

selected by Leo XIII. to urge the widest reasonable distribution of private ownership among the people. What crying injustice and public crime it would be to alienate for public ownership the land cultivated by the hardened hands and moistened with the sweat of the farmer! Let voluntary co-operation produce the utmost results, but not land-nationalisation. Pope Leo XIII. deserves the endless praise of all good men for his noble defence of the toiler. "We are told that it is right for private persons to have the use of the soil and the fruit of the land, but that it is unjust for anyone to possess, as owner, either the land on which he has built or the estate which he has cultivated." The modern argument could not be more fairly stated, and the Pontiff proceeds to expose its fallacy. "Those who assert this do not perceive that they are robbing man of what his own labor has produced. For the soil which is tilled and cultivated with toil and skill merely changes its condition: it was wild before, it is now fruitful; it was barren, and now it brings forth in abundance. That which has thus altered and improved it becomes so truly part of itself as to be in great measure indistinguishable and inseparable from it. Is it just the fruit of a man's sweat and labor should be enjoyed by another? As effects follow their cause, so it is just and right that the results of labor should belong to him who has labored." (*The Condition of Labor*.)

Not content with advocating the nationalisation of the land, Socialism extends its demands still further. It clamors for the public ownership and management of the means of production in every line. But in its impotent and vague attempt to vest this public ownership and management in the entire commonwealth, it fails, more egregiously than Capitalism had done, to answer man's natural desire for private ownership. Socialism lacks the profound understanding of human nature which Christianity possesses, and hence it is opposed to the entire Christian tradition and teaching.

No doubt—and here there is a large promise of agreement between certain moderate Socialists and Christian tradition—public ownership of public utilities or of certain natural monopolies, is, under proper conditions, highly advisable; yet the great bulk of the productive property within a nation ought to be privately owned, for the reasons already adduced. The main problem is to ascertain how private ownership can be most widely distributed among the people.

What would happen under Socialism? The consciousness which, under that system, the laborer would have that his means of livelihood belonged to everybody in common, would not satisfy his instinct for ownership, nor would it stimulate his energy. Hence production would lag and its cost would rise. He would see all avenues to economic betterment closed against him: because strikes would be considered the mutiny of labor. Hence revolution and counter-revolution would make dire and monotonous history, until the last state would be worse than the first. Socialism would introduce not democratic, but bureaucratic control of industry.

A great truth, no doubt, underlies the Socialist contention, namely that wastage, both in production and distribution, can be prevented by centralisation. Of this Christianity takes full account in accepting government ownership and control, whenever it can serve the common good. But it is equally true that you can readily have over-centralisation, which will interfere with private rights and individual liberty, and, what is worse, will lead to confusion, to bureaucratic tyranny and deadly retardation of production even in the most essential necessities of life. Christianity fully perceives and values the elementary truths contained in Socialism—pernicious error though it be as a whole—but those truths are merely its own principles seen through a distorted lens. Whatever is truly best and most progressive in modern social doctrine was put into practice by Christianity more than four centuries ago, and Catholic sociologists are alike amused and irritated to hear these commonplaces of Christian tradition palmed off as modern discoveries.

What is good in Socialism is Christian. The rest is pernicious error. However, it would be a mistake to consider public ownership as the chief means—as some wrongly imagine—to attain just democratic control of industry. Co-operation is the man's field for this achievement. There is a wide and almost interminable province of co-operative enterprise lying between public-service utilities or such great monopolies as closely approximate to them, and industrial undertakings which of their very nature call for individual management, as the essential factor of success. But this would require extensive treatment in another article.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

"RATIONALIST" (Waitati).—We hold over your queries re Catholic schools in order to make exact inquiry.
B. D. (Wellington).—Please don't write to us as if we were experts. But if you will ask for information concerning the genealogical trees of quadrupeds we suppose your patronage of the *Tablet* entitles you to an answer. The data of the case are as follows:

Punka—Cooltrinn—Gallinaria—Gallinule
Desert Gold—All Black—Gallinule.

You can do the rest of the calculation for yourself. The problem is what relation is a great-grand-child to a grand-child when in collateral descent.

E. M. H.—Johnson was certainly one of the greatest figures of his age, but it is hard to assign him a definite place in the Temple of Fame. He owes so much to Boswell and to his friends of White's Coffee House that at this distance to get his true perspective is almost impossible. Burke, who was certainly just before all things, thought that Johnson was greater as a causeur than as a writer, and no doubt as a writer he has acquired a certain amount of false fame which really was due to his conversational powers. There will always be many to admire him, but as time goes on their number will decrease, for the trend of English prose is directly away from Johnson's model. As for us, we believe that without Boswell's *Life* and the admiration of the really brilliant coterie in which he moved his reputation as a writer would stand far lower than it does to-day.

"JUVENNA."—Patrick McGill wrote half a dozen books, as far as we can remember. His first was his best—*The Children of the Dead End*. In the *Rat Pit* he told the same tale from a different point of view. Two war books, *The Red Horizon* and *The Great Push* were successful. They were followed by a book of ballads, which he called *Soldiers' Songs*—nothing very startling in them. Then came another effort to tell his one story in a third way. It was vile and dirty. A poor book called *The Diggers* has since appeared. He ought to have died when he had written his first book.

J. J. F. (Hastings).—Thanks for your letter. Will write soon. I think your friend will score.

"GAEL."—There are hundreds of Gaelic words that clearly suggest the French. For instance the popular term among the Irish peasants for a boy is "gorsoon," which is almost identical with "garçon." Albion—the French name for England (whose proper adjective is also very Irish)—is practically the same as the Irish words for the White Cliffs. Monsignor O'Leary used to pronounce them *Ale bawn*. "Gars" and "gosse" are familiar terms. The latter might be rendered as "brat."

W. W. H.—You can take it as absolutely certain that many Protestants voted Prohibition for the precise reason that they were told it was a blow aimed at the Papists. It was, too. We know of a few decent Protestants who voted against Prohibition exactly because they saw the black, dirty bigotry behind the movement. Although a few sincere