

99. A Code of Social Principles; op. cit.; par. 163.

100. ibid.; par. 164.

101. "Quadragesimo Anno"; op. cit.; par. 49.

102. ibid.

taxes, but **it** cannot abolish family property rights.

"The right of inheritance, like the right of ownership, to which it is ~~ch~~osely allied, has a two-fold character, individual and social. This is quite especially so when it is a matter of property changing hands within the family circle, in view of the close ties that unite near relatives of the same family and the particular purpose of family property. The State cannot directly or indirectly suppress inheritance.... Nevertheless, it has the right to adapt the degrees of relationship, entitled to inherit, to the ~~ab~~tual organization of the family. It is desirable that sufficient testamentary rights be allowed to the head of a family to ensure that small businesses can be handed down intact in the family."<sup>103</sup>

Thus, the Catholic Church affirms the rights of the capitalist to hold private property, invest it for profit, control a business with it, not to be taxed out of its ownership, and to pass it on to his progeny. Yet, his property has social responsibilities, as well as private rights, connected to it. Unless the capitalist, himself, has a real sense of social awareness -- under modern capitalism -- his capital will produce grave social evils. For the Catholic, the medieval concept of "noblesse oblige" has become "l'argent oblige".

#### D. The "Just Price" of Management: Salaries

To the classical conception of the three factors of production (land, labour, and capital), modern industrial capitalism has added a fourth, namely, that of the entrepreneur, or organizer, or manager. This divorcement between ownership and

103. A Code of Social Principles; op. cit.; par. 108-110.

management, the Church feels, is not in itself wrong, but it contains many grave dangers.

"Industry, which brings together into an organic whole the different elements of production, land, capital, the effort of management and labour, gives rise to a community of working interests, distinct from the function of business organization.

The management of undertakings belongs to the entrepreneur, who is in fact nowadays normally the owner of the capital or responsible for it.

In principle, this structure of industry, which implies the wage-system as the method of rewarding work, is lawful and cannot be condemned."<sup>104</sup>

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 104. A Code of Social Principles; op. cit.; par. 125-126. (While not discussed, as such, in the Papal Encyclicals the problem of "absentee ownership" by stockholders in limited liability corporations presents itself as a real moral issue in modern capitalism. The following long quotation from Dr. J. F. Cronin of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, U. S. A. is here given, not only as an example of truly critical ethical insight (coupled with Catholic casuistry), but also as a commentary on the moral responsibility of management, a subject which will be further discussed in the next chapter.

"Normally there is associated with the idea of ownership the assumption that the owner has control over his property. But in many large corporations ownership is separated from control in a rather definitive manner. This situation arises from both factual situations and legal decisions. Factually, the large number of stockholders makes any joint action to control their company a virtual impossibility. Most big corporations are controlled either by management (through use of the proxy machinery) or by large minority stockholders. Moreover, the courts have often so interpreted the powers of a corporate board of directors as to give it independent authority. Many corporations have refused information to stockholders on the ground that such divulging of facts would be contrary to the interests of the company. Courts have upheld them in these decisions. Because of this, it is not too much to say that a share of stock is not so much a title of real ownership as a contingent claim upon profits.

In the light of this analysis, it is questionable whether stockholders always share the moral responsibilities which go with the properties they "own". If they do not have the full rights of ownership, they may well be exempt

Chief among these dangers, of course, is the possibility that managers will demand excessive remuneration, at the expense of the community at large and the Common Good.<sup>105</sup>

As we have seen in the discussion of ownership, the Cath-

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 104. (cont.) from many of its duties. Thus, if a stockholder could have no effective voice in determining a corporation's labour policies, he could hardly be held ~~account-~~able for them. It would seem that the major share of responsibility would rest on those who exercise actual control, namely, the board of directors and the management of the firm. Furthermore, in most cases the stockholder could not even be charged with indirect co-operation because of his purchase of corporate stock. If such purchases were made when the company was organized, the buyer would have no advance knowledge of the future policies of the corporation. If, on the other hand, the stock were bought subsequently, such purchases would normally neither help nor hinder the corporation. It has already received its money and is not usually affected by resales of stock in the securities markets. Hence the stockholder could not reasonably be charged with responsibility for immoral decisions made by a firm whose stock he owns.

An ethical problem would arise, however, in regard to the receipt of dividends from a corporation whose policies were contrary to justice. Even though the stockholder could not be blamed for the decisions in question, he may profit by them. Thus, if a corporation makes high profits through fraud, excessively high prices bolstered by a monopolistic situation, or through exploitation of labour, it would seem that part of these profits would be tainted. The stockholder would be in a position similar to the receiver of stolen goods. On these grounds, he would be obliged to sell the stock, and, in the absence of more direct methods of restitution, to give to charity such portion of his returns as might reasonably be imputed to profits obtained unjustly." -- Cronin; Catholic Social Principles; op. cit.; pp. 487-488.

105. Ryan, in his Distributive Justice, suggests that a legal limitation on incomes would be inconsistent with Catholic doctrine, but that taxation, which would impose a legal limitation on fortunes, might be justly enacted. His recommendations include progressive income, excess profits, and inheritance taxes. See pp. 223-232.

olic answer to this danger is the re-affirmation of the double demands of Justice and Charity.<sup>106</sup> However, since to treat unequals equally would cause social disequilibrium, the Church defends the right of the rich to be rich,<sup>107</sup> though it would enjoin them in the strongest of terms to social responsibility, both in the name of religious Virtue and social stability.

"The very extent of the benefits they (the rich) have received increases the burden of their responsibility, and a stricter account will have to be rendered to God who bestowed those blessings upon them. What should also urge all to their fulfillment of their duty in this regard is the widespread disaster which will eventually fall upon all classes of society if this assistance does not arrive in time; and therefore is it that he who neglects the cause of the distressed masses is disregarding his own interest as well as that of the community."<sup>108</sup>

But the danger of accumulated wealth on the part of those who control modern industry is coupled, under "laissez-faire" capitalism, with the possibility of their use of unprincipled, unrestricted, economic power.

".... it is patent that in our days not wealth alone is accumulated, but immense power and despotic economic

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106. See "Quadragesimo Anno"; op. cit.; par. 137.

107. In this connection, see Ryan; Distributive Justice; op. cit.; pp. 189-195. In his conclusions, Ryan states, "In the lights of these principles (The Principle Canons of Distributive Justice), it is evident that business men who use fair methods in competitive conditions, have a right to all the profits that they can obtain. On the other hand, no business man has a strict right to a minimum living profit, since that would imply an obligation on the part of consumers to support superfluous and inefficient directors of industry." -- p. 345.

108. "Graves de Communi"; op. cit.; par. 19.

domination are concentrated in the hands of a few, who for the most part are not the owners, but only the trustees and directors of invested funds, which they administer at their own good pleasure."<sup>109</sup>

It is for this reason that, until a new economic and social order can be established along Catholic principles, the State must assume jurisdiction and act as a limitation on economic power. "Quadragesimo Anno" asserts,

"Free competition, kept within just and definite limits, and still more economic power, must be brought under the effective control of public authority, in matters appertaining to the latter's competence. The public institutions of the nations must be such as to make the whole of human society conform to the needs of the common good, that is, to the standard of social justice. If this is done, the economic regime, that most important branch of social life, will necessarily be restored to right and healthy order."<sup>110</sup>

But this is not to mean that the State has any right to control "free enterprise". Under the Natural Law the right

109. "Quadragesimo Anno"; op. cit.; par. 105. (It is with this in mind that Catholic writers on economic ethics have viewed with alarm the build-up of economic influences in such devices as international cartels, trusts or combines, holding companies, and interlocking directorates. Such monopolistic practices as administered prices, discriminatory underselling, rebates, overcapitalization, and exclusive sales contracts are especially condemned.

"As for 'the democratization of economy,' it is equally endangered by monopolies -- that is, by the economic tyranny of an anonymous conglomeration of private capital -- and by the preponderant power of organized masses, ready to use their power to the detriment of justice and the rights of others." -- Pius XII, "Address to Workers", March 11, 1945.

In this connection see such authors as Cronin; op. cit.; pp. 146-157; Ryan; op. cit.; pp. 197-221; Johnson; op. cit.; pp. 16-26; Smith; Catholic Church and Social Order; pp. 123-150; Fogarty; Programme; pp. 76-94; Cardinal Verdier; Principles; pp. 17-19; Clump; op. cit.; pp. 93-118; and Dawson; Progress and Religion; pp. 205-215.)

110. "Quadragesimo Anno"; op. cit.; par. 110.

of man for "free associations" precedes the right of State control. The State, under the authority of the Common Good, is justly entitled to control "natural monopolies" (postal service, certain public utilities, etc.) and to take measures against "restraint of trade"; but the Law of Nature protects management's right to manage. Pius XII explained this feature of the Church's social view:

"There can be no question that the Church also admits -- within certain just limits -- state ownership and management, judging that 'certain forms of property may legitimately be reserved to the public authority; those which represent a dominating power so great that it cannot without danger to the general welfare be entrusted to private individuals'.<sup>111</sup> But to make of this state enterprise the normal rule for public economic organization would mean reversing the order of things. Actually, it is the mission of public law to serve private rights, not to absorb them. The economy is not of its nature -- not more, for that matter, than any other human activity -- a state institution. It is, on the contrary, the living product of the free initiative of individuals and of their freely established associations."<sup>112</sup>

Thus, the Catholic view of management is clear; managers have a natural right to exist as a class, and may, in justice, receive large salaries, though they possess the dangers inherent in their function under capitalism -- that of possessing and controlling too great an economic power. These dangers must be met by the influential, though limited, authority of the State. As will be seen in the next section, while the

111. Quoted from "Quadragesimo Anno"; op. cit.; par. 114.

112. "Address to Catholic Employers" by Pius XII; May 7, 1949; as cited by Cronin; Catholic Social Principles; op. cit.; p. 522.

Church recommends that they share both their authority and their profits with the workers under them, they need not -- either in justice nor by the claims of charity -- be forced to do so.

Hence, Catholicism would correct capitalism as it would deny communism. But even this revised economic order would not produce the "organic society" which, as we have seen, is the Church's ideal. Minimally, Catholicism can "live" with this kind of corrected economy; but preferably, she would transform it into an order approximating her ideal. That analysis follows.

### III. The Catholic Ideal: A Neo-Medieval Organic Society

Jacques Maritain, in his True Humanism, contends that the ideal of an organic society is neither impractical nor impossible in the modern day. While recognizing the futility of trying to return society to Medieval customs, the Medieval idea of the corporate State is consistent with what he calls an "analogical" philosophy of culture. He explains,

"The philosophy of culture ought, to my mind, to avoid two opposite errors, one which binds all things in a univocal rigidity, the other which dissipates everything in equivocation. The latter form of philosophy holds that historical conditions become so different with time that their very governing principles must be heterogeneous: as though truth, right, the supreme laws of human action were mutable factors. A univocal philosophy, on the other hand, leads to the belief that these supreme rules and principles

must be everywhere applied in the same way, and, in particular, that the way in which Christian principles are to be applied and realized in the varying epochs of time and history ought not to vary.

The true solution springs from the philosophy of analogy. The principles do not vary, neither do the supreme practical laws of human life: but they are applied in ways which are essentially diverse, corresponding to one and the same concept only by a similitude of proportion. But this presupposes that one has a notion which is not only empiric and in a manner blind, but also one that is truly rational and philosophic, of the diverse phases of history. For a simple empiric cataloguing of factual circumstances can only make for a certain opportunism in the application of these principles, and this is poles apart from the standpoint of wisdom. That is not the way in which the atmosphere or 'heaven' of a historic epoch is brought about; but by the bearing of rational judgments of value, by the discernment of the form and significance of the intelligible constellations which govern the diverse phases of human history.

Hence the particular problem now before us, which can be formulated as follows: should a new Christendom, in the conditions of the historic age on which we are entering, while incarnating the same (analogical) principles, be conceived as belonging to an essentially (specifically) distinct type from that of the mediaeval world? To this question I answer, yes. I hold that a new age of the world allows the principles of all vitally Christian civilization to be realized in terms of a new concrete analogue.<sup>113</sup>

Thus, the new Christendom would, at the same time, retain the organic principles of the Medieval period and the benefits of modern scientific industrialism.

"It would be a grave error to repudiate the machine and technically developed industry, things which are good in themselves and which should, on the contrary, be used to produce an economy of abundance. But it is the very illusion of rationalism to fail to understand that we must choose between the idea of an essentially industrial civilization and an essentially human one, for which industrialism would indeed be only a means: and thus subject to laws other than those of industry.

113. Meritain, Jacques; True Humanism; The Centenary Press; London; 1938; pp. 132-133.

The idea of planning thus changes its meaning; it is there from the moment the need is recognised for industrial organisation and rationalisation. But these should be the work of a political and economic wisdom which is above all a science of freedom, proceeding by the dynamism of means to ends, and in continuity with the nature of human beings, not a so-called mathematical universal provision; and which would aim to regulate industry, not only in accord with its own laws, but with those higher ones to which they are subordinate; and primarily always to regulate the movement of supply by the real needs and capacities of consumption."<sup>114</sup>

But how is this essentially human, organic, controlled, economic order to be brought about? As we have seen, the Medieval patriarchal idea was instituted from the top down, and was thus enabled to have its activities regulated (Just Price, Usury, etc.) by its ultimate aims. On the other hand, the Reformation -- and capitalism, too, for that matter -- were instituted from the bottom up; and, as a result, economic activities were allowed to exist independent of any ultimate control.

Thus, the analogic view would insist that the new Christendom must emerge from the top, from the power of the spiritual world to control the material world and order its actions. But how, in practice, can this be done? Maritain's answer is simple and definite: by Catholic Action. Catholics can operate, he feels, on three levels (not two) of simultaneous action:

"As I have tried to show in the previous section, the activity of the Catholic is deployed on three several planes: the spiritual plane, the temporal plane, and the intermed-

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114. Maritain; True Humanism; op. cit.; pp. 188-189.

iate plane which joins the spiritual and the temporal. On the temporal plane, the Christian acts as a member of the terrestrial community, and he ought so to act as a good Catholic. On the spiritual plane (be it purely the spiritual plane or the plane on which the spiritual joins the temporal) he acts as a member of the Church of Christ and in the measure in which he appears before his fellows in his quality as a Catholic, in that measure he commits the Church.

Two consequences follow immediately from these principles..... First consequence: These three forms of activity so placed and defined cannot be substituted one for another. They are all three necessary, each on its own plane,..... Second consequence: On the third plane, on that of the junction of the spiritual and temporal ones, of catholic action and of civic action for the defence of the values of the city of God in the temporal sphere, union should evidently be the watchword. It is clear that this union can alone give Catholics sufficient force to establish among themselves a network of cultural works which would be the first beginnings of a virtual Christendom, and cause the civil legislature to respect religious interest, -- it being well understood that this is a question purely of the incidence of the spiritual in the temporal sphere, and of authentic religious interests as these are determined hic et nunc by the Holy See and Episcopate, and not by the particular judgement of no matter what person or no matter what party usurping the mission of speaking in the name of the Church, and sometimes thinking that they understand her interests better than she herself.... But on the second plane, on the temporal one, the rule is not union, but diversity. When the objective is the earthly life of men, when it concerns earthly interests and our temporal welfare, or such and such an ideal of the common temporal good and the ways and means of realising it, it is normal that a unanimity whose centre is of a supra-temporal order should be broken, and that Christians who communicate at the same altar should find themselves divided in the commonwealth. It would be contrary to the nature of things, and here highly dangerous, to seek on this plane a union among Catholics which could there be only artificial, and obtained either by a political materialisation of religious energies or by a weakening of the Christian's social and political energies, and a sort of flight from general principles."<sup>115</sup>

Thus, according to this view, the form of the new Christendom would be shaped by the decisions of the Church and put into  
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 115. Maritain; True Humanism; op. cit.; pp. 295-298.

practice by a consecrated Catholic Christian laity. Such a new order would be, according to Maritain, a "corporative, authoritative, and pluralist" society.

"Here we desire very briefly to point out that if a communal and personal society should emerge in modern history, in conditions, very different from and even the inverse of Medieval conditions, it is likely none the less to reproduce in an analogous fashion certain characteristics of Medieval civilisation. We think, for example, that though greatly differing in style it also will be a society of corporative, authoritative, and pluralist type.

The corporative and gild organisation as a State form is so strictly in line with the needs of our time that under different names and in the service of different ideals it has already come into being in Soviet Russia and in Fascist Italy. In the City of our Imagination.... the economic and political order of civil society would embody distinct and compact social groups, be they called corporations or gilds or what you will. But each of these lesser unities in the social order would have its own spontaneous life not derived from the State.....

The society of which we speak would in effect be a society sans classes, that is to say one in which the distinctions between classes which have been heretofore observed in our Western civilisation would have disappeared, such distinctions having been founded in earlier times chiefly on the inheritance of blood, in modern times on the inheritance of money. But a fresh differentiation would inevitably arise in a community of human beings all of whom were alike included in the category of workers, for there is no order without diversity and inequalities of rank; and in a world where social values would depend not on birth or on riches but on work, the chiefs whom the social organs of the several grades would single out would form a true aristocracy of popular choice closely bound to the service of the community by the very object of their office, and no doubt as proud and as jealous of honour and of freedom as were the old hereditary and military aristocracies.....

As to the third characteristic that we have mentioned, by pluralist we intend a society in which, in contrast with the strict unitary conception which has been the fashion since the Renaissance, the State shall unite in a vital and not in a mechanical order legislative organs of several different kinds and social institutions of varying legal status.... We have chiefly in mind an organic heterogeneity in the structure of civil society, in institutions and organs, for example, of the economic and also of the

juridical order."116

The blueprint for such a social order as Maritain envisages can be found, as we have seen, in the Papal Encyclicals, especially "Quadragesimo Anno". Written as they are on "the third plane" of Catholic action, they are essentially spiritual documents, though they do descend into the concerns of the material world. As an extension of Dogma, the plan for the new Christendom is deductive not inductive; and it rests solidly upon man's "right of free associations" which is guaranteed by the Law of Nature. This right was cited by Leo XIII:

"Private societies, then, although they exist within the State, and are severally part of the State, cannot nevertheless be absolutely, and, as such, prohibited by the State. For to enter into a 'society' of this kind is the natural right of man; and the State is bound to protect natural rights, not to destroy them, and if it forbids its citizens to form associations, it contradicts the very principle of its own existence; for both they and it exist in virtue of the like principle, namely, the natural tendency of man to dwell in society."117

"Quadragesimo Anno" enlarges on this principle:

"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 it is 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 smaller 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.....

116. Maritain, Jacques; Freedom in the Modern World; Sheed & Ward; London; 1935; pp. 55-61.

117. "Rerum Novarum"; op. cit.; par. 38.

Let those in power, therefore, be convinced that the more faithfully this principle of subsidiary function be followed and a graded hierarchial order exist between various associations, the greater will be both social authority and social efficiency, and the happier and more prosperous the condition of the commonwealth."<sup>118</sup>

Therefore,

"Now this is the primary duty of the State and of all good citizens, to abolish disputes between opposing classes, and to create and foster harmony between vocational groups.

The aim of social policy must therefore be the re-establishment of vocational groups. Society today still remains in a strained and therefore unstable and uncertain state, because it is founded on classes with divergent aims and hence opposed to each other, and consequently prone to emnity and strife."<sup>119</sup>

Thus, a new order of Christendom is needed. A "Charter for the Corporate State" is given in the famous "Paragraph 83":

".....To this grave disorder, which is leading society to ruin, a remedy must evidently be applied as speedily as possible. But there cannot be a question of any perfect cure unless this opposition be done away with, and well organized members of the social body be constituted; vocational groups, namely, claiming the allegiance of men, not according to the position they occupy in the labour-market, but according to the diverse functions which they exercise in society. For it is natural that just as those who dwell in close proximity constitute townships, so those who practice the same trade or profession, in the economic field or any other, form corporate groups. These groups, with powers of self-government, are considered by many to be, if not essential to civil society, at least natural to it."<sup>120</sup>

Such "Gilds" will be natural and functional, and they ought to be representative:

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118. "Quadragesimo Anno"; op. cit.; par. 79-80.

119. *ibid.*; par. 81-82.

120. *ibid.*; par. 83.

"..... Such a bond of union is provided both by the production of goods or the rendering of services in which employers and employees of one and the same vocational group collaborate; and by the common good which all such groups should unite to promote, each in its own sphere, with friendly harmony. Now this union will become powerful and efficacious in proportion to the fidelity with which the individuals and the vocational groups strive to discharge their professional duties and to excel in them.

From this it is easy to conclude that in these corporations the common interest of the whole vocational group must predominate; and among these interests the most important is to promote as much as possible the contribution of each trade or profession to the common good of the State. Regarding cases which may occur in which the particular interests of employers or employees call for special care and protection, the two parties will be able to deliberate separately or to come to such decisions as the matter may require."<sup>121</sup>

Thus, the "labour dispute" will be of the historic capitalistic past; for every person, according to his function in society, will have a station and rank in a "Gild". The tensions and disputes of a fluid society would be transformed into a desire for the Common Good in the new stable, static, organic order. Contract would disappear, for Status would no longer be determined "by" work, but "in" work, and every man and his family would be secure. With such an ordered, controlled society, the fluctuations of the trade cycle would disappear, and the twin evils of depression and

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121. "Quadragesimo Anno"; op. cit.; par. 84-85.

inflation would be no more. 122

But how can these "Free Associations" or "Gilds" be established? The Papal answer: Through the consecrated

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 122. There is dispute among Catholic commentators as to the extent of economic control that such "Gilds" or "Councils" would and should have.

"This point (price-fixing) was discussed at some length at the Fribourg meeting of the International Institute of Social and Political Sciences, October, 1948. At that meeting, Father Nell-Breuning, widely considered the most authoritative commentator on "Quadragesimo Anno" flatly stated:

'Bongras assigns control of wages and prices to the industry councils. This, however, is not the function of the industry councils. Price formation is in the first place a matter of the market. It is of decisive importance to organize, by way of proper institutions, a functioning social market economy. In a secondary place, a general price and monopoly control board, over all the industrial councils, might intervene with price regulations. The regulation of capital formation should be handled with caution; otherwise we would destroy the freedom of consumers.'  
 (Politeia; pp. 231-232)

Later in the same meeting, this eminent author applied a similar principle to wages. His ideal is social control through permeation of the market with institutions dictated by social justice. With these safeguards, competition could then be trusted to set prices and profits, determine production, and allocate resources." -- Cronin; Social Principles; pp. 246-247. (While admittedly outside the scope of this thesis, I can't help but wonder what would happen when this "permeated market" would conflict with the theory that "Truth has more rights than error". What would the Zoning authority decide in regard to the locale of such "Free Associations" as Protestant Churches? In the name of the "Common Good" what would be the "Just Price" of beef on Fridays? In the name of "Social Justice", would Protestant ministers be allowed a "Living Family Wage"? It would appear, at least, that without Patriarchal authority the formation of the "Corporate State" would be impossible; and, with it, self-contradictory.)

Catholic Action of the "Free Associations" already in existence, both trade unions and businessmen's groups.

"We are content, therefore, to emphasise this one point: Not only is man free to institute these unions which are of a private character, but he has 'the further right to adopt such rules and regulations as may best conduce to the attainment of the end in view'. The same liberty must be asserted for the founding of associations which extend beyond the limits of a single trade or profession. Let those voluntary associations which already flourish and produce salutary fruits make it the goal of their endeavours, in accordance with Christian social doctrine, to prepare the way and do their best towards the realization of those higher corporations or vocational groups which We have mentioned above."<sup>123</sup>

Thus, it may be safely asserted that one of the intermediary aims of Catholic Action groups is to "capture" the present-day labour unions.<sup>124</sup>

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123. "Quadragesimo Anno"; op. cit.; par. 87.

124. It is with this end in view that the Church in France, began, under the authority of the French hierarchy, the post-war "Worker-Priest" Movement in Paris, Marseilles, and elsewhere. When certain of those involved became so immersed in working class movements (including Communism) that Church Discipline suffered, a Papal Order was issued that forced the Movement to be abandoned, as such. Some of the Worker-Priests defied the Order and continued to work in full-time secular employment after the ultimatum date of Mar. 1, 1954. For a full history of the Movement (which itself grew out of the J. O. C. Movement of Catholic Action) see The Worker-Priests (by an anonymous author); Routledge & Kegan Paul; London; 1956. For the inspiring stories of personal dedication of individual worker-priests see such volumes as: Mission to the Poorest (Marseilles) by M. R. Loew; France Pagan? (Paris) by Maisie Ward; and Priest-Workman in Germany (the first of the Worker-Priests who voluntarily went to the forced-labour camps in Nazi Germany) by Henri Perrin; -- all published as a series by Sheed & Ward; London; 1949-1950. (The total history of the Movement has not yet been written for, while the priests themselves have been restricted in their witness by the hierarchy, their total effect upon the social history of France has not been properly evaluated by social scientists. Besides, those who left the priesthood to continue their witness to Christ -- either within the Church as laymen, or outside of it altogether -- are still at work.)

To the end that they may be instrumental in engendering the modern "Gild" -- to that end Catholicism sees in unionism (and also in business associations)<sup>125</sup> a way out of the "class conflict".

The ends for which the Corporations are established are, of course, economic;<sup>126</sup> but the total effect would be the

125. In this connection see "On Atheistic Communism", Par. 68-69 in which business and professional associations are encouraged to "introduce into society that order which We have envisaged....."

126. "The functions of the Industrial Council will vary, of course, according to its scope and jurisdiction. But the system could be applied to the following ends:

- (a) To determine wages and industrial conditions throughout the industry. Co-ordination of wage rates and relativity of conditions would be preserved by means of a provision for appeal to the Arbitration Court from the decisions (original or by way of review) of the National Industrial Council.
- (b) To control the prices, wholesale and retail, of the products of the industry.  
It may be necessary to constitute some reviewing authority for such fixations.
- (c) To control the maximum rates of dividends from year to year.
- (d) To plan the amount and quality of production from year to year.
- (e) To plan the marketing of the product.
- (f) To control, with due regard to the demand and to the interests of all concerned, the number of enterprises operating in the industry.
- (g) To determine conditions for the entry of workers into the industry and to ensure their efficient training.
- (i) In general to exercise complete control over the policy and development of the industry, including, in the case of a secondary industry, the supply of raw materials to other enterprises.
- (j) To enable workers to suggest improvements and modifications which would improve productivity and lessen class hostility."-- From: "Pattern for

Peace", A document issued by the Australian Hierarchy and cited by Cronin; Catholic Social Principles; op. cit.; p. 208.

revitalization of the Church in its mission and duty to men.

"What remains for Us but, in the spirit of Leo XIII and in accordance with his advice and purpose, to exhort you to continue to promote the work which the last generation of your brothers and sisters has begun with such staunch courage? Do not let die in your midst and fade away the insistent call of the two Pontiffs of the social Encyclicals, that voice which indicates to the faithful in the supernatural regeneration of mankind the moral obligation to co-operate in the arrangement of society, and especially of economic life, exhorting those who share in this life to action no less than the state itself. Is not this a sacred duty for every Christian?"<sup>127</sup>

Thus, a Neo-Medieval Organic Society is the answer of the Roman Catholic Church to the problems of the modern economic world.

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127. "La Solennita della Pentecoste", Papal Encyclical of Pius XII, June 1, 1941; par. 1694.

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## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES AND THE MODERN ECONOMIC WORLD

#### I. Protestant Opinion as seen in the "Pronouncements"<sup>1</sup>

As is only to be expected, Protestantism in general and Protestant leaders in particular speak with no such unified voice as the Church of Rome on the concerns of economic ethics. The cause is obvious; Catholics, while they may differ in relatively unimportant matters, speak from the background of the same theological doctrines to which they are committed equally, and within the context of an ancient, hierarchical Church structure in which the Social Doctrine is firmly established; whereas, within Protestantism, the theologies are as many as the theologians, and the Denominational structures themselves often tend to encourage diversity of opinion. The end result of this diversity appears to be a wide variety of religiously concerned opinion which many times expresses a common outlook; but often, also, completely opposite views.

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1. It does not seem to be within the scope of this Chapter to present any more than a brief, cursory examination of certain of the more significant Protestant views. As has already been noted, (see pp. 118 foll. of this thesis) Weber's claim and Catholicism's charge that Protestantism opened the door to what has been called the "new Social Ethic" appears largely justified. This Chapter will confine itself to an examination of those Church "Pronouncements" and Protestant writers which appear to be saying something unique or important about what has been termed "the post-industrial revolution Protestant Ethic". In using this approach, I am indebted to D. L. Munby's Christianity and Economic Problems; Macmillan; London; 1956.

The one area of complete agreement within Protestant social ethics is, of course, the social teachings of Christ. But the message of Jesus, while couched in the terms of a personal ethic directed to persons is, essentially, a statement of values; and does not provide a blueprint for an ordered economic society:

"The teachings of Christ which bear on economics are not expressed in technical terms; but deal primarily with motives and human values. They are, therefore, the more searching and timeless. They center upon the priceless worth of the humblest human being; the fundamental place in life of love even to enemies. They give supreme emphasis to the motive of service as over against self-seeking; 'Whosoever would become great among you, shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all'."<sup>2</sup>

Yet most Protestants seem to believe that these very general Christian "principles" can be translated, if not into "rules" or "laws", at least into recognizable "standards" for the moral elevation of Society. The results of this feeling are the "Social Pronouncements" or "Statements" of both denominational assemblies and ecumenical conferences;<sup>3</sup> and, insofar as the Western World is concerned, they have been almost overwhelmingly in favour of "the humanization of modern capitalism".<sup>4</sup>

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2. Preface to the "Social Pronouncements of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, 1932". The Biblical quotation is Matt. 20:26-27.
  3. For resource material on the "Social Pronouncements" of Protestantism, as cited by Dr. C.P. Hall in his "The Churches Deal with Economic Issues", see the Appendix.
  4. A phrase first used by Dr. Elton Mayo in his The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization, which was an account of the now famous "Hawthorne Experiment", and has since been widely quoted. See Urwick, L. and Brech, E. The Making of Scientific Management; Management Publications; London; 1949.

While it would be repetitive in the extreme to cite more than a few of the Protestant "Social Pronouncements", several of the more significant published views might be noted (if for no other reason than to illustrate the extent of Protestant Church concern on economic questions). As "typical examples" of Protestant opinion they are indicative, but it must be remembered that the Protestant doctrine of "God alone is Lord of the conscience" makes them less than universal or authoritative. These views have no such binding power on the Protestant believer as do the "Encyclicals" upon the mind and heart of the faithful Roman Catholic.

One of the earliest documents to be widely read and discussed was "The Social Creed of the Churches" which was adopted by The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America on December 4, 1908. It stated,

**"The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America Stands:**

For equal rights and complete justice for all men in all stations of life.

For abolition of child labor.

For such regulation of the conditions of toil for women as shall safeguard the physical and moral health of the community.

For the suppression of the 'sweating system'.

For the gradual and reasonable reduction of the hours of labor to the lowest practicable point, and for that degree of leisure for all which is the condition of the highest human life.

For a release from employment one day in seven.

For the right of all men to the opportunity for self-maintenance, a right ever to wisely and strongly safeguard against encroachments of every kind.

For the right of workers to some protection against the hardships often resulting from the swift crises of

of industrial change.

For a living wage as a minimum in every industry, and for the highest wage that each industry can afford.

For the protection of the worker from dangerous machinery, occupational disease, injuries, and mortality.

For suitable provision for the old age of workers and for those incapacitated by injury.

For the principle of conciliation and arbitration in industrial dissensions.

For the most equitable division of the products of industry that can ultimately be devised."<sup>5</sup>

In the light of present-day legislative enactments and industrial practices, these assertions do not seem particularly revolutionary. Yet, in that day,<sup>6</sup> this was indeed a significant document. For responsible American Protestant Church leaders of all denominations to speak on issues concerning the national economy and national industrial relationships was indeed unusual. But we must not overlook

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5. "The Social Creed of the Churches", The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, Dec. 4, 1908 -- as cited by Schackford, J.W.; The Program of the Christian Religion; Meyer and Chappell, Eds.; Smith & Lamar; New York; 1917; pp. 183-184. ("In 1908, meanwhile, the Federal Council, representing some twenty denominations, took shape, adopting at once a statement of 'Social Ideals' taken almost verbatim from the 'Social Creed of Methodism' of that Church's new Department of Church and Labor." -- Nichols, J.H.; Democracy and the Churches; Westminster; Philadelphia; 1951; p. 128.)
  6. As a historical note, the famous -- and brutal -- steel mill strike against the Bethlehem Steel Corporation at Homestead, Penna. did not take place until two years later, in 1910. That one incident probably did more to alert American Protestantism to the moral and social problems of industrialism than other -- certainly more than the "Social Creed" of the Federal Council.

what was even more significant: namely, that the Protestants of the Federal Council, by their adoption of this "Creed", were re-affirming the right of Church to speak to the world on economic matters. Nineteenth-century organized Protestantism was notoriously silent on social issues; but, by the turn of the century, Protestant Churches on both sides of the Atlantic were beginning to experience a rebirth of social consciousness.<sup>7</sup> As we have seen, this "right of the Churches to be heard" was entirely consistent with the views of the Reformers.

This sense of social responsibility continued to develop within the Churches.<sup>8</sup> In the midst of the Depression, this concern was evidenced by another "Pronouncement" of The Fed-

7. While this is generally agreed by all scholars, this is not to imply that there were not individual Protestants who exhibited a profound social awareness. Names of such men as Lord Shaftesbury, George Williams, F. D. Maurice, and Bishop Westcott, in Britain, and such leaders as Rauschenbusch, Washington Gladden, Garrison, Theodore Parker, and Jane Addams in the U.S. come immediately to mind. However, the Churches, as Churches, were more concerned with personal than social ethics. That William Booth, probably the most significant social actionist of the nineteenth century, stood outside organized Protestantism indicates the ecclesiastical social climate. See Latourette, K.S.; A History of Christianity; Eyre & Spottiswoode; London; pp. 1160-1201, 1226-1274, especially pp. 1256-1257.
8. For excellent histories of the development of social concern within the Protestant Churches see (for Britain) Hudson, C.E. and Reckitt, M.B.; The Church and the World; Volume III; Allen and Unwin; London; 1940; and (for the U.S.) Nichols, J.H.; Democracy and the Churches; op. cit.

eral Council in 1932. Of it, B. Y. Landis has written,

"The most comprehensive and representative statement of social ideals ever declared by American Protestantism was that adopted unanimously at a full meeting of the representatives of churches, which were members of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America held at Indianapolis, Indiana, December, 1932."

That statement said, in part,

"The Churches Should Stand For:

1. Practical application of the Christian principle of social well-being to the acquisition and use of wealth, subordination of speculation and the profit motive to the creative and cooperative spirit.

2. Social planning and control of the credit and monetary systems and the economic processes for the common good.

3. The right of all to the opportunity for self-maintenance; a wider and fairer distribution of wealth; a living wage, as a minimum, and above this a just share for the worker in the product of industry and agriculture.

4. Safeguarding of all workers, urban and rural, against harmful conditions of labor and occupational injury and disease.

5. Social insurance against sickness, accident, want in old age, and unemployment.

6. Reduction of hours of labor as the general productivity of industry increases; release from employment at least one day in seven, with a shorter working week in prospect.

7. Such special regulation of the conditions of work of women as shall safeguard their welfare and that of the family and the community.

8. The right of employees and employers alike to organize for collective bargaining and social action; protection of both in the exercise of this right; the obligation of both to work for the public good; encouragement of co-operatives and other organizations among farmers and other groups.

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9. Landis, B.Y.; Religion and the Good Society; The National Conference of Christians and Jews; New York; 1943; p. 85.

9. Abolition of child labor; adequate provision for the protection, education, spiritual nurture, and wholesome recreation of every child.
10. Protection of the family by the single standard of purity; educational preparation for marriage, home-making, and parenthood.
11. Economic justice for the farmer in legislation, financing, transportation, and the price of farm products as compared with the cost of machinery and other commodities which he must buy.
12. Extension of the primary cultural opportunities and social services now enjoyed by urban populations to the farm family.
13. Protection of the individual and society from the social, economic, and moral waste of any traffic in intoxicants and habit-forming drugs.
14. Application of the Christian principle of redemption to the treatment of offenders; reform of penal and correctional methods and institutions, and of criminal court procedure.
15. Justice, opportunity, and equal rights for all; mutual good will and co-operation among racial, economic, and religious groups.
16. Repudiation of war, drastic reduction of armaments, participation in international agencies for the peaceful settlement of all controversies; the building of a co-operative world order.
17. Recognition and maintenance of the rights and responsibilities of free speech, free assembly, and a free press; the encouragement of free communication of mind with mind as essential to the discovery of truth.<sup>10</sup>

That the "Statement" of 1932 is, in large measure, based on the "Creed" of 1908 is obvious; but that it has also extended the circumference of the Church's social view is equally clear. In the quarter-century between the two documents, the Federal Council was willing to go "on record" for specific social gains, no doubt reflecting not only the in-

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10. From the adopted report of the Commission on the Church and Social Service, The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1932.

creased social awareness of the denominations themselves, but also the economic crisis of the time.

But, since the end of the 1914-1918 War, British Protestantism has usually been more socially advanced than American. In 1924, meeting under the sponsorship of the Interdenominational Conference of Social Service Unions (I.C.S.S.U.), an interdenominational assembly was held at Birmingham under the chairmanship of Archbishop William Temple. This "Conference on Christian Politics, Economics, and Citizenship" (which came to be known by its initials, C.O.P.E.C.) had as its basis

"... the conviction that the Christian faith, rightly interpreted and consistently followed, gives the vision and the power essential for solving the problems of today, that the social ethics of Christianity have been greatly neglected by Christians with disastrous consequences to the individual and society, and that it is of the first importance that these should receive a clearer and more persistent emphasis."<sup>11</sup>

The Conference itself was preceded by extensive preparations -- questionnaires, study groups, papers, etc. J. H. Nichols describes its influence and effect:

"Four years were assigned to study and discussion in a great variety of groups on the meaning of God's will for the common life in politics, economics, society, education, the family. The whole was to culminate in a great conference. While ... (Copec) actually met in Birmingham the year before the world conference in

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11. Basis for the "Conference on Christian Politics, Economics, and Citizenship", Birmingham, 1924, as cited by Hudson, C.E. and Reckitt, M.B.; The Church and the World; op. cit.; p.179.

Stockholm, it marked a greater maturity in the social gospel movement.... In some respects it already pointed beyond the social gospel...

The quadrennium of study was the outstanding contribution of Coped. The great proliferation of study groups stimulated by the questionnaire and by various public meetings on particular questions involved more, and more varied participation, than any such previous undertaking, including college students, workmen, minister's associations, girl's clubs. The whole process made known to each other hitherto isolated enthusiasts for social Christianity.

At the actual conference in 1924, fifteen hundred delegates met for a week, debated the Reports and accepted them, voting some 170 recommendations on a very varied range of issues. All the Churches of Britain were represented, save the Roman Catholic, which withdrew on orders. Penology, education, housing, leisure, politics, and citizenship were all reviewed in their own terms without much reference to the theological issues disposed of separately under 'the nature of God and his purpose'. Differences were sharp on birth control and divorce and a divided report came in on pacifism. 'Industry and property' challenged the basis of British economy, contending that the concentration of wealth in the hands of some, and the unemployment of others, was affected slightly if at all by character or ability. The right to property was not to be considered absolute and the primacy of the profit motive in economic life was deplored. The living wage as the first charge on industry was asserted, as also the right of labor, not merely to organize, but to share in management."<sup>12</sup>

But the Pronouncements of Copec were not as far-reaching as the Report of the Malvern Conference (which was an unofficial conference of the members of the Church of England, held at Malvern in 1941 under the sponsorship of the Industrial Christian Fellowship and presided over by the Arch-

12. Nichols, J.H.; Democracy and the Churches; op. cit.; pp. 229-230.

bishop of York). An excerpt from that report is as follows:

"There is no structural organization of society which can bring about the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth, since it is a gift from God, and since all systems can be perverted by the selfishness of man. Therefore, the Church as such can never commit itself to any proposed change in the structure of society as being a self-sufficient means of salvation.

But the Church can point to those features of our existing society which, while they can never prevent individual men and women from being Christian, are contrary to divine justice, and act as stumbling blocks, making it harder for men to lead Christian lives.

In our present situation we believe that the maintenance of that part of the structure of our society, by which the ultimate ownership of the principal industrial resources of the community can be vested in the private owners, may be such a stumbling block. On the one hand, it may deprive the poorest members of the community of the essentials of life. On the other, while these resources can be so owned, men will strive for their ownership for themselves. As a consequence, a way of life founded on the supremacy of the economic motive will remain, which is contrary to God's plan for mankind. For one or both of these reasons, the time has come for Christians to proclaim the needs for striving towards a form of society in which, while the essential value of the human personality is preserved, the continuance of these abuses will no longer be possible....

It is a traditional doctrine of Christendom that property is necessary to fullness of personal life; all citizens should be enabled to hold such property as contributes to moral independence and spiritual freedom without impairing that of others; but where the rights of property conflict with the establishment of social justice or the general social welfare, those rights should be over-ridden, modified, or, if need be, abolished.....

The existing industrial order, with its acquisitive temper characteristic of our society, tends to recklessness and sacrilege in the treatment of natural resources. It has led to the impoverishment of the agricultural community, and is largely responsible for the problem of the 'mass man', who is conscious of no status, spiritual or social, who is a mere item in the machinery of production and who easily develops the herd psychology, which is automatically responsive to

skilful propaganda.

Human status ought not to depend upon the changing demands of the economic process; no one should be deprived of the support necessary for the 'good life' by the fact that there is at some time no demand for his labor...."<sup>13</sup>

Thus, while it is certainly true that Church Pronouncements, as such, are not binding on individual churchmen; it may not be too much of an overstatement to say that they illustrate both the changing theological convictions and the changing political thinking of the most socially concerned within the Churches.<sup>14</sup>

At this point, too, another generalization would seem to apply: the larger the group represented by a "Pronouncement", the less specific and more general the "Pronouncement" appears to be. Thus, the 1500 Churchmen of all Protestant Christendom, meeting at Amsterdam in the 1948 meeting of The World Council of Churches, could agree:

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13. Excerpt from the Roll of Resolutions adopted by the unofficial Malvern Conference, 1941.
  14. The significance of the fact that even in the depths of a Depression the American Protestant Churches would make a plea for enlightened capitalism, and in war-time Britain English Churchmen sought, if not a Christian Socialism, at least a Welfare Statism, might help to explain present post-war differences in Anglo-American views, theological, political, and economic.

Does the Protestant Church lead or reflect its cultural environment? The best answer would seem to be found in some theory of interaction. It would appear, at least, that the same question applied to Catholicism would best be answered by some form of quantitative analysis: In a predominately Catholic Culture, the Church leads and directs State aims and goals; in a predominately non-Catholic (or anti-clerical) State, the Church reflects (or, in some measure, adopts) its cultural character. In this regard, the differences of Catholicism in the Provinces of Quebec and Ontario are striking!

"The World today is experiencing a social crisis of unparalleled proportions. The deepest root of (today's) disorder is the refusal of men to see and admit that their responsibility to God stands over and above their loyalty to any earthly community and their obedience to any worldly power....

Two chief factors contribute to the crisis of our age. One of these is the vast concentrations of power -- which are under capitalism mainly economic and under communism both economic and political.... The second factor is that society, as a whole dominated as it is by technics, is likewise more controlled by a momentum of its own than in previous periods....

Our Churches have often given religious sanction to the special privileges of dominant classes, races, and political groups, and so they have been obstacles to changes necessary in the interests of social justice and political freedom..... Christians should recognize with contrition that many churches are involved in the forms of economic injustice and racial discrimination which have created the conditions favorable to the growth of communism.... Christians should seek to recapture for the Church the original Christian solidarity with the world's distressed people, not to curb their aspirations towards justice, but, on the contrary, to go beyond them and direct them towards the only road which does not lead to a blank wall, obedience to God's Will and His Justice....

The institution of property is not the root of corruption of human nature... nor is ownership.. an unconditional right.

(There are) points of conflict between Christianity and the atheistic Marxian communism of our day.....

(But the Church should) make clear that there are conflicts between Christianity and capitalism:

1) Capitalism tends to subordinate what should be the primary task of any economy -- the meeting of human needs -- to the economic advantages of those who have the most power over its institutions.

2) It tends to produce serious inequalities.

3) It has developed a practical form of materialism in western nations in spite of their Christian background, for it has placed the greatest emphasis upon success in making money.

4) It has also kept the people of capitalist countries subject to a kind of fate which has taken the form

of such social catastrophes as mass unemployment.....  
 (Both communism and laissez faire capitalism have) made promises (they) could not redeem.... The Christian churches should reject (both of these ideologies, and) it is the responsibility of Christians to seek new, creative solutions which never allow justice or freedom to destroy the other."<sup>15</sup>

Thus organized Protestant Christendom expresses a deeply felt concern about the questions and implications of economic problems. It would be entirely unfair to accuse the Protestant Church of being unwilling, in the present day, to criticize either itself or its socio-economic environment. But it proposes no authoritative scheme or solution as does the Catholic Church. Beside the well-thought-out proposals of the Encyclicals, the plea for "new, creative solutions" appears pale indeed!

However, this apparent lack of moral sturdiness within official Protestantism must be considered within the context of the ecclesiastical structures which in great measure determine the nature of the "Encyclicals" and the "Pronouncements". As we have noted in Troeltsch's analysis,<sup>16</sup> it is the patriarchal nature of Catholicism upon which the authority of the Church itself is based. Thus -- not only in an ideological sense, but in reality -- the Papacy (i.e.,

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 15. Exerpts from pp. 1-9 of "The Church and the Disorder of Society"-- Section III of the Report of the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches; Amsterdam, 1948. (Published in booklet form by The Department of Church and Economic Life of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, New York, 1948.)

16. See pp. 54-55 of this thesis.

the Hierarchy) is the Church. As a result, when an Encyclical appears -- while it seems to be the personal view of one man and may, in fact, reflect to a large degree one man's private opinions -- it is, in reality, the derived view of the Hierarchy (i.e., the final and unquestionable view of the Church), and binding upon believers.

Within official Protestantism, on the other hand, authority rests, as we have seen,<sup>17</sup> not within the structure of the Churches, but outside of it -- in the Bible, or in the Christian community, or in the individual as led by the Holy Spirit, etc. Thus, even the officially constituted and delegated ecumenical assemblies reflect in their Statements only the majority view of those present and voting. As a result, the "Pronouncements" are neither "binding" nor "authoritative" -- or could they ever be. They are only "common denominators" or "common factors" of independent social views. As in most legislation, a published ethical view, which itself is a compromise position stemming from differing presuppositions and theological principles, would, almost inescapably, tend to be less demanding and precise.<sup>18</sup>

But it would be completely misleading to conclude that, because Protestantism lacks an official "Ethic", it is with-

17. In this connection, see especially pp. 83, 92-94, of this thesis.

18. This is just a corollary to the old truism: "The virtue of autocracy is unity; the vice of freedom, multiplicity."

out "economic ethics". (That it has "economic influence" we have seen in the discussion of the Max Weber thesis.)<sup>19</sup> Theoretically, at least, whenever any Protestant, however defined, expresses a moral judgment on any social or economic question, he enumerates, however prejudicially or naively, a "protestant social ethic".<sup>20</sup>

Yet, this is not to imply that Protestantism's Economic Ethics -- other than the "Pronouncements" -- are merely nothing more than the total of innumerable, undisciplined, casual, moral views. As we have seen in Chapter III, the most ethically conscious theology of the Reformation, that of Calvinism, held within itself a tension which attempted to balance

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19. See pp. 118-149 of this thesis.

20. Some scholars conclude that this lack of "an Ethic" is, in reality, a great weakness within Protestantism, or that, at the very least, it limits Protestant effectiveness in the modern day. Supporting this latter view, J. H. Nichols writes,

"As men were increasingly consolidated into greater political and economic masses, the highly decentralized Church structure of Puritan Protestantism seemed ever less able to address itself to the problems that were presented on a regional or national basis. Only the large and centralized Churches, such as the Roman Catholic, seemed to be in a position to apply themselves effectively to the kind of social and political issues that were now dominant. Even psychologically, the depersonalization and Vermassung of modern life seemed to require more in the way of unifying symbolism and central authority in a religious community than Puritan Protestantism seemed to possess." -- Nichols, J.H.; Democracy and the Churches; op. cit., pp. 278-279.

a theologically produced concept of individual freedom (which the Weber thesis quite properly noted and analyzed) and also a socially controlled and concerned sense of discipline (the implications of which Weber did not see). Thus Protestantism, as such, has always attempted, in the words of the Amsterdam Pronouncement "to seek new, creative solutions which never allow either justice or freedom to destroy the other". Thus, it is not surprising to find that those who are recognized as the leading Protestant ethicists have tended to emphasize either the one side or the other of these tensions.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, it would appear logical to define the scope of Protestant thought on modern economic questions in the terms of emphasis on either justice or freedom in particularly significant Protestant writers. Moreover, recognizing that modern Protestantism generally agrees that "Capitalism (even in its modern non-laissez-faire form) is a philosophy of economic freedom", a survey of modern Protestant opinion would necessarily ask the question: "Does modern capitalism, as it is known today, include an adequate concern for social justice?"

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 21. It should be recognized, of course, that much modern Protestant theology, especially that characterized by the term, "Barthianism", refuses to recognize the concerns of economic ethics as having any direct theological validity. The "teleological suspension of the ethical" would appear, at least, to remove ethics from the sphere of ultimate significance. Protestant ethicists, on the other hand, find ultimate meaning in economic activity -- regardless of their theological "schools".

In order to allow this survey to assume manageable proportions, only the answer to that question will be sought in the writings of only a few modern Protestant authors. However, it must be remembered that this method of inquiry carries with it a necessary consequence: only an incomplete study will be the result.

Yet, it certainly would appear that the degree of social justice possible within capitalism is more determinative of its ethical quality and acceptability to Protestantism than any other one factor. If this is, in fact, the case; then it would seem that -- even by taking only a fraction of considered Protestant opinion<sup>22</sup> -- these conclusions might be set in a valid contrast to the authoritative Roman Catholic view. This approach, at least, respects the diversity of Protestant views (which the "Pronouncements" by their very nature cannot do -- if they are to have any content at all) which extend the whole length of the freedom-social justice spectrum.<sup>23</sup>

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 22. As a personal note -- apology, of course, is extended not only for the necessarily brief analyses which follow, but also for their necessarily limited number. There are many more incisive, illuminating, critical, Protestant opinions which perhaps should have been included. That the choice was not a simple one may be evidenced by the Bibliography. Those selected, however, are, I believe, if not "typical", at least "significant".

23. It would appear that the majority of Protestant clerical opinion would be found on the "social justice" side of the spectrum. (In this connection, see the Bibliography in which most of the authors are clerical and "socially minded.") Lay Protestant opinion, on the other hand, would seem to be found most often on the other -- if economists views and voting records are in any way a valid indication. I have, however, found no statistical survey to support this speculation.

## II. The Ethical Quality of Modern Capitalism

### A. The Views of V. A. Demant<sup>24</sup>

Demant begins his analysis of the modern social world in his study, The Religious Prospect, by drawing a distinction between the "dogma" and the "doctrine" of Christianity, Liberalism, and Totalitarianism.<sup>25</sup> While Christians, on the whole, have successfully upheld Christian dogma ( the philosophy of being ) in opposition to Liberal dogma ( the philosophy of becoming ), they have wrongly failed to distinguish inherent contradictions between Liberal dogma and Liberal doctrine.<sup>26</sup> Demant claims that the truths in Liberal doctrine ( an objective truth, an ultimate rightness, natural law, and a metaphysical equality in man )

"... can only be sustained by an outlook which holds man to have a being determined by elements outside the historic order. The Christian doctrine of man as a spiritual being, and thereby not exclusively part of the stream of becoming, is the final guarantor of that truths"<sup>27</sup>

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24. V.A. Demant is an Anglo-Catholic, a Professor at Oxford. A prolific author, his writings extend over a 30 year period (from pre-depression days to post-war), and present a remarkably consistent social view.

25. Demant, V.A.; The Religious Prospect; Muller; London; 1939. "What T.E. Hulme calls 'abstract ideas at the centre' or 'categories of the human mind' I call dogma. The more conscious body of thought that is recognized as matter of conviction or opinion I designate by the term 'doctrine'." -- p.21.

26. *ibid.*, pp. 23-25.

27. *ibid.*, p. 55.

But Capitalism, which is the economic expression of the liberal doctrine, does not give proper recognition to the status of man; and, as a result, "our age is crying, an age caught in the squirrel-cage of its own purposeless activities for which it possesses such powerful means,"<sup>28</sup> for a return to an organic ideal.

Working from the principle that "... if any department of human life, such as economics or politics, is not true to its own job according to the structure of human and cosmic reality, it will prey on the department above it in the scale of human values and deprive it of its freedom"<sup>29</sup>, Demant concludes: "The disease with which we have infected the world is that of the domination of life by economic values. This has all but destroyed our political freedom, debauched our culture and religion, and stultified genuine economic activity itself."<sup>30</sup>

In light of this analysis, he can see the decline of capitalism:

"I have suggested four main reasons for the decline of capitalism: the hostility it has brought on against itself; the break-up of its own institutional framework; its parasitism on the non-economic founda-

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28. Demant, V.A.; Christian Polity; Faber and Faber; London; 1936; pp. 41-42.
29. Demant, V.A.; Theology of Society; Faber and Faber; London; 1947; pp. 135-136.
30. *ibid.*, p. 136.

tions of society; and the dissipation of the dispositions which reared and sustained it."<sup>31</sup>

Thus, while totalitarianism "is a revolt from the doctrine and dogma of Christendom, and is, in fact, a fulfillment of the dogma of Liberalism"<sup>32</sup>; Communism versus Capitalism is, in his view, "a struggle of organic conceptions against atomic ones."<sup>33</sup>

But the social tragedy of capitalism, during the whole course of its history, is not only that it lives off the cultural heritage and spiritual resources of the Medieval status society; but also it has tried to replace the true doctrine of freedom, i.e. the nature of man, by a spurious conception, and, in so doing, destroyed all hope of true social justice. Demant writes,

"The freedom for which the Church is responsible cannot be upheld as a freedom from these false totalitarianisms -- the libertas minor -- whether of individual or church body.... It must be proclaimed as the freedom for man to realize his nature. Secular totalitarianism is perceiving a truth that liberalism lost -- namely, the truth of the libertas major, that man is not his own law and finds fulfillment only in relation to the ground of reality. Contemporary totalitarianism is false because it subjects the person to only one layer of reality -- a purely this-world reality. The freedom for which the Church can fight is the freedom of the person to be a person. A person is not an atom, nor is he a drop in the stream of terrestrial history. He is from beyond history and society and state and

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32. Demant, V.A.; Religion and the Decline of Capitalism; Faber and Faber; London; 1949; p. 31.

32. Demant; The Religious Prospect; op. cit., p. 60.

33. Demant; Christian Polity; op. cit., p. 87.

race. He is a person sui juris, an absolute in his way, relative only to God .....

The Christian claim for freedom from terrestrial absolutisms can only proceed effectively from the necessity of a more real world than they represent. This more real world is the world of God and man, of creation, of sin and redemption; a world in which man is both above history and in it, which is expressed politically in conceptions of Justice (not liberty) above the laws and arrangements of particular societies, and also in the spiritual significance of particular societies... events, moments, and social structures."<sup>34</sup>

Thus, capitalism not only denies the nature of man and his freedom, as well as social justice; but it also disrupts the very processes of life:

"I am aware that I am making a controversial assumption in suggesting that the nerve of capitalism is the predominance of market relationships over the greater part of the social field. But it does underlie most if not all the characteristics.... belonging to it.... If we may state the main problem set by the capitalist phase of history as the achievement of great economic advantages at the cost of colossal social dislocations, then our assumption that capitalism in its total aspect means the running of a society as an adjunct of the market relationship, helps us to see where the main dislocations lie.... (In capitalism) there must be no discouraging placards 'not for sale' set up in the interests of non-economic concerns of living -- of the concerns of kinship, of neighborhood, of profession or creed. Everything must be open to the freedom of contract.... The organic bonds grown by society were to be loosened or snapped and all non-contractual relations discouraged."<sup>35</sup>

Thus, Demant's analysis -- in light of the failures of capitalism (and its political successor, communism) -- reveals itself to be an essentially pessimistic view. If man is

34. Demant, V.A.; Christian Polity; op. cit., pp. 90-93.

35. Demant, V.A.; Religion and the Decline of Capitalism; op. cit., pp. 22-23.

inundated with the values of a market place to the exclusion of heavenly or fraternal relationships, then capitalism, despite its technics which supply a profusion of things, does man irreparable harm.

While man is not yet completely lost, he needs deparately to replenish the sources of civilization. Demant identifies these as: vital or biological sources ("life-giving power of the earth"), cultural sources ("the sense of community and tradition"), and faith ("resources which fulfill needs of man's spiritual nature").<sup>36</sup> With these elements -- and especially the last -- civilization can be saved. With them the Church can supply an adequate doctrine of "Re-Creation",<sup>37</sup> which alone can give salvation to a capitalistic age. But given a choice, however, between a perfect social order and the Church, Demant makes an astonishing ethical admission:

"It would be a tragic and unholy choice, but it would have to be made, because the essential content of the Body of Christ is a more ultimate thing than the most perfect system of social justice."<sup>38</sup>

Thus Demant, as a Protestant, would correct Capitalism by supplanting it -- if not by Medieval Guilds -- by a Catholic romanticism, not essentially different in outlook from that of Rome itself.

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36. Demant, V.A.; Religion and the Decline of Capitalism; op. cit., pp. 173-175.

37. See Demant; The Religious Prospect; op. cit.; pp. 197 foll.

38. Demant, V.A.; as cited by Niebuhr, Reinhold; Essays in Applied Christianity; Meridian; New York; p. 210.

## B. The Views of Emil Brunner<sup>39</sup>

Unlike other Protestant thinkers, Emil Brunner has attempted to establish a Protestant doctrine of Justice which would be, in some measure, comparable to that of Aquinas or the Reformers.

"While the Catholic Church, drawing on centuries of tradition, possesses an impressive systematic theory of justice, Protestant Christianity has had none for some three hundred years past.... It is doubtless one of the main reasons why the Protestant Church is so unsure of itself in questions of the social order, economics, politics, and international law...."<sup>40</sup>

Justice, which is "the supreme and ultimate standard in the ethics of institutions"<sup>41</sup>, is, admittedly, an inferior virtue in regard to persons where the standard of the Christian life is Christian love; but, Brunner believes, it is discoverable within Protestant principles alone, and vitally necessary for an adequate theology for today.<sup>42</sup>

It stems from the doctrine of Creation, and that, in itself, helps to shape its tenets:

"It is the will of the Creator that the individual human being should not be self-sufficient.... Creation has so disposed human beings that they must seek and have each other. It is their mutual need of each other which shows that they are predestinated for fellowship. Their individual difference, and the capacity and need

39. Standing more clearly in the great Reform tradition than almost any other Protestant ethicists, Dr. Brunner is a former teacher in Zurich. Now retired, after teaching for two years in The International Christian University in Tokyo, his "missionary theology" exerts great influence throughout ecumenical Protestantism.

40. Brunner, E.; Justice and the Social Order; M. Hottinger, Trans.; Lutterworth; London; 1945; p.7.

41. *ibid.*, p. 25.

42. See *ibid.*, pp. 13-18.

for completion which springs from it, is the natural, creaturely condition of the truly personal fellowship of love... The uniqueness of every individual human being is the limitation of that individual, and from that limitation there arises mutual dependence.... In Christianity,...this mutual dependence is the goal of creation, and the proof of and preparation for the supreme destiny of fellowship. It is a tenet of the Christian creed that no man is sufficient unto himself.

Hence, a new conception of justice results. The sum cuique can never be interpreted as 'the same to all'..... It is, in fact 'to each his due', to each shall be rendered what is indefeasibly his, what is not another's.....

The cardinal factor is the direct responsibility of the individual to God implied in God's call, and the dignity and equality which results from it. The secondary, though not inessential, factor is the mutual dependence resulting from man's predestination to fellowship and its substratum in nature, individual limitation and idiosyncrasy. Hence, in the Christian idea of justice, equality and the equal right of all are primary, while the difference of what is due to each in the fellowship is, though not inessential, secondary."<sup>43</sup>

As can be seen, this view, while differing in terminology, is not essentially different from that of Aquinas. However, following in Calvin's tradition, Brunner rejects the idea of a "Law of Nature" because of the effect of man's sin. The Fall, as we have seen in Calvin, "necessitates a modification of the order of justice, not only in the sense that it becomes a coercive system of positive law, but also in the sense that the substance of this positive law cannot coincide with that of the law of nature laid down in the order of creation..... Relative justice comes into being."<sup>44</sup> Natural law, as such, has only the function

43. Brunner, E.; Justice and the Social Order; op. cit., pp. 44-45.

44. *ibid.*, p. 93

of being a criterion against which human laws are judged.<sup>45</sup>

Yet, according to Brunner, this does not mean that the absolute is lost -- as some modern interpreters of Calvin have insisted -- and that justice can have no ultimate reality. He continues,

"Once we have seen the realization of the truly good to be impossible, to create the best that lies within our means does not imply the surrender of absolute justice. For, in seeking earnestly the best possible adaption to the given situation, we shall be guided solely by the question of how the truly good may be preserved and find expression in that necessary adaptation. The creation of the 'best possible' is guided by the will to give expression, as far as possible, to the truly good within the framework of existing limitations. Every positive system of justice is a compromise between the truly just and what is possible."<sup>45</sup>

Thus, the "ethic of the possible" exists in the relative world of evil; but, depending on the absolute Good for its direction, seeks within the possible alternatives not "the just" but "most just". Yet, because it operates in the realm of the possible, this attitude is conditioned by a strong realism.

"But it must be noted that the best solution is not an abstract maximum of approximation to the absolutely good, but that adaptation which best responds to the sense of the demand for justice in the given circumstances. The rigorism of abstract legality is in all cases alien and dangerous to life..... The optimum of the relatively just lies between overreadiness to adapt to reality and excessive rigour in maintaining the abstract idea of absolute justice. It is difficult to say which deviation from this rule is worse -- a feeble opportunism or a fanatical dogmatism. The greatest measure of justice will only be found... where, in full awareness of actual and present reality,

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45. Brunner, E.; Justice and the Social Order; op. cit., p.94.

men search for the closest approximation to the sense of true justice which it admits."<sup>46</sup>

To this concept, Brunner adds a principle stemming from it:

"Hence the adaptation of justice to the concrete event will be the more successful the more individual its verdict can be, the smaller the range of cases it comprehends. The greater the circle of persons or things covered by a law, the more abstract, schematic, and hence unjust must be the order which it creates. Hence a system can approximate to absolute justice in inverse ratio to the range of persons whom it covers. . . . . The greater the domain in which order has to be established, the greater the abstraction, the greater the violence done to individual concreteness. The greater the actual deviation of a human situation from God's order, the 'more evil' a state of things, the more widely must the system of positive law deviate from the creative ordinance of God. . . . . In determining what is just, the weight of actual circumstances will be the greater in proportion to the multiplicity of men and conditions which have to be ordered."<sup>47</sup>

As this principle is applied to social systems, Brunner finds that justice sometimes has to accept injustice because of the larger injustice that would result if the system were changed. "A few blind fanatics can ruin a State, a custom, or a social order . . . more thoroughly . . . by their fanaticism for absolute justice . . . than a host of ill-intentioned revolutionaries."<sup>48</sup> "Hence the attitude of the Christian faith to justice and reality is essentially a conservative one, because the scope of fruitful individual interference in a given system is relatively narrow in comparison with the vast difference between the individual and the system."<sup>49</sup>

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46. Brunner, E. Justice and the Social Order; op. cit., pp. 94 and 95.

47. *ibid.*, pp. 94-95.

48. *ibid.*, p. 96

49. *ibid.*, p. 96

But this is not to mean that social action is impossible. It does mean that those concerned with true justice will be studious, careful, adaptable, and perpetually unsatisfied:

"The greatest measure of justice will be realized only where men are so loyally devoted to the truly just that for its sake they will carefully study the ground on which it is to be planted, so that it shall yield that greatest measure..... they infinitely prefer the smallest realization of the truly just to any resounding but Utopian program of justice, and that, having once been able to give effect to the smallest measure of true justice, they restlessly seek to do more. They stand perpetually as middlemen of true justice between the absolutely just and reality, always on the lookout for business to be done for justice in reality."<sup>50</sup>

That this view stands in direct opposition to the Social Action program of Catholicism is clear. It denies that a universal Justice can actually exist in reality without becoming unjust; and would insist that necessary social action inevitably involves disruption, which is only justified when there is a real possibility that a lesser evil or greater good will result.

As is immediately apparent, this type of ethical thought produces judgments which, except in individual, concrete, moral situations, are paradoxical in nature. In the simple decision, to act or not to act in the light of possible alternatives, this may not be the case; but the development of thought that leads to this decision is, by Brunner's ethic, paradoxical in the extreme. Even its description is paradoxical for it is, at the same time, both valiant labor and heroic restraint.

50. Brunner, E.; Justice and the Social Order; op. cit., pp. 96-97.

Thus (as might well be expected in a system where justice is effective in inverse proportion to its success and where in a given situation ultimate justice might well dictate the use of unjust or less just methods) it is only consistent that Brunner's judgments on the social order are surrounded with qualifications. For him capitalism, as an economic system, is and is not acceptable morally. He is both highly critical of its institutions and deeply appreciative of them. For him, capitalism destroys and protects, affirms and denies, establishes and disrupts -- all at the same time. While it would appear that this approach is the strength and weakness of dialectical thought, it makes a survey of his conclusions difficult indeed. Perhaps the best method of illustrating his observations, in the light of the possible alternatives, would be to indicate briefly wherein he considers capitalism to be right and wrong:

Because capitalism has affirmed contract rather than status; it has preserved independence, but lost the sense of community. It is probably to be preferred over collectivism; but, even then, it has fallen short of the federative ideal which is the source of original organic harmony and unity in the social order.<sup>51</sup>

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 51. In this connection, see Brunner, E.; Justice and the Social Order; op. cit., pp. 70-79. ("The Christian view of the relationship between individual and community can be stated thus: fellowship in freedom, freedom in fellowship." -- p. 79.)

However, even then, the claim of interest is at best ethically dubious (as is complete reliance on the rightness of market value); but then, too, so are the prohibitions against usury and the claim that there can be a "just" price. But both of these capitalistic practices do provide a relative stability and a relative freedom for the individual, and to replace them arbitrarily would probably involve grave social disruption.<sup>55</sup>

But when that relative stability is gone, the State has the moral right to intervene to control economic fluctuations, especially to protect "the decent living wage" of workers. Yet,

"To supervise and adjust does not mean to exercise unlimited control, but to participate, and this participation in property and in the distribution of national income belongs to society by the divine order of creation."<sup>56</sup>

Because of its technical advances, capitalism is dangerous; but technics is essentially morally neutral. But they increases man's capacity to live quantitatively and destroy his own individualism as well as society and, as a result, technics are brought into judgment by a Christian faith.

"It is the tragic fact of modern history that the technical revolution took place at a time that mankind was in a process of social dissolution and ethical confusion."<sup>57</sup>

55. Brunner E.; Justice and the Social Order; op.cit., pp141-150.

56. ibid., p. 154.

57. Brunner, E.; Christianity and Civilization; op. cit., p.11.

Capitalism has rightly retained the idea of private property and denied the rigid equality which is based on unethical and unjust claims. But it contains no self-correctives to its tendency toward exaggeration of present inequalities. The correctives that have helped -- organized labour, State intervention, and the just self-limitation of individual capitalists -- have arisen outside the structure of capitalism itself. Even with these mitigating factors, however,<sup>52</sup> capitalism falls far short of the Christian ideal:

"The Christian doctrine of justice demands, as we have seen, not equality, but compensation. The economic law of the Old Testament aims, not at equality, but very definitely at compensation, at a mitigation of inequality."<sup>53</sup>

On this basis, unions have a right to exist, but neither unions nor management should be irresponsible in their demands; there is justice in both the wage according to need and the wage according to output. Nor does this deny the right of the capitalist-employer for more than the worker of the share of the products of their mutual labour:

"Yet, on the principle, the functions should be distinguished. Even the employer is 'worthy of his hire, but the capitalist, regarded purely from the standpoint of justice, should receive no more than corresponds to the service rendered, which consists in abstention from consumption and acceptance of risk."<sup>54</sup>

52. Brunner, E.; Christianity and Civilization; Nisbet; London; 1949; p. 93.

53. Brunner, E.; Justice and The Social Order; op.cit., p.140.

54. ibid., pp. 152-153.

Thus, "... the moral dangers inherent in the capitalist system have become and still are sinister realities; tremendous intensification of the profit motive, increased inequality with regard to property and power, social disintegration."<sup>58</sup>

Therefore, quite consistently, Brunner would answer the question of Capitalism and Social Justice in this way:

"Because the large majority of capitalists are motivated much more by the profit motive than by justice and goodwill, the capitalist system on the whole has morally bad effects, and would have them much more without the check of trade-unionism and state interference..... (But the) medicine, however, would prove more dangerous than the sickness which it means to cure..... Totalitarianism, however, means the end of personal freedom, a soulless mechanical monster, compared with which the evils of capitalism -- great as they are -- must be called tolerable."<sup>59</sup>

As a result, Protestantism has a real challenge which no mere "enlightenment" can do so well:

"Mere ethics have ever displayed real dynamic. You cannot cure a demon-ridden technical world with moral postulates. In contrast to mere ethics and morality, Christian faith has the dynamic of passion, of surrender and sacrifice; it is capable of turning men to the eternal end, of unmasking demonic sin and thereby banning it, which no enlightened education is capable of doing."<sup>60</sup>

Thus, Brunner's view is positive in the fact that Christianity can work effectively -- even in the midst of the evils that capitalism supplies -- because "within the Christian faith motive is more important than structure."<sup>61</sup>

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58. Brunner, E.; Christianity and Civilization; op.cit., p.91.

59. *ibid.*, p. 91.

60. *ibid.*, p. 15.

61. *ibid.*, p. 93.

### C. The Views of Reinhold Niebuhr<sup>62</sup>

Sharing the view that the Biblical estimate of man is necessary for the formulation of the Christian ethic, Reinhold Niebuhr differs from Brunner in his view on the application of that ethic to the social problems of mankind.

Niebuhr would reject both the rationalistic and vitalistic interpretations of the nature of man for they

"point to a single and common source of error: Man is not measured in a dimension sufficiently high or deep to do full justice to either his stature or his capacity for both good and evil or to understand the total environment in which such a stature can understand, express, and find itself..... As a creature who is involved in flux but who is also conscious of the fact that he is so involved, he cannot be totally involved. A spirit who can set time, nature, the world, and being per se into juxtaposition to himself and inquire after the meaning of these things, proves that in some sense he stands outside and beyond them."<sup>63</sup>

But, it is this very transcendence in man which is corrupting: because man is high, he fails to realize that he is low; and, when forced to confess his dependence of God, is also forced into anxiety which is sin. Thus, sin may result in man attempting to deny his freedom (sensuality) or, and this is most common, trying to deny his limitations (freedom-producing pride). As a result, the Christian view of man is para-

62. Reinhold Niebuhr is the Vice-President of the Faculty and Professor of Applied Christianity at Union Theological Seminary in New York. Probably more than any other theologian, he "holds the ground" between continental "Dogmatic Theology" and American "Social Christianity". In the 30 and more years of his teaching and writing he has shifted his position within those two spheres, as this brief analysis will attempt to show.

63. Niebuhr, Reinhold; The Nature and Destiny of Man; Scribner's; New York; 1941; Vol. I, p.124.

doxical in that it

"...relates three aspects of human existence to each other:

1) It emphasizes the height of self-transcendence in man's spiritual stature in its doctrine of 'the image of God.'

2) It insists on man's weakness, dependence and finiteness, on his involvement in the necessities and contingencies of the natural world, without, however, regarding this finiteness as, of itself, a source of evil in man.....

3) It affirms that the evil in man is a consequence of his inevitable though not necessary unwillingness to acknowledge his dependence, to accept his finiteness and to admit his insecurity, an unwillingness which involves him in the vicious circle of accentuating the insecurity from which he seeks to escape."<sup>64</sup>

Because man "inevitably though not necessarily" sins, he must receive salvation from God. This is accomplished through love; but, while God may love man, man cannot love God. The commandment, "Thou shalt love God", becomes, in Niebuhr's terminology, "an impossible possibility". He explains:

"The faith which regards the love commandment as a simple possibility rather than an impossible possibility is rooted in a faulty analysis of human nature which fails to understand that though man always stands under infinite possibilities and is potentially related to the totality of existence, he is, nevertheless, and will remain, a creature of finiteness. No matter how much his rationality is refined, he will always see the total situation in which he is involved only from a limited perspective; he will never be able to divorce his reason from its organic relation with the natural impulse of survival with which nature has endowed him; and he will never be able to escape the sin of accentuating his natural will-to-live into an imperial will-to-power by the very protest which his yearning for the

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64. Niebuhr, Reinhold; Nature and Destiny of Man; op. cit., p. 150.

eternal tempts him to make against his finiteness.

There is thus a mystery of evil in human life to which modern culture has been completely oblivious."<sup>65</sup>

But while man is doomed not to love God, yet this "impossible possibility of love", by the nature of God and creation, makes possible a valid, though relative, ethic:

"The motive power of a love which transcends the impulses of nature is a combination of obedience to God and love of God..... The element of obedience & a sense of moral obligation, of a willful act of conformity to the divine standard, is consonant with the division between good and evil in the human soul which makes perfect love impossible, because no act is possible in which the resistance of egoism and sin is completely absent. The element of love as a motive of social love is consonant with the fact that the attraction of the good is actually present in human life, in spite of its sin. But the fact that it is present and that it is challenged by sin is expressed in the paradox of the love commandment, 'Thou shalt love'. In the terms of the moral experience of man it might be stated in the terms, 'I feel that I ought to love'.

The God, whom to love is thus commanded in the Christian religion, is, significantly, the God of mythical-prophetic conception, which means that he is both the ground of existence and the essence which transcends existence. In this mythical paradox lies the foundation for an ethic which enables men to give themselves to values actually embodied in persons and existence, but also transcending every actuality..... The Christian love commandment does not demand love of the fellow man because he is with us equally divine (Stoicism), or because we ought to have 'respect for personality' (Christian liberalism), but because God loves him. The obligation is derived, in other words, not from the obvious unities and affinities of historic existence, but from the transcendent unity of essential reality."<sup>66</sup>

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65. Niebuhr, Reinhold; An Interpretation of Christian Ethics; Meridian; New York (from published volume, 1935); 1956; p. 110.

66. *ibid.*, pp.190-191.

Thus, Christian ethics are divinely inspired and rooted in the theological conviction of sin, the nature of God, and of the paradoxical nature of man's relationship to God. Because of his nature, man sins not in his acts, but in his essence; but that which ties him to sin, also ties him to love and expression of that love. Yet, while his actions are sinful, the result of his nature, and universally so, man can still do acts of relative evil which are "less evil" because there is a real distinction between sin, as such, and guilt.

"Yet men who are equally sinners in the sight of God need not be equally guilty of a specific act of wrong-doing in which they are involved. It is important to recognize that Biblical religion has emphasized this inequality of guilt just as much as the equality of sin. A primary source of orthodox Lutheranism's inability to deal effectively with specific moral issues in history is its blindness to the prophetic note in Scriptures in which those who are particularly guilty of moral wrong-doing are constantly singled out. Specially severe judgments fall upon the rich, and the powerful, the mighty and the noble, the wise and the righteous... The strictures of the prophets against the mighty, accusing them of pride and injustice, of both the religious and the social dimensions of sin, are consistently partial.....

The simple religious insight which underlies these prophetic judgments is that the men who are tempted by their eminence and by the possession of undue power become more guilty of pride and of injustice than those who lack power and position."<sup>67</sup>

Therefore, because of human sin and the tendencies within man toward self-righteousness, Christians are encouraged, even

67. Niebuhr, Reinhold; The Nature and Destiny of Man; op. cit. pp. 222-223.

while knowing that they are sinning, to carry on an aggressive warfare against entrenched injustice. Thus, while agreeing with Brunner that social action becomes morally ambiguous in the social realm, coercion is morally acceptable, and even part of the obedience of men. Niebuhr criticizes Brunner's ethics in this way:

"On the necessity of coercion, men like Brunner and Gogarten speak with clarity and persuasiveness. But on the whole the doctrine works out completely to the advantage of political and economic reaction.... In Brunner the reactionary tendency is less marked but nevertheless real.....

(Brunner's) pessimism about human society drives him into the camp of reaction in spite of his avowed socialism. He thinks capitalism ought to be destroyed, but since any political order is better than no order at all, and since the state is the 'dyke' against the final consequences of sin, and since any effort to remodel the 'dyke' might possibly result in an inundation of the world in sin, it follows that the Christian can countenance change only if it can be achieved without interruption (Pausenlos). Brunner presses that point so strongly that one does not see how a Christian can possibly countenance adequate measures of social change, since no conceivable method can be guaranteed to achieve its goal without some social dislocations and convulsions.

Without being unfair to Brunner one must come to the conclusion that a genuine religious absolutism is unconsciously compounded in his social theory with the fears which a bourgeois world harbors of the consequences of a revolution. If we are to have a new theory of natural law we ought at least to have one which will justify necessary coercion in favor of a new social order as much as in favor of the status quo."<sup>68</sup>

Thus, it is not surprising that when Niebuhr's ethical judgment is examined, he is highly critical of capitalism as one of the institutions in which the corruptions of man find

68. Niebuhr, Reinhold; "Barthianism and Political Reaction"; "The Christian Century", June 6, 1934; as quoted in Niebuhr, Reinhold; Essays in Applied Christianity; op. cit., p. 155.

expression. But it is at this point that we find that his position has shifted over the years. Niebuhr's theological position "hardened" in the very early "thirties", and most of his published writings reflect a deeply felt revolt against what he felt to be the shallowness of Liberal Christian thought. As has been noted, he follows in the dialectical tradition that considers sin as evil and not mere error.

But it is in his ethics that we find his greatest change. As he has written, "What we think of man and God, of sin and salvation, is partly prompted by the comparative comforts or discomforts in which we live. It is a very sobering reflection on the lack of transcendence of the human spirit over the flux of historical change."<sup>69</sup> While he has never been a "Social Gospeler", he has always been convinced that the Gospel must be applied to society. Thus, in the early twenties, he found evil within the capitalism of that day:

"I poked fun at them a little for enjoying their theological liberalism so much in this part of the country, while they were afraid of even the mildest economic and political heresy." (written in 1924).... "We are all responsible. We all want the things which the factory produces and none of us are sensitive enough to care how much in human values the efficiency of the modern factory costs. Beside the brutal facts of modern industrial life, how futile are all our homiletical spoutings." (1925)..... "It does seem pretty bad to have the churches lined up so solidly against labor and for the open shop policy of the town." (1926)..... "Perhaps there is no better illustration of the ethical impotence of the modern

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69. Niebuhr, Reinhold; writing in the 1956 "Preface" to Leaves From The Notebook Of A Tamed Cynic; Meridian; New York; 1956; (from a volume first published in 1929); p. 3.

church than its failure to deal with the evils and ethical problems of stock manipulation. Millions in property values are created by pure legerdemain. Stock dividends, watered stock and excessive rise in stock values, due to the productivity of the modern machine, are accepted by the church without a murmur if only a slight return is made by the beneficiaries through church philanthropies." (1927)<sup>70</sup>

Then, in 1941, writing in his Nature and Destiny of Man, Niebuhr could still identify capitalism as a serious potential in the power of evil. This particular section follows his identification of the fact of equal sin and unequal guilt for different men:

"This Biblical analysis agrees with the known facts of history. Capitalists are not greater sinners than poor labourers by any natural depravity. But it is a fact that those who hold great economic power and political power are more guilty of pride against God and of injustice against the weak than those who lack power and prestige..... Wherever the fortunes of nature, the accidents of history, or even the virtues of the possessors of power, endow and individual or a group with power, social prestige, intellectual eminence or moral approval above their fellows, there an ego is allowed to expand. It expands both vertically and horizontally. Its vertical expansion, its pride, involves it in sin against God. Its horizontal expansion involves it in an unjust effort to gain security and prestige at the expense of its fellows. The two forms of expansion can not be sharply distinguished because, as previously noted, spiritual pretension can be made an instrument of power in social conflict, and dominant power, measured socially, inevitably seeks to complete its structure by spiritual pretensions."<sup>71</sup>

Undoubtedly, this is a more critical judgment of capitalism's power for potential evil than the expression of right-

70. Quotations taken from Leaves from a Notebook of a Tamed Cynic; pp. 83, 99, 133, 155. Niebuhr, op. cit.

71. Niebuhr, Reinhold; Nature and Destiny of Man; op.cit., pp. 225, 226.

eous indignation (if Niebuhr would allow such a phrase) which were noted before. Moreover, this type of analysis indicts not only capitalism, but also other systems utilizing power and prestige: totalitarianism, fascist and communist; Church organizations, notably Catholicism; and tyranny in all forms which deny freedom.

Thus, it is not surprising that his "shift of emphasis" should be away from capitalism as an impossible economic system to something more pressing today. In 1956, in his Preface to the republished edition of An Interpretation of Christian Ethics, Niebuhr shows this increased concern, and himself explains his developed opinions. For this reason, it is given here, despite its length:

"This volume was significantly published as the 'Rauschenbusch' lectures, and it was meant to express both the author's general adherence to the purposes of the 'Social Gospel' of which Rauschenbusch was the most celebrated exponent, and to spell out some of the growing differences between the original social gospel and the newer form of social Christianity. The differences consisted primarily a sharper distinction between justice and love. This distinction was prompted by the growing awareness of the defect in the social gospel in its analysis of human behavior, derived from its rejection of the doctrine of original sin. The social gospel was that part of the liberal movement which had a sense of responsibility for social justice. It thought it could exercise that responsibility by insisting that love was the law of life in all and not merely in personal relations. It usually neglected that aspect of human behavior which St. Paul describes as 'The law in my members, warring against the law that is in my mind.' It was, in short, rather oblivious to the power and persistence of self-regard in both individual and collective terms. Consequently it did not have to concern itself very much with the structures of justice and the institutions of society by which men tried to achieve

a tolerable justice by managing and balancing competing interests and forces. I still believe, as I believed then, that love may be the motive of social action but that justice must be the instrument of love in a world in which self-interest is bound to defy the canons of love on every level.

But there are many intricacies in the relation of love to justice which I did not fully understand at that time and which I would like now to explicate more fully than I was then able. Some of the corrections of my previous views were prompted by friendly and even unfriendly critics. Some of the insights were the consequence of further thought upon this central problem of Christian ethics.....

The issues at stake are now as they were then. The primary issue is how it is possible to derive a social ethic from the absolute ethic of the gospels. The gospel ethic is absolute because it merely presents the final law of human freedom: The love of God and the neighbor. A social ethic must be concerned with the establishment of tolerable harmonies of life, tolerable forms of justice, and tolerable stabilities in the flux of life. All this must be done, not by asking selfish people to love one another, neither by taking their self-love for granted. These harmonies must be created under 'conditions of sin'. That is, a social ethic must assume the persistence of self-regard, but it cannot be complacent about any form of partial or parochial loyalty or collective self-interest.

Perhaps this volume will make some contribution to this perennial task in every human community despite its dated character and its obvious defects. The problem of doing this has become more important since this book was written, because meanwhile our own nation has grown into the most powerful nation of the free world and carries tremendous responsibilities in the contest between freedom and communist tyranny. Every resource for the performance of our responsibilities must be made available to this nation. One such resource would be a relevant Christian faith which is not debilitated either by complacency or by irresponsible idealism which sets up impossible goals for the nation and for mankind, and forgets that our immediate responsibility is to avoid catastrophe and to secure a tolerable peace in a world filled with acute tensions."<sup>72</sup>

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72. Niebuhr, Reinhold; Preface to 1956 Edition of An Interpretation of Christian Ethics; op. cit., pp 8-10.

Thus, Niebuhr would answer the question of the possibility of social justice within capitalism by asserting the tolerability of capitalistic institutions in light of the totalitarian alternatives: Catholic feudalism, political fascism, and idolatrous communism. While he violently rejects the sanctification which modern "pietistic moralists" would cast over capitalistic practices,<sup>73</sup> he would insist that the new necessity is an idea of "community". He writes,

"In building and preserving any kind of community we must give due weight to the following factors:

1) The inclination of the individual to consider other than his own needs. Without this capacity for justice, the harmony and order of communities would depend purely on coercion.....

2) Despite the capacity of men to consider the needs and interests of others, they also have an inclination to follow their own interests with little regard for the larger interests. This inclination must be defined not merely as 'self-interest' but as 'particular interest' in contrast to a more universal system of interests.....

3) Traditional, historic, organic and natural forces of communal cohesion such as common language, ethnic kinship, geographic factors, common experiences and common perils. All of these factors operate below the level of conscious decision and bind men together in ways which are not explicitly coercive on the one hand but are on the other hand not the contractual relations of the business community. These are the factors....which prevent the classical economic theory from fully covering or explaining all the facts and problems of the human community....

4) The conscious contrivances of statecraft which seek to prevent partial and parochial interests from clashing in chaotic competition or conflict, which provide channels for the maximum degree of cooperation, which suppress undue recalcitrance against the minimal standards of justice and order, which equalize fortuitous inequalities in the interests of justice, and which create a larger community than is possible upon the basis

73. In this connection, see Niebuhr, Reinhold; Essays in Applied Christianity; op. cit., pp. 90-92, 95-114, 123-138. (Niebuhr identifies such men as "Billy" Graham, N. V. Peale, James Fifiield, and Daniel Poling as "Pietistic Moralists".)

of the 'natural' limits of human sympathy and concern for the neighbor.....

Such justice as the best communities of human history have achieved has been attained between the Scylla of anarchy and the Charybdis of tyranny.... Power and coercion are not, in short, the simple devils of the drama of man's age-old struggle to gain community. Coercion is pregnant with both good and evil possibilities-- exactly as is freedom.....

... from the Christian standpoint at least, we cannot regard as evil the structures, systems, laws, and conventions by which partly selfish and partly unselfish men are held together in large scale cooperation. The order and justice which they achieve must be regarded as an approximation of a loving community. It is of course not the loving and just community. It is merely the approximation under the conditions of sin. So long as men are selfish these hard shells of community must be preserved.

.... The 'letter of the law' does indeed kill, if it is made into the final good..... But insofar as the law achieves a tolerable justice and prevents men from taking advantage of each other, it is a vestibule to the realm of brotherhood, rather than its polar opposite." 74

Thus it is that Niebuhr can somewhat injudiciously criticize the Barthian influence on such men as Niemoller, Hromadka, and Bishop Berezky:

"On the whole, European fellow-traveling theologians adopt the slogan of the neutralist intellectuals: 'A plague on both their houses'. Their traditional contempt for capitalism allows them to equate the errors of American pride with the cruelties of the most vexatious tyranny in history." 75

For Niebuhr, the society organized around the first nine commandments is better than a society that denies them all.

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74. From the essay, "Coercion, Self-Interest and Love", by Reinhold Niebuhr in Boulding, K.E., The Organizational Revolution; Harper's; New York; 1953; pp. 240-244.
75. Niebuhr, Reinhold; in "Communism and the Clergy", "The Christian Century", August 19, 1953; in Essays in Applied Christianity; op. cit., p.121.

## D. The Views of Kenneth Boulding<sup>76</sup>

As an economist who is concerned with the moral and ethical aspects of modern industrial capitalism, Dr. Boulding believes that most Christian moralists have been too hesitant in defending capitalistic ideas. He puts his case boldly:

"A strong case can be made that Protestant and evangelical Christianity, by its stress on conversion, on individual enterprise in religion, and on the minor virtues of industriousness, punctuality, thrift, honesty, truthfulness, and so on, has played a key role in the whole revolution. By its stress on the conversion experience as a radical change in the life of the individual it gives a positive value to change which carries over into all spheres of life. By the emphasis on the individual's responsibility to make his own peace with God in an unmediated religious experience it gives a positive value to enterprise.... And by its emphasis on personal integrity it has made possible a vast extension of interpersonal relationships in the system of 'finance' -- a system, while it may be deficient in charity, at least is based firmly on faith and hope!

Unfortunately Protestantism, and especially liberal Protestantism, has suffered a grave loss of nerve in the past few decades. It has become defensive, ashamed of its own tradition, and even completely unaware of any history or historic mission. Its own scholars and theologians are in considerable measure to blame for this state of affairs. They have accepted much too easily criticisms of capitalism (e.g. the Marxist criticism) which are not for the most part valid, and they have not been able to put their finger on the significant positive contribution of Protestant capitalism or on its real failings.

More than any other single factor it has been the instability of output and employment in a highly progressive market economy that has undermined its intellectual and moral support. In part, though only in small part,

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76. Dr. Kenneth E. Boulding is a member of the Society of Friends, a Professor and Head of the Department of Economics at The University of Michigan. While most of his writings deal with exclusively economic matters, his contributions to the "Series on the Ethics and Economics of Society" published by The National Council of Churches, U.S.A. (from which this material is taken), according to D.L.Munby, "set the tone of the series".

this instability is part of the cost of progress and must be accepted as such. In large part, however, this instability is unnecessary and can be avoided if government is prepared to accept its proper responsibility as a 'governor' or stabilizer. Were this difficulty to be cleared out of the way, Protestantism should once more be able to shoulder its prime historic mission as the promoter of enterprise in its best sense, the search for constantly better ways of doing everything. This does not commit it either to 'public' or 'private' enterprise; indeed, this distinction is no matter of principle, and the choice among various forms of enterprise should be entirely pragmatic. But it does commit it to economic progress as the most fundamental task of any economic system."<sup>76</sup>

Economic progress ("the increase in human power to satisfy human needs")<sup>77</sup> has to be considered as one of the goals of society in the assessment of the ethical justification of capitalism. Herein is capitalism's merit.

"Economic progress is not in itself an ultimate end of human activity, nor is it a universal criterion for passing judgment on societies. Nevertheless it is a significant partial end, and in making any assessment of the weight which should be given to it other possible ends or criteria of judgment should be considered. Some of these may be in competition with economic progress others may be complementary to it..... Our evaluation of (economic progress) depends, in considerable degree, on our attitude toward power on the one hand, and toward wants on the other...."<sup>78</sup>

Thus, asceticism, the idea of "holy poverty", has taken hold of some parts of Christendom; but it is not only a moral idea, it is economic as well: "The way of renunciation is the attainment of satisfaction not by expanding our power but by curtailing our wants."<sup>79</sup> This kind of economic means to serve a moral end has, no doubt, its own ethical justifi-

76. Boulding, K.E.; in The Goals of Economic Life; A.D. Ward, Editor; Harper's; New York; 1953; pp. 82-83

77. *ibid.*, p. 73

78. *ibid.*

79. *ibid.* p. 74.

ation. Yet,

"Nevertheless, there is something also to be said on the other side. The idealization of poverty has never proved stable, especially in Christendom, and even the Franciscans were corrupted by the 'world'. In America, the ideal of holy poverty has seemed unsuitable to a rapidly expanding economic universe, and only small groups, such as the Catholic Worker's Movement, have cherished it. It is hardly represented in Protestantism at all, least of all in the liberal Protestantism of the 'social gospel'. This is not merely the perversity of human nature and original sin. The power to satisfy existing wants can also be a power to criticize them. The new rich eventually become the old rich. The change of taste which power brings is not always in the wrong direction. And the power to fail is also sometimes the power to learn."<sup>80</sup>

Thus, capitalism is not inimical to even a high concept of human freedom -- if it contains within itself the elements of both progress and self-criticism. Under this view, social control becomes a question of efficient means rather than a question of a possibly desirable end.

But if state intervention, problems of equality, preservation of an organic society, etc. are reduced to questions of economic efficiency, how can justice and a sense of personal responsibility be preserved? This is, of course, the heart of the question of capitalism's ethical justification. But Dr. Boulding believes that if economic progress is properly understood, rather than undoing man's divine and human relationships, instead, it changes the whole terms in which the problem is understood. Static laws and static standards have

80. Boulding, K.E.; Goals of Economic Life; op. cit., p.74.

no application in dynamic conditions. Thus, he feels, a dynamic capitalism, if it can preserve a high concept of freedom, will itself answer the problems of social justice.

His explanation is striking:

"The concept of economic justice -- i.e., justice in distribution -- has different connotations if we are considering a stationary society or one that is progressing in wealth. In a stationary society in which total capital and total income are constant, economic competition reduces itself to what in the theory of games is called a 'zero-sum game' -- i.e., an affair in which what one gains is gained at the expense of others, the total of gains and losses being zero. In such a society one man's accumulation can be made only at the cost of another's decumulation, or if one man increases his income it can only be by decreasing others'. To an astonishing extent the exponents of the 'social gospel' seem to believe that the actual economic system is, in fact, stationary.....

In a progressive society, however, economic competition is not generally a zero-sum game but is a positive-sum game, in which the activity of the players results in an increase in the total to be divided, so that any increase is not taken from somebody else but is a net addition to the total pot. The moment this is recognized, both competition and accumulation are seen in a different light, and much of the moral objection to them disappears. Perhaps one of the main contributions which the economist as a technician can make to the moral philosopher in this regard is to render explicit those conditions under which the action of an individual to increase his own net worth results in an addition to the total capital of society, equal to, or even greater than, his own accumulation. In contrast are those conditions under which accumulation by the individual results in an increase in the total capital of society less than the increase in his own net worth, and in which therefore the accumulation of one individual is made, at least partly, at the expense of someone else."<sup>81</sup>

Thus, with this understanding of the nature of capitalism,

Dr. Boulding replies to Professor Niebuhr's charge that in

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<sup>81</sup>. Boulding, K.E.; Goals of Economic Life; op. cit., pp.75-76.

his The Organizational Revolution he does not pay enough attention to the injustices of inequalities within capitalism. Dr. Boulding writes,

"I believe that I am as much of an equalitarian as he is, and I am not at all unhappy about the tendencies to correct inequalities. I still think that the rise of the welfare state is closely correlated with the rise of nationalism, and that this admixture may ultimately destroy the welfare aspects of the state because of the dynamic instability of national defense..... Where I think we differ is that I would lay a great deal more stress on economic development rather than on equality itself as an ideal to be striven for in the economic system. I cannot escape the feeling that Professor Niebuhr thinks of 'justice' in economic life as the problem of how to divide up a fixed pie, whereas I am much more interested in how to increase the size of the pie. It is not inequality as such that troubles me but poverty and the problems of poverty and equality are by no means the same. Indeed, 'redistribution' is not an important weapon in the abolition of poverty; where poverty has been reduced it has been mainly because of the rise of per capita incomes due to an over-all rise in the productivity of the society."<sup>82</sup>

Therefore, productivity becomes not only a matter of technology, but is advanced to the state of being a moral imperative if poverty is to be abolished. But here, for Boulding, arises the real problem of capitalism: it is not in the free market that injustice arises, but rather in the workings of those institutions which, at the same time, are responsible for productivity and which would dominate or control the market if they were able to do so. The "Organizational Revolution has produced, necessarily, ever increasing sized institutions. This is a necessity for productivity. But the paradox is found in that those same institutions, because

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82. Boulding; The Organizational Revolution; op. cit., pp. 248-249.

of their nature, have a tendency to destroy increasing productivity through their power of self-existence after their usefulness is over.

The market, itself, is a social good in that it creates many centers of power and co-ordinates them.

"..Nevertheless, my interest is in the cure of these weaknesses rather than in the death of the market; for I believe the market, when it works well, is a true instrument of redemption, though a humble one, not only for individuals but for society. It gives the individual a sense of being wanted and gives him an opportunity for serving without servility. It gives society the opportunity of co-ordinating immensely diverse activities without coercion. The 'hidden hand' of Adam Smith is not a fiction."<sup>83</sup>

But with the rise of the dominant organizations of the Organizational Revolution (as seen in Organized Labor, Farm Organizations, Professional Societies, Business Enterprises -- especially trusts and combines, and Governmental Economic Activity), while they may serve the cause of justice, have a tendency to disrupt the market because they are self-continuing and fail to "die" when their usefulness to society is over. Their self-perpetuating instincts create a "continuing dilemma", and confuse the free market.

"Consequently, the 'pure' Christian society is always a flower that withers almost in the moment of its blooming. The early Church at Jerusalem, the Franciscans, the Anabaptists, the Quakers, the Methodists -- all have been subject to the law of organizational hardening, the replacement of the subtle and evanescent

83. Boulding, K.E.; The Organizational Revolution; op.cit., pp. 152-153.

flower of the loving community by the hard, dry seed of organization, or by simple decay and death. The only hope of love is that the seed into which it passes has the power to generate new flowers. It is only by constant death and rebirth that loving societies can exist. The only possibility of a permanent organization embodying a spirit of pure love .... seems to be a constant new birth, and this implies constant death of the old. In this sense, then, the less existing organizations are protected and the easier it is for them to die, the better the chance of the new birth and the flowering of the loving community. It is because we give our love to the organizations which are only the apparatus of life, and not to God who is the author of life, that perfect love comes so rarely into flower; the worst enemy of the greater love is the lesser."<sup>84</sup>

Thus, for Boulding, the justice possible in capitalism is made possible by increasing productivity; but, if efficiency is impeded, the inefficiency must be destroyed. This, of course, does not apply to inefficient workers, but to the organizations which have become useless for social progress. Thus, the way to protect justice, according to Boulding, is to protect the instrument of efficiency, the market which by its free workings discriminates between the efficient and the inefficient.

For him, justice is completely possible within capitalism -- but only if there is the social freedom for institutions to be born, grow, produce, and die. This is why Dr. Boulding quite rightly terms his view of man, history, and progress "ecological".

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84. Boulding, K.E.; The Organizational Revolution; op. cit., pp. 85-86.

E. The Views of William H. Whyte, Jr.<sup>85</sup>

Probably no better conclusion to this cursory survey of modern Protestantism's attitudes toward capitalism could be given than by recording the protest of W. H. Whyte's The Organization Man. As equally conscious of established institutionalism as Niebuhr or Boulding, Whyte believes that the social effects of "the humanization of modern industry", at least as seen within large corporations, is completely contrary to Protestant principles.

He describes the current American accepted ideology in this way:

"Officially, we are a people who hold to the Protestant Ethic. Because of the denominational implications of the term many would deny its relevance to them, but let them eulogize the American Dream, however, and they virtually define the Protestant Ethic. Whatever the embroidery, there is almost always the thought that pursuit of individual salvation through hard work, thrift, and competitive struggle is the heart of the American achievement.

But the harsh facts of organization life simply do not jibe with these precepts..... In their own countries such Europeans as Max Weber and Durkheim many years ago foretold the change, and though Europeans now like to see their troubles as an American export, the problems they speak of stem from a bureaucratization of society that has affected every Western country.

..... When (the corporation man) makes his ritualistic attack on Welfare statism, it is in terms of a Protestant Ethic undefiled by change -- the sacredness of property, the enervating effect of security, the virtues of thrift, of hard work and independence..... He is

85. William H. Whyte, Jr. is an Episcopalian, on the Board of Governors of an Episcopalian College, a former business executive, and now one of the Editors of "Fortune Magazine". "The Yale Review" called The Organization Man (from which this material was taken) a "magnificent book", and it has received wide acclaim since its publication, particularly in U.S.A. college circles.

not being hypocritical, only compulsive. He honestly wants to believe that he follows the tenets he extols, and.....only by using the language of individualism can he stave off the thought that he himself is in a collective as pervading as any ever dreamed of by the reformers, the intellectuals, and the utopian visionaries he so regularly warns against."<sup>86</sup>

But this is only an ideology and not the faith, Whyte believes. The faith is incorporated within what he calls the "Social Ethic".

"By social ethic I mean that contemporary body of thought which makes morally legitimate the pressures of society against the individual. Its major propositions are three: a belief in the group as a source of creativity, a belief in 'belongingness' as the ultimate need of the individual; and a belief in the application of science to achieve the belongingness..

.... I think the gist can be paraphrased thus: Man exists as a unit in society. Of himself, he is isolated, meaningless; only as he collaborates with others does he become worthwhile, for by sublimating himself in the group, he helps produce a whole than is greater than the sum of its parts. There should be, then, no conflict between man and society. What we think are conflicts are misunderstandings, breakdowns in communication. By applying the methods of science to human relations we can eliminate these obstacles to consensus and create an equilibrium in which society's needs and the needs of the individual are one and the same."<sup>87</sup>

Whyte develops his thesis by analysing all the various aspects of modern American culture, especially the attitudes of men involved in corporate life. It is his belief that the fundamental approach to life of such men as "William James, John Dewey, Charles Beard, Thorstein Veblen, the muck-rakers and a host of reformers brought the anachronisms of

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86. Whyte, W.H.; The Organization Man; Doubleday Anchor; New York; 1956; pp. 4-6.

87. *ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

the Protestant Ethic under fire, and in so doing helped lay the groundwork for the Social Ethic."<sup>88</sup>

"Quite clearly, revolt was in order. The growth of an organization society did demand a recognition that man was not entirely a product of his own free will.... It did need a new breeze, and if there had been no James or no Dewey, some form of pragmatism would probably have been invented anyway."<sup>89</sup>

In his sociological survey, Whyte readily admits that the culture has not yet been completely reshaped (the small businessmen still being the backbone of the individualist tradition); but he suggests that the modern corporation has put its permanent stamp of conformity on the modern capitalist. Soon, he feels, the organization man will be completely denied; his own individuality, his self-expression, and any will of his own to do what he likes, go where he likes, live as he likes, and buy what he himself desires. In short, the modern capitalist is the mass man, and the tyranny is all the worse because it is accepted voluntarily.<sup>90</sup>

88. Whyte, W.H.; The Organization Man; op. cit., p. 22.

89. *ibid.*, p. 23.

90. Other volumes with this same theme include: Riesman, Glazer, and Denney; The Lonely Crowd; Doubleday Anchor; New York; 1950; and Mills, C.W.; White Collar; Oxford; New York; 1953. (Riesman suggests that modern culture is the development of a "tradition directed" society with a low birth-rate giving way to an "inner directed" culture with a high birth-rate, which, in turn, has been succeeded by an "outer-directed" society with a stable birth rate. In other words, the most powerful motivations come not from our heritage or from our implanted moral principles, but from what we believe the right responses to be from other people's prevailing attitudes. He insists that we are now living in an "antenna age" in which the signals received determine the continually shifting personal self-adjustments which dominate our lives.)

While Whyte's researches cover many areas of modern capitalistic culture,<sup>91</sup> of particular interest is his discussion of modern religion in which he gives the opinion that religious attitudes not only helped shape, but in turn are shaped, by the prevailing social ethic. One of his illustrations will suffice to show the trend of his thought:

"Life, as it is, is beautiful enough, and one could easily gather from current reading that God is so merged with society that the two are just about indistinguishable. In an advertisement for the movie, "A Man Called Peter", there is a picture of a man walking up a hill through some dry ice mist. In his white shirt and four-in-hand tie, he looks uncommonly like a thoughtful young executive, but we find that he is a minister; 'He was a first-name kind of guy..... He was everybody's kind of guy.... He unpomped the pompous, played baseball with kids, turned a two-hour leave into a honeymoon for a sailor and his girl, and gave voice to all the longings in a man's soul.... He was a lovin' kind of guy..... Every woman secretly had her eyes on him, but he had eyes only for one -- Catherine -- who learned from him what a wonderful thing it was to be woman -- and wrote this story that topped the best-seller list for 128 weeks..... He was God's kind of guy.'"

This profanity, for that is what it is, is bold, even for the popular press, but it is characteristic. God likes regular people -- people who play baseball, like movie nuns. He smiles on society, and his message is a relaxing one. He does not scold you; He does not demand of you. He is a gregarious God and he can be found in the smiling, happy people of the society about <sup>92</sup> you. As the advertisements put it, religion can be fun."

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91. Whyte's studies go into the areas of education, business training, vocational testing, science, literature, religion, the problems of suburbia, personal and family finances, housing, and business ethics. Such chapter titles as "The Fight against Genius", "Love That System", "Society as Hero", and "The Web of Friendship" are indicative.

92. Whyte, W.H.; The Organization Man; op. cit., p. 282.

While Whyte never adequately distinguishes between the "Social Ethic" and "Secularism"<sup>93</sup>, his answer for modern victims of the Social Ethic is clear: Fight the System.<sup>94</sup> Capitalism in this day has been so overtaken by the needs of society that social control has supplanted freedom. He concludes his study with these words:

"He must fight The Organization. Not stupidly, or selfishly, for the defects of individual self-regard are no more to be venerated than the defects of cooperation. But fight he must, for the demands for his surrender are constant and powerful, and the more he has come to like the life of organization the more difficult does he find it to resist these demands, or even to recognize them. It is wretched, dispiriting advice to hold before him the dream that ideally there need be no conflict between him and society. There always is; there always must be. Ideology cannot wish it away; the peace of mind offered by organization remains a surrender, and no less so for being offered in benevolence. That is the problem."<sup>95</sup>

Thus, for Whyte, justice can live within modern capitalistic institutions easily enough; but it is a question as to man's freedom. For him, modern capitalism needs more -- not less -- self-interest.

If nothing else, his study proves that there is, indeed, a wide variety of opinion within Protestantism. Within Anglicanism, itself, for that matter; for *DEMANI, TOO, IS ANGLICAN!*

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94. This is probably because Whyte does not distinguish, as did Weber, between "The Spirit of Capitalism" and "The Protestant Ethic".
95. Whyte includes, as his Appendix, a chapter entitled, "How to cheat on Personality Tests";
96. Whyte, W.H.; The Organization Man; op. cit., p. 448.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSIONS AND CONTRASTS

During the preparation of this study certain personal conclusions have come inevitably to my mind. Many of them were included within the text of the previous chapters, but there are some generalizations which may be drawn from the work as a whole. While I can claim little originality for them, and they are by no means determinative; yet, they may add something to the definition of the problems within the multiple relationships of man, his fellow-men, the world, and God. After this lengthy examination of the Economic Ethics of the two most important Christian traditions, I would submit these as valid contrasts and conclusions:

I. BECAUSE OF ITS DOCTRINE OF NATURAL LAW, CATHOLICISM CAN MAKE A TOTAL CRITICISM OF THE ECONOMIC ORDER. PROTESTANTISM, ON THE OTHER HAND, BECAUSE IT IS NOT TIED EITHER TO A DOCTRINE OF A "LAW OF NATURE" OR TO A HISTORICAL "NORM", CAN ONLY OFFER LESS COMPLETE BUT MORE OBJECTIVE INSIGHTS.

As we have seen, the whole Roman Catholic Economic Ethic (with the possible exception of the "Titles" to usury) is the lengthened view, even today, of one man, "St.

Thomas of Aquin of Blessed Memory".<sup>1</sup> Every conclusion and every program suggested in Chapter Four is the direct deduction of something found within the analysis of Thomistic thought in Chapter Two. As a complete, integrated, logical system, Thomism stands as a monument to Aquinas.

While it is merely conjectural, I can't help but wonder what the effect on history would have been if St. Thomas had lived three centuries later? Catholicism allowed its ethics "to crystallize around the institution of feudalism",<sup>2</sup> and this may be traced almost directly to Aquinas himself. But if he had lived in the sixteenth century would he have interpreted the Natural Law in the same terms? Certainly, the status quo which he sought to preserve would not have had the same characteristics. Could he have applied the Aristotelian definitions of Commutative and Distributive Justice to an economy that was losing its stability and becoming dynamic? Would the Reformers now be considered by Catholic authors to be heretical innovators and would Calvin's insistence on the "Holy Community" be as overlooked as it now is?

I can supply no answers, of course; but I suspect that Catholicism's total indictment of capitalism would be of a far different order if its first formulator had lived in a

1. "Quadragesimo Anno", Par. 1.

2. See the quotation from Bennett, J.C.; p. 149.

different social, economic, and political atmosphere.

But Protestantism's diversity of views of Creation, man, and the effect of sin have hampered its witness. While history records that both Lutheran and Calvinistic concerns for social control were dissipated by the victory of Secularism, it was probably the direct result of Protestantism's insistence on the demonic nature of sin that was responsible. When the absolute cannot be translated into relative terms without losing its divine character, when love and justice are by nature unrealizable in society -- there is an "impossible possibility", expressed or unexpressed, at work. Unattainable ideals seldom inspire a perpetual search. With all the good intentions of "proving God", the dedicated Calvinist turned to the world at hand -- and soon lost his good intentions. Without a universal platform, such as the Law of Nature, Protestantism and Capitalism soon became almost indistinguishable for it was difficult to keep their tensions in focus. It is no wonder, for example, that Whyte identifies "The Protestant Ethic" with "The American Dream". Catholicism does the same.

Thus, Niebuhr's criticism of Barthian thought as being reactionary is the result of post-Reformation Protestantism's failure to keep the absolute nature of sin distinguished

from its relative consequences. In short, Protestantism either had to explain the problem of evil by denying the reality of a natural good, or be left with a "social gospel" which underestimated the demonic in the human soul.

There is no doubt that this philosophical problem is still unanswered in modern Protestantism. Personally, the "equality of sin and the inequality of guilt" does not appear to answer it for to determine guilt involves the use of some kind of objective standard. Brunner's idea of a new Doctrine of Creation may hold possibilities; but that, too, involves weaknesses, especially in its prejudice against social change.

But this very questioning becomes Protestantism's virtue. Because it is continually forced to go back to a re-examination of its first principles, Protestantism does not allow itself (except in its most uncritical adherents) to become involved in a finalized social ideal. When the Catholic looks forward to the new society, he sees the ingredients of the static, ordered, organic, feudalistic world. The Protestant can have no such vision, for he realizes that the perfect form of human society has never even been visualized (except in the undefined term, "Kingdom of God"), much less put into practice. Thus, his judgments become more

objective, more perfectionistic and critical, more incisive and realistic. By the virtue of his philosophic quandry, the Protestant cannot institutionalize the Kingdom of God -- either in Heaven or on earth. His view of the nature of sin will not allow him to accept the double standard of "Counsels and Precepts" as the way of perfection; but neither will it allow him to be satisfied with anything less than The Sermon On The Mount -- as impossible as that well might be.

II. THE CHURCH HAS ALWAYS HAD THE POWER TO "SANCTIFY" THE ECONOMIC STATUS QUO; BUT WHEN IT USED THAT POWER IT LOST ITS CAPACITY TO DIRECT CHRISTIAN CRITICISM AGAINST IT.

This is, of course, somewhat of a tautology; but I believe it needs constant repetition. "Be ye not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed..."<sup>3</sup> is a continual challenge to Christendom in the light of almost perpetual temptation.

As we have seen at the time of Constantine; during the height of the power of the Medieval Church; in the powerful influence of Calvinism; and in our own heady days of "the humanization of modern industry"; the Church is in real danger of accepting the partial good in place of the whole. The Church as an institution must insist on corrections within the economic order; but when those ends are achieved -- either totally or only in part -- the Church's responsibility lies in "setting the sights" of society on a higher level.

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3. Romans 12:2.

It would be quite inaccurate to give to the Church all the credit for social and economic advance as purely economic forces were involved more than is generally recognized by anyone other than Marxists. But it would be equally wrong to deny that her influence was not brought to bear on the alleviation of human suffering and the remoulding of society. In no small measure, the Church, through the work of dedicated Christians, did help to reduce slavery to feudalism, feudalism to contract, and contract to the "social ethic". But, at each stage, there has been the tendency to sanctify the new order and finalize it as God's ultimate Will.

In this connection, Dr. W. Norman Pittenger's words are applicable. In criticizing the speech of a fellow-clergyman (unnamed) who illustrated this willingness he writes,

"He simply did not see what he was saying. He was making Christianity a function of our national life. He was implicitly denying its integrity and its supreme claim upon men's allegiance in its own right, and implicitly defending Christianity simply because it happens to be good and useful for the preservation of American ideals.

What he did unconsciously may one day be done quite consciously and intentionally. Indeed, it is already being done.....

When the new society has been established among us, the danger will be all the greater. For that society will be concerned to see that all men have sufficient income, sufficient comfort, sufficient health, and all the other necessary sufficiencies of life, in order that they can realize to a fuller degree the intrinsic possibilities of human nature. This is all to the good. But

precisely because it is to the good and so important, so close to the heart of Christian concern for the rights of one's brothers, so intimately related to the compassion all Christians ought to feel, it will be the easier to confuse the preservation of that kind of society and the greater implementation of its quite real values, with the Christian religion itself. This is perhaps a credit to the hearts of those who make the confusion; it is certainly no credit to their heads."<sup>4</sup>

This may be an overstatement and could quite possibly lead to an exclusively "other-world" interpretation of Christianity. It is certainly a bit premature in the light of the physical needs of two-thirds of the world's people who go to bed each night hungry; but it does express a concern for the temptation to which the Church has repeatedly succumbed. Protestantism has not been as guilty, on the whole, of sanctifying the status quo as has Catholicism because it has been more unwilling to finalize its Social Ideal. Even so, the warning has historical justification for all of Christendom.

III. BECAUSE OF ITS OWN ASSURANCE IN ITS FINAL SOCIAL IDEAL, CATHOLICISM HAS BEEN GUILTY OF OPPORTUNISM; BUT, BECAUSE OF ITS LACK OF SELF-ASSURANCE, PROTESTANTISM HAS BEEN GUILTY OF COMPLACENCY.

The impetus given to the Catholic Social Doctrine by its Natural Law theory has allowed Catholicism to "come to terms" with unsavoury politics -- from the Emperors of the -----

4. Pittenger, W.N.; The Historic Faith in a Changing World; Oxford; New York; 1950; pp. 113-114.

Holy Roman Empire, through Francis I, to General Franco in our own day. It would be unjustified to say that Catholicism is willing to let the end justify the means for that is in contradiction to its theory; but, in practice, Catholics have often forsaken ethical criteria for momentary ecclesiastical supremacy, as the various "Concordats" will testify. The Church, confident of its lasting power, quite rightly refuses to be overawed by petty dictators or economic imperialists; but, rather than denounce them from strength, seems willing to augment its own power by using them -- by lending the dignity of its offices in the hope of securing immediate advantages and influence for the Church's total program. Because of its Doctrine of the Law of Nature, Catholicism places too high a value on stability, and overestimates its power to redeem from within. This is, I submit, unethical; and even inconsistent with the best that is within the Catholicism that extols martyrdom and self-sacrifice.

For my part, I find it inconsistent that Pope Pius XI, in the name of the Church, could sign a "Concordat" with Mussolini in 1929; and, then, two years later, on the basis of the same principles, issue such a moving document as "Quadragesimo Anno" with its deeply expressed concern for human wel-

fare. And, then, in the name of the same principles, scarcely four years later follow the course which Latourette describes:

"When, in 1935, Italy invaded Ethiopia, although Pius XI incurred the displeasure of the fascist press by declaring wars of conquest unjust, the Roman Catholic Church made no clear-cut protest but sought to take advantage of the situation to extend Papal authority over the Ethiopian Church."<sup>5</sup>

In this sense, both Niebuhr and Boulding are completely justified in questioning the wisdom of whether entrenched power and ethical purity can go hand in hand.

But Protestantism's sins, by contrast, have been those of omission. The only ameliorating element that I can find, other than the individual witness of certain dedicated souls, is that today most Protestants regret that the Churches did not, in the "robber baron days", speak out earlier and with more vehemence against the evils of industrial capitalism. The "sweat shop", the fourteen-hour day, the employment of six and eight-year-old children, the unrestricted and unregulated employment of women and its resultant degradation of family life, and all the other questions of primary social justice -- prisons, housing, unions, pensions, social insurance, etc. -- remain an indictment against Protestantism's conception of responsibility. Because Protestant Puritanism reduced ethics to questions of only personal morality -- and only discouraged the resultant injustice by prudential philanthropy -- the Protestantism of today is reaping its reward

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5. Latourette, K.S.; A History of Christianity; Eyre and Spottiswoode; London; p. 1365.

in its over-all lack of vital penetration within the so-called "working classes". That this is a judgment based only on history is a good thing indeed; however, this conception of social responsibility is still present in the form of "pietistic moralism" and still carries great influence, especially within American Protestantism.

The "Social Gospel" may have had great intellectual deficiencies, but I suspect it may also have thwarted the rise of Anglo-American Communistic protests not unlike those in France, Italy, and South America today. Catholicism is not exempt from blame,<sup>6</sup> yet it is sadly true that the "labour party" and the "new deal" (which were both inspired by deep Christian concerns) are not now known as essentially Protestant Social Movements. That they were secular is a discredit to Christendom.

Yet, this having been said, another conclusion must be added:

IV. MODERN CAPITALISM IS RADICALLY DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF THE UNREGULATED "HIDDEN HAND" OF ADAM SMITH; BUT THIS DEVELOPMENT, WHILE MAKING CAPITALISM MORE PALATABLE TO PROTESTANTISM, SHOWS LITTLE INDICATION OF BECOMING THE CATHOLIC IDEAL.

The "Social Ethic" of which Whyte is so condemnatory

6. It is significant, as J. H. Nichols points out, that the most "socially advanced" countries today have as their background a Protestant tradition. Moreover, as Niebuhr records, there was no responsible Catholic protest against "McCarthyism". Senator McCarthy was himself a Catholic.

has developed, it would seem, by the increasing social power of trade-unionism on the one hand, and increasing government intervention in the economy on the other. Both of these "coercive elements" run contrary to the unregulated interplay of economic forces envisaged by Adam Smith and Ricardo. The Keynesian analysis may not be universally accepted, but the total doctrine of laissez-faire is no longer held up even as an ideal -- as the "capitalistic" policies of a British Conservative Welfare State and an American "Liberal Republicanism" will go to prove.

Whether by political pressure or social evolution the effect of the change is clear: the "dog-eat-dog" days are now over. Even in the U.S.A., the most conservative of the modern western nations, a host of political enactments -- The Sherman and Clayton Anti-Trust Bills, The Wagner Labor-Relations Act (with its Taft-Hartley addition), the Pure Food and Drug Law, the Securities and Exchange Commission Measure, the "G.I. Bill", and the number of "Alphabetical Agencies" -- have changed not only the character of American free-enterprise, but also the ethical quality of its capitalism.

As we have seen, American Protestantism -- both in the Social Gospel Movement and in the Neo-Orthodox tradition -- welcomed these measures and this change as being, for the most part, consistent with Christian principles. As we have

also seen, modern capitalism, by Protestant standards and from Protestant perspectives, is not regarded as perfect; but it is, at least, "acceptable", "tolerable", and "welcome". Protestantism generally acknowledges modern "humanized capitalism" to be more morally worthy than a de-humanized anything else.

Moreover, it is only within Protestantism that the "positive-sum-game" of which Boulding writes is seen as changing the terms of the wealth-poverty and equality-inequality problems. Even if not universally, Protestantism, for the most part, recognizes tremendous productive power and capacity for economic growth as moral goods. Catholic authors write only with the view of the static economy operating under the "zero-sum-game" principle. Thus, with the few exceptions like Demant, Protestantism finds it extremely difficult to cast a blanket denunciation on modern capitalism. Even discounting the Protestant prejudice for freedom, this appears to be the basis of modern Protestant economic thought. Generally, Protestantism acknowledges the wisdom of Tawney's criticism of Demant's Religion and the Decline of Capitalism:

"Not many of the ills to which flesh is heir are worse than starvation. The rise of European Capitalism must be seen against the background of a continent where shortages approaching famine were in most parts recurrent, and in some were endemic."<sup>7</sup>

7. R.H. Tawney's Review of Religion and the Decline of Capitalism; in the "Observer", July 16, 1950; and cited by Munby, D.L.; Christianity and Economic Problems; Macmillan; London; 1956; p. 244.

Catholicism, on the other hand, is content to recite the social ills of capitalism as they were seen in the unregulated, uninfluenced days. From the Natural Law Catholics condemn the free market as denying the just price and promoting usury. Capitalism, they feel, is the complete contradiction of the principle of the organic society, and the social ideal of status under capitalism must inevitably give way to unrestricted freedom of contract. Moreover, the humanitarian and Natural Law demand of the "family living wage" cannot be logically deduced from capitalistic principles; and the Corporate State cannot be logically derived from the philosophy of the free market.

This is all no doubt true; but it does miss the point that seems obvious: modern capitalistic practices do NOT STEM FROM laissez-faire capitalistic principles. This must be kept in mind when the Catholic authors lay claim to significant and unique concerns for social justice and the human welfare of those who suffer under capitalism. Or, even the most progressive Catholic ethicists, for that matter, when they concede that Protestants are interested in social justice, fail to distinguish between capitalistic theory and modern industrial practice. Thus, J. F. Cronin writes,

"This group (the Federal Council of Churches) accepts the principle that both individual reform and the change of institutions are necessary to procure social justice. Its detailed comments on property, labor, prices, and profits are not dissimilar from much that is found in

Catholic Social Teaching. There should be little conflict on social principles between Catholics and Protestants who accept the Federal Council Report."<sup>8</sup>

Thus, in a subtle way, Catholicism is as willing to accept the help of Protestantism as it is fascism to establish the Social Ideal. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to be objective about such matters; but, as can readily be seen from only a cursory study of the "Pronouncements" and the "Encyclicals", the differences of total social objectives are greater than their similarities, though their judgments on certain economic practices may, at one time or even today, be the same. I submit, that everything taken together, the high point of modern Catholic Economic Ethics was "Quadragesimo Anno"; and that, since that time, Catholicism has been content with a reiteration of its program and principles. This is not true in the political realm, for the modern Catholic teachings which condemn communism in the political Encyclicals have long identified communism as being unchristian, and are increasingly incisive in regard to its objectives and methods. But, in regard to capitalism, like Niebuhr, Catholicism was most critical, but, unlike him, unable to reassess its position. Such is the nature of a finalized judgment.

But all this does not imply that the humanitarian impul-

8. Cronin, J.F.; Catholic Social Principles; Bruce; Milwaukee; 1950; p. 62.

ses within Catholicism cannot find expression; but the Neo-Medieval organic society is, obviously, nowhere near the modern society of the "Social Ethic". Because Catholicism has failed -- as many Protestants have done -- to distinguish between Secularism and essential Protestantism, it fails to distinguish the economic sins of a generation ago from the loud protests of the economically conservative today, i.e. the "pietistic moralists", who do not represent either modern Protestantism or modern capitalism but condemn both.

On the other hand, a valid ethical concern for human welfare does flow from Catholicism; and no assessment of their Economic Ethic would overlook it and retain validity. This zeal -- as evidenced by the humanitarianism and sympathy of the Encyclicals, the witness of dedicated priests and laity (the Worker-Priest Movement and the J. O. C. and the Catholic Welfare League, to name but a few) and the concern for the helpless as seen in Catholic Institutions around the world -- does stem from a vital Christian feeling, and is a tribute to Catholic charity. That, of course, is the point: these activities are expressions of love and not justice. While not inconsistent with the Natural Law, these expressions indicate the theological, and not the moral, virtues.

Yet, it is certainly insufficient to deride Catholicism

for its mistakes without suggesting a more adequate Protestant Economic Ethic. But, as we have seen, none exists. There is no one authoritative Protestant view, and even the expressions of opinion of significant Protestants differ -- in some cases, widely.

The reason that Protestantism has not finalized its economic views, it would appear, can not only be found within the nature of Protestantism, but with the nature of ethics as well. An Ethic is always a compromise position arrived at by decision in the light of possible ends and courses of action. I believe that Protestantism has acted quite widely in refusing to accept any end but "The Will of God"; but, since that phrase has yet to be adequately defined, Protestantism has refused to accept any one action or series of actions as being "right" or "good". Yet, since the compulsive power of the Christian faith indicates some kind of Christian activity, some kind of ethic, or some series of ethical principles, must be derived. Necessarily, to be truly Protestant, it would have to harmonize conflicting principles, indicate action, and couple them with a Christian affirmation of faith. And, above all, it would glorify God.

This may not be possible. Personally, I have serious doubts as to whether it can ever be finally done. Yet, not to write an ethic, but to suggest some of the features which would have to be incorporated within an adequate Protestant Economic view, I submit the following:

V. IN THE FORMULATION OF A MODERN PROTESTANT ECONOMIC ETHIC THAT WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH HISTORIC PROTESTANTISM DUE CONSIDERATION WOULD BE GIVEN THE FOLLOWING FACTORS:

A. THAT THE NATURE OF MAN IS BOTH CONTAMINATED WITH SIN AND CAPABLE OF UNBELIEVABLE SELF-FORGETFULNESS;

True to the Reform tradition, Protestantism must insist that evil is real, and not mere error to be corrected by education, science, good-will, or anything less than Divine Redemption. On the other hand, the Protestant Ethic must not become an equally one-sided "problem of the good", and deny that there exist ultimate possibilities for love, devotion, and self-sacrifice in the least moral of men.

B. THAT THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IS BOTH CONCERNED WITH THE SPIRITUAL REALM OF THE ETERNAL HUMAN SOUL AND WITH THE TRANSITORY WORLD OF THE HUMAN FLESH;

It would be contrary to the teachings of Jesus to deny the reality and the goodness of this world. Yet, Protestantism must always keep before it the "interim-ethic" which insists that the world is relative, transient, and that men are "strangers and pilgrims".

C. THAT THERE ARE POSITIVE VALUES BOTH IN STABLE AND DYNAMIC SOCIETIES -- AND THAT NEITHER TRADITION NOR PROGRESS ARE IN THEMSELVES ULTIMATE GOALS;

There appears to be real merit within Boulding's emphasis on the dynamic nature of the "flower of the Spirit";

and that societies and institutions must be treated ecologically, -- be allowed to be born, nurture, flower, and die with ease. On the other hand, the society that is totally rootless, and preserves neither its traditions nor its cultural heritage is in real danger of immanent collapse. Demant expresses a vital truth in his fear that modern economic life is parasitic in that it lives off the cultural deposits of previous ages.

D. THAT THE PRIVILEGES OF THE INDIVIDUAL MUST BE PROTECTED, BUT MUST BE BALANCED BY THE NEEDS OF SOCIETY AS A WHOLE;

"Liberty in Law" is a worthy ideal, but its definition grows increasingly complex in an age of abundance and rising populations. The Social Ideal of Protestantism must include a harmonizing element between a concept of unlimiting status and limited contract. Social fluidity has to be preserved, and individuals rewarded by some measure of justice; but society, as a whole, has the obligation to protect itself from the destructivity of its own citizens in conflict. Moreover, a responsible society will protect those individuals within it who cannot or will not protect themselves. Law, by itself, is neither evil nor good -- only necessary; but the positive laws must be just and preserve freedom at the same time.

E. THAT THERE MUST BE ADEQUATE MEANS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE WHICH WILL ALLOW A MAXIMUM OF PROGRESS WITHIN A MINIMUM OF SOCIAL DISRUPTION;

To act everywhere for the "glory of God", the Protestant must act in society, and a competent ethic would include the recognition of the constant need for Social Change. This appears to be the point at which Brunner's idea of social justice is weakest for he seems to deny both constructive and destructive social action. But Protestantism must seek to provide means for a maximum of Christian Action within a minimum of social disruption. Thus, for example, the Churches could encourage automation for they would have an answer to redundancy; they could demand an end of apartheid without the fear of producing a Little Rock; and they could help dethrone a Batista without the cost of a Castro.

F. THAT MEN ARE DESTINED TO BE SERVANTS TO GOD AND EACH OTHER, BUT NEVER TO MERE "THINGS";

A partial good, the technics of capitalism, may eventually eradicate poverty; but they do have sub-human overtones. When production demands that a man's employment be determined by a machine -- "when it works, I don't; when it doesn't, I do"<sup>9</sup> -- then the Churches must develop an adequate idea of Christian Vocation. Men must not become brutes. But modern productivity demands tend to disrupt the accepted, older

9. A remark made to me by a friend in Bucyrus, Ohio who was describing his "job". His duty is to sit beside an IEM-machine in a completely automated Timken, Inc., plant -- and read the newspaper! If the electronic machine should cease to operate effectively, his highly trained mind and skilled hands are needed at once, for it is estimated that a breakdown costs the Company over fifty dollars a minute. He is virtually indispensable for the factory's operation, and yet does nothing for weeks on end, except to appear for "work" regularly each day on time.

work values; laziness becomes productivity, continually rising prices make thrift foolishness, and the excellence of individual<sup>AN</sup> production line performance becomes socially disruptive and economically wasteful if it far exceeds the minimum. Under these conditions, unless the Protestant Church can place the problems within a larger context, the so-called "Protestant virtues" can become less virtuous than mere moral mediocrity. Those same impulses which helped to create capitalism's productivity might encourage its dissolution.

G. THAT THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS WITH HIS PEOPLE.

While ethics remains embroiled in the problem of how "to translate an absolute love into a relative justice",<sup>10</sup> a Biblical faith reminds men that God is among them. Underlying the Protestant's affirmation of faith is the Master who said, "...I am with you always even unto the end of the world."<sup>11</sup> The leadings of His Spirit must never be discounted no matter how mundane the problems or how evil the sin.

It is not within the intention of this study to write a new Protestant Ethic, yet I submit that the study of the contrasts between Roman Catholic and Protestant Economic Ethics logically suggest these elements to be included within a Protestant Ethic that has not yet been written, as opposed to a Catholic Ethic which has "arrived" -- but, because of a Law of Nature and a finalized Social Ideal, at many wrong conclusions.

10. See the quotation from Niebuhr, p. 263.

11. Matt. 28:20b.

APPENDIX A

A LIST OF THE PAPAL "SOCIAL ENCYCLICALS"

(as given by Cronin, J.F.; Catholic Social Principles; Bruce; Milwaukee; 1950; pp. 774-778.)

Pope Leo XIII

Quod Apostolici Muneris

Miuturnum Illud

Immortale Dei

Libertas Praestantissimum

Sapientiae Christianae

Rerum Novarum

In the Midst of Solitudes, February 16, 1892

Letter to Bishop of Grenoble, June 22, 1892

Longinque Oceani

Letter to Italian Bishops, December 8, 1902

Pope Pius X

Il Firmo Proposito

Pope Benedict XV

Letter to Bishop of Bergamo, March 11, 1920

Pope Pius XI

Ubi Arcano

Mens Nostra

Divini Illius Magistri

Casti Connubii

Quadragesimo Anno

Non Abbiamo Bisogno

Caritate Christi Compulsi

Ad Catholici Sacerdotii

Mit Brennender Sorge

On Atheistic Communism

Firmissiman Constantiam

Pope Pius XII

Summi Pontificatus

Sertum Laetitiae

La Solennita della Pentecoste

Nell' Alba

Christmas Broadcast, 1942

Address to Italian Workers, June 13, 1943

## Pope Pius XII (cont.)

- Christmas Message, 1943  
 Radio Address, September 1, 1944  
 Letter to French Episcopate, January 6, 1945  
 Address to Italian Workers, March 11, 1945  
 Address to College of Cardinals, June 2, 1945  
 On Women's Duties  
 Christmas Broadcast, 1945  
 Discourse to Members of Italian Electric Industry, Jan. 24,  
 1946  
 Letter to Semaines Sociales, 1946  
 Discourse to Italian Farmers, November 15, 1946  
 Address to Members of Renascita Cristiana, January 22, 1947  
 Allocution to Sacred College of Cardinals, June 2, 1947  
 Letter to Semaines Sociales, 1947  
 Discourse to Catholic Action Men, September 7, 1947  
 Allocution to International Union of Leagues of Catholic  
 Women, September 12, 1947  
 Address to Small Craftsmen, October, 1947  
 Christmas Broadcast, 1947  
 Address to Congress of International Exchange, March 7, 1948  
 Discourse to International Institute for Unification of  
 Private Rights, May 20, 1948  
 Allocution to Sacred College of Cardinals, June 2, 1948  
 Discourse to Christian Association of Italian Workers,  
 June 29, 1948  
 Address to Young Men, September 12, 1948  
 Discourse on Public Finance, October 2, 1948  
 Discourse to Members of Fiat Automobile Plant, October 31,  
 1948  
 Christmas Message, 1948  
 Address to Catholic Employers, May 7, 1949  
 Address to Minister from India, July 6, 1949  
 Address to Women of Italian Catholic Action, July, 1949  
 Letter to Semaines Sociales, 1949  
 Message to German Catholics, September 4, 1949  
 Allocution to Belgian Workers, September 11, 1949

## APPENDIX B

### A LIST OF THE PROTESTANT ECUMENICAL "SOCIAL PRONOUNCEMENTS"

(As given by Hall, C.P.; The Churches Deal With Economic Issues; National Council of Churches; New York; 1954.)

#### World-Wide Ecumenical Bodies

- Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work  
Stockholm, Sweden, 1925; Understanding (An Interpretation) by C. H. Brent
- International Missionary Conference  
Jerusalem, 1928; Volume V. The Christian Mission in Relation to Industrial Problems  
Madras, India, 1938; The World Mission of the Church
- The World Conference on Church, Community, and State  
Oxford, England, 1937; Section III. The Church and the Economic Order
- Lambeth Conference of the Bishops of the Anglican Churches  
London, England, 1948; The Encyclical Letter from Bishops, together with Resolutions and Reports
- First Assembly of the World Council of Churches  
Amsterdam, Holland, 1948; Section III. The Church and the Disorder of Society
- Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches  
Evanston, U.S.A., 1954; Section III. The Meaning of the Responsible Society

#### National Bodies

- Canada. The Farmer and National Life; United Churches of Canada; Toronto; 1942.
- China. Report of the General Assembly; Church of Christ in China; 1949.
- Great Britain. Social Justice and Economic Reconstruction (compiled reports)
- New Zealand. Christian Order in Relation to Industry, Commerce, and the Land; Conference on Christian Order of the National Council of Churches of New Zealand; Christchurch; 1945.
- South Africa. Report of the National Conference on Christian Reconstruction; Christian Council of South Africa; Fort Hare; 1942.

The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America

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