

The present age has witnessed a remarkable development in all the civilised nations of the

Principles of Democracy.

It is everywhere passing into a recognised rule, that the power which God has given to men for order and management of human society has its secondary and human source in the will of the people. This great change in the views of men was not effected without violence and bloodshed in some places; but it is now the possession of many peoples, who have not been called on to shed their blood for it. Australia, the youngest of the nations, has grown into nationhood with and through the growth of the democratic principle; and hence her sons know full well how to value constitutional and personal liberty; and they highly prize the equality which just laws of their own making ensure to them.

We are able to thank God, that hitherto our land has been preserved from war—that greatest of scourges, unhappily not unknown in the modern world, but known to us only from afar. We have also been singularly exempt from those social plagues, of which in other lands we learn the ravages and the dire results. Anarchy has found no home amongst us; nor do we fear that its insane ravings will ever be acceptable to citizens so practically reasonable as are Australians. As Catholics, we know that the Church is still, as she ever has been, the most efficient guardian of order where it exists, and restorer of it when it has been subverted; but we have every reason to hope that the day is far distant when she will be called upon to exert her strength in this free land against such enemies of human welfare as anarchy and its vile offshoots.

The Catholic Church and Socialism

The name 'Socialism' has of late been in frequent use in Australia, especially on political platforms where, according to the purposes of the different parties, it has been made to mean things very widely apart. Thus some by Socialism understand the doctrines and systems of those would-be reformers of social evils, who pretend to believe that the existing state of human society was founded in injustice, and that the lapse of time has only aggravated and accentuated the wrongs which must ever flow from it. In accordance with this doctrine, their programme of action is the simple one of overturning the present order of society. Their object in doing so, would be to arrange what they would consider a more equitable distribution of worldly possessions. As to how this is to be done, they are not agreed; nor has any one of their leaders yet worked out a plan which recommends itself as practicable to men of sound judgment. The means adopted by those Socialists for the overthrow of the present social order is an active propagandism by speaking and writing of their principles and purposes, and an unceasing effort to undermine the belief of the people in those truths on which our social fabric is based. Thus, with the view of concentrating men's aims and their earthly welfare alone, they bid them, to use the irreverent words of a leading Socialist, leave 'Heaven to the angels and sparrows'; and, recognising in religion the mainstay of society, they strive to arouse their followers to the attainment of an imaginary happiness by denouncing what they call 'the two curses of our time—the curses of Capitalism and Christianity.'

On the other hand, there are many amongst us who regard Socialism as the name of

The Economic Principles

by which those are influenced and guided who seek to redress the wrongs and to alleviate the miseries of the laboring poor. It is beyond question that the large majority of the very poor are heavily pressed by misery and wretchedness which render their lot intolerable; and this deplorable evil is most acute in those countries where the causes producing it are most active.

To remedy this evil, which has ever pressed itself on the attention of philosophers from the days of Plato to our own, many and various schemes have been proposed, most of which have been branded by the common judgment of men as Utopian. It is also the verdict of the civilised world that more has been done for the earthly welfare of human society by the principles of Our Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, taught us in His Gospel, than by any 'human schemes whatever.' It was by Christianity that slavery was abolished, and woman raised from the degraded state to which paganism had dragged her down. Catholics further believe that the only hope of remedying the social ills of the present day is in the Catholic Church. As our late glorious Pontiff, Leo XIII.,

said in his immortal Encyclical on the Condition of Labor: 'If society is to be cured now, in no other way can it be cured but by a return to the Christian life and Christian institutions.' Of Socialism taken in this sense, it is well known that the Papal Encyclical just cited is the most luminous and authoritative exposition in existence. As the late Cardinal Manning wrote: 'Since Christ said in the wilderness of the hungry thousands about him, "I have compassion on the multitude," no voice has been heard throughout the world pleading for the people with such profound and loving sympathy for those that toil and suffer as the voice of Leo XIII.'

Making this distinction of the different kinds of Socialism, it need not be stated which of them will be promoted by the Catholic Church in Australia. The passing prominence given to the subject has come about, not by reason of the activity amongst us of Socialists, strictly so called, who aim at the destruction of society, but for other reasons.

It will not, however, be out of place for you, dearly beloved brethren, to keep before you the principles by which you may

Discern Right from Wrong

in this important matter. Your close union with your priests and pastors will be the best protection against the danger of adhering to any false or dangerous principles of Socialism. Your confidence in the Church as the Divinely appointed guardian of the rights of men, social and individual, will make you suspicious of any statements or actions that ignore or despise her authority. In this connection Holy Church can use the words of Our Lord Himself: 'He that is not with Me is against Me.'

Another protecting influence is your zeal for Catholic education. One of the favorite and most mischievous measures for propagating Socialism, falsely so-called, is non-Christian education; while, on the other hand, nothing is more necessary to make a people thoroughly Christian than the education of the young, conducted under the direction of the Church.

In order that you may be able to judge whether the principles of any programme of social action are Socialistic in the bad sense of that word or not, we deem it our duty to remind you, dearly beloved brethren, of a few points which bear on this matter.

The Decalogue declares the Creator's will, not only as to the duties of man, but also as to his rights. Every man has a right to four things—to his life, to his family, to his goods, and to his character. The right to life is declared and protected by the Commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill'; the right to his family by the Commandment, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery'; the right to his goods by the Commandment, 'Thou shalt not steal'; and the right to his character by the Commandment, 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.' It is a deplorable fact that many who now pose before the world as the teachers of the highest human culture and the guides of men to social welfare, are as regardless of man's right to life, in certain frequent-occurring circumstances, as the lowest savage the world has known. The Creator says, 'Thou shalt not kill.' They say the happiness of men and the welfare of society sometimes require man's interference with the laws of life, and, therefore, he may in these cases disregard the Fifth Commandment. In this delicate matter, dearly beloved brethren, we may remind you that the criminal practices to which we refer are sometimes advocated through the prevalent instinct of selfish pleasure-seeking by persons who profess to believe in God and to fear the consequences of breaking His Commandments.

(To be continued next week.)

By a recent mail Father Fitzgerald, the well known Franciscan, received orders of recall from the Irish centre of his Order. It is less than two years since Father Fitzgerald was restored to Sydney after a former call to Ireland. It is understood that Father Fitzgerald will be stationed at the Wexford centre of Franciscan action.

Mr. T. Dalton, present at the Consecration of St. Mary's Cathedral (says the Sydney 'Freeman's Journal'), is probably the youngest Knight of St. Gregory in the world. The Papal distinction, too, has probably very rarely been enjoyed in the same hereditary way. Had the late Hon. Thomas Dalton, K.C.S.G., lived a few years longer, there would have been three Knights of St. Gregory in the family, including his brother, Mr. James Dalton, of Orange.