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# The Catholic Record.

VOL. 7. FOR THE WEEK ENDING SATURDAY, MAY 23, 1888. NO. 345

### CLERICAL.

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### THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND CIVILIZATION.

By Rt. Rev. John Walsh, D. D., Bishop of London.

The Encyclical Letter, "Humanum Genus," of Our Holy Father Pope Leo XIII., on the Sect of the Freemasons.

The American Catholic Quarterly Review. Let us now briefly consider the beneficent action and influence of the Church on the condition of the laboring and artisan classes. At the time of the advent of our Blessed Lord, the civilization of the pagan world had reached its height, but it was a cold, heartless civilization; it was like a marble statue by Phidias, exquisitely beautiful, and seeming to breathe and palpitate with life, but yet hard, cold, unfeeling, and pitiless. There was then no pity for the poor, and no consideration for the toiling masses. Labor had fallen into contempt, was a badge of degradation, and considered as only fit for slaves. Workingmen were deprived of the rights of manhood, were robbed of their liberties and civil rights, and were reduced to the position of slaves. Both in Greek and Roman civilization work had been made servile, and workingmen slaves. At the time of Augustus Caesar there were upwards of sixty millions of slaves in the vast empire over which he ruled. And those slaves were not men on whose brows an Indian or an African sun had burnt the brand of slavery; they were, in blood and race, the equals of their masters. In Roman law a slave was not a person, but a thing; he had, of course, no civil or political rights; he had no power to receive a legacy, no power of civil action, and was entirely beyond the pale and protection of law; he had not even religious duties or hopes. He was in everything absolutely subject to his master's will, who had the power of life and death over him: Such is the frightful condition to which millions of workingmen were reduced in ancient civilization, when they were described by Seneca as having "fettered feet, bound hands, and branded faces."

Our divine Saviour became a workingman, was a carpenter, and for years labored and toiled with St. Joseph for his daily bread. He thus made labor sacred, He exalted it in human estimation, and gave it a dignity in the eyes of men and a power of merit in the eyes of God. In the Christian system,

LABOR HAVING BECOME ENNOBLED by the action and example of Christ, the workingman rose in the scale of human estimation; he ceased to be regarded as a thing, and was looked upon as a man possessing human rights and liberties and duties. Men, whether free or bond, were taught the doctrines of equality before God, who was in everything common father and Christian brotherhood, that, in the language of St. Paul, "in one spirit they were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free" (1 Corinthians xii.); "that they were all children of God by faith in Jesus Christ; that there was neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, but that they were all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians iii., 27-28). These blessed sounds broke with the power and magic of fettered slaves. Millions of human beings, bowed down under the intolerable burdens and unspeakable sorrows of slavery, lifted up their heads, raised their eyes towards heaven, and began to hope.

Gradually, under the blessed and fruitful influence of the example and teachings of our Saviour, the fetters began to fall from the festering limbs of the slaves, men learned their rights and dignity as well as their responsibilities, labor was ennobled and sanctified, and the curse of slavery was condemned and in principle destroyed. Who can estimate the value of this mighty result, this great moral revolution! What blessings has it not conferred on mankind! What fountains of tears has it not dried up! What broken hearts has it not healed! What unspeakable sorrows has it not banished! What burdens of grief has it not lifted up from the heart and soul of man! With what hope, what joy, what sunshine of liberty and gladness has it not flooded the world, transforming it from a pen of slaves into a home of Christian freemen.

THE CHURCH, THE BRIDE OF CHRIST, followed His blessed example in her treatment of slavery and in her care of the laboring classes. She exerted herself to correct false ideas regarding the character of slavery, and to create and foster a public opinion condemnatory of the institution. In order to estimate correctly her beneficent action in this respect, it would be necessary to have an adequate knowledge of the gigantic and almost insurmountable difficulties that stood up against her in her efforts to better the condition of the slaves, and gradually to remove and destroy the system. False notions and doctrines regarding human rights,

the prejudice of race and of caste, the immense material interests that were connected with the institution of slavery, and that grew out of it, the break-down of the Roman Empire and the tremendous social and political convulsions that resulted from it, the irruption of the northern barbarians sweeping like a destructive and irresistible inundation over the civilized world, the fierce onslaught of heresy on the very life of the Church, and the hostility and jealousy of emperors and kings—all these opposing influences and forces compelled the Church to halt in the work of undermining the system of slavery and of emancipating the slaves, and not unfrequently forced her to contend for her own existence and preservation. Nevertheless the broad and indisputable fact stands out on the face of history, that the gradual abolition of slavery and its final disappearance from the civilized world, are due, in the main, to the teaching, the legislation and the constant action of the Church. Besides, two of her religious orders, the "Trinitarians" and the Order of Mercy, redeemed about one million of Christian men from the horrors of captivity in Mahomedan countries, spending millions of money in their release, and shed the blood of many of their members in martyrdom for this Christ-like cause. Labor, in the Catholic Church, has been ennobled and dignified; it has its rights as well as its duties. Imposed originally as a penalty, the law of labor has become sacred, meritorious, and elevating, has been lifted up to a species of worship. "Workman," says the Church, "whoever thou art and whatever thy strength is devoted, contemplate thy Master and thy God, occupied for many years in the workshop of a mechanic, sawing, planing, and polishing wood, permitting Himself to be called the son of a carpenter, and stamping for the future, upon all manual labor, which His example has sanctified, not merely a consideration appreciable by human estimation, but also a divine value." Such is the high ideal which she has held up to the world of

THE CHARACTER AND SACRED DIGNITY OF LABOR. NO GLOVER SHALL WORK BY NIGHT, "la clartez de feu ne de lumiere, quar l'aevre qui est feté par nuit n'est ne bone ne loal." In the bridle trade, if any old work be painted over and regilt, or mended and exposed for sale, the work must be burned, and the seller fined. Of linen drapers, "nule qui soit engorgies de son pais par maures cas l'en ne doit recevoir on dit mestier." In the trade of "tapis Sarrazin" no one shall employ a strange workman until he knows that he is a "preudome et loial." Tailors were obliged to cut their cloth in an open shop, "a la veue du peuple," to prevent any suspicion of fraud. It is in this admirable manner that the Church, in the days of an undivided Christendom, regulated the relations between capital and labor, between the employers and employed. The rights of both were well defined and secured. The artisan was awarded just compensation for his labor and skill, and his patron was certain to obtain good work and just value for his money. There were no harsh separations, no exasperating inequalities, no heart burnings between class and class, but on the contrary there prevailed peace, harmony and good-will. The Church, to a great extent, reigned supreme over men's consciences; her teachings were, on the whole, listened to and obeyed, her authority as the divinely appointed teacher and guide was generally acknowledged and the result was the reign of justice, of right and order amongst the various classes of society. Of course, in this fallen world the Church will be always

TO PROTECT THEM AGAINST RAPACITY AND INJUSTICE but she also took care to procure legislative enactments to promote honesty and practical integrity in the workmen, and thus to protect against fraud and imposition those who employed or patronized them. In these legislative enactments we easily discern the blessed influence of the holy Church protecting the workman and artisan in his just rights, and at the same time safeguarding the interests of his employer or patron, thus establishing the harmonious play of rights and duties, of reciprocal claims and interests. We proceed to quote some of these enactments and rules that governed the trade-associations of the Middle Ages as we find them cited by Digby, from a curious old book, called *Livre des Metiers*, which contains the registry of the trades of Paris in the 13th century and the rules enacted for their government. The simplicity of some of these rules is combined with a most useful discretion.

But let us hear them as they are delivered. "Any person," says one of them, "can exercise this trade in tin vessels at Paris freely, 'pour tant qu'il face bon cuivre et loial.' He must never work at night, on pain of a fine to the king, 'quar la clartez de la nuit n'est mie si suffisant que il peussent faire bons cuivres et loial de leur mestier. Nus cordiers ne puet cuivre de nuit pour les fausses cuivres que on puet faire.' The bucklemakers ordain "que nus mestier ne doit souffrir entour il vallet qui ne soit bons et loiaus, ne reveur ne maive garcon de quelque lieu qu'il soit, ne de Paris ou d'ailleurs." The lacemakers ordain that no one shall work by night "pour les fausses cuivres que i se fait, et pour ce que la clartez de la chandelle ne suffit mie a leur mestier." All the general condition required in all the trades is expressed thus "pour tant que il face bon cuivre et loial." The silk-mercers ordain "que nul cuivrier soit vallet ou mestre qui soit blames de holerie ou de mauves renommee, ou qui auroit este tanié d'aucun mestier ou

d'aucun pays, ne puet cuivre ou dit mestier," before being punished. Generally, in all trades, masters could employ their sons as apprentices, but "soullement nez de loial marier." Of stone-masons, Master Guillaume swore "que il le mestier garderai bien et loiaument a son poir ausi pour le poure come pour le riche, et pour le foible come pour le fort." Every mason and plasterer swore that HE WOULD HIMSELF LOYALLY OBSERVE THE RULES, but that he would inform the master if he should ever find any one in fault in anything. The stone-masons and plasterers must swear that they will put nothing in the plaster but the best lime and lye, and that they will give good and loyal measure, that the mortar shall be made of good lime and that if it be made of other stone they shall pay a fine. The linen-draper swears that he cannot have an apprentice "se il n'est si fil de leal espouse, ou ses freres ou ses neiees de leal marier."

NO DRAPER SHALL SUFFER NEAR HIM, OR NEAR ANY OTHER OF THE TRADE, any workman who lives immorally; and if any workman should be discovered, having a vicious connection in the suburbs, the provost of Paris should be informed, and he will make him leave the city or have him chastised for his folly. In the trade of "tapis noztre," or coarse carpeting, no one shall employ any thread, "fors que de file de laine bon et loial. Et ce ont establi le preudomes du mestier pour le comon profit de touz et pour leste." Of the toulons (fullers), if any workman in the trade should discover that there is any fellow-servant who has been a bad character, he should make it known to the master under pain of a fine. The stocking makers swear that they will use strong thread, which has not been rotted by the dye, for, if the thread should be thus rotted, the stockings shall be burned, and the maker must pay a fine of five sours; four to the king, and the rest to the guardians of the trade for their trouble.

THE END AND NATURE OF HUMAN SOCIETY so requires, it is right to obey just commands of lawful authority, as it is right to obey God, who ruleth all things; and it is most untrue that the people have it in their power to cast aside their obedience whenever they please. On the other hand, the Church has not failed to impress on kings and rulers the duty of governing with justice and for the welfare and happiness of their subjects. With St. Thomas, she told them that the people were not for the kings, but the kings for the people. Liberty of the subject, mild government, economy in regard to public revenue, maintenance of justice, peace and order, the responsibility of kings, were the lessons she constantly inculcated. In this connection it will be useful to call attention to the teachings of some of the most eminent and representative Catholic theologians on the origin of civil power and on forms of government. St. Thomas Aquinas teaches that civil government is a "preudome et loial," but "jure humano," and that to "ordiner anything for the common good is the right of the people, or of some one representing the people." Bellarmine says: "It is false that political princes (civil rulers) have their power from God only; for they have it from God only so far as He has planted a natural instinct in the minds of men that they should wish to be governed by some one. But whether men should wish to be

GOVERNED BY KINGS OR BY CONSULES, by one or by many, by a perpetual or a temporary magistrate, depends on their own wishes; as also it is not the special command of God, but the wish of men which determines that person should be king rather than that. Wherefore St. Thomas, in the cited passage 22, quæst. x., art. 10, and quæst. xi., art. 2, lays it down as a matter certain and decided that political governments and kingdoms are not founded on divine, but on human law—a proposition which no scholar would contradict." *De Potestate sum Pontif.* (De pot., 21, p. 203). This doctrine of the delegation of civil authority from the people, Suarez states, was the common opinion of his day, and he goes on to say "that the civil power, whenever it is found in a man or in a prince, has emanated, according to usual and legitimate law, from the people and the community, either directly or remotely, and that it cannot otherwise be justly possessed" (*De Ley*, lib. iii., cap. 4.) And the same illustrious theologian, in his work against James I. of England, he king of that country, Bellarmine, cited above, was "ancient, received, true and necessary." And this has continued to be the doctrine of Catholic theologians down to the present day. The king or supreme magistrate is, in Catholic teaching, but the executor of the will of the nation or people whom he governs; and should he abuse his trust, or employ the superior power with which he has been invested to the public detriment, should he, in other words, rule his people with injustice and tyranny, and trample on their rights and liberties, he could be lawfully deposed and torn down from his place of power.

The following is a synopsis of Catholic teaching on this subject: 1st. Civil society is a divine appointment. This change and overthrow is deliberately planned and put forward by many associations of *Communists* and *Socialists*; and to this is not hostile, but greatly favors their designs, and holds in common with them their chief opinions. And if these men do not at once and everywhere endeavor to carry out their extreme views, it is not to be attributed to their teaching and their will, but to the virtue of that divine religion which cannot be destroyed.

It will be in order here to consider briefly Catholic teaching and action as regards the question of civil power and the duties and rights of subjects. It will be seen that SHE HOLDS THE SCALES EQUALLY poised between the co-relative rights and duties of authority and allegiance, that whilst she protects and upholds the just rights of kings and rulers, she at the same time provides for the largest measure of rational liberty for subjects. She has ever taught the divine origin of civil power. She anointed her kings and made their persons and their office sacred in the eyes of their subjects, and inculcated the duty and obligation of obedience to them for the reason that they were God's ministers. With St. Paul she said: "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers, for these are ordained of God, and those that are, resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist purchase to themselves damnation. Wherefore, be subject of necessity, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake." (Romans, xiii.) She condemns disobedience, disloyalty, and rebellion to just laws and legitimate government, as most grievous sins, and she bans and excommunicates from her pale all members of secret societies that have for aim the overthrow of governmental authority and the destruction of the State. Hence, the Holy Father in his Encyclical Letter teaches: "As men are by the will of God born for civil union and society, and as the power to rule is so necessary a bond of society, that, if it be taken away, society must at once be broken up, it follows that from Him who is the Author of society has come also the authority to rule; so that whosoever rules, he is the minister of God. 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