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# The Catholic Record.

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## THE SOCIAL QUESTION.

Dr. Zahn Says Leo is its Most Illustrious Exponent.

The Rev. Dr. John A. Zahn contributes a highly interesting article on "Leo XIII. and the Social Question" to the August number of the North American Review. Dr. Zahn says that one of the greatest questions of the day, it is admitted by all, is the social question, and its most illustrious exponent is, without doubt, the august Pontiff of the Vatican. Ever since his assumption of the tiara Leo XIII. has manifested a special interest in all problems relating to the welfare of society. This is abundantly evinced by his noble encyclicals on these topics, and by his numberless letters to eminent representatives of Church and State.

In a private audience, with which I was favored not long since, continues the doctor, the social question was introduced and discussed at some length. I ventured to tell His Holiness that the editor of the North American Review had requested me to write an article on this subject, and that the people of America, non Catholics as well as Catholics, were always pleased to give respectful and reverent attention to his utterances, and especially to all those in any wise bearing on the condition of the laboring classes.

"Ah, yes," he said, "the Americans are a noble people. I love them greatly. I am aware of the deep interest they take in social problems and was gratified to learn that they received so kindly my encyclical on the condition of labor. You may tell the people of the United States, through the North American Review, that I shall always be ready to contribute to the fullest extent of my power towards their well-being and happiness, and especially towards the well-being and happiness of the wage-earners of their great republic."

"The social question," continued the venerable Pontiff, his eyes beaming with light and intelligence as he discoursed on the subject to which he attaches so much importance—"the social question is the great question of the future. La question sociale, c'est la question de l'avenir. It is a question in which all should be interested, and each one should contribute his quota towards lessening and removing the difficulties with which it is at present beset. It is particularly desirable that ecclesiastics should be thoroughly conversant with the subject, and that they should take an active part in every discussion and in every movement that looks toward the betterment of the social question of humanity, and especially the social condition of that major portion which must earn their bread by the sweat of their brow."

This is but a brief synopsis of what the Holy Father actually said, and conveys no idea whatever of the earnestness and impressiveness which characterized the spoken words of the large-hearted and noble-minded occupant of the chair of Peter. He dwelt particularly on his encyclicals *Innocentiae Dei* and *Rerum Novarum*, and referred incidentally to other documents, bearing on the same subjects, of which he is the author. In another part of his splendid article Dr. Zahn says:

"Since issuing his famous encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, of which Europe, poisoned by the School of Manchester and by the teachings of a materialistic philosophy, had greater need than young and prosperous America. Leo XIII. has developed his apostolic doctrine more in detail. This is observed especially in his letters to the Count de Mun, the Bishop of Grenoble, the Bishop of Liege, the Cardinal of Mechlin, as well as in his letters to M. Decurtens, to Abbe Six, to Abbe Naudet, and others. All these manifestations of the great Papal mind are bound together by the same golden thread. Go to the people to assist and emancipate them. Establish syndicates and association for the laboring classes. Demands from the State legislation for their protection, and strive to secure the passage of a law, international in character, which shall protect at the same time both employer and employee from economic piracy. Restrict the hours of labor, and place women and children under proper protection. Give to the poor man a just remuneration for his work, and strive to make him an upright and honorable citizen. Above all, see that religion is the inspiring and directing soul of the home, for without it the work of reconstruction and regeneration is impossible."

That which, above all else, brings out in bold relief the solicitude of Leo XIII. for the laboring man is the injunction which he lays on, the mission which he commits to, the priests of the Church. He wishes them to go forth into the market-place, to visit the factories, to found societies for workingmen, to inaugurate conferences for them, and thus to direct the large democratic and social current which is the result of long ages of effort, labor and sacrifice. To Americans, with their native activity and independence, this is easy and natural. It, however, demanded evangelical courage to impose this on the Old World, where here centuries of *Renaissance* of Pagan law, and a century of *laissez-faire* and *laissez-passer* have atomized

society and divided the human family into two opposing camps—on one side the tyranny of the law and of the employer; on the other, renewed servitude and virtual rebellion—everywhere hatred, lack of equilibrium, egotism and overt struggle.

One of the most striking characteristics of the Pope's teaching ancient labor problem is his return to the ideas of evangelical solidarity, to the lessons of social wisdom, and to the principles which governed the guilds of the Middle Ages—all of which, with singular skill, he adapts to the needs and conditions of the century just closing. Sometimes reactionaries, and even English Liberals, reproach the Pope with going too far and with favoring methods which are regarded as revolutionary. In the eyes of such people he is a Socialist. This revolutionist, however, but re-ignites the almost extinguished torch of Christian traditions. He is simply continuing the spirit of the early ages of the Church. "The day when there shall be placed in the chair of St. Peter," wrote de Vogue in his *Spectacles Contemporains*, "a Pope animated with the sentiments of Cardinal Gibbons and Cardinal Manning, the Church will stand forth before the world as the most formidable power it has ever known." So be it. It is not Leo XIII. such a Pontiff? Fearlessly brushing aside three centuries of cabinet diplomacy, he declares his intention of following the traditions of those illustrious pontiffs who are honored in history as social law-givers and emancipators of the people. He synthesizes admirably the Gospel, St. John Chrysostom, St. Thomas, Gregory VII., Alexander IV., Pius IV., and many others besides. "The danger is imminent," wrote Madam Adam in her *Patric Bourgeois*, "for Leo XIII. is preparing a crusade which a younger Pope may render triumphant. The constitution of the Church and individual devotedness, which Christianity, we must admit, is capable of exalting, in a far higher degree than the philosophy of Paul Bert, are calculated to provoke one of those grand movements of moral reform which are always based on a social movement."

Madam Adam forgets that it is not a crusade, but a return to the principles of economic and organic mutuality which obtained before the *Renaissance*, and an adaptation of them to the age in which we live. This is what Leo XIII. told Castelar, the Spanish Republican, in so many words. "It is necessary," said he, "to bring back the Church to its original traditions." In this declaration are revealed at once the historic mind and the originality of Leo XIII. In it are disclosed his greatness and the unity and majestic co-ordination of all his acts and all his teachings.

Economically and socially, the *Renaissance*, the resurrection of pagan law, the cult of exaggerated individualism, the philosophy which issued in Darwinism, have again brought back and made general both the pride and the slavery of ancient Rome. Absolute and pagan theories regarding property, exaltation of liberty, which, while it is the honor of the human mind in the domain of politics, is folly in the domain of economic science, substitution of an artificial mechanism for the normal organism, rupture with industrial organizations—the atomization of society—in a word, all the miseries of our modern world have proceeded from these sources. Our age is, indeed, but a walled-in field of battle, in which egotism, individual interests and passions are engaged in homicidal combat. Formerly society was an edifice, in which each social floor had its protection, its right, its security, its well-being. It was, to employ another figure, a vast organism, in which each member, while it was subject to the law governing the whole, had its proper function and its full life.

It is this thought, eminently Christian and eminently evangelic—a thought reposing on justice and love—which is the mainspring of the social action of the Holy Father. Here, as elsewhere, Leo XIII., while always having a regard for the times in which we live, supplies us with the traditional means of subsistence and defence. A man of the past and of the future, continuing in his own beneficent way the policy of his illustrious predecessors, while at the same time paving the way for a better tomorrow—without change of principles, but by the application of new methods—the present Pontiff stands conspicuous in history as an innovator, while he is all the while but a priest appropriated for our own time.

Besides the teachings of antiquity there are other guides nearer to us for pontifical initiative. A conservative prince, the Papacy scarcely ever moves in advance of the political and social exigencies of an epoch. It does not create, it codifies.

The Fathers have determined with precision this law of organic growth. Origen, Tertullian, St. Augustine, and above all, St. Vincent of Lerins, have developed the philosophy of this phenomenon. It is thus that they speak of a *sensus theologicus*, of an *intelligentia ecclesiastica*, of a *sensus Catholicus* which are affirmed, explained and translated in a body of

doctrines, in *codem sensu et in eodem dogmate*.

In a lower degree, the Papacy appropriates and condenses the human teachings of each epoch in so far as they bear on the immutable principles of the evangelical and traditional deposit. In every direction in which the energies of the Church are employed, we remark a formal evolution of this institution which is in relation to the evolution of the ideas and the facts of the contemporary world. With the plastic power, which is par excellence the sign of her vitality, the Church adapts herself in our days to the service of societies formed outside of herself, and often opposed to her, as she adapted herself to the feudal system, to the *Renaissance*, and to all the metamorphoses of its flock. Her work, sometimes, illudes the careless observer, because it goes on by processes which resemble the mysterious processes of growth and development in the higher organisms. Under the action of vital force all the atoms of our body are continually being changed and renewed, but our form and personality are in nowise modified thereby. It is in this sense that we must understand the renovation of the Church and the Papacy.

The Church and the Papacy are never in a hurry. In everything which does not concern eternity, in the domain of the contingent and the relative, her role is not to anticipate, but to regulate and to consecrate all the progress definitely made. Some thinkers urge, as an objection and as examples of unexplainable variation, the misfortunes of certain bold spirits, who, in the past, were blamed for having maintained political and social doctrines which were subsequently cordially received by the Vatican. These innovators had started too soon. Political truths, essentially relative, do not become complete verities and acceptable to Rome save at the moment when they appear practical, or when the circumstances of time and place clearly evince that the fruit is ripe and may be gathered. In all that concerns herself, the Church is the sole judge of this moment.

The encyclical on the condition of labor and other similar acts of Pope Leo XIII. are the official and permanent consecration of the labors and the teachings of the most devoted Catholics of this century in respect of the social question.

The first one after Ozanam, or the Viscount de Melun, to make a deep impression on Rome in this matter, was Bishop Ketteler, of Mayence. It was in 1848, when economic currents, that he promulgated one time, even, Bismarck seriously thought of making him Archbishop of Cologne, and of undertaking with him the great work of social reconstruction. The Kulturkampf, which the Iron Chancellor inaugurated in order to placate the national liberals, to break the power of Rome and to divide France, rendered this grandiose project illusory. Ketteler, however, did not abandon his plans. While the storms raged above the Germans forests he gathered about him those gallant heroes, Vogelsang, Kuestlein, Scheelen, Hiltz, George, Monfang, Schorlemer, Brandts, Bachem, and all that chosen band, who, even in our own day, with less élan and more timidity, it is true, continue to develop his ideas. At the Council of the Vatican, before the cannon of Sedan had startled Europe, the Bishop of Mayence hoped to secure official recognition of his programme, and thus bring the laboring world within the orbit of the Church. But this fondly cherished hope was not realized.

"And to think"—he complained to the Archbishop of Rouen—"to think that we have not been able to utter the cry of love and sympathy to the outcasts of the century!"

But the seed which he sowed germinated. On the morrow of this same war, a representative of France took up the idea which had its birth beyond the Rhine. Supported by the teachings of Lepage and Perin, the Count de Mun with the volcanic fire of his eloquence, continued the social crusade. He soon succeeded in rallying around him such soldiers as La Tour de Pin, P. Pascal, M. Lorin, Abbe Noudet, Abbe Bataille, Abbe Six, M. Sabatier, and, above all, Cardinal Langenieux and M. Leon Harnel, who led to the Pope the first workingmen's pilgrimage.

At this same epoch, the Abbe Potier, professor at Liege, in Belgium, discovered his vocation for social work. A priest and a theologian, he had a singular love for the poor, and was possessed of a judgment that was almost infallible. From the gospel he drew forth a whole body of social doctrine, and found a sanction for his apostolate in the highest founts of Christianity. His programme is an irrefutable, economic codification of the doctrines of the Holy Fathers and of the Doctors of the Middle Ages. In spite of all the attacks which have been directed against it, it remains impregnable. Around him also have gathered a zealous body of co-workers like the Kurths, the Levies, the de Harles, the Vetragnans, and hosts of others.

Then, again, there is M. Decurtens, a layman. A born democrat, and a counsellor of the nation, he is as ardent

an ultramontane as he is an imperturbable socialist. A leader of the laboring classes and a man of broad culture, erudite, eloquent and energetic, he is endowed with not only an incomparable capacity for work but also an incomparable power of will.

He it was who effected in Switzerland the fusion of the labor organizations, Catholic and Protestant. He it was who induced his government to convoke an assembly of all the Estates in order to consider universal, social legislation—a project which was frustrated by William II. It is he, too, who makes periodical pilgrimages to the Vatican to engage the Holy Father to direct the social movement of our time. He has many rivals and imitators, but the noblest spirits of Helvetia are with him.

The Anglo-Saxon race furnished the Pope with reason for action. Here appear Manning, Gibbons, Ireland and Keane, the last three of whom are better known, and more highly appreciated, in Europe than in their own country. They are men of ardent action, always optimists, ever alert and never discouraged. Both by vocation and by environment they are leaders. Disentangled from the conventionalities of the Old World, they are more free than their European confreres; their faith is more pronounced and their word has the true ring of the Gospel of Christ.

As an American I am proud that the sacred spark which set Europe and the Vatican aflame was supplied by our own favored land. In 1887, when the memorial concerning the Knights of Labor was forwarded to Rome, the Christian world still hesitated. But this document was the trumpet note which settled the issue. Rome spoke; the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* was promulgated, and timid Catholic Europe breathed a sigh of relief.

Leo XIII. has been the grand result of a historical movement. It is because he was obedient to the laws of history, and because he understood the social needs of his time that he deserves to be known forever as the Pope of the workmen and the great high-priest of our century.

## IS THE SOUL IMMORTAL?

Cardinal Gibbons Gives Proofs of the Life That is to Come.

The New York Morning Advertiser has been holding a symposium on the Immortality of the Soul, and has had contributions from a number of persons of distinction. The following is that of Cardinal Gibbons:

Hope springs eternal in the human breast. Man is, but always to be blest. The soul, uneasy and confined from home, Rests and expiates in a life to come.

The knowledge of one's self, the history of others who have passed away, and faith in God compel the belief in the immortality of the soul. Within one hundred years nearly all who now walk the earth will have bid farewell to scenes of life, and their bodies will be a forgotten and insignificant portion of this earth which we tread. Though no fact is more evident than death, though nothing is more certain to the learned and unlearned alike, yet there is in all the millions who now inhabit the earth, a something that reaches beyond the grave, a something that peers through the portals of death, a something which says: "I shall not, I must not, die."

Besides the body, which will soon be consigned to the grave, there is a principle by which we move, and live, and have our being. This principle we call the soul. This soul has intellectual conceptions and operations of reason and judgment. Our minds grasp what the senses cannot reach. We think of God and of His attributes. We have thoughts of justice and of truth, we know the difference between good and evil. This consciousness is inexplicable on the basis of a solely material principle of being.

All nations, ancient and modern, whether possessing the true or a false religion, have believed in the immortality of the soul, how much soever they may have differed as to the nature of future rewards and punishments, or the mode of future existence. Such was the faith of ancient Greece and Rome, as we learn from the writings of Homer, Virgil and Ovid. Belief in the soul's immortality was held by the ancient Egyptians, Chaldeans and Persians, and other nations of Asia. Grotius testifies that faith in a future life likewise existed among the Germans, Gauls, Britons and other tribes of Europe. The Indians of North and South America looked forward to the happy hunting grounds, reserved in after life for the brave.

This belief in a future life was not confined to the uncultivated masses. It was taught by the most eminent writers and philosophers among the enlightened and polished nations of antiquity. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca and Plutarch, guided by the light of reason only, proclaimed their belief in the soul's immortality. "The belief which we hold," says Plutarch, "is so old that we cannot trace its author and its origin, and it dates back to the most remote antiquity." Even idolatry implied a recognition of the soul's immortality, for how could men pay honor to departed heroes if they be-

lieved death is the end of man's existence?

Belief in the soul's immortality follows necessarily from a belief in an all-wise God. God, who created nothing without a purpose, has given us a desire to know, and a longing to be happy. Man's intellect is not confined to the narrow limits of the body. It reaches down to the unexplored depths of the sea; it wings its flight to the heavenly orbs; it enters into most subtle substances, penetrates the matter that composes them and separates their elements; it dissects its own thoughts; while the carnal body can at least but serve as an unwieldy pivot, upon which this time-defying pivot depends. Yet when analysis and calculation have exhausted their powers, the intellect of man still finds itself balked by unsolvable problems. Can it be that this intellect, so superior to the body of man, will perish forever, with its capacity for knowing still unsatisfied?

Why this unsatiable desire for happiness? Is it in vain? Yet ask any one of the millions who now live: Was there ever a time in your life when the cup of bliss was filled? Was there ever a moment when you had all you desired and feared not its loss? Not one could answer yes, for death would say, with a hollow, mocking miser who loves his wealth: Have you enough? His answer, accentuated by his thin, meagre form, will be: More, still more. Ask the ambitious man, who loves self: Are you satisfied? His answer will be: Higher, still higher. Ask the sensual man: Did you find happiness in the gratification of your appetites? "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Ask the affectionate father or husband as he stands at the grave of his beloved. He will answer: We shall meet again.

God has given us a desire for perfect felicity, which He intends one day to be fully gratified; and if this felicity cannot be found, as we have seen, in the present life, it must be reserved for the time to come. And as no intelligent being can be contented with any happiness that is finite in duration, we must conclude that it will be eternal, and that consequently the soul is immortal. Life that is not to be crowned with immortality is not worth living. "If a life of happiness," says Cicero, "is destined to end, it cannot be called a happy life."

It must be so. Plato, then, reason's well. Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire, This longing after immortality? Or whence this secret dread and inward horror Of falling into naught? Why shrinks the soul back on herself and starts at destruction? 'Tis the divinity that stirs within us, 'Tis Heaven itself that points out an hereafter And intimates eternity to man.

God is all good and all just. Yet, if death end all, how can we reconcile our experience of the world with our idea of God's goodness and justice? If death be the end of all, where would be the reward of virtue, and the punishment of evil? Vice that ridicules and virtue that suffers, are they to have the same reward? The honest man and the thief made equal by death? The innocent maiden, seduced and betrayed, to have the same indent as the selfish villain who laughs at her downfall? St. Vincent de Paul, who renounced the pleasures of domestic life to rescue the fatherless waifs of the street, and the vicious wretch who sent those innocent orphans of unfettered fatherhood into a cheerless world, both to be treated alike by death? If death ends all, why restrain the vicious inclinations of our appetites? If the soul be not immortal, we should say with Cæsar: "Virtue, thou art but an empty word."

Society, with its laws, is only a tyrant, patriotism an insane sentiment, if the soul is annihilated by the hand of death. The soldier is ordered to a post of danger. If he leaves it he saves his life, but at the command of duty he remains and dies. Where is his reward? The honors that are paid to his memory. What benefit to him if his undaunted soul has ceased to exist? To sacrifice one's self for the public good is noble, generous and sublime; but if everything were to end with death, such a sacrifice of life would be insanity, for the soldier sacrifices, gratuitously throws away, a something which if death ends all is of incalculable benefit to him—his life. Destroy the belief in the soul's immortality and there will no longer exist a sufficient motive for heroic patriotism.

Eradicate this belief and the world becomes the theatre of anarchy and crime. Remember the result of the experiment when tried by Francis Figular, the materialist, who hesitated not to say, "It was not petroleum but materialism that destroyed the monuments of France." Destroy this belief, and duty becomes but a "rope of sand." Religion, virtue, civilization and liberty are parts of the same chain, linked together by a belief in the immortality of the soul. Break this necessary connection and the whole chain will go.

"Is immortality," tis that alone, Amid life's pain, abasement, emptiness, The soul can combat, elevate and fill. Simplicity is the presiding unity of the Sacred Infancy.—Faber.

## GEMS FROM THE ENCYCLICAL OF LABOR.

All agree and there can be no question whatever that some remedy must be found, and quickly found, for the misery and wretchedness which press so heavily at this moment on the large majority of the very poor.

God has granted the earth to mankind in general, not in the sense that all, without distinction, can deal with it as they please, but rather that no part of it has been assigned to any one in particular, and that the limits of private possession have been left to be fixed by man's own industry and the laws of individual peoples.

Is it just that the fruit of man's sweat and labor should be enjoyed by another? As effects follow cause, so it is just and right that the results of labor should belong to him who has labored.

Religion teaches the rich man and the employer that their workmen are not their slaves; and that they must respect in every man his dignity as a man and as a Christian. . . . And that it is shameful and inhuman to treat men like chattels to make money by, or to look upon them merely as so much muscle or physical power.

To exercise pressure for the sake of gain upon the indigent and the destitute, and to make one's profit out of the need of another, is condemned by all laws, human and divine. To defraud any one of wages that are his due is a crime that cries to the avenging anger of heaven.

Neither must it be supposed that the solicitude of the Church is so occupied with the spiritual concerns of its children as to neglect their interests, temporal and earthly. Its desire is that the poor, for example, should rise above poverty and wretchedness, and should better their condition in life, and for this it strives. By the very fact that it calls men to virtue and forms them to its practice, it promotes this in no slight degree. Christian morality, when it is adequately and completely practiced, conduces of itself to temporal prosperity, for it merits the blessing of that God who is the source of all blessings; it powerfully restrains the lust of possession and the lust of pleasure.

The first duty of the rulers of the States should be to make sure that the laws and institutions, the general character and administration of the Commonwealth, shall be such as to produce of themselves public well-being and private prosperity. This is the proper office of wise statesmanship and the work of the heads of the State.

Among the many and 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 in the schools distributive—toward each and every class.

It may be truly said that it is only by the labor of the workingman that states grow rich.

If employers laid burdens upon the workmen which were unjust, or degraded them with conditions that were repugnant to their dignity as human beings, . . . there can be no question that in certain limits, it would be right to call in the help and authority of law.

No man may outrage with impunity that human dignity which God Himself treats with reverence, nor stand in the way of that higher life which is the preparation for the eternal life of heaven.

If we turn now to things exterior and corporeal, the first concern of all is to save the poor workers from the cruelty of grasping speculators, who use human beings as mere instruments for making money. It is neither justice nor humanity so to grind men down with excessive labor as to stupefy their minds and wear out their bodies.

As a general principle it may be laid down that a workman ought to have leisure and rest in proportion to the wear and tear of his strength; for the waste of strength must be repaired by the cessation of work.

Let it be granted that, as a rule, workman and employer should make free agreements, and, in particular, should fully agree as to wages; nevertheless, there is a dictate of nature more imperious and more ancient than any bargain between man and man, that the remuneration must be enough to support the wage earner in reasonable and frugal comfort. If through necessity, or fear of a worse evil, the workman accepts harder conditions because an employer or contractor will give him no better, he is the victim of force and injustice.

Gentleness and softness, says Suri, were the graces our Lord most desired that we should copy in Himself.

Literature is the flower and beauty of human intellect.—Faber.