

quent protest against the many cruel wrongs of the existing system; and noted, also, its assertion of the indefeasible right of the individual to possess private property as his own. We shall summarise—in a necessarily incomplete way—some of the other leading principles embodied in the document, classifying them under three heads: (a) Some ground-work principles; (b) the question of State action in preventing or remedying social wrongs; and (c) the rights and duties of the workers. (a) Under the first head may be taken the Encyclical's enunciation of the broad principle of strict justice all round. 'Rights,' it says, 'must be religiously respected wherever they are found. It is the duty of the public authority to prevent and to punish injury and to protect everyone in the possession of his own.' But ownership, it is carefully pointed out, is really stewardship; and carries with it, by virtue of the Divine law of charity, high duties as well as rights. 'Man should not consider his outward possessions as his own, but as common to all; so as to share them without difficulty when others are in need.' 'Whoever has received from the Divine bounty a large share of blessings, whether they be external or corporeal 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 minister of God's providence for the benefit of others.' Regarding the source of wealth, the Encyclical lays down this deeply important and far-reaching principle: 'All human subsistence is derived either from labor on one's own land, or from some laborious industry which is paid for either in the produce of the land itself, or in that which is exchanged for what the land brings forth.' The same idea is expressed still more tersely in the following sentence: 'It may be truly said that it is only by the labor of the working man that States grow rich.' And following on these facts comes the great fundamental principle that the worker has a right to the full result of his labor. 'It is just and right,' says his Holiness, 'that the results of labor should belong to him who has labored.'

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(b) While strongly condemning the unrestricted State interference which would obtain under Socialism, whereby the civil government would 'at its own discretion, penetrate and pervade the family and the household,' the Encyclical, nevertheless, leaves a wide field for State action and State intervention whenever the welfare of the community is in any degree at stake. The general right of the State to control property is thus acknowledged: 'The right to possess private property is derived from Nature, not from man; and the State has only the right to regulate its use in the interests of the public good, but by no means to abolish it altogether.' The one form of State action which is again and again commended as desirable and beneficent is State intervention on behalf of the poor and the hard-working. Thus we read: 'It is in the power of a ruler to benefit every order of the State, and amongst the rest to promote in the highest degree the interests of the poor . . . for it is the province of the commonwealth to consult for the common good. And the more that is done for the working population by the general laws of the country, the less need will there be to seek for particular means to relieve them.' Again: 'The richer population have many ways of protecting themselves, and stand less in need of help from the State; those who are badly off have no resources of their own to fall back upon, and must chiefly rely upon the assistance of the State. And it is for this reason that wage-earners, who are undoubtedly among the weak and necessitous, should be especially cared for and protected by the commonwealth.' And once more: 'Justice, therefore, demands that the interests of the poorer population be carefully watched over by the Administration, so that they who contribute so largely to the advantage of the community may themselves share in the benefits they create.' There are two particular exercises of State action—both of extreme importance to the general mass of the people—which come in for special mention and approval. The first is that which

finds expression in legislation establishing the worker's right of association—i.e., in trades, unions, and other societies for mutual help. 'The State,' says the Encyclical, 'must protect natural rights, not destroy them; and if it forbid its citizens to form associations it contradicts the very principle of its own existence, for both they and it exist in virtue of the same principle, viz., the natural propensity of man to live in society.' The other is legislation which goes in the direction of bringing about diffused ownership among the people, especially in regard to land. 'The law should favor ownership, and its policy should be to induce as many of the people as possible to become owners. . . . If working people can be encouraged to look forward to obtaining a share in the land, the result will be that the gulf between vast wealth and deep poverty will be bridged over, and the two orders will be brought nearer together.'

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(c) The rights of the workers are set forth with great fulness and detail, and we will have space for only a few of the more important statements. First there is the universal right to live by work. 'The preservation of life is the bounden duty of each and all. It follows that each one has a right to procure what is required in order to live; and the poor can procure it in no other way than by work and wages.' Then there is the right to a living wage. 'Let it be granted, then, that, as a rule, workmen and employer should make free agreements, and in particular should freely 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 a contractor will give him no better, he is the victim of force and injustice.' Immediately after, the minimum wage is defined as that which is 'sufficient to enable the worker to maintain himself, his wife, and his children in reasonable comfort.' We have already noted the right of the workers to unite with others of the same trade or craft in guilds, or what are now known as unions. If the demand for a just wage is refused, the members of the guild or union have, according to Leo XIII., both right and liberty to refuse to work—that is, to strike. So long as the cause is just, the right to strike cannot be denied. The laborer, says the Encyclical, 'is free to work or not.' This, of course, presupposes the absence of special legislation, such as our Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, under which registered unions bind themselves not to strike during the currency of an industrial award. Finally, the workman's right to Sunday rest, to reasonable hours of labor, to fair conditions of work, and to a measure of leisure and rest in proportion to the wear and tear of his employment, are fully and firmly vindicated.

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Such are, in brief and imperfect outline, some of the leading Catholic principles on the Labor question as laid down in this great Encyclical—the most statesmanlike, democratic, and humanitarian pronouncement ever issued by the representative of any Church. When, therefore, we are asked what we have to offer as an alternative to Socialism, we may reply with a practical programme of social reform along the following four lines, as prescribed by Leo XIII. and expressly endorsed by the present occupant of the Holy See. (1) The *protection* of labor—by the improvement and perfection of our factory and industrial legislation. (2) The *organisation* of labor—by the extension and development of the guild or trades union movement. (3) The *insurance* of labor—by old age pensions or national annuities, by Workmen's Compensation Acts, by insurance against sickness and infirmity as in Germany, and by insurance against unemployment as is being now attempted by Mr. Lloyd George in England. And (4) *diffused ownership*—in land, as by our New Zealand Land for Settlement Acts, with their easy acquirement of leasehold or freehold, and in capital, by a determined extension