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# The Failure of Individualism

*LUTHER · CALVIN*

*LOCKE · ROUSSEAU*

*ADAM SMITH*

*KARL MARX*

R.S. Devane, S.J.

What is the remedy for the present widespread collapse of society? Communism is incompatible with the dignity and rights of the human personality and is totally unacceptable to Christians. Rugged individualism has been found wanting. Is it possible then to reconcile the rights of the individual with those of society in the reconstruction of civilisation? The author traces the causes of the present disorder, and suggests a solution in accordance with Christian social principles.

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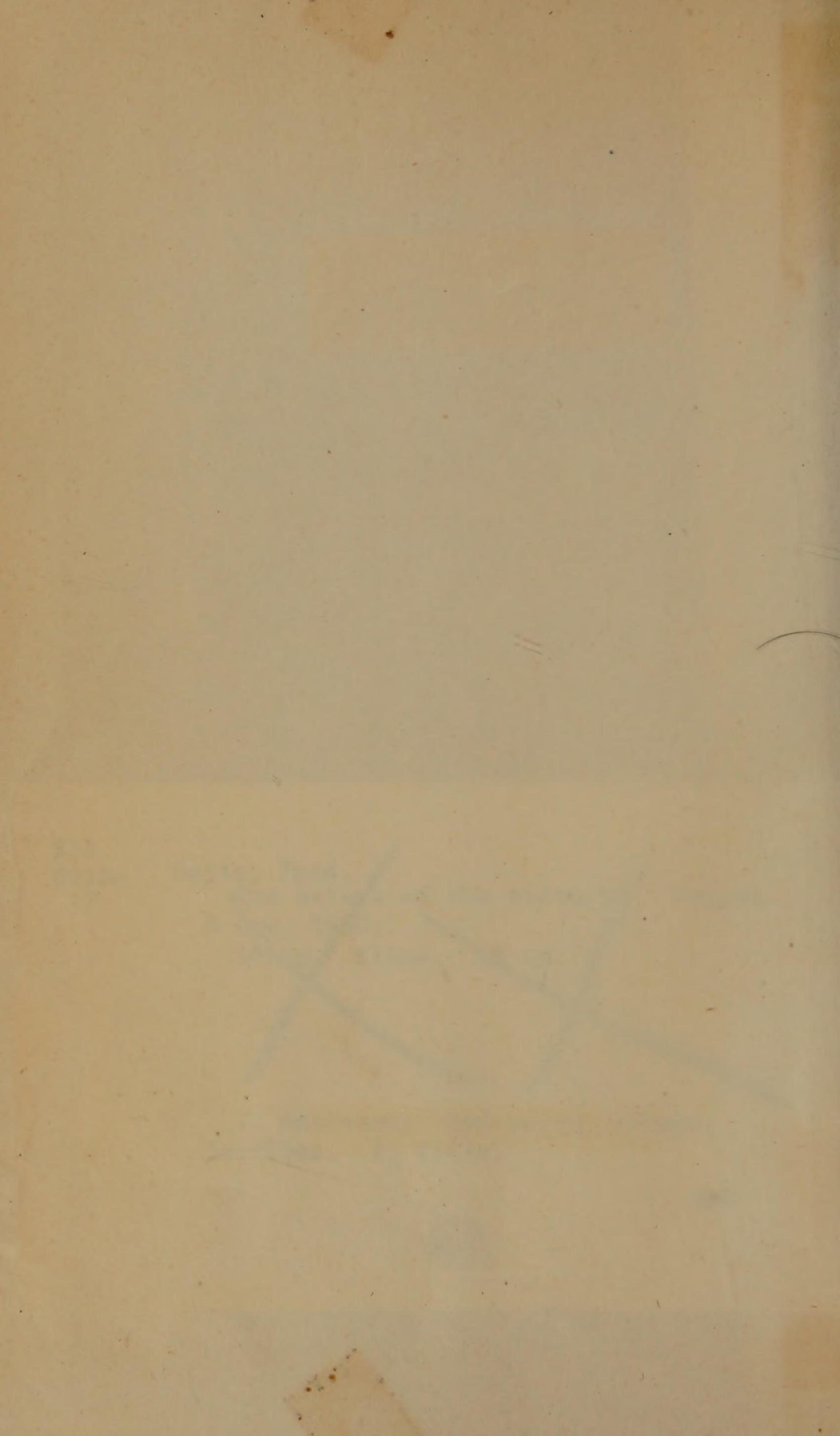
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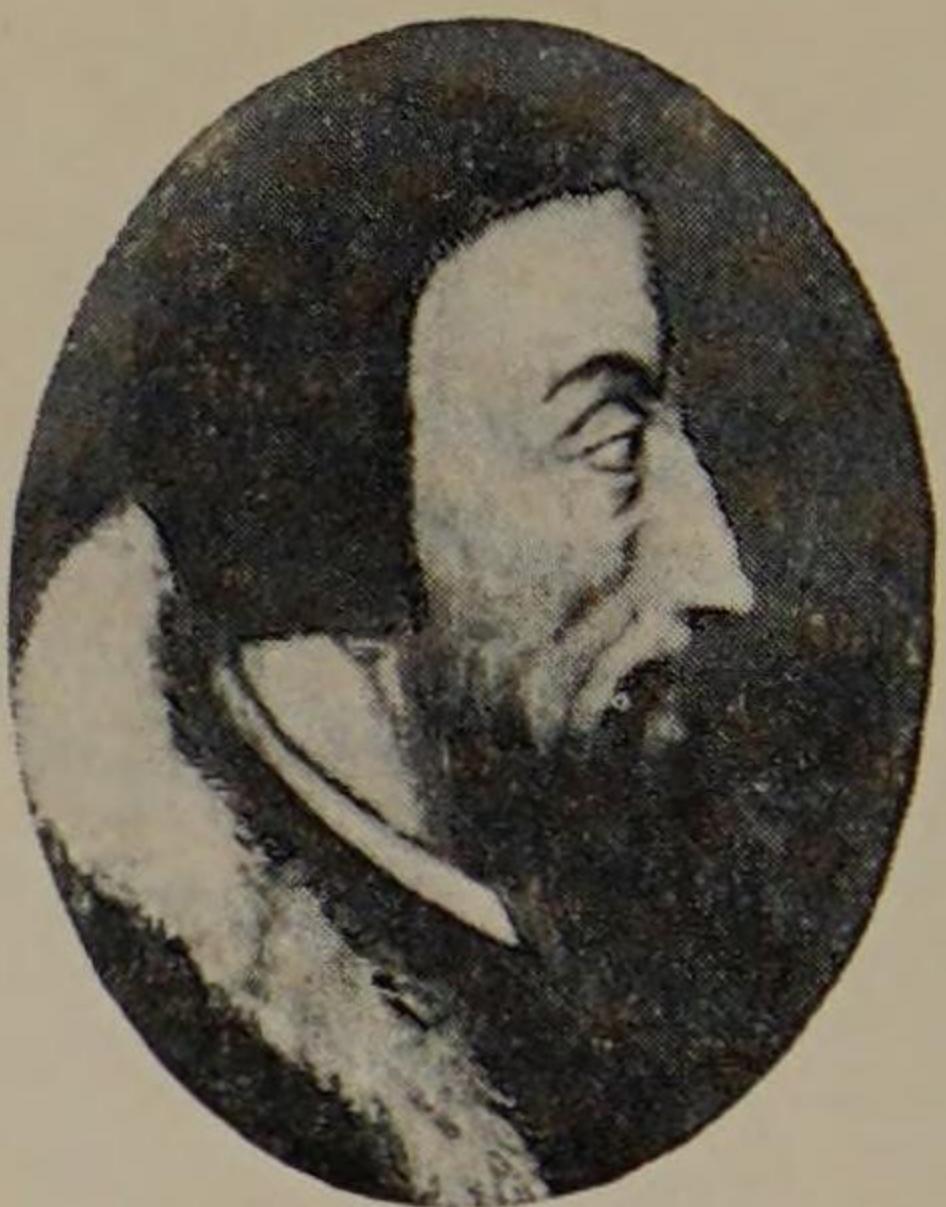


# GREAT REVOLUTIONARIES

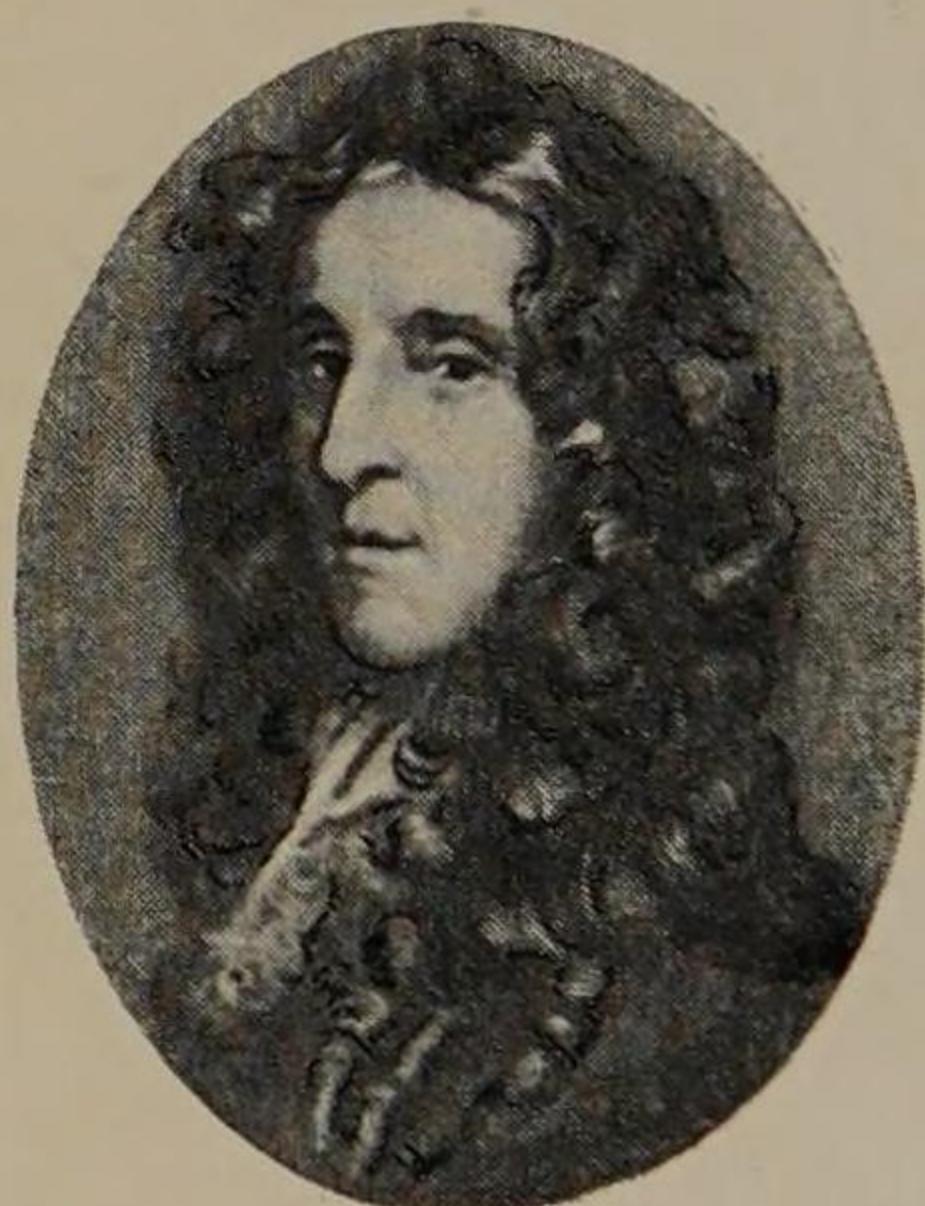
Some makers of the Modern World



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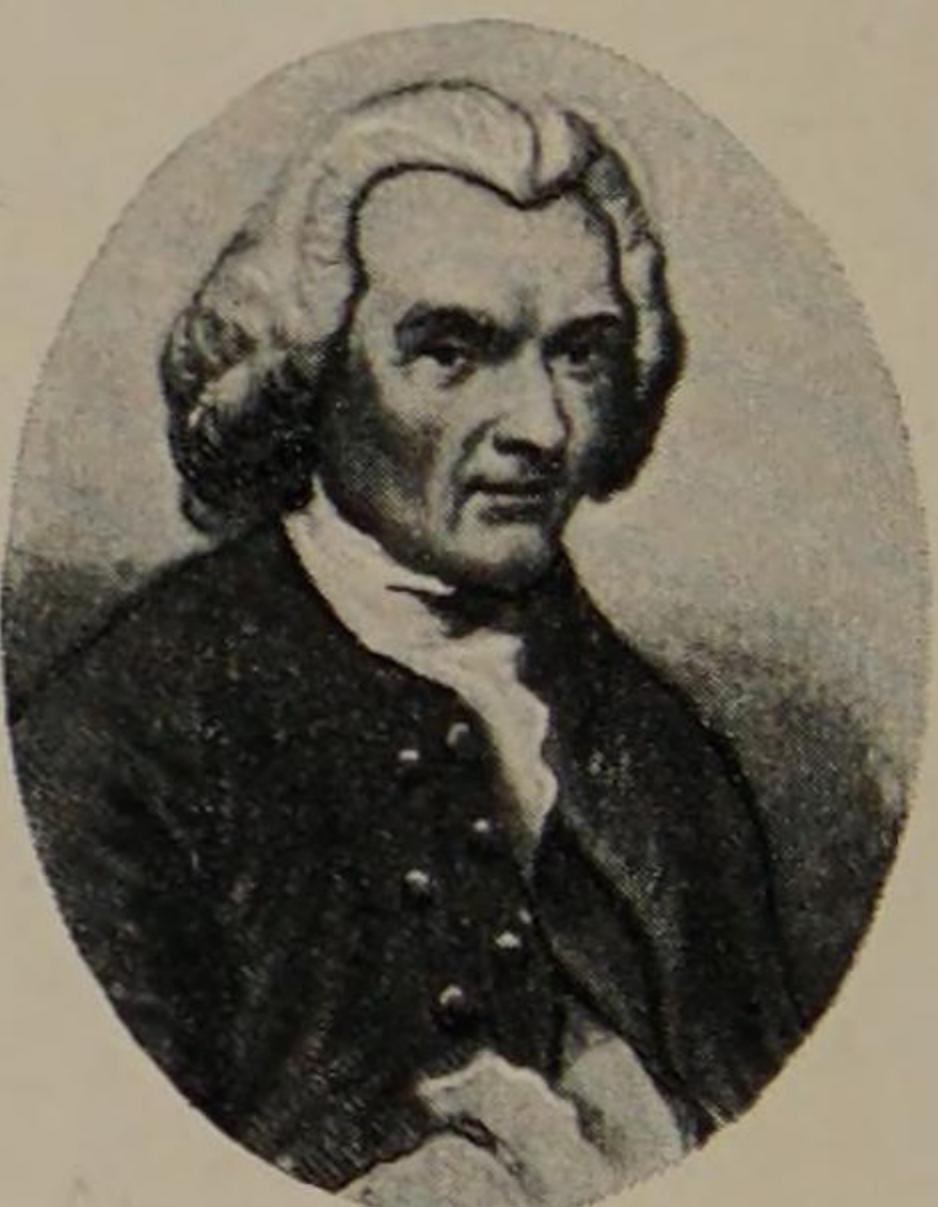


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RELIGIOUS  
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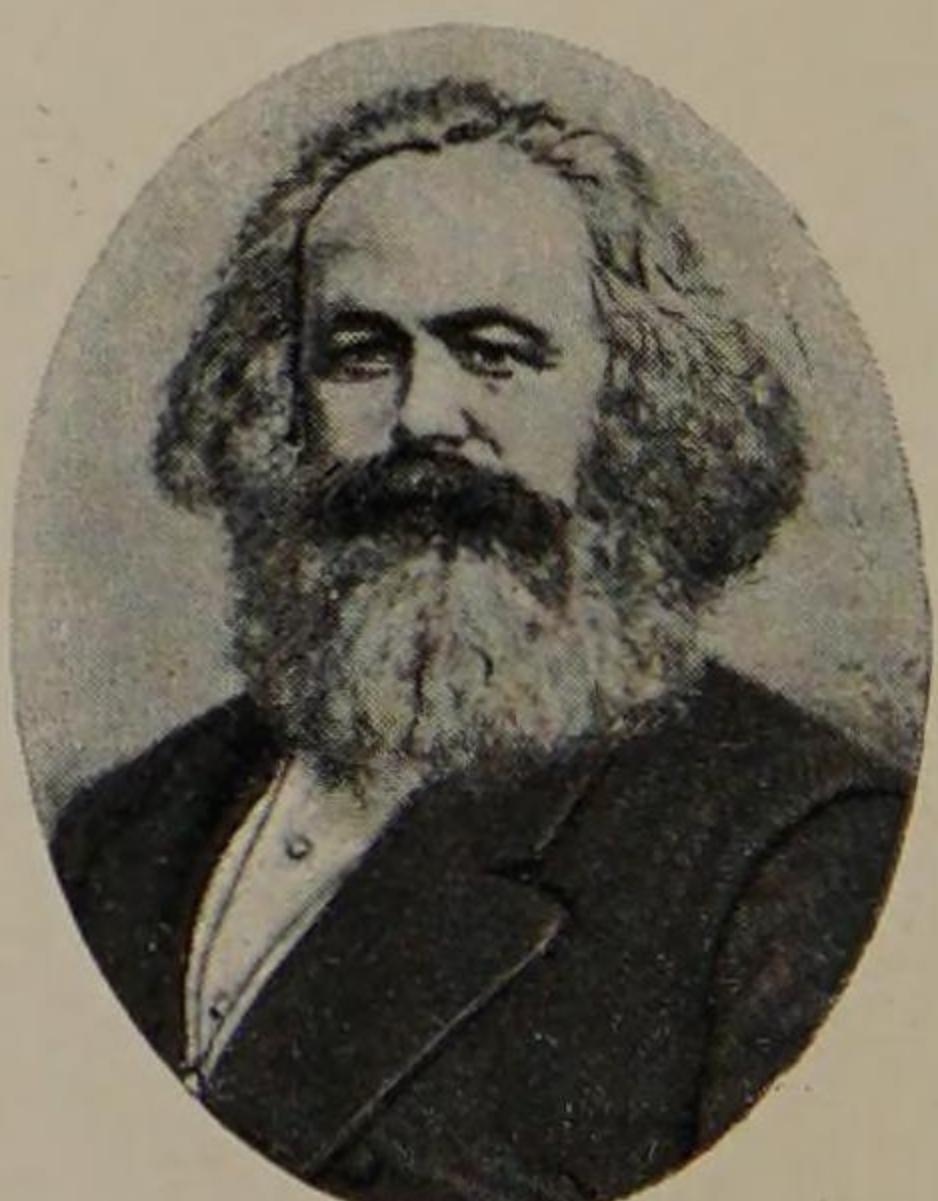
Rousseau  
1712-1778

POLITICAL  
REVOLUTION



Adam Smith  
1723-1790

ECONOMIC  
REVOLUTION



Karl Marx  
1818-1883

# THE FAILURE OF INDIVIDUALISM

A DOCUMENTED ESSAY

*By*

R. S. DEVANE. S.J.

*“The old world, if I may call it so, or ‘Modern Times’ . . . . have come to their end and are in decomposition. A new and unknown world is coming to birth.”—N. BERDYAEV.*



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SCELESTA TURBA CLAMITAT:  
REGNARE CHRISTUM NOLUMUS:  
TE NOS OVANTES OMNIUM  
REGEM SUPREMUM DICIMUS.

*(Hym. in Fest. D.N.J.C. Regis.)*



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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THIS ESSAY is an attempt to give a brief survey of the origin, development, and failure of Individualism in its various aspects—religious, political and economic. It is intended for the general reader and may be regarded as a “Handbook of Politics and Economics” for the intelligent citizen who wishes to understand what has led to the present social chaos.

After the Reformation the organic structure of society dissolved and was gradually replaced by Individualism. Our present civilisation which has been based on Individualism is collapsing, because the foundation has given way. For this reason there can to-day be few subjects more worthy of study than Individualism.

This Essay treats mainly of English conditions, because England may be said to be the cradle and home of Individualism. Though Protestantism, that is Religious Individualism, arose simultaneously in England and in the Germanies, yet it developed intensively and extensively with the English in a way it did not with the Germans. The German States were divided from each other by the Reformation, for several of them resisted the advance of Protestantism and remained faithful to the Old Faith. In England, however, Protestantism welded the people into a complete unity that afforded Individualism a special opportunity to develop not merely in Religion but also in Politics and Economics. Religious Individualism entered into the souls and minds of the English, created an intensively individualistic mental atmosphere and outlook, and thereby facilitated the development of Individualism in Politics and Economics.

Simultaneously with the final and complete overthrow of the Catholic Faith in England through the Revolution of 1688, there came Representative Government based on Political Individualism: John Locke was its able

defender and philosopher. Through Locke and the Revolution of 1688 England intimately affected not only the rise and growth of Democracy in the American States, but it also deeply influenced Rousseau and the French Revolution—and from Revolutionary France Democracy spread throughout the world. Rousseau borrowed all his major political ideas from Locke and merely brought them to their logical conclusion in his famous "Contrat Social." Political Individualism and Modern Democracy, therefore, owe their origin primarily to England.

As a result of the spoliation of the monasteries by Henry VIII the foundation of English Capitalism or Economic Individualism was firmly laid. With the fall of her great rival, Spain, England got a unique start in the race for wealth and conquest which, owing to her national unity arising from Protestantism and her favoured position as a sea-power, she used to excellent advantage. English Capitalism had attained a marked superiority in the eighteenth century when the Industrial Revolution, which began in England, gave it an impetus that carried it along in unrivalled supremacy till the end of the last century. From England, Industrial Capitalism or Economic Individualism, with all its baneful influence, spread to the uttermost ends of the earth. It is for these reasons that it has been stated above that England has been the cradle and home of Individualism: by studying the origins of Individualism in England, we are studying the sources of its development throughout the world.

In writing this Essay I had particularly in mind my own country and her people. Although Ireland is an ancient nation, it reached the condition of Statedom only in 1922. Owing to its intimate relations with England for many centuries, but especially since the beginning of the last, the present political and economic conditions of Ireland cannot be adequately appreciated unless projected against the historical background of England. As the Irish people are now striving to build a new State amid the confusion of a collapsing world, it is supremely necessary that they

should fully understand what has led to the present social chaos so that they may clarify their minds in relation to national planning and reconstruction.

There are many matters of a highly controversial nature dealt with in this Essay ; hence documentation became a necessity. The documentation is, *purposely*, unusually full, since the *general reader* for whom the Essay has been written may not have adequate library facilities at hand, —and books on Politics and Economics may be outside his reach. For the people of Eire who have such facilities only in a few large cities an extensive documentation was essential—and it was the general body of Irish readers I had particularly in mind when writing this Essay.

I wish to express my gratitude to the friend who saw the proofs through the Press, when owing to ill-health I was unable to do so. I also wish to thank the publishers and authors who so kindly gave permission to quote extracts from their books.

#### POSTSCRIPT

This book had been set up in type when Mr. de Valera's Fianna Fáil Government went out of office in February, 1948. Fianna Fáil was considerably the largest political party : On many occasions its leader had stated that it was his intention to build a Christian Social Order in Éire. The first act of the new inter-party Cabinet, which consisted of representatives of all the parties except Fianna Fáil, was to send a message to the Pope in which they said that it is "*our firm resolve to be guided in all our work by the teaching of Christ, and to strive for the attainment of a social order in Ireland based on Christian principles.*" With the basic unifying Christian social philosophy found in the Constitution and with all parties of State agreeing on striving to build a Christian Social Order in Éire, there is every hope that success will be achieved and that a Christian Democratic State will be evolved. Should this Essay help in some measure towards that end, the author will be amply recompensed.

RATHFARNHAM CASTLE, DUBLIN,  
25th March, 1948.



## INTRODUCTION

“ From religious individualism, the passage was easy to political and social individualism. It is only natural that men who have been taught to rely on their own private judgment in matters of faith, and on their own lonely efforts to attain salvation, should resent dictation and hindrances in their political and economic life. One’s standpoint towards religion colours one’s standpoint towards every other human activity.” (Professor George O’Brien, *An Essay on the Economic Effects of the Reformation*, p. 57.)

As one looks across Europe to-day, one sees in country after country widespread ruin and desolation. Great cities have been wiped out. Kings have been deposed, long-established political systems have been overthrown. God and His Christ have been abandoned by many millions, and in many nations. The ancient civilisation of the West, sapped and undermined for centuries, is threatened with collapse : the historical period known as “ Modern Times,” —the “ Age of Progress ”—has come to an end. “ With desolation is all the land laid desolate ” and one may add with emphasis—“ because there is no one who thinketh in his heart.” In their blind thoughtlessness men have been rushing down the road to ruin which has ended in social chaos or near-anarchy in many lands. To-day, plans are being drawn by statesmen, and feverish efforts are being made by peoples, to reconstruct civilisation in their various countries. Is it prudent or wise to attempt to do so without first having a clear idea of the radical cause of the present widespread collapse of society ?

Various and partial causes have been assigned for the terrible plight of Europe—the Great War (1914–18) ; the Treaty of Versailles ; the rise of Communism in Russia, soon to be followed by Fascism in Italy and Naziism in Germany ; the British fear of Germany, the Russian Communists’ fear of capitalist democracy, the German

fear of encirclement. Yet, all these are but the final expression of a radical and ultimate cause, deeply-rooted, reaching back for centuries, and growing in its cumulative atomic force until the final violent explosion burst forth in 1939 and after. What is this ultimate cause? To supply the answer to this question, this Essay has been written.

Europe finds itself in its present sorry plight owing to the nihilistic individualism or atomism that had its origin mainly in the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century and for which the Renaissance had, to some extent, prepared the way.<sup>1</sup> This individualism is three-fold—(1) religious, (2) political, and (3) economic. For four centuries society has been steadily disintegrating under the growing force of this triple composite evil, until to-day it is in danger of complete collapse. The purpose of this Essay is to give not a complete but, it is to be hoped, a sufficiently comprehensive survey of the growth and development of each of these types of individualism referred to; to show how they interrelate and how they have combined to undermine the social structure, and how as a consequence they have led to the religious, political and economic chaos that we see around us. The thesis, to be expounded under three main headings, may be summarised as follows.

*The Religious Individualism* of Luther and the Reformers shattered the religious unity of Europe and is responsible, to a great extent, for the widespread religious indifferentism and neo-paganism of to-day, and for the secularisation of society.

*Political Individualism*, which appeared at the Reformation and on the break-up of Christendom into National Sovereign States, developed (under the influence of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau) the modern Liberal-Democratic State with its secularist and revolutionary tendencies. This *false* democracy, or Democratism as M. Jacques Maritain

<sup>1</sup> For the relation of the Renaissance to the Reformation, see the section on "The Renaissance," p. 12.

styles it, must not however be confounded with *true* democracy ; both of these will be considered and compared in a later section of this Essay.

The abolition of the Church's far-reaching influence in the economic life of peoples and the confiscation of the Church's property in the sixteenth century—both resulting from the Reformation—laid the foundations of *Economic Individualism* or Capitalism which has evolved since then through mercantilism, the Revolution of 1688, the industrial revolution and *laissez faire*, into the economic chaos of to-day. The discovery of the New World and of the route to the East afforded many opportunities for the development of the Capitalistic Spirit,

In passing, it may be said that totalitarianism was but a violent and unbalanced reaction against the intolerable pressure of political individualism linked with economic individualism—both of which developed to an alarming degree during the last century and a half. It is scarcely necessary to add that the attempted cure was even worse than the disease.

The above are the three basic causes of the world's present unrest : to fail to understand them and their effects, before undertaking plans of national reconstruction, is to invite disaster. The purpose of these pages is to examine each of them and to show how, singly and conjointly, they have led the world to its present perilous position. Naturally, owing to the limits of space, the discussion of these extensive subjects can only be very summary. Still, it is hoped that it will be sufficient to give the general reader a comprehensive idea of the basic causes of the political and social evils of our time. Before proceeding it is necessary to understand what Individualism in general means.



## **PART ONE**

### **RELIGIOUS INDIVIDUALISM**



# INDIVIDUALISM

## WHAT IT IS

The word "individualism" passed into the English language<sup>1</sup> from the French *individualisme*. The latter was coined by Alexis de Tocqueville in his *De la Démocratie en Amérique*, in which he thus explains its meaning as he understood it :

" Individualism is a novel expression, to which a novel idea has given birth. Our fathers were only acquainted with egotism. Egotism is a passionate and exaggerated love of self, which leads a man to connect everything with his own person, and to prefer himself to everything in the world. Individualism is a mature and calm feeling, which disposes each member of the community to sever himself from the mass of his fellow creatures ; so that after he has thus formed a little circle of his own, he willingly leaves society at large to itself. . . . Egotism is a vice as old as the world, which does not belong to one form of society more than another. Individualism is of democratic origin and it threatens to spread in the same ratio as the equality of conditions." (Vol. iii, Bk. ii, ch. 11.)

It was when de Tocqueville's book was translated into English by Henry Reeve that the term passed into the English language. According to the large Oxford Dictionary, Reeve adopted, or rather adapted, the French word *individualisme*, and apologised for doing so because he knew of " no English word exactly the equivalent to the expression." Commenting on this in the article on "Individualism" which he contributed to the *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*, Dr. A. D. Lindsay<sup>2</sup> writes :

<sup>1</sup> Somewhat over a hundred years ago.

<sup>2</sup> Master of Balliol, raised to the peerage under Mr. Attlee's premiership

"The primary meaning of the word (Individualism) then is as of a state or attitude of mind which is naturally produced in a certain kind of society. That society is most easily described in negative terms. It is one in which little respect is paid to tradition or authority. It is as far removed as possible from that primitive type of social organisation where the overpowering dominance of tribal custom and tradition leaves little scope for individual initiative and concern, and the members of the tribe are so absorbed in the group that it forms what anthropologists have called a tribal self. More positively an individualistic society is one where people 'think for themselves' and are regarded as being 'the best judges of their own interests,' it being assumed that they have interests and business which are only their own. It is a society where the movement from 'Status' to 'Contract,' which Maine regarded as the mark of a progressive society, has gone a long way."

Individualism is a term somewhat akin to Feudalism, Protestantism, or Christianity as popularly used in the newspapers ; it is comprehensive and elusive. It has different connotations when used in relation to religion, politics and economics. Speaking generally we may say that Individualism implies the isolation of the individual from the other individuals who make up society—whether religious (the Church), or political or economic (the State). Such individuals have no living or organic, but merely external, contact with one another. Such a society is but a conglomeration of individuals.

Max Weber has said that "this expression *Individualism* includes the most heterogeneous things imaginable." It is rather difficult to give a satisfactory definition of Individualism ; recourse must therefore be had to a description. After some consideration it seemed best to allow the reader to form an idea of what Individualism is by putting before him the opinion of some writers of outstanding authority. In this way, as each writer supplements the views of the

others, there arises as a result a composite idea ; this will be more satisfying than any direct attempt at description.

An equivalent term to "Individualism" is "Atomism." The development of the physical sciences in the seventeenth century was a factor in the evolution of Individualism, especially in Political Science. The revived interest then shown by physical scientists in what was considered the ultimate constituent of matter, the atom, stimulated political scientists to think along parallel lines when discussing the basic element of human society ; and, as a consequence by transference or analogy the "individual" came to be regarded as the social atom. On this Dr. Lindsay observes :

" Hobbes (1588-1679) was the first systematically to attempt to make political theory scientific in this new sense.<sup>1</sup> His men are, for the purposes of his theory, identical, their relations with one another are external. Their natures are not affected by the social relations into which they enter. This is the characteristic doctrine of what may be called scientific individualism. . . . Social and political relations are merely means by which the individual obtains more efficiently what he desires before he entered into those relations. . . . But political and social relations do not bite into the natures of individuals. The individuals remain the same, unchanged, spiritually isolated atoms."

In an article on "Individualisme" in the *Dictionnaire Apologétique de la Foi Catholique* (1911), the distinguished French Catholic Sociologist, the Marquis de La-Tour-du-Pin La Charche, thus explains its meaning :

" Individualism is a condition of abnormal mentality, although growing more and more in influence, which is characterised by the systematic ignoring of social bonds and duties, and by the cult of 'self'—of 'the ego'—(*le culte du 'moi'*).

<sup>1</sup> Hobbes's theory will be developed when we examine the origin of authority in the State.

"The condition is abnormal and unnatural, because the nature of man is essentially social; he can live only in a social condition. The human race is called *human society*, humanity. Its solidarity is not only in time but also in eternity.

"The first expression of individualism recorded in history was that of Cain: 'Am I my brother's keeper?'—the most frequent and the last is that of the gangster, 'I wish to live my own life'—To live his own life is always to live for himself at the expense of others. . . . This doctrine of individualism ends in anarchy in every sphere of human economy—*religious* society, *domestic* society, *civil* society, and *political* society properly so called."

He gives a brief analysis of the disruptive effect of Individualism in each of these provinces. Writing of Economic and Political Individualism he says that man is returning not to the state of *barbarism* as is commonly held, but to a condition of slavery. He is moving—

"towards paganism and towards the terrible revenge of the proletariat which is being prepared to-day by Socialism—this most complete expression of individualism. In this monstrous dream there are no longer classes nor corporations, nor altars nor hearths; the isolated individual, an amorphous atom, stands in the presence of, and in dependence on the State. The State is indeed the only political society which answers to the charter of individualism such as appeared in the 'Declaration of the Rights of Man' of 1789 and in the ulterior applications of its principles. Individualism conceives the State as the sovereignty of the individual. Universal suffrage is its basis whether under the elective form in the constitution of so-called representation of parties, or under the plebiscitary form. In one case as in the other there can only result the domination of a party."

Nicholas Berdyaev, the brilliant Russian Orthodox

Philosopher, supplements the writers just quoted. In his essay on "The Middle Ages"<sup>1</sup> he attributes the "rotting of the old societies" to their being "infected by individualism or atomism."

"Throughout modern history society has been eaten away by a series of internal maladies, man turning against man and class against class: all societies have been characterised by the warfare of opposing interests, by competition, by the isolation and dereliction of each individual man. . . . (p. 83).

" . . . As things are we can regard individualism only as an utter reaction, though it still flatters itself that it is the pioneer of liberty, light and progress. Liberalism, parliamentarism, constitutionalism, juridical formalism, rationalism, and empirical philosophy, so many fruits of the individualist spirit and of humanist self-affirmation, are all reactionary; they have had their day and their original significance is played out (p. 86).

The views of de Tocqueville, Dr. Lindsay, Le Marquis de La-Tour-du-Pin La Charce and Nicholas Berdyaev, help to give a general and composite idea of what Individualism is and connotes. Othmar Spann emphasises one particular aspect of individualism in his *Types of Economic Theory*.<sup>2</sup> He points out the relation of the individual to the community or to society and briefly indicates the falsity of the individualist's position.

"From the individualist's outlook, society would be regarded as the summation of independent individuals: comparable to a concourse of atoms, to a heap of stones, in which every atom or stone remains independent, self-determined, as it were, leading a separate existence; and in which the association of the parts has produced no more than a superficial and purely mechanical community. In that case, individuals form the real and

<sup>1</sup> In the collection "The End of Our Time."

<sup>2</sup> Translated from the 19th German edition by Eden and Cedar Paul, (Allen and Unwin.)

primary being of society and the State. This conception is called "Individualism" because it is one in which society and the State are thought of exclusively in terms of the individual; and natural right is its chief type. *But in every type of individualism, the individual is the main thing, not the community.* Individualism has its own conception of right, apart from any assumption that there exists a society *sui generis* contraposed to the individual. . . . (p. 59).

"In conformity with this outlook, society is imagined to be a purely mechanical aggregation of individuals; it is not looked upon as something which has a peculiar entity of its own, but is regarded as a summation—as, so to say, a sort of mutual assurance corporation formed by individuals. Both these premises are false. The individual is not mentally self-governing; and society is not a mere summation, is not a purely mechanical agglomeration of such individuals."

3 Perhaps, the most satisfactory and succinct exposition of Individualism is that given by a recent writer of a very remarkable book. Referring to Individualism in *The Managerial Revolution*, James Burnham said that "it is not so easy to define what we mean by it." As he was writing of the economic shape of things to come he naturally viewed Individualism from the capitalist point of view. At the same time he pointed out its relation to religion and politics, and for that reason his description (which follows) may be regarded as a commendable synthesis :

"Capitalist thought, whether reflected in theology or art or legal, economic, and political theory, or philosophy or morality, has exhibited a steady concentration on the idea of the 'individual.' We find the 'individual' wherever we turn: in Luther's appeal to 'private interpretation' of the Bible as the test of religious truth; in the exaggerated place of 'conscience' in Puritanism; in the economic notion of the economic

process's consisting of millions of separated individuals each pursuing his own greatest personal pleasure ; in the very conception of the heart of democracy's lying in the private individual's privately setting forth his will by marking a private ballot. . . .”

“ Now, the individualist's idea of the individual is not an ultimate any more than any other idea. It has its special and distinguishing features, differing from those possessed by the idea of the individual found in other types of society. According to the prevailing capitalist idea, the fundamental unit of politics, psychology, sociology, morality, theology, economics, was thought of as the single human individual. This individual was understood as complete 'in himself' in his own nature, and as having only *external* relations to other persons and things. The Church, the State, the ideal utopia, are not realities in themselves, but only numerical sums of the individuals who compose them ” (pp. 25-26).

In his Finlay Lecture at University College, Dublin, on “ Individualism, True and False,”<sup>1</sup> Professor Hayek used the term “ Individualism ” in a new sense and attempted to supplant the commonly accepted meaning by one of his own, regarding the former as a distortion. This but leads to unnecessary confusion, which he realised when he said : — “ Indeed, when in preparation for this lecture I examined some of the *standard*<sup>2</sup> descriptions of 'individualism,' I almost began to regret that I had ever connected the ideals in which I believe with a term that has been so abused and misunderstood.” It would have been much better had Dr. Hayek invented some new term and thus prevented further misunderstanding. The meaning of “ Individualism ” is too well established now to be easily displaced.<sup>3</sup>

J. Ramsay Macdonald also balked at the term “ Individualism ” as it did not fit in with his peculiar ideas. He

<sup>1</sup> Since published in pamphlet form.

<sup>2</sup> Italics mine.

<sup>3</sup> For a criticism of Dr. Hayek's lecture, see *The Irish Rosary*, Sept.-Oct., 1946.

said : " I do not like to use this word because it is so misleading. . . . Socialism is itself a theory of individualism because socialists contend that only under Socialism will men be free." (*The Socialist Movement*, p. 28.) We have then the interesting situation of Professor Hayek, an opponent of Socialism, disliking the use of the word " Individualism " and J. Ramsay Macdonald, a protagonist of Socialism, expressing similar dislike. The difficulty in understanding what Individualism is arises from the failure to appreciate the difference between " the individual " and " the person." <sup>1</sup>

Indeed, untold confusion has arisen in modern times owing to the failure to distinguish between the *individual* and the *person*, between *individuality* and *personality*. As M. Maritain says : " The modern world confounds two things which ancient wisdom had distinguished ; it confounds individuality and personality." " What," he asks, " is modern individualism ? A misunderstanding, a blunder : the exaltation of individuality camouflaged as personality and the corresponding degradation of personality."

The word *individualism* is derived from *individual*. An *individual* is defined as a being distinct from others (stone, tree, horse, man, angel). A *person* is an individual of rational or intellectual nature (man or angel). A *human person* is an individual of human rational nature. Because he is rational he is (1) capable of knowing the end for which he has been made ; (2) of freely pursuing it ; (3) has the right and duty to pursue it, and has in addition all the other rights and duties that follow from his nature as a person (life, freedom of conscience, marriage, property, etc.).

The *human person* is also a " social animal " destined by his nature to live in the society of his fellow-men with

<sup>1</sup> See the article on " Person and Society," by Dom Wesseling, *Dublin Review*, April, 1941 ; see also " Personne et Société," by Jacques Maritain, in *Unitas*, a Roman quarterly, March, 1946,— portion of a conference " Personne et Individuel " given by him to the Roman Pontifical Academy of St. Thomas, Rome. Consult " The Personalist Manifesto " by E. Mounier, and *Esprit* (Paris), the monthly organ of " Personalisme."

whom he has a common nature and hence common ends or purposes—*Bonum Commune*, or the Common Good. Society is therefore a union of *persons* or human rational beings (not of mere *individuals* as such) in pursuit of a common end or common good. Hence he has *social duties* as a member of a family, a local community, a State. "Mere individuals," says Romano Guardini, "can constitute only herds or human ant-heaps: community is a mutual relationship of personalities." (*The Church and the Catholic*, p. 38.)

M. Maritain points out as follows how "the exaltation of individuality camouflaged as personality" has led to "the degradation of true personality."

"In the Social Order, the modern city sacrifices the *person* to the *individual*; it gives universal suffrage, equal rights, liberty of opinion, to the *individual*, and delivers the *person*, isolated, naked, with no social framework to support and protect it, to all the devouring powers which threatens the soul's life, to the pitiless actions and reactions of conflicting interests and appetites, to the infinite demands of matter to manufacture and use. . . . And it says to each of the poor children of men set in the midst of the turmoil. 'You are a free individual; defend yourself, save yourself, all by yourself.' It is a homicidal civilisation." (*The Essay on Luther*, in *Three Reformers*, p. 21.)

M. Maritain concludes: "Let us say that the Christian City is as fundamentally *anti-individualist* as it is fundamentally *personalist*."

If this distinction between the *individual* and the *person* be grasped, one can clearly understand what Individualism is, and one has then the key to some of the outstanding social, political and economic problems of the world of to-day. *In all that follows in this Essay, it is of primary importance that the reader should remember and be constantly conscious of this distinction between "the individual" and "the person."*

The main purpose of this Essay is to break up

composite Individualism into its component elements—religious, political, economic—and to discuss each of them in some detail. Individualism as a factor of social disintegration lies in three distinct provinces—religion, politics and economics. It is quite easy to see that religion was basic and primary ; but as to which of the other two should take precedence in the order of discussion, it was rather difficult to decide. Looking through Hilaire Belloc's masterpiece, *The Crisis of our Civilisation*, soon solved the difficulty. He asserts that :

“ Almost all men of the nineteenth century and most men of to-day would take for granted that economic phenomena in society that is, the way in which wealth is produced, distributed and exchanged, were the causes of political change, and even to-day many men of the older generation still cling to that view.

“ But the conception is false : political change, invariably comes prior to economic change ; economic change could not take place but for the acceptance of laws and a machinery of government which allows the new economic conditions to function. First comes, in every great revolution of European affairs, a spiritual change ; next bred by this, a change in social philosophy, therefore in political arrangement ; lastly, the economic change which political rearrangement has rendered possible.” (p. 122.)

We accept this order and shall, therefore, proceed to discuss the growth and development of Religious Individualism. Before proceeding it will be necessary to consider briefly the Renaissance in relation to Protestantism and the Reformation.

#### THE RENAISSANCE

The Renaissance was a hundred years on its way before Luther's revolt began ; it was, as Cardinal Baudrillart has said, “ one of the most brilliant epochs in the intellectual and artistic history of man.” Christopher Dawson

says of it that "there never has been a period, not even the classical age of Greece, in which the aesthetic view was so dominant in every aspect of life." The heralds of the Renaissance were Petrarch (1304—74) and Boccacio (1313—75). It may be said to have had its beginning in the early years of the fifteenth century and to have lasted till the declining years of the sixteenth, nearly two centuries, from rise to decline. It was primarily a movement to resurrect the classical learning and culture of ancient Greece and Rome. It received a powerful impetus when, after the conquest of Constantinople by the Turks, 1453, the Greek scholars fled to Italy, bringing with them many of the ancient classical manuscripts.

The Renaissance is a vast subject and can only be discussed here, and briefly, in its relation to the Reformation; the necessity of documentation will be obvious. Dean Inge said in *Protestantism*: "The connection of the Renaissance with the Reformation is a complicated subject." Historians with an anti-Catholic bias (and how many such there have been who have written of this period) wish to convey the idea that the Renaissance was nascent Protestantism, that "modern progress" derived from the Reformation, that mankind had lived wrapt up in ignorance and superstition for most of a thousand years—that is during the period when the Catholic Church was supreme in Europe. "The fact is," as Cardinal Gasquet states, "that round the true history of the Reformation Movement in England, there has grown up, as Janssen has shown had been the case in Germany, a mass of legend from which it is difficult enough to disentangle the truth." "To suggest that men like Colet, More, and Erasmus<sup>1</sup> had any leaning to or sympathy with the Reformation as we know it, is, in view of what they have written, absolutely false and misleading."

As an instance of the type of history referred to by Cardinal Gasquet, the popular legend of Erasmus as the morning star of the Reformation will be of interest. He,

<sup>1</sup> Leading lights of the Renaissance and all earnest Catholics.

the most brilliant of the humanists, while denouncing the religious and moral corruption of his time lived and died a sincere Catholic. Protestant writers quote Erasmus as saying : " I have laid the egg and Luther hatched it." This is not only an example of how legendary history is written but also of historical wishful thinking, or of what Hilaire Belloc calls " writing history backwards." What Erasmus did actually say of his reforming efforts, as pointed out by J. M. Stone in *Reformation and Renaissance*, is : " I am always the same, and yet, I have laid the egg and Luther has hatched it. This is a joke of the Minorite brethren, for which they deserve to be complimented as wits ; but I laid a hen egg, and Luther has hatched a different bird." (P. 162.) The significance of this distinction may be seen from what Erasmus wrote in 1524, " Luther is a hundred times a worse heretic than Arius or Origen." The previous year he had written in *Spongia adversus Aspergines Hutteni* : " All will, I think, agree that the Church is in Rome, for the multitude of evils do not prevent the continued existence of the Church, otherwise we should have no churches at all. And I believe that her faith is sound, for although some godless men are contained within her communion, the church continues to exist in the good." (Op. cit., p. 185.)

Even Dean Inge admits that :

" The Northern Reformation was at least as much a reaction against the Renaissance as a development of it. This Erasmus understood, and since he was devoted both to the extension of human learning and the moral reformation of Christendom, his ambiguous attitude in the convulsion of his time was easily understood and indeed justified. He desired a Reformation, but not the Reformation which actually occurred."

In *The Achievement of the Middle Ages*, the Catholic historian, W. E. Brown, exposes the following fallacy—" that the Renaissance was an incipient revolt against the forces which governed the medieval world and especially

against the papal Church, and that this revolt gathered strength as churchmen refused to accept the new learning until they were swept away from their strongholds by the Reformation."

" Such an explanation cannot stand before the facts of the case. The great humanists were almost all churchmen from the beginning to the end of the movement.<sup>1</sup> This is not only true of men like Ximenes, Nicholas Cues, and Aeneas Sylvius, who might be held to have hidden their humanism beneath the red cassock of the Sacred College, but of those who, like Petrarch and Lorenzo Valla, professed doctrines which seem sometimes at variance with the Catholic religion. Nor was this a mere temporary accident. The recovery of classical learning, the developments of painting and sculpture, the new academies where platonic philosophy was discussed, were patronised and protected first and foremost by the Popes themselves. The Avignon Court saw the beginning of that movement, and though it suffered as all else did in Europe during the Great Schism, that work was taken up afresh by the long line of Popes whose reigns cover the hundred years from the middle of the fifteenth century. The older universities might fulminate against those who despised scholasticism, but their thunder was rendered ineffective because humanism was enthroned in the Chair of Peter. Indeed Renaissance learning became almost a qualification for a bishopric " (pp. 211-12).

✓ Hilaire Belloc describes the relation between the Renaissance and the Reformation as follows :

" The great advance in our physical powers over nature, and in our knowledge of physical cause and effect, is not a product of the Reformation at all : it is a product

<sup>1</sup> Burckhardt says : " In the course of the fifteenth century the works of antiquity were discovered and diffused with extraordinary rapidity " ; and, he adds with surprise—" It is a curious fact that some of the most zealous apostles of the new culture were men of the strictest piety, or even ascetics " (p. 479). But, why this surprise at saintly Catholics being scholars ?

of the Renaissance. The Renaissance was not completed by, nor did it march side by side with, the Reformation ; nor was the Reformation even a fruit of the Renaissance. The Reformation was essentially a diversion of the main stream of the Renaissance into narrower, incongruous channels, flowing in a different direction from what the glorious stream of rediscovered culture would have followed, had it been left undisturbed.”<sup>1</sup> (*How the Reformation Happened*, pp. 280-81.)

The two leading historians of the Renaissance and propagandists of the Protestant legend are Burckhardt and Symonds : it is extremely probable that if a reader were to ask a librarian of a public library in Britain for a history of this period he would be handed one or the other mentioned. Here are briefly their views, which will be followed by the comment of some distinguished Protestant critics. Burckhardt opens the chapter on the “ Development of the Individual ” in the *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* with these words :

“ In the Middle Ages both sides of human consciousness—that which was turned within and that which was turned without—lay dreaming or half awake beneath a *common veil*. The veil was woven of faith, illusion, and childish prepossession, through which the world and history were seen clad in strange hues. In Italy this veil first melted into air ; an *objective* treatment and consideration of the state and of all things of this world became possible. The *subjective* side at the same time asserted itself with corresponding emphasis ; man became a *spiritual* individual and recognised himself as such.”

Professor Groethuysen of the University of Berlin thus exposes this “ writing of history backwards.” He says : “ Burckhardt must be credited primarily with the spread

<sup>1</sup> D. B. Wyndham Lewis caustically remarks : “ In turning the pages of more English historical studies than one the student is oppressed with the conviction that all these Renaissance personages are really Low-Church Victorians in fancy dress.” See his excellent introduction (pp. 1-25) to *Emperor of the West*, for the relations of the Renaissance and the Reformation.

of the idea of the Renaissance as an age of liberation from the shackles of medievalism and *the beginning of the modern era of individualism.*” Groethuysen gives the following balanced judgment on the Renaissance :

“ It is best to characterise the period of the Renaissance not as a wholly distinct cultural epoch, but rather as a transition period between the medieval and the modern ages in which old and new, religious and profane, authoritarian and individualistic principles and concepts existed side by side, while at the same time certain marked transformations and changes in ideas and ways of living took place in Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, France, Germany and England. Politically, the Renaissance saw the rise of the modern national state; in the economic sphere it witnessed the development of early capitalism and the emergence of a new leisured class.” <sup>1</sup>

✓ J. A. Symonds draws the following fantastic caricature of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance :

“ During the Middle Ages man had lived enveloped in a cowl. He had not seen the beauty of the world, or had seen it only to cross himself, and turn aside and tell his beads and pray. . . . Beauty is a snare, pleasure a sin, the world a fleeting show, man fallen and lost, death the only certainty, judgment inevitable, hell everlasting, heaven hard to win, ignorance is acceptable to God as a proof of faith and submission; abstinence and mortification are the only safe rules of life: these were the fixed ideas of the ascetic medieval Church. The Renaissance shattered and destroyed them, rending the thick veil which they had drawn between the mind of man and the outer world, and flashing the light of reality upon the darkened places of his own nature. For the mystic teaching of the Church was substituted culture in the classical humanities; a new ideal was established, whereby man strove to make himself the monarch of the globe on which it is his privilege as well as destiny

<sup>1</sup> Article on “ The Renaissance ” in *The Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*

to live. The Renaissance was the liberation of the reason from a dungeon, the double dungeon of the outer and the inner world." (Vol. on *The Age of the Despots*, 1875.)

Such is the grotesquely fantastic legend which Burckhardt and Symonds loosed upon the credulous Protestant world. It is very important to note, in passing, that the Renaissance which is depicted by many Protestant writers as nascent Protestantism was vigorously opposed by the Reformers. Christopher Dawson says, "The culture of the Renaissance, and that of the Reformation were two separate worlds, entirely alien from one another in spirit and without any common ground on which they could meet." (*Progress and Religion*, p. 186.)

Symonds contributed the article on the "Renaissance" to the ninth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. In the fourteenth edition, Professor Smith of Cornell University added some critical comment on Symonds' contribution, from which the following is taken :

" Of all the positions taken by Symonds that most subject to attack has been his assertion of the close connection and similar purpose of the Renaissance and Reformation. Like most historians of the nineteenth century, Symonds regarded them both as liberal movements, emancipations of reason so nearly alike that the Reformation might be called ' The Teutonic Renaissance.' Just as he was writing, however, Friedrich Nietzsche, basing his opinion on Janssen's *Geschichte des deutschen Volkes seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters*, which represented the Reformation as a blight on German Catholic civilisation, proclaimed that ' the Reformation was a reaction of backward minds against the Italian Renaissance ' : and this view gained ground until it was adopted by Catholic historians like Lord Acton, Protestant historians like Ernest Troeltsch,<sup>1</sup> and generally by the majority of scholars."

<sup>1</sup> Troeltsch's view is : " Whatever the Ancient World and the Renaissance may have done for the intensification of individuality . . . the really permanent attainment of individualism was due to a religion, and not to a secular movement—to the Reformation and not to the Renaissance."

Finally, and as a summing up, Dr. Shotwell, Professor of History, Columbia University, says :

“ In the purely intellectual sphere it is certainly true that the recovery of the antique world was of great importance. . . . But it did not mean the ‘ double discovery of the outer and inner world.’ Mankind did not as Burckhardt and J. A. Symonds lead one to imagine suddenly throw off a cowl that had blinded the eyes of a thousand years to the beauty of the world around, and awaken all at once to the mere joy of living. If anyone was ever awake to the joys of living it was the minnesinger, troubadour or goliard.

“ As for the claim that the Renaissance delivered men from that blind reliance upon authority which was typical of medieval thought, *that is a fallacy cherished by those who rely upon the authority of historians, blind to the most ordinary processes of thought.*<sup>1</sup> In this regard, indeed, in spite of the advance of scientific method and the wealth of material upon which to base criticism, we are still for the most part in the middle ages. The respect for anything in books, the dogma of journalistic inerrancy which still numbers its devotees by millions, the common acceptance of even scientific conceptions on the data of a small group of investigators, these are but a few of the signs of the persistence of what is surely not a medieval but a universal trait. The so-called Renaissance did much ; but it did not do the things attributed to it by those who see the ‘ middle ages ’ through humanist glasses.’ (Article on “ The Middle Ages,” *Encycl. Brit.* 11th Ed.)

This is an admirable piece of criticism. Yet a new and popular edition of Burckhardt appeared just after World War II had ended.

The story of the Renaissance and the Reformation has been so distorted, and as such so diffused by many anti-Catholic historians, that it seems almost a hopeless under-

<sup>1</sup> Italics mine.

taking to try to set things right. It is for this reason, therefore, that English and Irish Catholics and all lovers of truth must be grateful to men like Newman, Belloc, Chesterton, Dawson and others who set out on what seemed the impossible adventure of undoing false history by unmasking what Hilaire Belloc has called "the worst Myths <sup>1</sup> of the official anti-Catholic history." The worst type of Myth, he says,—"the one which appeals most of all to the ignorant general reader and the one which is most difficult to eliminate wholly even from the mind of the best-instructed, is the method of reading modern times into the past": this, he says in another place is "writing history backwards."

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Belloc says that "'a Myth' is 'falsehood' passing for historical truth."

## PROTESTANTISM

### RELIGIOUS BIAS OF WHIG HISTORIANS

Arising out of what has just been said about historical myths, it is necessary to warn the seeker after historical truth against anti-Catholic bias unconsciously developed through reading popular history handbooks. It is difficult for anyone who has been brought up on the histories generally in use in Protestant schools and universities, not to develop unconsciously a strong prejudice against the Catholic Church and against Catholics in general. He will receive in the system of historical education that obtains wholly distorted notions of the Ancient Church, the mother and maker of the civilisation of the West. He will be led to regard her as "obscurantist" and "reactionary," as opposed to learning in general and to science in particular. He will see her presented as an alien importation, as an intruder and unnatural, as the "Roman Mission" or the "Italian Mission," as the enemy of liberty. And he will have been much influenced in this historical outlook by those popular English novels which have a perennial interest for impressionable youth, in which a virile English Protestantism is glorified and openly or insidiously contrasted with a decadent foreign Catholicism. In all this distorted outlook on Catholicism he will be further influenced not infrequently by the Pulpit and the Press. It will require a superhuman effort to break through this wall of prejudice that has been built up round the Protestant mind by the anti-Catholic historians. D. B. Wyndham Lewis has said that—"the vast Whig Legend rises like a Great Wall of China between the English and their past." (*Emperor of the West*, p. 360.) Later on, there will be given a list of some converts who succeeded in fully breaking through and finding Faith and Freedom at no small personal cost, preceded in many cases by much mental pain and anxiety.

Mr. Belloc asserts that "the whole picture of history, the whole presentation of our development, is propaganda from the enemies' camp" (that is the Protestants'). "The historians," he says, "whose works he (the Englishman) has been given as text-books, those who inform the fiction he knows, the classics of his tongue, the body of the literature with which he is familiar, are the historians in opposition to ourselves. Write down half a dozen names of English historians: Macaulay, Carlyle, Gibbon, old Freeman, Motley, and the modern writer, Trevelyan (this last a typical product of the highly anti-Catholic English universities and governing class). . . . As for Trevelyan, he is, of course, nothing more than the echo of his great-uncle Macaulay." (*Crisis of Our Civilisation*, pp. 235-6.) What an unbridgeable gulf lies between such historians and the appreciation of the Catholic culture that has been the vital principle of English and European civilisation may be seen from the following well-known passage in Froude's History. He was describing the great transition that took place at the Reformation between the old Catholic England and the new England of Protestantism. He says:

"The paths trodden by the footsteps of ages were broken up; old things were passing away and the faith and life of ten centuries were dissolving like a dream. . . . And now it is all gone—like an unsubstantial pageant faded; and between us and the old English there lies a gulf of mystery which the prose of the historian will never bridge. They cannot come to us, and our imaginations can but feebly penetrate to them. Only among the aisles of our Cathedrals, only as we gaze upon their silent figures sleeping on their tombs, some faint conceptions float before us of what these men were when they lived; and perhaps in the sound of church bells, that peculiar creation of medieval age, which falls upon the ear like the echo of a vanished world."

For the Catholic historian the history of England is a continuous unity, there is no "gulf of mystery." The English Catholics of the twentieth century are spiritually and culturally kith and kin with their brothers of the twelfth or the fifteenth century, whose "life and faith" they thoroughly understand and appreciate. The "Reformation" has not cut off the Catholics of to-day from religious and historical communion with their fellow-Catholics of the past: it is this lesion of religious and historical continuity which took place with the uprise of Protestantism that has made it so difficult for Froude and English Protestant historians in general to write objectively when treating of the Catholic Church. What Hilaire Belloc wrote in his essay on "William Cecil" may be aptly applied as a comment on Froude's statement above. "It has been remarked that England more than any other European country, is cut off from her past. When England became Protestant she became a new thing and the old Catholic England of the thousand years before the Reformation is to the Englishman after the Reformation, a foreign country."

There is being published at present a popular series of handbooks on history: *The Teach Yourself History Library*, under the editorship of A. L. Rowse. He has written an introduction to the series, which he styles the "Key Volume," under the title, *The Use of History*, (1946). These handbooks will probably have a wide circulation and it is useful to take a casual glance at the introductory volume. Mr. Rowse writes in very high praise of G. M. Trevelyan's historical works and the latter pays the following tribute to *The Use of History* in a blurb on the dust-cover: "Mr. Rowse's book is the best analysis I have ever seen of the educative effect of history on the mind, and particularly on the political judgment of the reader." It will be of interest to consider briefly the peculiar angle from which Mr. Rowse sees the English Catholic position.

Three great names stand out in the noble effort of

countering anti-Catholic bias and of presenting the Catholic case in English history—Newman, Belloc and Chesterton. The cold, penetrating mind of Newman broke up the fog of anti-Catholic misrepresentation and let in the flood of light which came with the Oxford Movement. In the present century Belloc and Chesterton did similar work, and the recent big influx of converts of the intellectual type into the Catholic Church is largely to be attributed to their influence. The two latter have done immense service to the Catholic cause and have changed the whole course of the writing of English history. But, here is what Mr. Rowse thinks of them :

“ Of course, there are plenty of historians who allow their emotional prejudice to bedevil their judgment. Their reason is at the service of their emotions ; their emotions mould their reason. Take Belloc and Chesterton, those two big bouncing boys of prejudice, who have had such a deplorable influence in rewriting our history and making nonsense of it. With them it is only too obvious. But it is no less obvious, to any one who understands a little psychology, with a much subtler and more brilliant mind, Newman. If you read his novel *Loss and Gain*—which is very revealing of himself—you will see how all his sympathies at school were with King and Church.<sup>1</sup> He never got over them. The whole of his subsequent mental history was a subtle process of finding intellectual reasons to prove what his heart had long ago opted for. I call that very feminine : I understand the process well.” (*The Use of History*, p. 180).

“ I understand the process well ” : that is final. *Causa finita est.* Elsewhere in the book, Mr. Rowse says : “ If people with good university standards would not, or could not, write in such a way as to be readable, the general public fell into the hands of charlatans, the Chestertons and Bellocs—or rather it was the Chestertons and Bellocs

<sup>1</sup> That is in the struggle in the English Civil War.

that fell into the hands of the public!" (P. 90.) To describe Belloc and Chesterton as "charlatans" and Newman as "feminine" needs little comment—except to say that Mr. Rowse's remarks give good ground for believing that he is one of those who "allow their emotional prejudice to bedevil their judgment"—notwithstanding that he had said "my emotional preferences were, and are, Catholic—certainly not Protestant."

In his *Apologia* Newman has given a detailed account of the development of his religious opinions from his boyhood till his reception into the Catholic Church, 1845: in this there is nothing that can be remotely described as emotional or "feminine." Indeed its contents may be truly described as both intellectual and virile. It is a book that should be read and studied by those who are earnestly seeking religious truth; it is a masterpiece of brilliant argument and a religious classic deserving to take its place side by side with the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine.

The reasons for Mr. Rowse's irritation seem to be: (1) The refusal of Belloc and Chesterton to accept the traditional anti-Catholic myths centring round the Reformation and the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688<sup>1</sup>; (2) that they viewed and appreciated these great controversies from the peculiar vantage point of Catholics—for Catholics were equally involved in them with Protestants; (3) that, above all, Belloc and Chesterton had a profound "influence in re-writing our history." He is also very irritated by Belloc's exposure of the Elizabethan myth of the "Virgin Queen," the "Good Queen Bess," and he specially warns students not to read "Belloc's or Theodore Maynard's stuff about her."<sup>2</sup> Much of this present Essay will be devoted to the consideration of the political and economic aspects of the two great revolutions mentioned and to the

<sup>1</sup> They looked on "the Revolution of 1688 as a mistake"; and "the Reformation—which in fact made our fortune as a people they regarded as a disaster."

<sup>2</sup> Theodore Maynard is a distinguished American Catholic writer. Belloc has described "the Elizabeth Myth" as "a sort of creative and vital falsehood"—"a more monstrous scaffolding of poisonous nonsense has never been foisted on posterity."

change that has taken place in the attitude of people towards them—mainly as the result of Belloc's and Chesterton's mighty efforts.

But, little by little, the light is breaking through and the truth begins slowly to appear. Having referred to "certain comic aspects of the huge Elizabethan Legend, with its Valhalla of shining supermen and various heroes," D. B. Wyndham Lewis wrote in his *Emperor of the West*:

"When the full raw truth about national operatic demi-gods, the Virgin Queen and Cecil, Drake, Hawkins and Raleigh, Grenville and Sidney, is allowed to creep into English school-books and the popular mind, we shall be well on the way to reason. Mr. Christopher Hollis has dealt fittingly with some of this popular pro-Elizabethan rhetoric or ballyhoo in a recent study.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile such a dashing farrago of inspiration and untruth as Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* is still a standard gift-book for innocent British youth."<sup>2</sup> (p. 9).

He who is seriously seeking for truth will not confine himself to the Whig or anti-Catholic historians and their romantic Protestant myths; let him also examine the Catholic point of view and form his judgment dispassionately. It will be helpful for him to recall that Newman, who had so long and so critically examined the Protestant and Catholic positions as set forth by English historians, attributed "the extreme aversion and contempt in which Catholics are held in this great Protestant country to the influence of falsehood and misrepresentation, energetic in its operation and unbounded in its extent." ("The Present Position of Catholics," p. 223.) He who has been brought up on the myths of the Protestant English historians should therefore strive to realise that the

<sup>1</sup> *The Monstrous Regiment*.

<sup>2</sup> D. B. Wyndham Lewis says of it: "Yet this book is not more false than much of the work of Froude, a serious historian, one of the major English historians, whom contemporary Victorians knew to be a deliberate falsifier and to glory in it."

religious prejudice which has been developing in him from his boyhood onwards will be the greatest obstacle to him in his search for historical or religious truth, and that as a consequence he should consciously and continuously react against it in order to negative it and so restore a properly-balanced mind and judgment.

In the volume referred to above, particularly in the Epilogue, D. B. Wyndham Lewis severely criticises the anti-Catholic virus of the popular English Protestant historians ; in concluding he suggests the following antidote.

“ There is one antidote at least to the kind of stuff purveyed by the Whig monopoly, the Gibbons, Humes, Macaulays, Froudes, Freemans, Greens, Carlyles, the instigators of what Mr. H. G. Wells, himself sufficiently detached as a historian from accurate comprehension of or continuity with the past, has justly called ‘ that movement of professional barbarity, of braggart race-imperialism and anti-Irishism of which Froude and Freeman were leaders, which smelt of Carlyle and Germany and helped to provoke the Celtic Renaissance,’ that great pretentious nineteenth-century Nordic Superman drive which has been continued by their successors to-day. The antidote is contained in the historical work of John Lingard, an English scholar who happens to be the first English historian to write scientifically —that is, from exact and documented sources, from authentic original texts. . . .

“ The name of Lingard is unknown to the vast majority of the English and is never mentioned at either of the principal English Universities ; nevertheless he is the creator of accurate English historical writing. That such proved romancers as Macaulay, Froude, Green and the others should be household words while Lingard remains almost unknown is a sufficient commentary on the attitude of English educational authorities towards their history ” (op. cit., pp. 286-7.)

Lingard completed his History of England in 1830, ending with the fall of the Stuarts and the Great Revolution. Hilaire Belloc, who spent a lifetime exposing the Whig falsification of history, was deeply indebted to Lingard and in appreciation added a volume to those of Lingard, covering the period from the Revolution to the death of Edward VII. In the opening words of his introduction Belloc described Lingard as "the Father of Modern English history and the man upon whose labours, as upon a foundation, all other academic text-books have arisen."<sup>1</sup> It may well be asked—Why is it that "the name of Lingard is unknown to the vast majority of the English and is never mentioned at either of the principal English Universities?" Surely it cannot be that English Protestants are reluctant to face the truth. Let those who dispassionately seek historical truth read Lingard, as a corrective to the Whig historians who have given a one-sided account of English history, ignoring or misinterpreting the Catholic side.

### INDIVIDUALISTIC NATURE OF PROTESTANTISM

Individualism or Atomism, which has hastened the "progress" of humanity down the "road to ruin," to the religious, political and economic disasters of our time, mainly derives from the religious revolution of the sixteenth century.<sup>2</sup> In the article referred to above Dr. Lindsay says :

"The Reformation was an emphatic assertion of the individualist element which had been overshadowed by the authority of tradition and of the organisation. The central doctrine of the Reformation was the universal priesthood of believers, a doctrine in implication indivi-

<sup>1</sup> In a pen-portrait (*Catholic Profile*) of Belloc in the "Catholic Herald," January 31, 1947, the writer said: "He undertook the completion of Lingard's History of England, and so completely overshadowed Lingard that the rectification of English historical writing is attributed to him, solely, by many of his followers."

<sup>2</sup> The Renaissance merely predisposed and prepared the way.

dualistic and democratic. Luther himself did not draw the full consequences of his teaching of the "Liberty of a Christian Man." But those who followed him did—notably the Anabaptists, the Independents and the Quakers. Their religious individualism turned away from everything in organised Christianity which stood for the corporate and authoritative aspect of the Church. Its implication was almost that 'organised Christianity' was a contradiction in terms. The Church is a fellowship of believers, each the direct concern of God, each directly responsible to God, each guided by the illumination of God in his own heart and conscience."

3 Protestantism cannot be properly appreciated without some understanding of the peculiar nature of its founder's character. Luther was essentially egocentric. It may be said with much truth that he is almost the incarnation of religious individualism: round him revolves the whole system of Protestantism. Jacques Maritain has analysed this characteristic at length in *Three Reformers*.<sup>1</sup> The essential idea is as follows:

"What first impresses us in Luther's character is *egocentrism*: something much subtler, much deeper, and much more serious, than egoism; a metaphysical egoism. Luther's self becomes practically the centre of gravity of everything, especially in the spiritual order. . . .

"I do not admit," he writes in June, 1522, 'that my doctrine can be judged by anyone, even by the angels. He who does not receive my doctrine cannot be saved.'<sup>2</sup> 'Luther's self,' wrote Moehler, 'was in his opinion the centre round which all humanity should gravitate; he set himself up as the universal man in whom all should find their model. Let us make no bones about it, he put himself in the place of Jesus Christ. . . .'

<sup>1</sup> The sub-title of the Essay on "Luther" is—"The Advent of the Self."

<sup>2</sup> Other declarations of Luther are "I boldly vouch and declare that when you obey me, you are without a doubt obeying not me but Christ." And also "Whoever obeys me not, despises not me but Christ."

"Lutheranism is not a system worked out by Luther ; it is the overflow of Luther's individuality. It will be the same with Rousseau, the procedure is essentially romantic" (pp. 14-16).

8 Luther was born in 1483 and died 1546 : he was, therefore, only sixty-three years old. He began his revolt against the Church in 1517, published his three great Reformation Tracts, 1520,—*Address to the Christian Nobility, A Prelude on the Babylonian Captivity of the Church, The Liberty of a Christian Man.*<sup>1</sup> In less than thirty years of colossal activity he had shaken the Church to its rock-foundation, and broken up the unity of Christendom. The Counter-Reformation was the Catholic reaction which saved the Church in Southern and Western Europe ; the Northern nations were, however, lost to the Faith and remain so till to-day.

Protestantism aimed at the destruction of the Papacy, the teaching authority of the Church. Pope, Bishop, and ordained priest, were thrust aside by the Reformers and the "universal priesthood of believers" was proclaimed. "Private judgment" was one of the central doctrines of the "New Religion" ; the individual interpreted the Bible with the help of the Holy Spirit and had no need of Pope or Church or Bishop or priest in order to discover the dogmatic or moral teaching of Christianity. The Church as an organised religious institution gradually fades away as the individual grows in importance and eclipses it. Little by little the organic idea of the Church was undermined until it became a mere "fellowship of believers," that is of so many individuals grouped together with mere external contact as so many stones in a heap.

The individualistic, fissiparous, character of Protestantism manifested itself rapidly by the appearance of many sects,—all contradicting each other on some major point of doctrine or practice. To-day in Protestant

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Murray says : "Into the ferment of the early sixteenth century Luther's *Freedom of a Christian Man* was the electric spark that exploded the gunpowder." (*The Individual and the State*, p. 96.)

countries, such as Great Britain and U.S.A., the final development has been the advancing dissolution of all "institutional religion" so that the "individual" becomes, as it were, a church to himself,—the majority having no practical interest whatsoever in organised religion or a church. It was the cynical Voltaire who said that there were "as many sects as there were men who knew how to read." Thus has ended the "liberty of a Christian man," and the "universal priesthood of believers." Protestantism as an organised authoritative body has largely ceased to exist and a mere residual conglomeration of individuals remains. Such has been the disruptive force of Religious Individualism, ending in widespread religious indifferentism and neo-paganism. "By proclaiming the Bible and private judgment in opposition to the authority of the Church it (the Reformation) released the atomic energy of individualism in religion with destructive results that are witnessed on all sides to-day."<sup>1</sup>

There is one fact that it is necessary to emphasise—ignored by many Protestant historians and which some Catholic writers have gone out of their way to stress—it is that the Reformers neither intended, nor foresaw, nor even remotely dreamt of the disruption of Christendom as the result of their fundamental religious individualism. Of this Hilaire Belloc says:

"It is a feature which nearly all historians neglect and yet one manifest upon the reading of any contemporary expression—That feature is this: *No one in the Reformation dreamt a divided Christendom to be possible.* . . .

"That fatal habit of reading into the past what we know of its future, has in this matter most deplorably marred history, and men whether Protestant or Catholic, who are accustomed to Protestantism, read Protestantism and the absurd idea of a local religion—a religion true in one place and untrue in another—into a time where the least instructed clown would have laughed in your face at such nonsense." (*Europe and the Faith*, p.277.)

<sup>1</sup> *The Tablet*, 20th October, 1945.

Hilaire Belloc asserted in the volume just quoted that "the prime product of the Reformation was *the isolation of the soul*," and he added :

" That truth contains in its development, very much more than its mere statement might promise. The isolation of the soul means a loss of corporate sustenance ; of the same balance produced by common experience, a public certainty and the general will. The isolation of the soul is the very definition of its unhappiness. But this solvent applied to society does very much more than merely complete and confirm human misery.

" In the first place, and underlying all, the isolation of the soul releases in society a furious new accession of force. The break-up of any stable system, in physics as in society, makes actual a prodigious reserve of potential energy. It transforms the power that was keeping things together into a power driving separately each component part ; the effect of an explosion " (pp. 321-2).

It is the release of this atomic, anarchic, spiritual force of individualism, that came out of the Reformation, which is the basic cause of the disruption of the life of men in the religious, political and economic spheres, as will be shown in the course of this Essay. This individualism in the social life of man is akin to that atomic energy in the physical order which is making such a stir in the world to-day.

The awful spiritual isolation of the individual Christian in the opening years of the Reformation period, as described by Max Weber, is really terrifying.<sup>1</sup>

" In its extreme inhumanity this doctrine must above all have had one consequence for the life of a generation which surrendered to its magnificent consistency. That was a feeling of unprecedented inner loneliness of the single individual. In what was for the man of the age of the Reformation the most important thing in life, his eternal salvation, he was forced to follow his path

<sup>1</sup> This refers to Calvinism in particular.

alone to meet a destiny which had been decreed for him from eternity. No one could help him. No priest, for the chosen one can understand the word of God only in his own heart. No sacraments, for though the sacraments had been ordained by God for the increase of His glory, and must hence be scrupulously observed, they are not a means to the attainment of grace, but only the subjective *externa subsidia* of faith. No church, for though it was held that "*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*" in the sense that whoever kept away from the true church could never belong to God's chosen band, nevertheless the membership of the external church included the doomed. . . .

"This, the complete elimination of salvation through the Church and the sacraments (which was in Lutheranism by no means developed to its final conclusions), was what formed the absolutely decisive difference from Catholicism." (*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, pp. 104-5.)

John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is the classical portrayal of the spiritual loneliness of the religious individualist. Professor Dowden refers to it in *Puritan and Anglican* as follows :

"All that is best and most characteristic in Bunyan proceeds from that inward drama, in which the actors were three—God, Satan, and a solitary human soul. If external influences from events or men affected his spirit, they came as Nuncios or Messengers from God or from the Evil One. Institutions, churches, ordinances, rites, ceremonies, could help him little or not at all. The journey from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City must be undertaken on a special summons by each man for himself alone : if a companion join him on the way, it lightens the trials of the road ; but, of the companions, each one is an individual pilgrim, who has started on a great personal adventure, and who, as he enters the dark river, must undergo his particular experience of hope or fear." (p. 234.)

All this is, as it were, the negative side of this religious isolation of the individual; but there is the positive, the Catholic point of view also. Karl Adam sets this forth admirably in the introductory chapter to the *Spirit of Catholicism*, where he shows how man has been torn from the fellowship of God and from the *communio fidelium*, the fellowship of the Church.

“ It is the mark of the modern man that he is torn from his roots. . . . Instead of this man who is rooted in the absolute, hidden in God, strong and rich, we have the man who rests upon himself, an autonomous man. Moreover, this man, because he has renounced the fellowship of the Church, the *communio fidelium*, the interrelation and correlation of the faithful, has severed the second root of his life, that is to say the fellowship with other men. . . . Nowhere else, in no other society is *the idea of community*, of fellowship in doing and suffering, in prayer and love, and of growth and formation in and through such fellowship, so strongly embedded in doctrine, morals and worship, as in the Catholic Church. And so the rupture of Church unity has of itself loosened the bonds of social fellowship and thereby destroyed the deep source and basis of a healthy, strong humanity, of a complete humanity. *The autonomous man has become a solitary man, an individual.*” (p. 8.)

If a Protestant be really logical in his full acceptance and application of Private Judgment he must be necessarily opposed to institutional or corporate religion. Dr. Inge, formerly Dean of St. Paul's, London, in the chapter on “ Institutionalism,” in his challenging book, *Protestantism*, states his view with his usual uncompromising forcefulness. Having referred to several writers who supported the “ corporate idea, the idea of loyalty to an institutional church,” he comments thus: “ All these writers and many others who might be cited, seem to agree with Cyprian that to be a Christian means to be an enthusiastic

Churchman. This is a view which no Protestant can accept." (p. 137.)

Though Dean Inge's words may startle Catholics and may seem to be those of a religious revolutionary, yet he is but expressing the ordinary present-day Englishman's ideas regarding "The Church."

Much light has been thrown on the present religious situation in England in an editorial in the *Tablet* (London), 29th January, 1944, on "The New Establishment," in which the following comment is made on Mr. Butler's speech in the House of Commons when introducing the Education Bill. The President of the Board of Education had said :

"Let us hope that our children, to use words found in one agreed syllabus, 'may gain a knowledge of the common Christian faith held by their fathers for nearly two thousand years; may seek for themselves in Christianity principles which give a purpose to life and a guide to all its problems.'"

The *Tablet*'s comment on this is as follows :

"Some will take the words 'may gain a knowledge' very literally, as meaning a form of historical and detached knowledge about what was believed in the past; but no Christian can fail to be conscious that an immense innovation is taking place, of which this Education Bill is only one manifestation.

"It is not perhaps an excessive statement to say that what we are now witnessing is as much a new establishment, an 'alteration of religion,' as happened under Queen Elizabeth. *Parliament is accepting, after nearly three centuries of the experiment of an established national Church, the idea of a non-institutional Christianity*, as best reflecting the feelings and outlook of the great majority who want to be in some sense Christians, without being either Church or Chapel. Few men appreciate the immensity and revolutionary character of what is being attempted—a Christianity without

Bishops or Presbyters. The new residuum is being given its own organisational embodiment, parallel with, but distinct from what are termed 'the denominations,' including the Church of England as established. It is not the English way to abolish institutions ; the Crown continued when its powers were firmly transferred elsewhere ; and often in the fulness of time new uses emerge for old institutions. To-day it is the fashion to attempt to distinguish the Christian religion from the idea of the Church."

The Russian Bolsheviks hold that according as Communism or the classless society will be established the *State* will fade away. It would seem that side by side there are Protestant Bolsheviks working for and leading up to, consciously or unconsciously, the disappearance of institutional religion or the "*Church*." This is "The New Establishment" in England which all Protestants who accept the traditional teaching of Christianity must look upon with grave alarm.

In his essay on "The Reformation" Alexandre Brou thus sums up the results of Luther's system, with its disruption of institutional religion leading to religious atomism and free thought :

" Of necessity, Lutheranism was an explosion of private judgment. It tended therefore to the destruction of all religion, in so far as religion is a social bond between men ; it reduced it to a mere phenomenon of the individual's interior life. The Church is thus reduced to almost nothing—a mere association among equals, who find, in so combining, a stimulus for their religious emotion ; the separate priesthood is suppressed, because all Christians are priests ; there is no need for any official teaching, any tradition, the only authority being the conscience of each individual interpreting his Bible. We know the result—thirty years after Luther, the crumbling of the sects, free enquiry leading to free thought." (*The Life of the Church*, p. 223.)

## PROTESTANTISM IN BRITAIN

The religious disintegration going on in Britain since the beginning of the present century when *non-denominational* religious instruction was introduced into the schools, and more especially since the Great War (1914-18), must be disconcerting to all those who regard themselves as traditional Christians. The following religious statistics have been taken from an article in *The Month*, March, 1940, written by Father Woodlock, S.J., entitled, "The Future of Christianity in Britain."

A religious census of London in 1914 revealed that only seven and a half per cent. of the population entered any place of worship on the Easter Sunday of that year. In 1916 several hundred Army chaplains made an enquiry into the religious conditions of the soldiers and there was unanimous testimony to the men's ignorance of the elements of the Christian Faith. They described it as "abysmal," "appalling," "amazing," etc., and their report adds: "Nor must it be assumed that this ignorance is confined to men who have passed through the elementary schools. The same verdict is recorded upon those who have been educated in our public schools."<sup>1</sup>

In May, 1918, the Y.M.C.A. made a similar survey, which was published in a 450-page report under the title, *The Army and Religion*; here too the same saddening condition is revealed. It said: "The answers have been practically unanimous. They are all to the effect that the vast majority of the men are in a condition of ignorance about the Christian religion." "The message of Christianity has clearly never reached the majority of the men at all." "The ignorance of the army in religious matters is colossal." "Boys from the Public Schools are almost in a worse case than others," etc.

<sup>1</sup> At this very time, 1917, in the leading judgment given by Lord Sumner in the House of Lords in the appeal case of *Bowman v. the Secular Society*, the learned judge declared:—"My Lords, with all respect for the great names of the lawyers who have used it, the phrase 'Christianity is part of the law of England' is not law, it is rhetoric." This is, in so many words, the proclamation that England is a secularist State.

At the Modern Churchman's Congress, 1938, Dr. Major said: "Church congregations are said to have declined by three-quarters since the Great War; Church Schools and Sunday Schools show an alarming decrease." Sir Cyril Norwood confirmed this, saying: "Congregations are said to be not more than a quarter of what they were before the war, and young people drift rapidly from institutional Christianity as soon as they come to the years of indiscretion." The Anglican Bishop of Chelmsford has said: "I believe the tide of Faith to be still running out. . . . Britain is dissatisfied and disillusioned because it has lost God."

The position of religion seems as hopeless in the English Public Schools as it is in the primary. An interesting sidelight is thrown on this aspect of the problem by Dr. F. C. Happold, Headmaster of Bishop Wordsworth's School, Salisbury—one of the most recent, perhaps one of the most interesting, among the English Public Schools. He is a deeply convinced Christian and wishes to see the Public Schools turn out integral Christians; but he regretfully points out the colossal difficulties in the way.

"In a world in which the whole Christian conception of life is being violently assailed, in a country such as ours which even by the widest stretch of the imagination cannot be called Christian, in an age when the current word, when not definitely hostile, is indifferent, if not to religion as such, at any rate to religion in its institutional form, it is impossible to envisage a school as a community of Christians or to regard its effective function as the *deliberate* attempt to create *professing* Christians. If it can train its members to think in Christian categories, if it can teach them to admire, to live, to regard as natural and fitting a Christian way of life, it will have accomplished an all-important task; it will be playing its part in making a Christian civilisation *possible*. (*Towards a New Aristocracy*, pp. 76-77.)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A stimulating book for all interested in secondary schools and in the making of youth leaders.

*The Times*, 26th May, 1944, reported that "both upper and lower houses of the Convocation of York yesterday passed a resolution expressing concern at the prevalent drift of the English-speaking world from religion. The Archbishop of York (Dr. Garbett) said 'that it was impossible to exaggerate the gravity of the present situation. They needed to state the gospel in the most simple and direct terms to the great mass of the people who are totally ignorant of the most elementary facts of the Christian faith.' The Bishop of Southwell ' suggested that the ordinary churchman was not alive to the menacing drift of the English-speaking world from religion.' "

The *Tablet*, 18th March, 1944, gave a synopsis of a report on a mass-observation survey of the views of 1,900 English school-teachers on the subject of religious education in schools ; this report appeared in *The Times Educational Supplement* of the previous week. From it one can appreciate the extent to which "non-institutional Christianity" is developing in England. Ninety per cent. of the teachers questioned were in favour of religious instruction, but of a nebulous character. Sixty-one per cent. were of the opinion that agreed syllabuses should include instruction in the main elements of the chief faiths of the world. A typical answer was : "Each child will eventually have to work out his own religion, if it is to mean anything to him at all. He should be told about all the chief religions, with as little bias as possible, and left to choose for himself." The *Tablet's* editorial comment was :

"The general conclusion emerges that, in the heart of the educational world, one of the strongest continuing interests, that of the teachers, is in favour of an approach to religion both latitudinarian and subjective, an approach allowing teachers to impress their own particular idea and predilections, an approach which does not see religion as membership of a society into which a child is born ; an approach which has, in fact, very largely lost the notion of the Church."

Othmar Spann, writing of political individualism said : " Since for individualism, the individualist forms the only substratum of the State, individual liberty is the political principle of the doctrine. The extreme form of individualism is, therefore, anarchism, or the absence of any kind of ruling power."<sup>1</sup> It is not an exaggeration to say that the religious individualism of the teachers referred to above is of such a kind as to be, in fact, religious anarchism—for the ruling power of the Church has faded away leaving merely an incoherent mob of isolated individuals.

The following letter from Rev. H. D. A. Major, a distinguished clergyman of the Church of England, to *The (London) Times*, 4th September, 1945, will show the alarming drift from traditional Christianity that has taken place in the English Established Church in recent times :

"As editor of the *Modern Churchman* for thirty years . . . I do know *a great number* of Modern Churchmen who do not believe in the virgin birth, in the resurrection of the physical body of Jesus Christ, in the descent of Jesus Christ into Hades between His death and resurrection, in His return at the end of the world to judge the quick and the dead at a great assize, and in the raising of the bodies of the dead from their graves to be present on that occasion.

"These beliefs are all affirmed in the Apostles' Creed, and have been held by orthodox Christians until recent times. In addition to these beliefs, a number of other beliefs taught in the great Churches of Christendom are not believed by Modern Churchmen, e.g. the verbal inspiration of scripture and its infallibility : the everlasting torment of the wicked in hell : the necessity of the sacraments (Baptism and the Lord's Supper) for individual human salvation : the expiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross : that, because of the fall of Adam and Eve, the whole human race is guilty of original sin and stands under the judgment of God.

<sup>1</sup> *Types of Economic Theory*, p. 62.

"If asked why Modern Churchmen do not believe these things, the reply is that modern biblical history and scientific studies have rendered them incredible."

Gravely perturbed by the alarming spread of irreligion and immorality, the Church of England appointed a special commission in 1943 to enquire into the religious situation ; the commission issued its report in 1945, and entitled it *Towards the Conversion of England*.<sup>1</sup> Coming first in its list of "Recommendations and Findings" is the following: "*The state of the Christian religion in this country urgently calls for definite action. That definite action is no less than the conversion of England to the Christian Faith.*"

The sad condition of religion in England may be seen from the following extracts from this report :

"There can be no doubt that there is a wide and deep gulf between the Church and the people. It is indisputable that only a small percentage of the nation to-day joins regularly in public worship of any kind. . . . It has been recently estimated that from 10 to 15 per cent. of the population are closely linked to some Christian church ; that 25 to 30 per cent. are sufficiently interested to attend a place of worship upon great occasions, that 45 to 50 per cent. are indifferent to religion though more or less friendly disposed towards it ; while 10 to 20 per cent. are hostile. (See *Christian News Letter*, 10th February, 1943, and Supplement 172 on 'Religion and the People by Mass Observation.') It is open to question which is the more alarming feature, the failure of the Church to attract or its failure to repel."<sup>2</sup>

According to this report, *pari passu* with the collapse of religion has gone the collapse of morality. There is, it

<sup>1</sup> Price one shilling.

<sup>2</sup> Protestantism in England has not, like Catholicism in Latin countries, been ruthlessly persecuted by "anti-clerical" governments ; nor has English Masonry, like the Grand Orient Masonry, been bent on destroying Christianity. Protestantism in England has had every opportunity to prosper ; yet it has failed.

asserts, a growing abandonment both by young and old of the virtues which were England's traditional boast—honesty and truthfulness. There is an "alarming spread of sexual laxity." "The Government has found it necessary to resort to poster propaganda against venereal disease and to issue to all medical officers of health a circular on the problem of illegitimate babies."<sup>1</sup>

The unchristian or rather pagan approach to marriage to-day in England may be deduced from the following statement of Mr. James Griffiths, Minister of National Insurance: "*An unmarried wife* taking care of the children shall have a pension so long as the children are of school age. And the *married wife* can claim a pension *as well*, but with limitations. The maximum paid will be what she was receiving from her husband." (*Weekly Review*, 24th February, 1946.) One may well ask how many *unmarried* wives may a man have? In 1905, there were 670 petitions for divorce, in 1915, 1,100; in 1935, 5,000; in 1945, 25,000; so the Lord Chancellor stated in the House of Lords, 28th November, 1946: his estimate for 1947 was 50,000. In the Summer of 1946, 48,000 divorce cases were waiting the decision of the Court.

Owing to the knowledge of the means of preventing conception, the dechristianised woman has accepted the same low standards of sexual morality as the dechristianised man. Thus ends a chapter in the history of neo-pagan feminism. The report says: "Owing to the immunity which contraceptives and prophylactics promise, the 'man's standard' is increasingly being adopted by both sexes." This report should give food for thought to those Irish sex-obsessed advocates of the abandonment of censorship when it states:

"The present depravity can cause no surprise when we recall the sex-obsession that has demented and dis-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Reginald Prestell, joint secretary of the Marriage Guidance Council, stated: "In 1943, babies conceived out of marriage were 12½ per cent. of the total numbers born, or one in eight." . . . "Before long one marriage in five would break down." (*The Times*, 9th January, 1946.)

illusioned people since the last war. Few greater wrongs could have been inflicted on adolescents than the iniquitous sex-suggestion of hoardings, plays, films, morals and ordinary conversation. It has been continuous propaganda for sex-indulgence.<sup>1</sup>

"The gravest feature of the whole situation is that there is so little feeling of shame in loose living, still less in untruthfulness or dishonesty. There is no longer a generally accepted moral standard by which men judge their own actions."

The Commission recommends that a nation-wide crusade for converting England to Christianity should be launched, supported by all the modern methods of propaganda—(1) the Cinema ; (2) the Theatre ; (3) the Radio ; (4) Television ; (5) the Press ; (6) Literature, including monthly periodicals and a religious "Weekly Digest" ; a "Religious Picture Post or something of the 'Lilliput' variety, to give a pictorial news survey of the work of the world-wide Church" ; and religious books of the "Penguin" type ; (7) "Christian Information and Publicity Centres." And finally a national advertisement campaign in the Press and through posters, based on a Five-Years'-Plan. Of this the report says :

"We are advised that the cost of this first Five-Years' Campaign proposal should develop to the rate of about £200,000 a year ; and by the end of the first year of its inception the expenditure might reach half that amount."

Such is the sorry plight of religion in Protestant England, and such are the sorry means by which it is hoped by the Established Church that England will be re-converted to Christianity.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the deplorable moral condition of youth working in factories, see the Report of the Church of England Youth Council, "The Church and Youth," 78 pp., 1947.

<sup>2</sup> In the report of a religious survey of Scotland made by the Scottish Churches Council (1934) it is stated that more than 1,100,000 *adults* have no religious affiliation. "It is deplorable" the report says "that more than one-third of our population have no regular church connection." The position is much worse to-day.

The most extraordinary feature of this report is that, when it comes to discuss the "underlying causes" of the national collapse and to indicate the historical factors involved, there is no mention of the disruption of Christendom and Christianity by the lamentable "Reformation" of the sixteenth century. The following factors are indeed briefly examined. "The Middle Ages," "the Renaissance," "the Age of Reason," "the French Revolution," "the Industrial Revolution," "the Present Scientific Age." But, the Reformation, which is an outstanding and radical factor in the secularisation of society is naïvely omitted: this certainly is Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark.

The main purpose of this Essay is to emphasise the immense importance of the Reformation as a primary factor in the growth and development of individualism and secularism, while at the same time indicating the inter-relations between the Reformation and the other historical factors mentioned in the report.

Since this report appeared, more detailed information on the drift from Christianity in Britain has been forthcoming. During the second World War "teams of dons and clerics" drawn principally from the universities of Cambridge, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, St. Andrew's, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, visited military camps, barracks, etc., "in various parts of these islands" and discussed religion with the Services. The members of the teams "included distinguished men of science and letters, three holders of the Order of Merit, representatives of both houses of parliament, several members of the episcopal bench." In an article in *The Times Educational Supplement*, 29th December, 1945, on "The Problem of Religious Education: A War-time Survey," Louis T. Stanley set down the result of the investigations. It was found that those questioned had but the haziest notion of Christ:

"It was," he said, "out of the question to expect anyone to believe in a divine side to Christ's nature. Two natures in one are impossible. The extraordinary

part of such confessions is that they were not considered in any way antagonistic to nominal membership of the Church of Christ, either Free Church or Church of England. In short, a large body of people are completely ignorant of the doctrinal structure of the Christian Church.

“There was also marked disinterest in the need for baptism and confirmation. . . . Miracles were discussed as colourful exaggerations. . . . The virgin birth was repudiated as an impossible legend. . . . Sin was regarded as a quaint term fashionable in the nineteenth century, but merely a geographical term to-day. That such a state of affairs exists may be hard to believe for those who are inside the Church. But the problem has to be faced.”

It is, therefore, not an exaggeration to say that there is an absolute need of a nation-wide apostolic movement for the re-conversion of de-Christianised Britain to Christianity. Luther, Calvin, Henry VIII and (as will be shown later) John Locke have gradually led England away from the Ancient Faith, from organised religion, from belief in the Divinity of Christ, into that morass of neo-paganism in which the people finds itself hopelessly floundering to-day. For almost four hundred years Religious Individualism has been undermining Christianity in England, until it would seem that but its ghost alone remains: England is now nominally Christian, but in reality it is not so. Of one thing we can be absolutely certain—Britain will not be won back to Christ by Films, Radio, Religious “Lilliputs,” and such like methods.

Against the growing de-Christianisation of Britain, and as a reaction to it, there is one small element of consolation—the large number of very distinguished men and women who are leaving the uncertainty and confusion of disintegrating Protestantism and finding security and happiness in the Ancient Church of their fathers. The following are some, and only a fractional number of

recent converts<sup>1</sup> to the Catholic Church: their names are given without comment, but this *élite* must impress anyone who is at all interested in the intellectual life of Britain.

G. K. Chesterton, Cecil Chesterton, Mrs. Cecil Chesterton, Maurice Baring, Sheila Kaye-Smith, Compton MacKenzie, Halliday Sutherland, T. C. Gregory, Christopher Hollis, Robert Speaight, Lady Eleanor Smith, Lord Alfred Douglas, Sir Shane Leslie, John Rothenstein, W. R. Titterton, Evelyn Waugh, George Glasgow, Christopher Dawson, Pamela Frankau, Rosalind Murray Toynbee, D. B. Wyndham Lewis, Professor Sir E. T. Whittaker, F.R.S., Dr. Sherwood Taylor, Rev. C. C. Martindale, S.J., Mgr. Ronald Knox, Father Vernon Johnson, Rev. Dr. W. E. Orchard, Rev. H. E. G. Rope, Dom Bede Camm, Father Humphrey Johnson, Gertrude M. Godden, Alfred Noyes, Dr. William Overbeck Wright, Countess Brassey, Violet Clifton, Lord Pakenham, Eric Gill, Peter Anson, The Earl of Wicklow, Naomi Jacob, Mother (Alice) Forbes, Professor Temple, F.R.S., Wilfrid Meynell, A. C. F. Beales, Dr. Letitia Fairfield, Father Owen Dudley, R. H. Bruce Lockhart, Graham Greene, George Scott-Moncrieff, Clare Sheridan, Barbara Barclay Carter, Reginald Jebb, Aodh de Blacam, Lord Holden, Naomi Royde Smith, John Eppstein, H. D. C. Pepler, Edgar Prestage, F.R.H.S., Father E. C. Messenger, Father H. E. G. Rope, Theodore Maynard and Saunders Lewis.

This is but a small representative number of recent converts; almost all hold distinguished places in the world of letters. These names should be as beacon lights to the many who walk in spiritual doubt and pain amid the uncertainty and gloom of a waning Protestantism. Moreover, considering the intellectual calibre of the converts mentioned above, the facile clichés of the ignorant and the bigoted that "Catholicism as a religious system is

<sup>1</sup> "During the past two years twenty-eight Anglican clergymen have been received into the Catholic Church." (*The Catholic Herald*, 3rd January, 1947.)

beneath the contempt of the educated" and that "going over to Rome implies mental unbalance" are extremely puerile.<sup>1</sup> Dean Inge did not hesitate to call the Catholic Church "a bloody and treacherous corporation" and "an imposture." Hilaire Belloc replied in "A Letter to Dean Inge," the concluding words of which are: "One thing in this world is different from all others. It has personality and a force. It is recognised, and (when recognised) most violently loved or hated. It is the Catholic Church. Within that household the human spirit has roof and hearth. Outside it is night.

In hac urbe lux sollennis,  
Ver aeternum, pax perennis,  
Et aeterna gaudia."

(*Essays of a Catholic*, p. 305.)

It is only those who from outside have found shelter beneath her roof and warmth beside her hearth, converts to the Faith, who can fully appreciate the truth of these words.<sup>2</sup>

#### PROTESTANTISM IN AMERICA

A brief reference to the condition of Protestantism in U.S.A., the offspring of English Protestantism, may not be out of place; it will confirm what has been said about the disruptive power of Religious Individualism. Willard L. Sperry, Dean of the Divinity School in Harvard University, has made an exhaustive study of "Religion in

<sup>1</sup> See Newman's *Present Position of the Catholics in England*, especially Lecture vi—"Prejudice, the Life of the Protestant View," Newman says there, "First, when I became a Catholic, grave persons, Protestant clergymen, attested (what they said was well known to others besides themselves) that either I was mad, or was in the most imminent danger of madness. They put it into the newspapers, and people were sometimes afraid to come and see me" (p. 246).

<sup>2</sup> The lamentable mental confusion and evasion experienced by Protestants when confronted with the Gospel-teaching on the unity of the Church may be seen in the Symposium, "Has the Church Failed" (1947), edited by Sir James Marchant. Dr. W. R. Inge's solution is both ingenious and ingenuous: "Christ," he says, "wished that his disciples be one flock—He never desired that they should be penned into one fold." (p. 96.)

America," in a book with that title, from which the following figures have been taken.

The present population of the United States is 134,000,000, of whom 67,300,000, or just fifty per cent., are members, real or merely nominal, of one of the 256 different denominations. Of these, 23,000,000 are Catholics bound together with the closest religious ties ; 38,500,000 are divided among 243 different Protestant sects, the chief of which are as follows : Baptists, 11,400,000, in *nineteen* different Baptist "churches" ; Methodists, 8,400,000, with *nineteen* different divisions ; Lutherans, 4,000,000, divided among *twenty* "churches" ; Presbyterians, 2,800,000 in *ten* different sects.<sup>1</sup> The idea of the Church as something Catholic is completely lacking to the American Protestant. Dean Sperry says :

" It is only by a deliberate act of the imagination, bringing some kind of order and common concern out of the chaos of denominationalism, that he is able to envisage, even remotely what is meant by the Church Universal. In America the seamless robe seems to have been shredded into so many rags and tatters that it is beyond recovery. A Christian must make shift with the particular fragment which has fallen to his lot " (p. 10).

The atomism of American Protestantism is described by Henry James, quoted by Dean Sperry, as follows :

" The field of American life is as bare of the Church as a billiard table of a centrepiece ; a truth that the myriad little structures ' attended ' on Sundays, and on the ' off ' evenings of their ' sociables ' proclaims as with the audible sound of the moving of a million mice. When an ancient treasure of precious vessels, overscored with glowing gems and wrought artistically with wondrous shapes, has, by a prodigious process, been converted into a vast community of small change, the

<sup>1</sup> In U.S.A. there is one divorce for every three marriages. In 1945 there were 1,618,331 marriages and 502,000 divorces. In 1938 the number of divorces was 248,000.

simple circulating medium of dollars and 'nickels,' we can only say that the consequent permeation will be of values of a new order. Of *what* order we must wait to see" (p. 8).

The seamless robe of Christ has been torn to "rags and tatters" by the sacrilegious hands of unconscious vandals, and the precious monstrance of the Mystical Body of Christ has been reduced to mere "scrap." The Universal Church of pre-Reformation days has, in many cases, been replaced by the individual Protestant congregation, isolated and independent, without any connection with any other "church." Dean Sperry once again emphasises this as follows :

"Thirty per cent.<sup>1</sup> of all our church people are thus 'gathered' into local churches which are in theory theologically and ecclesiastically self-sufficient. There is no parallel to this elsewhere in Christendom. A European scholar among us, trying to grasp this fact, which was entirely new to him, once said, 'Yes, I think I see what you mean. But this congregationalism of yours is not what the world has hitherto called a church ; it is anarchy !'" (p. 246).

John Dryden (1631-1700) contrasted the unity of the Catholic Church with the sect-shattered condition of Protestantism in "The Hind and the Panther" as follows :

"One in herself, not rent by Schism but sound,  
 Entire, one solid shining Diamond,  
 Not Sparkles shattered into Sects like you,  
 One is the Church, and must be, to be true ;  
 One central principle of unity.  
 As undivided, so from errors free,  
 As one in faith, so one in sanctity.  
 Thus She, and none but She, th' insulting Rage  
 Of Heretics oppos'd from Age to Age."

<sup>1</sup> This refers to the 67,300,000 real or nominal church-members. If 23,000,000 Catholics are excluded the percentage is much higher.

## PROTESTANTISM IN IRELAND

But if it be disconcerting to learn that English Protestants have "very largely lost the notion of the Church" and that American Protestants are even in a worse condition, it is for us far more disconcerting to be told in an official report that many young Irish Episcopalian Protestants show "a complete ignorance of the Biblical doctrine of the Church." The extent to which Religious Individualism, in the shape of "non-institutional Christianity," has permeated the ranks of the younger generation of Episcopalian Protestants in Éire is indeed alarming.

In the official report of the Church of Ireland Youth Conference<sup>1</sup> of the United Dioceses of Dublin, Glendalough and Kildare, 24th-25th October, 1943, it is stated :

"A clear majority are in favour of organised religion. . . . Some 'considered the Church useful but not essential,' 'You could get on very well with the Bible alone,' or 'after all, the Church is only an organisation'; and others could say no more than that it was impressive and encouraging to go to Church."

One of the general conclusions to the discussions on the paper in question—"Your Faith"—is that "there is evident among those who came a complete ignorance about the Biblical doctrine of the Church." Indeed, it would appear that many of the young Church of Ireland people would find themselves very much more at home with the former Dean of St. Paul's than with the Elders of their Church in Dublin and Kildare.

It is necessary to emphasise that in this official report it is recorded about our young Protestant fellow-citizens that "there is evident among those who came a complete ignorance about the Biblical doctrine of the Church." No doubt many of them are seriously dissatisfied with their religious position and feel insecure in the tottering

<sup>1</sup> Under thirty-five years.

world of to-day. In the circumstances it would seem that the time is now opportune for putting before these questioning young men and women, for their consideration, the claims of "Rome" which so repelled their forebears in the "Ascendancy" days. The social and political cleavage that held Protestant Youth apart from their Catholic contemporaries has now largely passed and a way of approach and understanding has opened up for the first time.

The religious unrest existing among Irish Protestants is further evident from a sermon preached by Canon Simpson at a Church of Ireland Ordination Service in March, 1944, in which he expressed his grave anxiety at the leakage to "distorted creeds" giving as instances, Unitarians and Christian Scientists. In the debate in the Northern Ireland Parliament on the educational reconstruction White Paper, Dr. Lyle said that compulsion of the teachers to give religious instruction was a grave danger for "there were in the ranks of elementary teachers a number of sceptics and agnostics, more, perhaps, than one imagines." (*Irish Times*, 2nd February, 1945.) The widespread diffusion of "undenominational Christianity" in the schools, as the result of the new education system, will lead to a serious decline of Protestantism in Northern Ireland and to the growth of secularism or indifferentism.

There are some very interesting statistics on the relative position of the three major religious denominations in Ireland to be found in a demographic study by R. P. MacDermott and D. A. Webb entitled *Irish Protestantism: To-day and To-morrow*.<sup>1</sup> The decline of the number of Episcopalian Protestants in Southern Ireland is very remarkable. In 1861, the Church of Ireland in the present twenty-six counties had 372,702 adherents. In 1891 the number had fallen to 286,804; in 1911, 249,535;

<sup>1</sup> Published by the Association for Promoting Christian Knowledge, Dublin and Belfast. To those who are interested in the future of Northern and Southern Ireland, religious and political, this excellent brochure, which contains several maps and statistical diagrams, is strongly recommended.

in 1926, 164,215 ; and in 1936, 145,030.<sup>1</sup> The authors' comment is as follows :

" But the fall in numbers has had consequences of some importance for the Church of Ireland. It has led to the abandonment of churches and to the union of parishes into blocks that are often unmanageably large in area ; and it has led to a feeling of weakened vitality in the ecclesiastical body politic and a narrowing of outlook, for, other things being equal, a body with larger numbers is likely to be a body with larger views. The decline has, however, been accompanied by something of greater importance, a far-reaching change in the territorial distribution of the Irish Church-people. . . . The membership of the Church of Ireland *as a whole* has declined since 1861 by only 29 *per cent.*, but over the same period the numbers *in the South* show a decline of 61 *per cent.* Before the Disestablishment more than half of the membership of the Church (54 *per cent.*) was in the South, and less than half (46 *per cent.*) in the North. Now something over 70 *per cent.* is in the North, and under 30 *per cent.* in the South. . . . But the changes in the distribution of the members of the Church of Ireland might, if they were to continue, entail very important modifications of its whole character and ethos ; and might profoundly affect that sense of continuity and living awareness of its own past as an inheritance, which is to a society almost what self-consciousness and the sense of personal identity are to an individual." (Pp. 1, 2, 3.)

The authors' concluding words are as follows :

" In the past the Church of Ireland has been a church of the whole country. But if the present processes were to continue there would be a danger of it becoming a

<sup>1</sup> The number of Presbyterians in the twenty-six counties fell from 66,172 in 1861 to 28,067 in 1936. The late Dr. Lowe, Clerk of the General Assembly (Presbyterian), "expressed the opinion that in fifty years we would probably have no congregations outside Dublin, Cork and Limerick." (*The Religious Outlook in Ireland*, by the Rev. Fred Gibson, B.A. (p. 1.)

Church of the North with a Southern appendix. The awareness of the Anglo-Irish cultural tradition might weaken almost to the point of extinction. In the weakening of that tradition the Church might become provincialised, and in shrinking into a Six-County body it might become not even a Northern Church, but an Ulster denomination, one of several co-ordinate, Northern Protestant denominations, each supposedly manifesting in various slightly different ways a common Protestant character and outlook within the unity of the general Northern post-Calvinist and Unionist traditions. A Church of Ireland that had undergone a mutation so profound would be something very different from the Church of Ussher, Bramhall and Taylor; of King, Berkeley and Swift; of Salmon, Alexander and Bernard." (p. 23.)

Could they come back from the tomb to-day, how puzzling and unrecognisable would Southern Ireland appear to Bishop Berkeley and Dean Swift with their memories of the halcyon days of the Protestant Ascendancy of the eighteenth century, when the Church of Ireland minority dominated everything!

The authors of this "Study" anticipate a further shrinkage in the Southern episcopalian body as they compute that the number of the potential mothers will fall by ten and a half per cent. in the period 1936-56. It does not seem at all improbable that by the end of the present century the foreboding mentioned above might be fulfilled, and that the Church of Ireland "might become provincialised, and in shrinking into a Six-County body it might become not even a Northern Church, but an Ulster denomination, one of several co-ordinate, Northern Protestant denominations." Many interesting problems will soon arise, amongst them the fate of the old pre-Reformation cathedrals.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From the discussions at the General Synod, May, 1947, it has become known that there is a probability that the Church of Ireland bishops may be reduced from 14 to 11.

## SECTARIANISM

The undermining of corporate or institutional religion by Individualism has grown slowly and surely since that memorable All Saints' Eve, 1517, when Martin Luther nailed his famous theses to the door of the Church in Wittenberg ; since Henry VIII declared himself Head of the Church of England by the Supremacy Act, 1534, and Head of the daughter Church of Ireland, 1537. The late Edmund Curtis, a Protestant, and professor of history, Trinity College, Dublin, makes an interesting comment in his *History of Ireland* on Henry's action : " It was a doctrine unheard of till then that a lay prince could have the spiritual supremacy over the Church of God in any country " (p. 165). Very Rev. W. R. Inge's judgment on the German and English leaders of the Reformation is characteristically forcible, and must come as a shock to many Protestants : " There is," he says, " very little to be said for this coarse and foul-mouthed leader of a revolution (Luther). It is a real misfortune for humanity that he appeared just at the crisis in the Christian World. Even our burly Defender of the Faith (Henry VIII) was not a worse man, and did less mischief." (*Church of England Newspaper*, 4th August, 1944.)

To-day Protestantism *as a whole* has, through the working of Religious Individualism, in its various component "churches" eliminated almost every dogma of the traditional Christian faith. National churches, episcopalian or non-episcopalian, have broken up into conflicting sections. Yet each national church still professes a nebulous unity that satisfies its dissident adherents. This is an amazing anomaly to Catholics. New freak religions and isolated "bethels," founded by small groups of religious revivalists, are constantly appearing—not a few of these latter are to be found in Northern Ireland. It is not unusual to find in predominantly Catholic Éire some towns with several religious meeting-places, churches or chapels, of as many different creeds.

Opposing Protestant sectaries in the foreign-mission field excite amazement and amusement in the more logical natives who ask why the missionaries should not arrive at some agreement as to what Christianity is, before coming to confuse them with conflicting appeals for their allegiance. Is it any wonder that in so-called Christian countries many should turn away in disgust from this religious bedlam, reject institutional Christianity in every form, and either each become a church unto himself, or else declare themselves agnostics or unbelievers ?

The evolution of Protestant individualism into Secularism can be touched on here but briefly.<sup>1</sup> It is sufficient to say that in the sixteenth century men rejected the Church but held on to their faith in Christ. In the seventeenth century the intellectuals rejected the divinity of Christ but retained their belief in the Deity : this is Deism which Bossuet described as a "disguised atheism." In the eighteenth century, the Age of Enlightenment, the "philosophers" openly rejected God Himself and substituted Reason. In the nineteenth century religious indifferentism, materialism, general unbelief and atheism, spread among the masses mainly through systems of secularist or neutral education devised by unbelieving Ministers of State. In the twentieth century the political leaders of a great European people have been found to deify and worship the "Race" ; while the rulers of another great State have not only proclaimed it without the need of God, Atheist, but even Militant Atheist. Protestantism, glorified as spiritual and intellectual emancipation, has given rise to rationalism, and rationalism has begotten atheism. Harold Laski says : "The accusation of Bossuet, that the variations of the Protestant sects opened the door to atheism is an irrefutable one." (*The Rise of Modern Liberalism*, p. 64.) To-day, with the exception of a few Catholic nations, Secularism is general ; men have ceased to be directly influenced by Christian dogma or by Christian morality. Religious Individualism has insidiously worked

<sup>1</sup> It will be discussed when writing on Locke and Rousseau.

its way into the innermost being of society and has undermined both faith and morals. *Men to-day live in the aftermath of Christianity.* Dr. Bell, the Anglican Bishop of Chichester, has thus summed up the situation: "Christian belief and morality are no longer the basis of western civilisation. That civilisation has lost its basis. It is no longer religious, but secular." (*Christianity and World Order*, p. 13.)

Much water has flowed under the European bridges since John Henry Newman's day: his address in Rome, 12th May, 1879, on the occasion of being raised to the Cardinalate comes back to memory, as the "apostasy" of the nations becomes so widespread to-day:

"Hitherto the civil power has been Christian. Even in countries separated from the Church, as in my own, the *dictum* was in force, when I was young, that 'Christianity was the law of the land.' Now everywhere that godly framework of society, which is the creation of Christianity, is throwing off Christianity. . . . Hitherto, it has been considered that religion alone, with its supernatural sanctions, was strong enough to secure submission of the masses of our population to law and order; now the Philosophers and Politicians are bent on satisfying this problem without the aid of Christianity. Instead of the Church's authority, they would substitute first of all a universal and thoroughly secular education, calculated to bring home to every individual that to be orderly, industrious and sober, is his personal interest. . . .

"As to Religion, it is a private luxury, which a man may have if he will, but which, of course, he must pay for, which of course he must not obtrude on others, or indulge to their annoyance. The general character of this great *apostasia* is one and the same everywhere; but in detail and in character, it varies in different countries."

It is nearly seventy years ago since these words were spoken: their truth must become painfully evident to

everyone who has been watching the rapid decline of religion—"the great *apostasia*"—since the beginning of the present century, and particularly since the end of the first World War.

### CHRISTIAN CO-OPERATION

Although the wave of Secularism has long been sweeping over Europe, still the turn of the tide would now seem not to be long delayed. Earnest Christians of different beliefs have begun to realise that they must abandon their intercredal strife and close their ranks against that Secularism which is bent on sweeping them all indiscriminately away. That there are not wanting some hopeful signs of the *beginning* of a movement towards religious unity, or at least co-operation, may be seen from the following facts.

The "Sword of the Spirit," founded by Cardinal Hinsley, August, 1943, has done much useful pioneer work in bringing British Catholics and Protestants together in a spirit of Christian co-operation. In several European countries political parties have been recently started with programmes formally based on traditional Christian principles. The following are examples: The "Christian Peoples' Party" in Norway; the "Christian Democratic Union" in Germany; the "Mouvement Républicain Populaire" in France, whose leader is M. Bidault, Foreign Minister and Catholic Activist; the "Christian Democrats" in Italy and the Christian Social Party in Belgium. In Holland, where political parties had been divided into religious water-tight compartments, the "R.C. State Party" has thrown open its ranks to Christians of all communions and is now known as *Katholische Volkspartei*.<sup>1</sup> In U.S.A. there is a widespread movement akin to the "Sword of the Spirit," for the purpose of

<sup>1</sup> Signor Miglioli, a leading Italian Christian Democrat, has suggested that there should be a Christian Democratic International which "would take its place alongside the Communist and Socialist International, linking all Christian parties everywhere, without any class distinction."

bringing Catholics and Protestants together in mutual understanding and in co-operation in social and political activities.

On the eve of the Conference of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council, held at Cambridge, England, under the chairmanship of Mr. John Foster Dulles, 4th-7th August, 1946, it was announced by D. Walter van Kirk, Secretary of the American Federal Council of Churches of Christ (Protestant), that it had been learned from answers to questionnaires sent to representatives of Protestant bodies in U.S.A., England, Scotland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Denmark, and the Netherlands, that these favoured united action on world problems by Protestants and Catholics, based upon "some kind of satisfactory understanding at the highest level, presumably between the World Council of Churches and the Vatican." Mr. John Foster Dulles said that at least "parallel action" would be sought. The principal reply quoted by the *New York Times*, said that "collaboration with the Roman Catholic Church on matters of world order needs to be prepared sympathetically and with an understanding of that Church's difficulties and background." "It must be preceded by conversations between the highest courts on both sides, and must also include a discussion of the alternative theories of the relationship between Church and State."

At the Cambridge Conference of Churches referred to above it was decided to set up a Commission on International Affairs consisting of thirty members representing twenty different countries. This Committee meets in U.S.A., in April, 1947, and the first World Assembly is planned for Amsterdam in 1948.<sup>1</sup> The time is big with opportunity for co-operation between Catholics and Protestants on a scale hitherto undreamt of.

This growing tendency towards co-operation has had

<sup>1</sup> This conference may be regarded as representative of the Protestant Churches of the World.

remarkable concomitant development. The following announcement was made by the Vatican Radio, in July, 1945 :

" Certain scholars, clerical and lay, have formed an international organisation in Rome, which is to be called " *Unitas* " and is to promote spiritual unity among nations through mutual understanding between Catholics and all those who, though not Catholics, nevertheless acknowledge our Lord Jesus Christ as Master."

" The Holy Father, by means of a recent letter sent by Mgr. Montini, of the Secretariate of State, to the President, has expressed satisfaction at the foundation of ' *Unitas* ' and has blessed all its members.<sup>1</sup> The President is the Prefect of Studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Père Charles Boyer, S.J., a Frenchman."

The founder members comprise many distinguished laymen and priests. Included in the former are some professors of the University of Rome. Among the latter are, in addition to Father Boyer, S.J.; Father Ulrich Beste, Rector of the Benedictine International College; Father Erich Hermann, S.J., Rector of the Pontifical Biblical Institute; Father Eugene Toccafondi, O.P., Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy at the Angelicum, the Dominican University; Father Marianus Cordovani, O.P., the Pope's Theologian, and several other prominent theologians and philosophers.

According to its Constitution " *Unitas* " aims at (a) " Furthering mutual knowledge and reciprocal understanding by the organisation of meetings, congresses and conventions, and works of moral and material aid between Catholics and those, whether of the East or the West, who profess Jesus Christ as their Master; (b) gaining the

<sup>1</sup> This letter was written in June, 1945, and stated that " The union that it (*Unitas*) aims at promoting is a *matter of urgency*, and hence His Holiness hoped that the Association would have a great development and would bear in abundance the fruit of charity and unity which one might fittingly expect from it."

interest, support and collaboration of the widest public opinion by means of literary, cultural and other exchanges of information." The first number of its official organ, *Unitas*, a quarterly, appeared in March, 1946. National Councils will be established in different countries, but two-thirds of such committees must consist of Catholics. The International Council at Rome will consist of Catholics only; the hand of friendship will be stretched out both to Protestants and to eastern schismatics alike.<sup>1</sup>

This is certainly a novel international movement to be fostered by such a hitherto conservative body as the Catholic Church. But, under the Providence of God, much good may arise out of the terrible evil of the present-day neo-paganism and the result may easily be an intense development of the movement towards Christian Reunion, directed by the Mother Church of Christianity and under the guidance and leadership of the great Common Father, His Holiness, the Pope. Is there not a fitting place within this international movement for Ireland—both North and South?<sup>2</sup>

To-day the prayer of every earnest Christian should be the prayer of Christ at the Last Supper: "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, in Me and I in thee; that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou has sent Me." (St. John xvii. 21.)

<sup>1</sup> The offices of the Organisation are at 16 Via Matteo Boiardo, Rome.

<sup>2</sup> It is an interesting coincidence to find the following, in an article on Archbishop Stepinac in the *Irish Times* (2nd November, 1946), published after the above was written. "Hitherto the brunt of the Communist attack has been borne by the Roman Catholic Church; but the issues are so big that there no longer can be any excuse for sectarian differences among the peoples who profess the Gospel of Christ. All the Churches ought to combine in defence of a civilisation which has taken two thousand years of stress and strife to establish." One wonders if the writer had heard of "Unitas."

PART TWO  
POLITICAL INDIVIDUALISM



## REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT BACKGROUND

In the recent war which has been fought with such destructive fury the allied nations declared that they fought to secure "the democratic way of life." No word, perhaps, is so frequently on men's lips to-day as "democracy"; yet there is inconceivable confusion in their minds as to what modern democracy is, or how it originated. Surely, the answer to these questions should be of very great importance.

Democracy ranges to-day from the alleged "dynamic democracy" of totalitarian Russia, through the "swindle democracy" (to use Mr. Churchill's term) of "liberated" Jugoslavia, Poland, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, etc., to the much publicised Lockean or Rousseauist democracies of Britain, France, and U.S.A. Speaking generally, democracy is of two *basic* types, false and true. False democracy has its roots in naturalism or dechristianised Christianity: true democracy presupposes and derives from the Christian teaching on the origin and destiny of man and society. It is therefore of great importance that all who regard themselves as *true* democrats should have clear notions as to what true democracy means. But, for none is it more important than for the people of Eire who are at present engaged in making a new democratic State.

Democracy in Britain, U.S.A., France, Switzerland, and other democratic States, has been slowly and painfully evolved and in harmony with the character and national traditions of each people. Ireland is in a most anomalous position. The Irish people is one of the oldest nations in Europe; yet the Irish State is but of yesterday. It takes more than a few years for a democratic State to evolve. This and the next generation of young Irishmen will play a vital part in the evolution of Irish Democracy. Don Luigi Sturzo, founder of the Partito Populare, has well said: "Democracy as something generic and abstract does not

exist. Democracies exist in the concrete : the British, the French, the American, the Belgian, the Swiss, the Dutch, and those of the Scandinavian countries, Denmark, Sweden and Norway." England has, after many years, worked out a form of democracy which suits its people. The people of Éire must also evolve a democratic State in harmony with its character, its history, and its religion ; or, as the present constitution puts it—" in accordance with its own genius and traditions."

English Democracy (or rather what passed as democracy) was begotten of the Protestant Revolution of 1688, and is associated with the " pious and immortal memory " of William of Orange. Harold Laski says—" The Revolution of 1688 drew its main source of strength from the traditional dislike of Rome, and the eager desire to place the Church of England beyond the reach of James's aggression " (*Political Thought in England*, p. 62) : its political philosopher and high-priest was the Englishman, John Locke. Owing to Ireland's close connection with it for upwards of a century, it is of great importance to-day that Irishmen should thoroughly understand what English Democracy is. Unless they have a clear idea of how it grew and developed, they will not build a truly Irish Democracy with security.

For, even though Éire has adopted a Christian democratic constitution, nevertheless her political system of " representative government " (with its administrative machinery) has been largely borrowed from England. Moreover, her political traditions deriving from England have deeply affected the Irish conception of democracy. This will be particularly obvious when one recalls the many decades during which Irish representatives sat in the Parliament at Westminster. It is therefore very necessary to grasp how the democracy deriving from John Locke and his " simplified Christianity " differs from that deriving from the political teaching of the Catholic Church, before Éire can safely build a truly Irish and Christian Democracy.

The late Chief Justice Kennedy laid very special stress on this influence of English political thought and tradition on the minds of Irishmen, pointing out in particular how deeply the legal profession and the schools of political philosophy and constitutional law had been thereby affected.

“ During upwards of a century,” he said, “ the political vision of the mass of the ordinary people of this country became more exclusively directed to Westminster, and fixed upon the varying fortunes of their little band of representatives in the British Parliament—notwithstanding the educative efforts of Thomas Davis, William Rooney, Arthur Griffith and Padraig Pearse and others, a line of teachers working alongside the active revolutionary movement. Political and legal constitutional studies in this country were in practice limited to the British Constitution and the working of the British Parliament. Professor Dicey’s book became an evangel accepted reverently and without criticism or question in our schools (such as they were) of political and constitutional law.”<sup>1</sup>

However, a new era has since opened up, as may be seen from the important judgment on “ sacerdotal privilege ” delivered by Judge Gavan Duffy in Dublin, 31st July, 1945. His Lordship, *inter alia*, said :

“ While common law in Ireland and England may generally coincide, it is now recognised that they are not necessarily the same ; in particular, the customs and public opinion of the two countries diverge on matters touching religion, and the common law in force must harmonise with our Constitution.

“ When, as a measure of necessary convenience, we allowed the common law generally to continue in force, we meant to include all the common law in harmony with the national spirit ; we never contemplated the

<sup>1</sup> See an excellent article on “ Constitutional Evolution,” by Vincent Grogan, B.L., *The Capuchin Annual*, 1943.

maintenance of any construction of the common law affected by the sectarian background. . . .”

“The judges of the old regime in Ireland were the guardians of the British Constitution in Ireland. They knew no Irish citizens with distinct rights of their own under an Irish Constitution. They ordinarily borrowed their construction of the common law from English judgments, as of course, and most of their common law judgments might as well have been delivered from the English Bench.”

It will take long and earnest effort to shake off this influence. Though the connection with Westminster has been broken, yet the centuried tradition is still a strong occult force in Irish legal and political life, none the less strong because it is unconscious. The study of John Locke is included here in order to make the Irish readers conscious of Locke’s place in the evolution of English Democracy, and to point out, at least indirectly, how unsuited is his and the Whigs’ politico-religious philosophy to the Irish Catholic people.

Another important influence in Irish politics derives from Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the “Father of Democracy.” “Rousseauism” was brought to Ireland from revolutionary France at the end of the eighteenth century by the United Irishmen. While there are many Irishmen who have been deeply stirred by the memory of those who “kindled here a living flame that nothing can withstand,” how few of them there are who have any real appreciation of the sinister significance of the political teaching of Jean-Jacques Rousseau from whose revolutionary fire came the spark that kindled that “flame”? Not a few of the United Irishmen imbibed Rousseau’s revolutionary philosophy, not only in their politics, but also in their attitude towards religion.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See chapters viii, ix, Dr. MacDowell’s *Irish Public Opinion, 1750-1800*. In his preface to *The Literary Remains of the United Irishmen of 1798*, Dr. R. R. Madden says: “I have omitted many cleverly written pieces of an irreligious tendency and others bearing the stamp of the French political philosophy of the revolutionary period.”

Although the leaders of the Irish revolutionary movement at the end of the eighteenth century were mostly Protestants, it must not be thought that they were the only links between Ireland and revolutionary France. Dr. Richard Hayes, in his very interesting volumes on this period, especially in *Ireland and Irishmen in the French Revolution*, has shown how constant and intimate were the relations between Ireland and France all throughout the eighteenth century, and how many Irish Catholic emigrants took an active part in the Great Revolution. It is not possible to make any detailed reference to Dr. Hayes's lengthy researches, but Lecky's brief though comprehensive account of the relations between Ireland and France can be quoted in full :

“ Among educated men and especially among those of the middle class, the French Revolution had been from the beginning a subject of the keenest interest and discussion, but the interest was not restricted to them. The ideas of an English peasant seldom extended beyond his county town, and the continental world was to him almost as unknown as the world beyond the grave. But tens of thousands of young Irishmen had passed from the wretched cabins of the South and West to the great armies of the continent. From almost every village, from almost every family of Catholic Ireland, one or more members had gone forth, and visions of sunny lands beyond the sea, where the Catholic was not looked upon as a slave, and where Irish talent and ambition found a welcome and a home, continually floated before the imagination of the people. The letters of the Irish exiles, the active smuggling trade which was carried on round the Irish coast, the foreign education of innumerable priests and monks who worked among the poor, kept up the connection, and it was strengthened by the strong natural affinity of character between the Irish and the French. Names of great battles where Irish soldiers had borne an honoured part under a foreign flag were remembered with pride, and vague distorted images of

the events that were happening in France—of the abolition of tithes, or the revolution in landed property, of the offer of French assistance to all suffering nations—soon began to penetrate to the cottier's cabin, and to mingle with the cottier's dream."

The effects of the French Revolution on the Irish in the homeland are thus described by Dr. Richard Hayes :

"The thunders of the Revolution echoed here, waking Ireland from her stupor, and in no country did the ideas and enthusiasm generated strike more responsive chords. Every class and every sect caught the new sentiments, and events abroad were followed with keen interest and sympathy. Tracts and ballads, pamphlets and broad-sheets, advocating the rights of men and the sovereignty of the people, poured from the presses of Dublin, Belfast, and Cork. Scattered widely in churches and theatres, at country fairs and city gatherings, they were everywhere largely read and discussed." (*Ireland and Irishmen in the French Revolution*, pp. 7-8.)

He adds that "nowhere outside France was the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille celebrated with such fervour as in Belfast and Dublin."

From this it is obvious how widespread was the influence of the Revolution and its philosophy on the Ireland of those days. But, that influence (though growing less conscious) did not die out with the passage of the years, as is evidenced by the history of the country during the nineteenth century and even to our own day. The fact that irreligion and anti-clericalism had been but relatively little associated with it should not obscure its political significance, especially when there is question of building democracy in our newly-established State.

Notwithstanding the eulogies that have been showered on the "Father of Democracy," there is, with the exception of Luther and Calvin, probably no individual more responsible for the present anarchy in Europe than Rousseau. H. Butterfield, Professor of Modern History at Cambridge,

has said with much truth: "I do not know who could deny that the French Revolution brought tragedy for the generation upon which it fell—tragedy for France and for Europe—not unlike that which resulted from the Nazi Revolution of 1933."<sup>1</sup> (*The Englishman and His History*, p. 110.)

We cannot properly appreciate the worth of *true* or Christian democracy without a knowledge of the *false* democracy of Rousseau who has confused and misled Europe by his emotional political sophistry. If there be need of eliminating Locke's influence from Irish national life, there is also need of eliminating the naturalistic political philosophy of Rousseau: only when rid of both of these can Ireland hope to develop a true democracy—an **Irish Christian Democracy**.

To-day, after centuries of oppression, Eire has its destiny in its own hands. The first generation of free-born Irish, dating from 1922, has now passed well into its majority. It is to them, and also to those who were born since 1916, that these pages are especially addressed. They are the architects and the makers of the New Ireland. Unless they have clearly defined notions of what true democracy means, their labour in nation-building will be misspent; it will but lead to another national collapse, greater perhaps than any previously. It is for this reason that it is to be earnestly hoped that they will learn to discriminate between Democracy that is *true* and Democracy that is *false*.

In concluding this introduction the following words are very à propos and are well worth quoting—coming as they do from the greatest moral authority in the world to-day.

"The hands on the clock of history are now pointing to an hour both grave and decisive for mankind. An old world lies in fragments. To see rising as quickly as possible from these ruins a new world, healthier, judicially

<sup>1</sup> This recalls the lines of a distinguished English poet and lover of liberty:

"But France got drunk with blood to vomit crime;  
And fatal have her Saturnalia been  
To Freedom's cause in every age and clime."

better organised, more in harmony with the exigencies of human nature—such is the longing of its tortured people. Who are to be the architects who will draw the essential plans for the new world, who are the thinkers who will give it final shape? . . . On the answer to these questions depends the future of Christian civilisation in Europe and in the world.”<sup>1</sup>

Let us adapt these words and apply them: “Who are to be the architects, who will draw the plans for the New Ireland, who are the thinkers who will give it final shape? On the answer to these questions depends the future of Christian civilisation in the Ireland of to-morrow.”

### THE UNITY OF CHRISTENDOM

Lest there may be any misunderstanding about the meaning of the expression “Political Individualism” it is necessary to state that it is used here in a special sense, and with the purpose of establishing, in a general way, a parallelism between it and Religious Individualism. Protestant Individualism destroyed the religious unity of Europe and with this disruption there arose National Churches and a babel of conflicting sects, leading finally to the detachment of the individual from organised religious society. The result is that to-day the Church is regarded by many professing Christians as a mere collection of individuals, a religious sand-heap as it were consisting of multitudinous grains of sand.

Side by side with this *religious* disintegration there has been operative within *political* society a fissiparous force of an individualistic character leading to parallel results—the detachment of the individual from political society and his isolation before the State: this is what is understood in these pages as Political Individualism. As the names of Luther and Calvin have been particularly identified with Religious Individualism, so those of Locke and Rousseau

<sup>1</sup> From the address broadcast by Pope Pius XII, 1st September, 1944, the fifth anniversary of the outbreak of war.

have been specially linked up with Political Individualism.

Buckle points out the parallel disruptive power of religious and political individualism as follows :

“ That same right of private judgment which the early reformers had loudly proclaimed was pushed to an extent fatal to those who opened it. This it was which carried into politics overturned the Government, and carried into religion upset the Church. For rebellion and heresy are but different forms of the same disregard for tradition, the same bold and independent spirit.”  
(*History of Civilisation*, Vol. I., p. 589.)

Part II of the Essay will be largely devoted to an exposition of the teaching of Locke and Rousseau, and their influence on political society. It is easy for those with little knowledge of history to appreciate what led up to the present-day religious disintegration ; but it will require the setting of a special historical background in order to understand the concomitant political disintegration. Hence, before proceeding further it will be necessary to touch very briefly on the unity of Europe known as Christendom. Christopher Dawson, in the opening page of his *Medieval Religion*, writes thus of Christendom :

“ We cannot understand the secular history of modern Europe, unless we understand something of that long thousand-year process of change and growth which we name the Middle Ages. Those thousand years saw the making of Europe and the birth and rebirth of western culture ; they also witnessed the creation of that socio-religious unity that we call Christendom, and the gradual penetration of our culture by Christian beliefs and Christian moral and intellectual standards. They have left an indelible imprint on both our social and religious life.”

In his *Crisis of Our Civilisation*, Hilaire Belloc summarised the growth and development of Christendom as follows. The “ Foundation of Christendom ” embraces the five centuries from 500 A.D. to 1000 A.D. during which nascent Christian civilisation was attacked by the bar-

barian hordes of Goths, Franks, Vandals, Norsemen, etc : this period included what is usually known as the "Dark Ages." Little by little the unity of Christendom was being forged and welded together by the assaults of the barbarians and also by the invasion of the Mohammedans. After the final establishment of Christendom there came "The High Middle Ages," a period of three hundred years, 1000 A.D. to the end of 1300 A.D., which Mr. Belloc describes as "A civilisation the highest and the best of which history has any record : the civilisation of Christendom." Then followed a period of gradual decline which he calls the "Decline of the Middle Ages"—1300 A.D. to 1500 A.D.

During the fifteenth century developed the Renaissance with its marvellous quickening of the human mind, and with it the beginning of the spirit of intellectual assertiveness. It was during this century that nationalist spirit awakened and that national cultures developed ; but all this was still within a united Christendom.

Then came the explosion of the Reformation with (a) its disruptive doctrine of Private Judgment and the establishment of national churches under the headship of secular princes ; (b) the rejection of the Church's economic teaching, affording an intense stimulus to the nascent capitalistic spirit—the means for the extensive exercise of which was supplied by the confiscation of the lands belonging to the monasteries and the gilds. Side by side, therefore, Religious Individualism and Economic Individualism made their appearance ; and concomitantly with the National Church came the Modern State and Political Individualism.

During the Middle Ages, as Christopher Dawson points out :

" Everywhere men became conscious of their common citizenship in the great religious commonwealth of Christendom. And this spiritual citizenship was the foundation of a new society. As members of the feudal state, men were separated by the countless divisions of allegiance and jurisdiction. . . . But as members of the Church, they met on a common ground.

"The new civilisation which slowly and painfully began to emerge in the early Middle Ages was in a very special sense a religious creation, for it was based on an ecclesiastical not a political unity. While in the East (Constantinople) the imperial unity was still all-inclusive and the Church was essentially the Church of the Empire, in the West it was the Church that was the universal society and the State was weak, barbarous and divided. The only true citizenship that remained to common man was his membership of the Church, and it involved a far deeper and wider loyalty than his allegiance to the secular state. It was the fundamental social relation which overrode all distinctions of class and nationality." (*Progress and Religion*, p. 166.)

No matter where a person went all over Medieval Europe he found himself peculiarly at home and as it were among brothers. Everywhere was the brotherhood of the common Faith ; everywhere was a common moral law understood and accepted by all. Moreover, there was the special brotherhood of letters—Latin, the language of the Church, being the common link and mother tongue of all men of learning. Society was a Christian organism and all men regarded themselves as members of one body, the Mystical Body of Christ. They looked out on the world with the same eyes, had the same standard of values, and their business dealings were not regulated by mere opportunism as to-day, but by the Church's moral code to which all gave unquestioning allegiance ; though naturally through human frailty they oftentimes broke it.

Frederic Harrison, no friend of Catholicism, pays the following generous tribute to the all pervading influence of the Catholic Faith at the peak-point of the Middle Ages :

"There was one common creed, one ritual, one worship, one sacred language, one Church, a single code of manners, a uniform scheme of society, a common system of education, an accepted type of beauty, a universal art, something like a recognised standard of the Good, the Beautiful, and the True.

" And this creed still sufficed to inspire the most profound thought, the most lofty poetry, the widest culture, the freest art of the age: it filled statesmen with awe, scholars with enthusiasm, and consolidated society around uniform objects of reverence and worship. It bound men together, from the Hebrides to the Eastern Mediterranean, from the Atlantic to the Baltic, as European men have never since been bound. Great thinkers, like Albert of Cologne and Aquinas, found it to be the stimulus of their meditations. Mighty poets, like Dante, could not conceive poetry, unless based on it and saturated with it. Creative artists, like Giotto, found it an ever-living well-spring of pure beauty. The great cathedrals embodied it in a thousand forms of glory and power. To statesman, artist, poet, thinker, teacher, soldier, worker, chief, or follower, it supplied at once inspiration and instrument." (*The Making of History*, p. 152.)

With the advent of Luther and his satellite revolutionaries the great religious and social unity of Europe, which could have been saved, was utterly shattered<sup>1</sup>: the Reformers did not reform, they but deformed and destroyed. Not alone had Religious Individualism appeared, but also Political Individualism and Nationalism. D. B. Wyndham Lewis maintains that: " It is no exaggeration to attribute the modern fever of nationalism directly to the Reformation, which sprang from and exalted the culture of the Ego and forced the bloom of those egotisms which in an unbroken Renaissance Europe under the Counter-Reformation must have ultimately

<sup>1</sup> D. B. Wyndham Lewis describing the condition of Europe on the accession of Charles the Fifth to the Empire, 1519, two years after Luther's revolt began, says that "the average European" is quite unaware that "the old European commonwealth is about to go up in shattered fragments before his eyes," and thus continues: "The ferment of the Renaissance is everywhere expressing itself in arts and letters and discovery. . . . The European princes . . . are growing more absolute, the Church's prestige is very low; yet still *the travelling European*, in whatever country he may find himself, in Sweden or Spain, Poland or Sicily, Scotland or Hungary, can feel himself at home in a universal culture unaffected by national rivalries. Less than twenty years hence he will not be able to feel this." (*The Emperor of the West*, p. 50.)

been checked in their noxious growth, and perhaps in the end have withered away. Modern nationalism was manufactured in Germany in the sixteenth century. . . ." (*Emperor of the West*, p. 276.)

In order to understand Political Individualism it will be necessary to discuss its two aspects (1) the breaking up of Europe into individual sovereign or national States—Nationalism, or National Individualism as it may be called ; (2) the disintegration of the Nation-State itself, with the resultant isolation of the individual citizen from political society : this latter developed mainly under the influence of the teaching of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. The break-up of Europe into individual sovereign states will be considered first.

#### NATIONALISM

Europe is to-day divided into a number of independent, or sovereign, or national States—Nation-States—each having supreme jurisdiction over its own territory and people. The Nation-State did not appear suddenly, it evolved slowly, and its growth was conditioned by certain factors, the chief of which are the following : (1) The gradual decline of the use of Latin as the language of the learned and the growth of distinctive literary languages : the rapid spread of printing-presses towards the end of the fifteenth century helped considerably the development of the " vernacular." (2) Increased commercial intercourse, and the trade rivalry between peoples that was a necessary concomitant. (3) The rise of absolute monarchs, with the national unity that resulted from strong centralised authority. (4) But, it was the Reformation that gave the dynamic disruptive impetus to the Nation-State which led to modern Nationalism as such and to the break-up of Christendom. Hilaire Belloc says that out of the Reformation came :

" The disruption of our society, and the sowing of those seeds which were later to threaten our very existence ; the independence of each separate province of

Christendom from the rest, the denial of any common moral authority over them, the affirmation of the Sovereign State owing allegiance to none and free to destroy any of its fellows, and itself open to a similar state without appeal." (*The Crisis of Our Civilisation*, p. 5.)<sup>1</sup>

Religion at the Reformation became a mighty separatist force instead of the unifying principle it had been in the past. The National Church flung the whole weight of its support behind the Protestant State and vice-versa. "Protestantism was the religious aspect of Nationalism ; it naturally came into being against the cosmopolitan character of Catholicism ; it received its support from *nations* ; and it assumed everywhere a national form"—i.e. national churches. (Carlton Hayes : *History of Modern Europe*, p. 167.)

Henri Massis, in *Défense de l'Occident*, refers to the disruptive power of the Reformation and the deification of the Nation, as follows :

"Luther's revolt began under the sign of liberty of thought, flung Law back to the world, making the State its exclusive giver, and ending thus in the idolatry of lay authority. The nation was at the same time deified in its attributes and its power. Henceforth, there was nothing more to be done but to transfer these prerogatives to the free will of the people, then to that of the individual, for the Lutheran principle—the generator of dissensions and conflicts—to develop its homicidal consequences. For, in destroying Christendom, the highest equilibrium that society has known, it also disunited the human species."

Moreover, each of the national sovereign States became Protestant or Catholic as the respective princes or kings supported or opposed the Reformation. Luther, on meeting

<sup>1</sup> In his *Essays of a Catholic* Mr. Belloc wrote : "The Modern State differs from the Medieval State in that it claims complete independence from all authority other than its own, whereas the Medieval State regarded itself as only part of Christendom and bound by the general morals and arrangements of Christian men." He develops this at length in his essay on "The Catholic Church and the Modern State," pp. 65-85.

much opposition in the early days of the revolution, was forced to look to the German princes for support and to exalt their authority in opposition to that of the Pope. In order to secure for them the obedience of their subjects he proclaimed that princes ruled by divine authority conferred on them *directly* by God.

It became the recognised practice of the time that rulers determined the religion of their subjects on the principle—*cujus regio, ejus religio*; this facilitated the Protestant princes in forcing the allegiance of their subjects away from the Old Faith. In return for the support given by the Protestant princes to the Reformers, a demand was made by the former for the confiscation of the property of the Church. In this way the Protestant State was built up through the confiscation of ecclesiastical wealth and with the supporting approval of the new National Church; as a result the State thereby became much strengthened, and was able to come to the help of the National Church when the latter was being opposed by the adherents of the Old Faith or by new sects. Finally, the Prince became head not only of the Protestant State but also of the National Church and took upon himself the definition and proclamation of new doctrines. Professor Gettell of the University of California thus sums up the close relations of the State and National Church, and points out how the one helped the other at the Reformation :

“ The desire to acquire church possessions and to escape financial exploitation was unquestionably a powerful motive in inducing secular rulers, especially in England and Germany, to favour the Protestant Revolt. Church property, appropriated by the State or assigned by it to an ecclesiastical system under its control, increased the wealth of the State and restored a large population to the jurisdiction of the secular authority. And the position of the ruler as head or protector of the new religious system strengthened his claim to rule by divine right.

"The diversities of doctrine and the rise of radical sects accompanied by peasant revolts and communistic agitations, which resulted from the Protestant teaching of individual belief, led the moderate reformers to appeal to the political authority to protect the movement against the excesses and fanatical vagaries. Accordingly, the State assumed the power of defining creeds and punishing heresies, and the power of the government was in this way further extended. All the great reformers enjoined passive obedience to the State, and taught that 'the powers that be are ordained of God!'" (*History of Political Thought*. p. 147.)

With the collapse of Christendom came the rejection by the Nation-States of a common or supra-national authority. Dr. Lindsay says: "As independent sovereign States they were not bound by common law—any relations which they had with each other were determined by voluntary engagements whose force lasted as long as either party wanted it to last and no longer." (*The Modern Democratic State*, Vol. I, p. 65.) We have had some impressively painful instances of such "voluntary engagements" or treaties in recent years—such as those between Germany, Poland, Russia, the Baltic States, and others unnecessary to mention. Opportunism now too often determines the duration of a treaty, and men are rapidly being driven to accept brute force as the final arbiter between sovereign States. The first manifestation of Political Individualism is therefore to be found in the appearance of the Nation-State. What once constituted united Christendom has to-day been reduced to a collection of individual sovereign states, each independent of the other and admitting no common supra-national authority.

In his *Acquisitive Society* Professor R. H. Tawney makes a very interesting comparison between *National Individualism* and the *Individualism* as such which developed within the Nation-State. It will be well to note carefully the opening sentence:

"Nationalism<sup>1</sup> is, in fact, the counterpart among nations of what Individualism is within them. It has similar origins and tendencies, similar triumphs and defects. For Nationalism, like Individualism, lays its emphasis on the rights of separate units, not on their subordination to common obligations, though its units are races or nations, not individual men. Like Individualism, it appeals to the self-assertive instincts to which it promises unlimited opportunities of unlimited expansion. Like Individualism, it is a force of immense explosive power, the just claims of which must be conceded before it is possible to invoke any alternative principle to control its operations. For one cannot impose a supernational authority upon irritated or discontented or oppressed nationalities, any more than one can subordinate economic motives to the control of society, until society has recognised that there is a sphere which they may legitimately occupy.

"And like Nationalism, if pushed to its logical conclusion, Individualism is self-destructive. For, as Nationalism, in its brilliant youth begins as a claim that nations, because they are spiritual beings, shall determine themselves and passes too often into a claim that they shall dominate others, so Individualism begins by asserting the rights of men to make their own lives what they can, and ends by condoning the subjection of the majority of men to the few whom good fortune or special opportunity, or privilege have enabled most successfully to use their rights. They rose together. It is probable that, if ever they decline, they will decline together. For life cannot be cut in compartments. In the long run the world reaps in war what it sows in peace. And to expect that international rivalry can be exorcised as long as the industrial order within each nation is such as to give success to those whose whole existence is a struggle for self-aggrandisement is a dream which has not even the merit of being beautiful." (p. 51).

<sup>1</sup>In the sense of the individual Nation-State: Nationalism is an equivocal term, and it must be noted in what sense it is used in what follows.

His conclusion is that "the perversion of nationalism is imperialism, as the perversion of individualism is industrialism."

It will be of interest, especially to Catholic readers, to have the view of the Russian philosopher, Nicholas Berdyaev, a member of the Orthodox Church, confirming and supplementing that of the distinguished English Protestant just quoted :

"Modern history has brought forth forms of nationalism of which the medieval world knew nothing. Nationalist movements and separatisms in the West are found to have been the result of the Reformation and of Protestant particularism. The spirit of Catholicism could never have led to such separatism, to such excessive national self-affirmation as has formed itself into self-sufficient national monads (in the same way that human individualities have become self-sufficient monads). It has meant the 'atomisation' of Christendom ; the individualities of nations and the individualities of isolated men ceased to be aware that they were parts of an organic and real whole : each rung claims to be independent of the ladder." (*The End of Our Time*, pp. 95-6.)

The development of Sovereign States, each independent of the other and without any co-ordinating supra-national authority to guide them, has been and will be the fruitful cause of wars. Of this James Burnham writes :

"Sovereignty for a nation implies that the nation makes laws for itself and recognises no superior law-maker. It means that the nation sets up tariffs and other import and export controls, regulates its own foreign policies and its own currency, and maintains civil and diplomatic and military establishments. The simultaneous existence of many sovereign nations in the modern world necessarily means an anarchic situation in world politics. This must be because, since each

sovereign nation recognises no lawmaker superior to itself, there is in the end no way except by force to mediate the deep conflicts that are bound to arise among the various nations." (*The Managerial Revolution*, p. 164.)

The isolated Nation-State is one of the outstanding international problems of the post-war period ; it is exercising the minds of the statesmen of the world to-day, with what results the future alone can tell.<sup>1</sup>

It is well to recall here, in the light of what has just been said, the words of Pope Pius XI in *Ubi Arcano Dei* :

" There is no *human* institution which can impose on all peoples any code of common law adapted to the present times, such as was possessed in the Middle Ages by that true society of nations which was the community of Christian peoples, among whom, even if in fact law was indeed frequently violated, nevertheless the sanctity of law remained in force, giving a secure rule by which the natives should judge one another.

" But there is a *divine* institution able to safeguard the sanctity of the law of nations, an institution both belonging to and at the same time superior to all nations, endowed with supreme authority and venerable for the perfection of its teaching office, the Church of Christ ; the one institution capable of undertaking so heavy a charge, from its divine mandate, from its own nature and constitution, from the greatness of its traditions and the majesty it has held throughout the centuries ; which was not overcome by the storm of the war but rather marvellously strengthened." (25th December, 1922.)

While the Nation-State appeared with the Reformation, it was not till the end of the eighteenth century that modern *exaggerated* " Nationalism," as this term is popularly understood to-day, appeared : Nationalism in this

<sup>1</sup> See *Essays on Nationalism* by Carlton Hayes.

sense is akin to Patriotism. Rousseau's doctrine of the "Sovereignty of the People" led to an intense development of the "*spirit of nationalism*" during and after the French Revolution: the displacement of the sovereignty of God by the sovereignty of "the people" gave rise to nation-worship, the deification of *la Patrie*. Lest this may seem to be an exaggeration it is necessary to recall that the French Legislative Assembly decreed in June, 1792, that—"in all communes<sup>1</sup> an altar to the Fatherland shall be raised on which shall be engraved the 'Declaration of Rights' with the inscription 'The Citizen is born, lives and dies for *la Patrie*.'" God's altar was thereby overturned and the altar of the Fatherland raised in its place: this was the apotheosis of "the people." Nationalism became a cult, a religion.

The influence of French exaggerated nationalism affected the European peoples who had fallen under the spell of the revolutionary doctrines; the result was an intense development of the spirit of nationalism all over Europe, from which Ireland did not escape. Patriotism is a Christian virtue; but the exaggerated nationalism of the last century and a half is quite unchristian; it is anti-Christian. Berdyaev says of it:

"The present-day nationalism of France, Germany, England, Italy, is all more or less pagan, anti-Christian, anti-religious; French nationalism of the Third Republic is in a high degree a product of Atheism. Faith in the living God is waning rapidly, and men have made for themselves a false God, the nation, or worship an even worse idol, internationalism." (*The End of Our Time*, p. 97.)

And Hilaire Belloc confirmed this view when he said:

"I do not mean that patriotism is a novelty, still less that it is other than a noble and exalted devotion. It is old as civilised human society, and is, if not a virtue, the nearest thing to a virtue which we can find outside

the field of pure ethics.<sup>1</sup> But I mean that making humanity the end, or even one's own nation the end, of action, is an error and a necessary seed of disaster. Indeed, to-day, from these two emotions, the worship of humanity and the worship of the nation, the very life of the world is imperilled."

### THE NATION-STATE AND THE INDIVIDUAL

The result of the break-up of Christendom has not, in the political order, been merely confined to the growth of the Nation-State. Disintegration has also entered into the Nation-State itself so that gradually the individual has become detached from civil society with the result that, to a very considerable extent, he stands politically isolated before the State to-day.

At the Reformation the "Liberty of a Christian Man," the "Universal Priesthood," and "Private Judgment" were proclaimed by Luther and his followers. The individual Christian then became, as it were, the basic idea or cell of each newly-constituted National Church. In the circumstances of the time it was only natural to expect, when National Church and National State were so closely allied and with the Prince as common head, that what happened within the National Church would, in course of time, also happen in the National State, namely, that the individual citizen would be regarded as the basic cell of political society—the State.<sup>2</sup> This is what, indeed, took

<sup>1</sup> In the Encyclical "Sapientiae Christianae," Leo XIII said: "The supernatural love of the Church and the natural love of our own country proceed from the same eternal principle, since God Himself is their Author and originating Cause." In his Encyclical *Pax Christi*, Pope Pius XI thus contrasts Patriotism and Exaggerated Nationalism. "Patriotism—the stimulus of so many virtues and so many noble acts of heroism when kept within the bounds of the law of Christ—becomes merely an occasion and an added incentive of grave injustice when true love of country is debased to the condition of an extreme nationalism, when we forget that all men are brothers and members of the great human family."

<sup>2</sup> In his *Students' History of England*, Dr. Gardiner says: "The man who in religion counted his own individual faith as the one thing necessary was likely to count his own individual convictions in social and political matters as worth more to him than his obedience to the authority of any government" (p. 379).

place; for, with the break-up of Christendom and the abandonment of the traditional and universally accepted authority of the Catholic Church, it became necessary to establish the basis of the political authority of the new Nation-State.

Luther and his followers held that authority was directly conferred by God on the Prince who, therefore, ruled by "right divine." But with the gradual permeation of the Protestant principle of individualism throughout the political order, and especially under the religious and political influence of Calvinism, the idea gained ground that the authority of the State derived from the individuals who composed the State and this by way of a social contract which, in their own interest, men made with each other when, driven by compelling circumstances, they determined to create a political society.

Luther and Calvin are the outstanding names in the history of the disintegration of religious society, while Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau are equally prominent in the history of the disintegration of political society. The story of this process of political individualistic disintegration is mainly that of the three philosophers just mentioned.

Hobbes led the way with his "Social Compact" by which he supposed that men, in order to escape from a condition of a pre-society savage existence, decided to confer their individual authority on the Prince, thereby constituting the Leviathan or the State: this State authority was *absolute* and could not be withdrawn. Locke improved on Hobbes, rejected the absolute power of the Prince, introduced the notion of *representative government*, based not on "the people" as a whole but only on the *propertied classes*—hence an oligarchy. However, he gave birth to the idea of "*representation*" which, after further development in the fertile brain of Rousseau, was implemented by the French Revolutionaries and resulted in the full expression of Political Individualism. The State was now considered as being based on "the people" as a whole and not on a mere class. All the individuals, equal and

free, pooling and conferring their authority by a Social Contract, gave existence to the sovereign people's State and to Modern Democracy.<sup>1</sup> Exaggerated individual liberty and "egalitarianism," as proclaimed by the Rousseauists, were the two forces that have led to the final stages of the disintegration of political society and to the isolation of the individual before the State. Man has become politically, as well as religiously, isolated. The isolation of "economic man" developed concomitantly.

It is useful, indeed necessary, to recall that the idea of the State in Catholic philosophy differs essentially from that of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau. The Medieval State was regarded as a living organism and was, like the Church, oftentimes compared to the human body. The individual was regarded as incorporated in the organism of the State, had a vital connection with it, and did not exist as a mere isolated unit. The Liberal State, which takes its rise from Locke and Rousseau, is a conglomeration of free, independent, and isolated individuals. Its authority is derived from the individuals who compose it by the delegation of the authority of the individuals to a Prince or Central Government; this is conceived as being effected through what is known as a "Social Contract." This will be explained in some detail when discussing the three philosophers mentioned.

Pope Pius XII pointed out the difference between these two concepts of the State in his address to the world on "Democracy, True and False," Christmas Eve, 1944.

"The State," the Pope said, "is not *an amorphous conglomeration of individuals within certain territorial bounds*; it is, and in reality must be, *the organic and organising unity of a true people*. A people and an amorphous crowd or mass, are two different things: a people lives and moves by its own life; a mass is

<sup>1</sup> The rebellion of the English colonists in America laid the localised foundations of Modern Democracy; but it was the dynamic power of the French Revolution that swept the idea across the world. This will be dealt with fully in the section on Rousseau.

inert in itself and cannot be moved except from outside. A people lives by the fulness of the lives of the men who are part of it, each of whom in his own place and way is a person conscious of his own responsibilities and convictions. The mass, on the contrary, awaits a stimulus from outside—an easy plaything in the hands of anyone who may exploit its instincts or sensations, ready to follow this flag to-day and another to-morrow. From the exuberance of life in a true people, life spreads abundant and rich into a State and all its organs, infusing it with constantly renewed vigour, with the consciousness of its own responsibilities and the true sense of the common good. The State can also make use of the elementary force of the mass, cleverly handled and managed ; in the ambitious hands of an individual, or a group brought together artificially by egotistical aims, the State itself can, with the support of the mass, degenerate into a mere machine which imposes its arbitrary will on the best section of the true people. The common good is thus heavily stricken for a long time, and often the wound can be healed only with difficulty. This clearly leads to another conclusion : *the mass in the sense that we have defined it, is the mortal enemy of true democracy and its ideals of liberty and equality.*"

In his Encyclical, *Immortale Dei*, 1st November, 1885, Pope Leo XIII had emphasised the error of those who derive the authority of the State from the individuals who compose it, glorifying the individual as independent and self-sufficient, and ignoring, in fact, the divine origin of all authority. "Thus, as is evident," Pope Leo XIII said, "a State becomes but a multitude" (a 'conglomeration of individuals,' a 'mass,' as the present Pope called it) "which is its own master and ruler." Pope Leo XIII explains this individualistic or false democracy as follows :

"Amongst these principles (which began to appear after the Reformation) the main one lays down that as

all men are alike by race and nature, so in like manner all are equal in the control of their life ; that each one is so far his own master as to be in no sense under the rule of any other individual ; that each is free to think on every subject just as he may choose, and to do whatever he may like to do ; that no man has any right to rule over other men. In a society grounded upon such maxims, all government is nothing more or less than the will of the people, and the people, being under the power of itself alone, is alone its own ruler. It does choose, nevertheless, some to whose charge it may commit itself, but in such wise that it makes over to them not the right so much as the business of governing, to be exercised, however, in its name. The authority of God is passed over in silence, just as if there were no God, or as if He cared nothing for human society ; or as if men, whether in their individual capacity or bound together in social relations, owed nothing to God ; or as if there could be a government of which the whole origin and power and authority did not reside in God Himself. Thus, as is evident, a State becomes nothing but a multitude, which is its own master and ruler." (*The Christian Constitution of States.*)

In his Encyclical *Libertas Praestantissimam*, 20th June, 1888, Leo XIII wrote of *false democracy* as follows :

" When once man is firmly persuaded that he is subject to no one, it follows that the efficient cause of the unity of civil society is not to be sought in any principle external to man, or superior to him, but simply in the free will of individuals ; that the authority of the State comes from the people only ; and that, as every man's individual reason is his only rule of life, so the collective reason of the community must be the supreme guide in the management of all public affairs. Hence the doctrine of the supremacy of the greater number, and that *the majority of the people is the effective source of all rights and duties.*"

With this premised, the growth and development of Modern Democracy will now be examined in detail. Using the words of Professor Henry Sidgwick, "Let us begin with Hobbes, as indeed modern political thought may be said to begin with him."

### HOBBES AND ABSOLUTE MONARCHY

During the period of the Civil War between Royalists and Puritans in England there lived Thomas Hobbes, who did for the State something akin to what Luther had done for the Church—made "the individual" the cell or basic idea. Having been much perturbed by the disorders arising from the Civil War he determined to establish lasting peace by devising a plan to secure unyielding obedience to the *de facto* sovereign rule of the King making, at the same time, rebellion against the Monarch unlawful. He put forward his thesis in *Leviathan*, which was published in 1651. On Hobbes's plan C. E. M. Joad makes the following comment :

'Hobbes set himself the difficult task of proving that, while the last revolution resulting in the restoration of Charles II in 1660 was justified, the next would be unjustified; unjustified because, given his views of the Social Contract security is the one thing for the sake of which men formed society, and the one thing which they cannot be allowed to jeopardise by successful rebellion. Successful rebellion, then, is the one thing which, in the interests of security, must be excluded. Yet it is also something which, on Hobbes's egoistic principles, cannot be excluded.' (*Guide to the Philosophy of Morals and Politics*, p. 481.)

In his *Leviathan* Hobbes considered men as originally existing in a "state of nature"—that is, before the establishment of human society. Men in their pre-society condition lived as isolated individuals, in a condition of uncontrolled savagery, of anarchy and violence, every

man's hand against his neighbour ; the life of man in this state was "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short." It was "a war of all against all." In such circumstances *self-interest* forced men to come together and by means of a "social contract," as below, to surrender each his individual authority or right of governing himself to a central authority.<sup>1</sup> Thus arose man-made civil society ; not something *natural* to man but arising from external necessity, and with its authority having its source in man and not in God. The contract as conceived by Hobbes runs thus :

"I authorise and give up my right of governing myself to this man, or to this assembly of men, on this condition, that thou give up all thy right to him, and authorise all his actions in like manner. . . . This is the generation of the great Leviathan"—or the State<sup>2</sup>—which he describes as "One person, of whose acts a great Multitude, by mutual covenants one with another, have made themselves every one the Author, to the end he may use the strength and means of them all, as he shall think expedient, for their peace and common defence."

Here is found the embryonic idea of the modern totalitarian State which absorbs the individual into the community and so becomes the Leviathan, and is ruled by a Dictator.

Christopher Dawson says that "the essential principle of the totalitarian States" was asserted both by Hobbes and Rousseau ; and one may add by Rousseau borrowing from Hobbes, who based the Leviathan, that is, dictatorship, on the will of the people. However, Hobbes's "democratic argument for dictatorship" was exploded by Locke, who pointed out that it involves an essential contradiction. Locke argued as follows :

<sup>1</sup> For a full account of the historical growth of this theory see *The Social Contract*, by T. W. Gough.

<sup>2</sup> Absolute monarchy.

"As if when men, quitting the state of nature, entered into society, they agreed that all of them but one should be under the restraint of Laws ; but that he should still retain all the liberty of the State of Nature, increased with power and made licentious by impunity. This is to think that men are so foolish that they take care to avoid what mischiefs may be done them by polecats or foxes, but are content, nay, think it safety, to be devoured by lions."

In the frontispiece to *Leviathan* there is the figure of an immense giant or superman, from the waist upwards, composed of myriads of midget or microscopical men. He wears a crown on his head, has a sceptre in one hand (civil authority) and a cross in the other (religious authority), implying that the twofold power resides in the ruler.

As has been said in an earlier section, Hobbes was interested in the new sciences that were being developed in his time which repudiated God and revived the theory of atomism. Society, to Hobbes, is made up of human atoms or individuals, equal to and independent of each other, and with as little social or organic contact between them as between one stone and the others in a heap. The individuals pool their authority in the hope of social peace and preservation from destruction. By such a theory Hobbes retained the *absolute* power of the King but got rid of God and incidentally of the "divine right of kings." In other words Hobbes set up a purely secular, a godless State. No doubt Secularism had been developing since the rejection of the Church's authority by the Reformers, but Hobbes now *formally* set forth the philosophy of the secular State. This is an ominous event in the development of European society.<sup>1</sup>

With Hobbes *self-interest* is the motive power behind human progress. This is an idea which, as we shall see

<sup>1</sup> Professor Joad says: "If Hobbes is right, justice, the will of the ruler, the law of the State are one and the same thing. Hobbes does, in fact, explicitly accept this identification, as do the Totalitarian States of the twentieth century." (Op. cit., p. 480.)

when dealing with Economic Individualism, has brought untold misery to the people of the world. It is, therefore, of primary importance to grasp Hobbes's principle of "self-interest" which will obtrude itself constantly later when Capitalism is considered : Professor Sabine analyses it as follows :

" Since all human behaviour is motivated by individual self-interest society must be regarded merely as a means to this end. Hobbes was at once the utilitarian and the complete individualist. The power of the State and the authority of the law are justified only because they contribute to the security of individual human beings, and there is no rational ground of obedience and respect for authority except the anticipation that these will yield a larger individual advantage than their opposites. *Social well-being as such disappears entirely and is replaced by a sum of separate self-interests.* Society is merely an "artificial" body, a collective term for the fact that human beings find it individually advantageous to exchange goods and services. It is this clear-cut individualism which makes Hobbes's philosophy the most revolutionary theory of the age.

" *With Hobbes the power of Christian tradition is for the first time fully broken by a clear-headed and cold-hearted rationalism.* The State is a leviathan, but no man loves or reveres a leviathan. It is reduced to a utility, good for what it does, but merely the servant of private security. In this argument Hobbes summed up a view of human nature which resulted from two centuries of decadence in customary economic and social institutions. Moreover, he caught the spirit which was to animate social thinking for at least two centuries more, the spirit of *laissez-faire*." (*A History of Political Theory*, p. 467.)

Professor Gettell sets forth in a few words Hobbes's ideas of rationalist morality :

"Political Society was created artificially by a social contract made because of the desire of security. Self-interest was the motive behind all authority and law. Law was the result of the general desire for self-preservation. Morality arose as a result of law. Hobbes was thus distinctly utilitarian. Morality was mere convenience. Self-preservation compelled men to unite and to submit to rules of conduct or laws. These created moral rules which were, therefore, natural." (Op. cit. p. 219.)

Dr. A. D. Lindsay, Master of Balliol, points out as follows the development of Hobbes's opportunist system of morality into utilitarianism and *laissez-faire*:

"Hobbes was the inventor of the economic man, who by nature pursues only his own interests. Doing so without control, he produces war. Politics, in the shape of the absolute sovereign comes to the rescue and allows him to pursue his interests undisturbed except for the price the sovereign makes him pay for his security. Rules of conduct there are in Hobbes's State. They are dignified by the honourable name of the laws of nature. Knowledge of them is 'the only true moral philosophy.' But they are only rules making for security. *They are rules of expediency and nothing more.* They have no intrinsic value in themselves." (Op. cit., p. 84.)

Hobbes's morality is, therefore, merely opportunist, purely utilitarian, and completely ignores God and the Divine law. His attitude to religion is consistent with his system of morals. The Church is merely an instrument in the hands of the sovereign to maintain his sovereignty. The sovereign has absolute power over Church and State, and the Church becomes the necessary tool of the State. Hobbes, who was known in his day as the "father of atheists," may be regarded also as "the first philosopher of the secular State."

Hobbes had a diabolical hatred of Catholicism which strongly reminds one of his modern counterpart, the

North of Ireland Orangeman. It is no wonder then that this benighted bigot made a violent attack in his *Leviathan* on the Catholic Church, which he styled the "Kingdom of Darkness," declaring it to be "no other than the ghost of the deceased Roman Empire, sitting crowned on the grave thereof." Lecky says of him in *Rationalism in Europe*:

"At the very first period when the principle of religious toleration was first established in England by the union of the spirit of scepticism and the spirit of Christianity, the greatest living anti-Christian writer was Hobbes, who was, perhaps, the most unflinching of all the supporters of persecution. It was his leading doctrine that the civil power and the civil power alone, has an absolute right to determine the religion of the nation, and, that therefore any refusal to acquiescence in that religion is eventually an act of rebellion." (Vol. ii. p. 82.)

Hobbes holds an outstanding place in the development of modern thought, both Political and Economic, but his importance is immeasurably enhanced by the fact that he was the inspirer of John Locke. Sir Leslie Stephen said that Hobbes was "the most potent stimulant to English thought in the last half of the seventeenth, and even during the first half of the eighteenth century in England. He had, indeed, fewer disciples than antagonists; but the writer who provokes a reaction does as much in generating ideas as the writer who propagates his own ideas." Such was the influence of Hobbes on Locke.

#### LOCKE AND LIMITED MONARCHY

In his study of "Locke," in the *English Men of Letters* series, Professor Fowler of Oxford said that Locke was "perhaps the greatest, but certainly the most characteristic, of English Philosophers;" and that he was "the most celebrated man, perhaps, that Oxford has sheltered within her walls since the Reformation." John Locke

was born in 1632 and died in 1704. He therefore lived in the eventful reigns of James II (1685–1688), and of his successor William of Orange (1689–1702), a period of unique importance in the political and economic development of England.

James II was a Catholic Monarch who asserted his absolute royal rule by "right divine." In asserting this claim he had the support of the Church of England. Macaulay, writing of the period of James II, said : "The greatest Anglican doctors of that age maintained that no breach of law or contract, no excess of cruelty, rapacity or licentiousness, on the part of a rightful king, could justify his people in withholding him by force." In 1687 he issued, without the consent of parliament, the "Declaration of Indulgence" whereby equality of all before the law, irrespective of creed, was established and the penal laws against Catholics and Dissenters were nullified in practice : as a practising Catholic he found it intolerable that his co-religionists should be penalised, but he was tactless in his manner of relief. This toleration of Catholicism made him very unpopular with his Church-of-England subjects ; the difficulty of the situation was accentuated by the birth of a Catholic son and heir to the throne by his second wife, a Catholic. After violent opposition to the action of the King in which the Church of England took a leading part, William of Orange, who had married Mary the Protestant daughter of James by his first wife, was invited to come to England and accept the crown. William crossed over from Holland and landed in England, 5th November, 1688. He reached London, 27th November. The Revolution was bloodless. James embarked for France, 23rd December. The throne was declared vacant, 28th January, 1689 : the crown was formally offered to William and Mary and accepted by them, 13th February, 1689.<sup>1</sup> Thus the long established power of the English Monarchy was broken and

<sup>1</sup> Few men have lost more for conscience sake than did James II, who, in the words of the Protestant Macaulay, "from a fanatical zeal for his religion threw away three kingdoms."

the rule of the Aristocracy who engineered the Revolution was secured. The claim of an English King to rule by "right divine" had ended ; and as a result the wealthy classes who made William of Orange King of England had established the precedent and the right to make or unmake kings. It must be noted that the king-makers were not "*the People*" but the *Aristocracy*.<sup>1</sup>

At the end of the year the Bill of Rights confirmed "the victory of the wealthier classes over the crown." Of the Bill of Rights Hilaire Belloc says :

"It was a document recapitulating all the points by which transference from popular monarchy to government by the landed class and the squires was effected : no revenue save by imposition of the governing class in Parliament ; no power of imprisonment save by the same class acting as local magistrates or lawyers ; no mitigation of existing laws of religious persecution, save by leave of the same authority ; and so on. There was added the barring of the throne to Catholics by demanding a declaration against the Real Presence. All this was passed on 16th December, 1689." (*A Short History of England*, p. 443.)

Protestantism was now at last secure ; the Church of England abandoned the legitimate King and threw her lot in with the aristocracy. Since the Reformation the Established Church, following in the footsteps of Luther, had been the zealous supporter of the "right divine of Kings" and the main buttress of the absolute monarchy. But now that its existence was threatened by the restoration of the Old Faith, the Established Church flung all its weight into opposition against the King. Of the traditional hostility of the Church of England to the liberties of the people, Macaulay wrote as follows in his *Historical Essays* :

<sup>1</sup> Many of the aristocracy were the descendants of those who grew rich by the pillage of the Church at the Reformation. The possible restoration of the Ancient Faith made them fear lest they may be compelled to restore the loot won by their forebears. See Part iii. *The Looting of the Monasteries and the Gilds*.

“ She continued to be, for more than one hundred and fifty years, the servile handmaid of monarchy, the steady enemy of public liberty. The divine right of kings, and the duty of passively obeying their commands were her favourite tenets. She held those tenets firmly through times of oppression, persecution and licentiousness ; while law was trampled down ; while judgment was perverted ; while the people were eaten as though they were bread. Once, and but once, for a moment, and but for a moment, when her own dignity and property were touched, she forgot to practise the submission which she had taught.”

Lecky’s judgment is similar : he says—“ No other Church so uniformly betrayed and trampled on the liberties of her country. In all those fiery trials through which English liberty has passed since the Reformation, she invariably cast her influence into the scale of tyranny.”

Referring to the constantly stressed teaching of the Established Church as regards the subject’s obligation of passive obedience to the royal commands, Macaulay cynically says that, after the Declaration of Indulgence, “divines whose sagacity had been sharpened by the imminent danger in which they stood of being turned out of their livings and prebends to make room for Papists, discovered flaws in the reasoning which had formerly seemed so convincing.” (*History of England*, ch. ix.)

Two factors arising out of the Revolution of 1688 led to national unity and created England’s greatness. Of them Hilaire Belloc says :

“ But now it was found that in practice aristocracy made men more united than any other form of Government. Under it England became more and more one thing, and after six generations of it is like a block of granite. This English unity was consolidated by the driving out of Catholicism. . . . England alone of the great modern nations has enjoyed complete moral unity which she owes to two things ; aristocracy and her successful extirpation of the Catholic Faith.” (op. cit., p. 445.)

As the philosopher and defender of the Revolution Locke made a unique contribution to this national unity based on aristocratic rule and Protestantism ; not, however, based on the Protestantism of the Church of England of the day, but a tolerant latitudinarian Protestantism, a "simplified Christianity" embracing all Protestant sects no matter how contradictory.

In defence of aristocratic rule Locke published his *Two Treatises of Government*, 1690. His object in writing them was, as he said, "to establish the throne of our Great Restorer, our present King William, and to justify to the world the people of England, whose love for their first and natural rights saved the nation when it was on the very brink of slavery and ruin." The *Treatises* were written nominally as a refutation of Sir Robert Filmer who in his *Patriarcha* (1680) maintained the Absolute Power of Kings, though in reality and implicitly it was directed against Hobbes and his *Leviathan*. It would be more correct to say that the first Treatise was directed against Filmer and the second Treatise against Hobbes who, however, is not mentioned.

Filmer quoted the renowned Jesuit theologian, Robert Bellarmine<sup>1</sup> who advocated popular liberty, and concluded : "Thus far Bellarmine ; in which passages are comprised the strength of all that I have read or heard produced for the natural liberty of the subject." Hobbes devoted twenty-five pages of the *Leviathan* to Bellarmine.<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note in passing that Locke makes no reference whatever to Bellarmine,—though sermons preached at the time in Anglican pulpits were, as Harold Laski says, "bristling with Suarez and Bellarmine." Locke opposed the absolute monarchy, but stood for the *aristocracy* not for the people : Bellarmine, on the other hand, stood for the *liberties of the people* and against royal despotism.

<sup>1</sup> Now canonised and a Doctor of the Church.

<sup>2</sup> Hobbes wrote : "I had been more brief, forbearing to examine these arguments of Bellarmine if they had been lies, as a private man, and not as a Champion of the Papacy against all other Christian Princes and States."

Hobbes's *Leviathan* and Locke's *Treatises* had the same essential ideas of a "state of nature" and of a "social contract." Hobbes, however, regarded man in the state of nature as a brutal and lawless savage ; while to Locke he was nature's gentleman. The power resulting from the social contract was regarded by Hobbes as *centred in an individual ruler or a ruling group*, while Locke conceived it as residing in the *community* (the aristocracy). Hobbes maintained the *absolute rule* of the sovereign and denied to subjects the right to rebel even against grave injustice ; Locke, however, limited the sovereign's rule and granted in extreme cases the right to rebel.

In his second *Treatise* Locke discussed the origin, nature and function of civil government. The "state of nature," according to Locke, was not a condition of lawlessness as Hobbes conceived it ; it was under the rule of law, the "natural law"—a body of rules based on *reason* which, at all times and everywhere, regulates the conduct of men. Under this law men are equal and possess equal natural rights which Locke defined as the rights to *life, liberty, and property*. The "state of nature" was pre-political, but not pre-social. In other words, by their social instincts men had been originally drawn together into human society, in which the "natural law" alone prevailed. There was not yet any central authority to interpret that law, to guide, direct and govern ; this came only with the establishment of *political society*.

Since in the state of nature there was no central authority to interpret or enforce the "law of nature" in cases of doubt or of conflicting opinions, or to protect the natural rights of individuals, it became necessary, if chaos were to be avoided, to set up some such authority to do so. This, Locke said, was effected by a "social contract," whereby the individuals gave up to the State their personal rights to interpret the "law of nature" in return for the guarantee that their natural rights to life, liberty and property, would be preserved.

To Locke sovereignty was not absolute as Hobbes main-

tained ; it was merely confined to the protection of the natural law. Locke asserted that the "social contract" was not, as Hobbes held, between the individual and a single ruler or a small governing group, but with *the community*. Such a contract involves the necessity of majority rule. Unless the minority be bound by the will of the majority the desired protection would be impossible.

The means by which security of life, liberty, and property, is to be obtained is through laws passed by the *legislature*. Legislation, according to Locke, is the supreme function of the State. But laws must not only be made, they must be enforced ; this is the function of the *executive*. And of course laws must be administered ; this postulates the *judiciary*. Here is found *implicitly* the theory of the *separation of powers* ; however, Locke did not *formally* develop it. Though Locke does not mention the word "sovereignty," his whole teaching implies that sovereignty exists only in the *community*.

The principles of (1) civil authority residing in the "community" and (2) "majority rule," which are to-day such commonplaces with liberal-democratic politicians, are among Locke's outstanding contributions to modern political philosophy and are the bases of representative government and modern democracy.<sup>1</sup> The *Separation of Powers* is also a major contribution of Locke.

In *Morals Makyth Man*, Father Vann O.P., lucidly and succinctly expounds the extreme individualism of Locke as follows :

"He retained the social contract theory, but he changed its nature. By it the individuals cede the anarchic powers of the state of nature into the hands not of the King but of the *community* ; they keep their individual liberty, and the State engages by a constitutional pact to respect and maintain them. There is no thought of

<sup>1</sup> For Catholic teaching as expounded by Suarez and Bellarmine, see Father Brodrick, S.J., *Blessed Robert Bellarmine*.

a common end of society. Men merely seek in it the security necessary for the attainment of their own individual ends. Thus, in place of the absolutism of the sovereign of Hobbes, Locke substitutes as Viallatoux remarks *the absolutism of the individual*; and for the principle of functional responsibility, the principle of non-interference on the part of the State and individual irresponsibility of the citizen." (p. 145.)

Dr. Murray gives the following admirable analysis and criticism of the "Social Contract."

"The merits of the contract theory are all on the surface for any one to see. The rights of the individual stand out with an unforgettable prominence. Locke beholds him simply as an aggregate of other individuals who agree to act together for certain specified and limited purposes, reserving their primitive freedom in all other respects. The State is, therefore, nothing better than a Limited Liability Company, with neither a soul to be saved nor a body to be kicked. The real sovereignty resides in the individual who can do as he pleases. There is nothing to prevent the State dissolving into as many petty bodies as the caprice of the citizen may suggest. The rights of the individual are jealously remembered: his *duties* are no less jealously forgotten.

"The demerits of the contract theory lie beneath the surface for few to see. As the powers of the State are contracted, those of the individual correspondingly expand. The bestowal of unlimited power on the individual is, in the long run, the mastery, the tyranny of the strong over the weak, the rich over the poor. The State exists to control such mastery, to keep it within bounds. If, instead of checking it, the State tacitly sanctions and even encourages it, then it is false to the trust the citizen has committed to its hands. The truth is that the sheer individualism of the contract theory strips the State of all moral functions. Its business is

simply to prevent its citizens from picking each other's pockets and flying at each other's throats. The State, in a word, is nothing other than anarchy plus the policeman." (*The Individual and the State*, pp. 231-2.)

#### PARLIAMENTARISM : THE PARTY SYSTEM

Locke, as an interested admirer of the class of landed proprietors, held that "the chief end of the State is the preservation of property." He wished to build up the landowners as a ruling class and thereby make them serve as a limiting restraint or brake on the power of the King. Locke, like Hobbes, conceived men as being originally in a "state of nature" before society was organised. R. H. S. Crossman says truly of him that "his natural man (the individual of the social contract) is a gentleman of rural England, with a comfortable property, and a respect for the property of others."

Of Locke, the patron and defender of property-holders, Christopher Dawson writes, in *Progress and Religion* :

"According to John Locke, the philosopher of the Revolutionary Settlement, the prime duty of a Government is not to defend the Christian Faith but to secure the rights of property, 'for the sake of which man entered into society.' Thus, as Lord Acton says, the English Revolution substituted 'for the Divine Right of Kings the divine right of Freeholders.' For two centuries and more England was to be the Paradise of the Man of Property." (p. 188.)

In other words England was to be to our own time an Aristocratic State *in fact*, though camouflaged as a democracy; an anomaly which Hilaire Belloc has very forcibly pointed out.

It is sometimes said that Locke is the "father of democracy." This is not true for the reason just given, namely, that his system envisaged property-holders only. Lord Acton calls Locke "the philosopher of government

by the gentry." It is Rousseau who begot modern democracy. Locke, however, initiated *representative government* but confined it to the upper classes. "Property, Property, Property"—that is the keynote of Locke's philosophy of the State. Harold Laski says of it :

" His emphasis upon the ' natural right of life, liberty and property ' is his century's insistence that a man's effort shall not be without its reward. His atomic view of society as a body of individuals living together for mutual convenience leads easily to a State the functions of which are limited by the powers they confer upon it. He has no difficulty in regarding that State as made to protect the interests a man will have who by effort accumulates property. For God, he tells us, has given the world to ' the race of the industrious and rational,' and the State, by their own consent, is there to protect their exploitation of it. He has the full sense of indolence as sin, the corresponding insistence on the obligation to labour and the recognition of the successful man's good fortune as an enrichment of the commonwealth. If property is the outcome of labour, clearly it is entitled to security, for it is "the great and chief end, therefore, of men's uniting into commonwealths."

(*The Rise of European Liberalism*, p. 116.)

Locke has had profound influence on the development of modern political thought. For out of some of the ideas he propounded—especially (1) that power resides *in the community* as the result of a social contract ; (2) his doctrine of " majority rule," (3) the right of rebellion—Rousseau evolved what the world knows as Modern Democracy, or, as it has been called by Jacques Maritain—"Democratism" or "Rousseauism." Professor Gettell says that Locke's "'right of revolution,' a development of the earlier theory of resistance, became one of the most influential parts of his doctrine." (Op. cit. p. 226.)

Locke worked out the principle of majority rule as follows :

“ When any number of men have by the consent of every individual made a community they have thereby made that community one body with a power to act as one body which is only by the will and determination of the majority. . . . It is necessary that the body should move that way whither the greater force carries it, which is the consent of the majority, or else it is impossible it should act or continue one body, one community.” (Chapter xiii.)

It is well to note that “ the body ” referred to is not an *organic* body, but a mere “ conglomeration of individuals.”

Locke also established the right to rebel.

“ Whosoever,” he says, “ uses force without right—as everyone does in society who does it without law—puts himself in a state of war with those against whom he uses it, and in that state all former ties are cancelled, all other rights cease and every one has a right to defend himself and to resist the oppressor.” (Chapter xix.)

To-day both these principles are looked upon by democratic peoples as plausibly obvious. In Locke’s time, however, they were regarded as novel and original: men were then emerging from the long period of the absolute rule of Kings.

Though all are agreed that Locke is the father of modern representative government or parliamentarism, yet the fundamental underlying principles derive from the religious individualism of Calvin. The Genevan Reformer was violently opposed to the centralised authority of the Catholic Church as well as of the National Protestant Church and replaced it by the individual authority of each local congregation. Hilaire Belloc says of Calvin’s religious individualism :

“ Calvin conceived a scheme of self-government. The units of his scheme, the individual churches, elected their chiefs who were then competent to meet in

assemblies and to decide on church discipline and the rule of faith. . . . *But the chiefs or ministers, once elected, had authority over the electors.* Therein lies the whole principle of parliamentarism, a parody or cheating false image of democracy ; a trick for making men think that they are governing themselves, a fallacy into which it is very easy for men to fall, regarding the representative as though he were identical with the represented. We all know what an atmosphere of political falsehood this root error involved the nations of the nineteenth century. We know still better to-day why and how the thing broke down." (*Crisis of Our Civilisation*, p. 117.)

James Bryce points out the connection between the English Puritans and religious and political individualism, in his work on "Modern Democracies," and emphasises the part played by Locke :

"Among the Puritans who formed the bulk of the parliamentary party in the Civil War, the Independents were the most consistent and energetic element. In their view all Christians were, as Christians, free and equal and, therefore, entitled to a voice in the affairs of a *Christian State as well as of a Christian Church*. After the Restoration of 1660 this doctrine fell into the background. But at the end of the period (in 1690) John Locke, the most eminent English thinker of the time, published a treatise on Government, upholding the principles of the Whig Party. As that book had its influence then and thereafter on the Whigs, so the seeds of the Independents' doctrine, carried across the ocean, fell on congenial ground in the minds of the New England Puritans, and there sprang up, two generations later, in a plentiful harvest." (Vol. i. p. 32.)

English historians have suggested that behind the Revolution of 1688 lay the deeply-rooted desire of "the people" for "civil and religious liberty." Hilaire Belloc has done noble service to truth by his exposure of the

Protestant presentation of history by the Whig historians. In a brilliant essay, *The Party System*, which he wrote in collaboration with Cecil Chesterton, reference is made to what lay behind the Protestant Revolution, to its makers and to their motives :

“ It is a great and not uncommon mistake to suppose that that triumph (the Revolution) was a triumph of democracy. . . . The Revolution of 1688 was not made by the people. . . . The Revolution was not made by but for a group of wealthy intriguers with an object in the main financial. That group of men and their successors proceeded to enrich themselves at the public expense in every conceivable way.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the best commentary upon the Revolution of 1688 is to be found in the enclosure during the century and a half which followed the House of Hanover of more than 6,000,000 acres of common land by the rich landowners and their satellites who had drawn the sword for “ civil and religious liberty.”<sup>2</sup> (Pp. 25-6.)

The new Parliament of 1689 was in no sense representative of “ the people ” ; it represented merely the monied classes—the great landowners and the commercial adventurers. Belloc and Chesterton said :

“ The Parliament, then, represented a narrow class, which had for its base the great landowners, for its buttresses the merchants, and for its recruitment wealth in any form however gotten ” (p. 27).

H. Laski confirms this view. The liberties won by the “ Great Revolution ” were, he asserts, but levers to establish the autocracy of the propertied classes—and “ the people ” as such were outside consideration. In *The Rise of European Liberalism* he writes :

<sup>1</sup> Something similar happened in the French Revolution. See section on Rousseau. The titled robbers of the Reformation will be dealt with in Part III.

<sup>2</sup> For the economic effects of the Protestant Revolution of 1688, see Part III of this Essay, section on “ The Protestant Revolution of 1688.”

“ The Revolution of 1688 was only the completion of the objects aimed at by the middle-class rebellion which Cromwell headed against the attempted Stuart despotism. Habeas Corpus, triennial parliaments to be dominated by political parties one of which will be the constant allies of the commercial interest, religious freedom within wide limits, the abolition of government control of the press, a judiciary independent of the executive power in the performance of its legal function, finance and the army in the control of an elected legislature, with these achievements the English merchant may sleep comfortably in his bed. His property is safe alike from the assault of State and Church for the simple reason that, equally with the country gentleman, he now has at last his hands on the levers of political power. In the full sense, he is a person, able to make and unmake governments.” (p. 102.)

The American historian, Carlton Hayes,<sup>1</sup> thus lays bare the democratic myth of the Revolution of 1688, so dear to the Whig historians :

“ In their admiration of the English government many popular writers have fallen into the error of confounding the struggle for parliamentary supremacy with the struggle for democracy. Nothing could be more misleading. The ‘Glorious Revolution’ of 1688 was a *coup d'état* engineered by the upper classes, and the liberty it preserved was the liberty of nobles, squires, and merchants—not the political liberty of the common people. The House of Commons was essentially undemocratic. Only one man in every ten had even the nominal right to vote. It is estimated that from 1760 to 1832 nearly one-half of the members owed their seats to patrons, and the representatives of large towns were frequently chosen by a handful of rich men. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Professor of History, Columbia University; afterwards U.S.A. Ambassador to Spain.

“ Certain it is that the Parliament of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, while wonderfully earnest and successful in enriching England’s landlords, and in demolishing every obstacle to British commerce, at the same time either wilfully neglected or wilfully failed to do away with intolerance in the Church, injustice in the Courts, or to defend the great majority of the people from the greed of landlords and the avarice of employers.”  
(*History of Modern Europe*, p. 293.)

Such was the genesis of modern British Parliamentarism. No doubt the parliament was “representative,” but of only a small propertied and monied class. The middle classes proper and the “masses” were excluded from voting until well into the nineteenth century. The popular attack on this autocracy masquerading as democracy was long drawn, and was all along the line vigorously resisted. The growth of the extension of the franchise may be briefly summarised as follows.

The Reform Act of 1832 extended the suffrage to the middle classes of whom roughly 500,000 were thereby enfranchised. The Act of 1867 gave the vote to the artisan class of the towns and included about 1,000,000;<sup>1</sup> the Act of 1884 gave further extension to the workers on the land, adding 2,000,000 to the voters’ list. The Act of 1918 established adult manhood suffrage and also gave the vote to women of thirty years of age; thereby 8,000,000 came on the register. Finally the Act of 1928 extended the suffrage to women of twenty-one, adding 5,000,000 more. British democracy may be said to have attained full stature with the passing of the Acts of 1918 and 1928.<sup>2</sup>

But, although the Act of 1918 was passed seven years after “The Party System” had been published, the points made in that book about representative government in

<sup>1</sup> After the passing of the Act of 1867 the cry went forth, “we must educate our masters”; this was used to justify the passing of the Education Act of 1870, which established the system of elementary education.

<sup>2</sup> Adult male suffrage was established in France after the Revolution of 1848—when the electors suddenly increased from 250,000 to 9,000,000. French women did not get the vote till the end of the war in 1945.

England still held good : and it will be shown later on that Hilaire Belloc, writing in 1937, asserts that English Government, instead of being democratic, was still aristocratic—"the only Aristocratic State in the white civilisation."

In the book referred to, Belloc and Chesterton say with truth that "democracy is government by the general will," that "pure democracy is possible only in a small community," such as a Parish Council ; for, only in the small group is the individual able to give effective expression to his will. Owing to the impossibility of "pure democracy" functioning in a State such as Britain, a working substitute had to be found in what is called "representative government." But the writers mentioned point out that this is not *true* but *camouflaged* representative government ; this they describe in the well-known phrase as "The Party System." They thus briefly explain this political anomaly :

"The idea of representation is to secure by an indirect method the same result as is secured directly in such (small) communities. Since every man cannot, under modern conditions, vote on every question, it is thought that a number of men might combine to send a man to vote in their name. Men so elected may then meet and vote, and their decision, if they are faithful representatives of the people, may be taken as the decision of the people. Under no circumstances would such a system work perfectly. But that it may work tolerably, it is essential that the representatives should represent ; for this three things are necessary.

"First, there must be absolute freedom in the selection of representatives ; secondly, the representatives must be strictly responsible to their constituents and to no one else ; thirdly, the representatives must deliberate in perfect freedom, and especially must be absolutely independent of the Executive.

"It must be obvious to everyone that these conditions do not prevail in England to-day. Instead of the Executive being controlled by the representative

assembly, it controls it. Instead of the demands of the people being expressed for them by their representatives, the matters discussed by the representatives are settled, not by the people, not even by themselves, but by the 'Ministry'—the very body which it is the business of the assembly to check and control." (p. 16-18.)<sup>1</sup>

It is well to recall that Éire has borrowed the Party System from England; further comment is unnecessary, except to add that it will take years of study and experiment before a suitable alternative can be developed to replace it. The following excerpt from a speech of a Fianna Fáil Deputy in a debate in the Dáil shows how democracy works under the Party System. The speaker said: "If a division is challenged, I know I will have to go into the lobbies against the motion. That is what happens under the party system. . . . I will have to vote against my convictions." (*Irish Times*, 15th February, 1947.) This is not merely an isolated instance; it is typical of the Party System. The individual representative is not free to vote as he thinks best; he is dominated by the leaders of whatever party to which he belongs.

Belloc and Chesterton maintain that England is governed neither by true Democracy, nor by a truly Representative Government, but by what they call the "Party System." This is the final evolution of John Locke's system of representative government. R. H. S. Crossman shows how Locke's system of representative government has worked out in practice, being specially suited to the peculiar character and the special conditions of the English people:

"His is a theory of government not *by* the people, or *through* the people, but *for* the people, and, once the

<sup>1</sup> In the *Social Contract* Rousseau refers to English representative government as follows: "The English nation thinks that it is free, but is greatly mistaken, for it is so only during the election of members of parliament; as soon as they are elected, it is enslaved and counts for nothing. The use which it makes of the brief moment of liberty renders the loss of liberty well-deserved."

government is constituted, the people have no right to interfere, except in the last extremity and by direct action. This principle has been maintained ever since Locke. Even after the development of democracy, government in England has remained the privilege of the few: the people choose their representatives, but do not rule themselves, and the general will in this country is not sovereign, but a check on government.” (p. 184.)

“ The gradual extension of the suffrage between the years 1832 and 1918 has not been accompanied by any real revolt against the hierarchy of social classes. The *bourgeoisie* did not destroy the aristocratic tradition; on the contrary, it was influenced by it, as deeply as it made its influence felt.” (*Political Thought*, J. P. Mayer, p. 187.)

Commenting in 1937 on the Revolution of 1688 to which Locke gave philosophic stability and permanence, Hilaire Belloc says that Locke’s oligarchy had endured to our own day, since it controlled the British Party System.

“ The crown had become a puppet, and an oligarchy of wealthy men henceforward determined the affairs of England. This oligarchy presided over the great commercial expansion of England and her great corresponding colonial expansion. The English gentry have created the whole story of England up to our own time. Though they and their power are no longer quite what they were, yet they in the main (though more and more mixed with incongruous elements) still furnish its direction to the English State.” (*An Essay on the Nature of Contemporary England*, 1937. p. 23.)

Furthermore, Mr. Belloc boldly asserts that “ *England is an aristocratic State; the only Aristocratic State in the white civilisation.* England is the only State where the sole alternative to Aristocracy—*Active Monarchy*—is forgotten and feels foreign.” (Op. cit., p. 42.) Incidentally, one

can now appreciate the anomaly involved in England's desire to impose her political ideas, which she declared to be *democratic*, on other nations.<sup>1</sup> Of this unique, and to the continental peoples most baffling, kind of State Mr. Belloc adds :

“ The Aristocratic State enforces unity more solidly and more thoroughly than a despotism. It has been well said that England enjoys all the social advantages of Fascism without any of its unnatural restrictions. England has all the fruits of Despotism without the inconveniences of a Despot. Full unity marks the whole nation ” (p. 30).

However, since the coming of adult manhood suffrage, 1918, and adult woman suffrage, 1928, there has been a rapid, though quite inadequately appreciated, development of “ democracy ” in England. This has been much intensified by the ideological issues arising out of the recent war with its emphasis on “ Fascism ” and “ Anti-Fascism.” The sweeping victory of the Labour Party at the general election (1945) proves that British democracy proper has been growing much more than many had anticipated. It is not without well-founded reason that it may be said that a point has now been reached which, to use the words of Harold Laski spoken after the election, marks “ the full maturity of British Democracy.” From now onwards a new era opens for the people of Great Britain. The aristocratic rule which lasted from the days of the Protestant Revolution and William of Orange till our own time has at last ended, and “ the people ” have now taken over control of the destinies of the British Empire, with what results time alone can tell. Yet, the old spirit of popular subservience to aristocratic leadership already referred to

<sup>1</sup> Writing about one hundred years ago de Toqueville said : “ The great triumph of the English aristocracy has been their long success in making the democratic classes believe that the common enemy was the Prince ; thus instituting themselves the virtual representatives of the people, instead of remaining conspicuously their principal adversaries.” (*Memoirs*, translated by Henry Reeve, vol. i. p. 245.)

has not quite disappeared, as is evident from the names of some of those who hold prominent places in the new Labour Government, and also of several new "Labour" members drawn from the "upper classes."

Though Modern Democracy took its rise from the *representative governmental system* of Locke, yet it was first developed as we know it to-day by the U.S.A. and France; and from the latter country and its great Revolution of 1789 it passed out to Europe and South America. To-day it is actually the gospel of Nationalist China, as especially orientated by the philosophy of Sun-Yat-Sen. But, it must be emphasised that it was Locke who supplied the basic ideas and principles that went to the making of American and French Democracy.

#### LOCKE AND ECONOMICS

Locke wrote three tracts on economic problems dealing with interest, gold and silver coinage, and the balance of trade; these fall outside the province of this Essay. His outstanding contribution to economic thought lies in his "labour theory of value"; this can be but briefly touched on here. Erich Noll says of Locke—"In the *Two Treatises of Government*, he seems to share Petty's view of the origin of value. . . . Labour is the main source of value, nearly the whole value of the products of the soil were due to labour; the rest was a natural gift." (*A History of Economic Thought*, p. 116.) The Petty referred to is Sir William Petty (1623-87) of the Down Survey of Ireland, who "has justly been called the founder of political economy." Othmar Spann, however, makes the following distinctions: "According to Locke human labour is to be regarded as the principal source of wealth; according to Petty, labour and the land."

Professor Aaron briefly points out how Locke's labour theory of value developed out of his theory of property:

"Locke's theory of property runs as follows: In the first place, each man possesses himself, his own person,

absolutely. But in addition he also possesses anything 'with which he has mixed his labour.' 'Whatsoever,' Locke explains, 'he removes out of the state that Nature hath provided and left it in, he hath mixed his labour with, and joined to it something that is his own and thereby makes it his property.' 'Though the water running in the fountain is everyone's, yet who can doubt but that in the pitcher is his only who draws it out.' Thus it is labour which creates property. It is *labour* also which gives *value* to most things. 'It is labour, indeed, that puts the difference of value on everything . . . of the products of the earth useful to the life of man, nine-tenths are the effects of labour.'<sup>1</sup> Locke here suggested a labour theory of value which was to be extensively developed by later thinkers, particularly by socialist writers." (*John Locke*, pp. 279-80.)

Locke was very probably influenced by Sir William Petty; yet for the one who has read Petty, one hundred, possibly many thousands have read Locke; hence the corresponding influence of the latter.

#### LOCKE AND RELIGION

Locke, through his philosophy, has seriously affected politics and economics; but he has also exercised a very marked influence on religion, particularly on the evolution of Protestantism. It may be said that he is the founder of Latitudinarianism or of Liberal Protestantism in England—the extreme type of religious individualism which has led, under the guise of "broadmindedness" and "tolerance," to the undermining of all institutional religion.

In his early manhood Locke came under the influence of the philosophy of Descartes. He told Lady Masham, at whose residence, at Oates, in Essex, he spent ten years,

<sup>1</sup> Locke wrote: "I think it will be a very modest computation to say that of the products of the earth useful to the life of man, nine-tenths—nay ninety-nine hundreds—are wholly to be put on the account of labour."

that he first became really interested in philosophy through reading Descartes when he was an undergraduate at Oxford. It was the study of Descartes during these impressionable years that gave that rationalistic bent to Locke's mind which is characteristic of him throughout his life.

The influence of Descartes on Locke is particularly obvious in the *Essay concerning the Human Understanding* (1690). It is here that Locke formulated these principles that later on gave him that quasi-rationalist bias in his approach to the study of Christianity and the Scriptures. In the *Essay* Locke set out "to inquire into the origin, certainty and extent of knowledge and the grounds of belief, opinion and assent." It is possible to give here only the barest outline of his thesis.

According to Locke the mind, at first, is but a *tabula rasa*, a clean slate, a virgin page. All knowledge comes from *Experience* which he divides into the "Two Fountains of Knowledge"—(a) *Sensation*, by which simple ideas come through the senses; and (b) *Reflection* by which the mind "has the power to repeat, compare and unite" these, thereby forming a new class of complex ideas wholly distinct from the former. "Experience" with Locke is the experience of each individual which implies that there is no universal truth, no objective truth. The mind does not perceive external objects immediately but only the impressions or "ideas" which they produce on the mind.

Soon after its appearance the *Essay* was the object of attack by many writers, among whom were the well-known Catholic apologist, Father John Sergeant, and Stillingfleet, Protestant Bishop of Worcester. Writing of these controversies Professor Fowler said :

" Religious and even devout, as are those portions of the *Essay* in which Locke has occasion expressly to mention the leading principles of the Christian Faith, yet his handling of many of the metaphysical terms and

notions which modern divines, whether Catholic or Protestant, had taken on trust from their predecessors, the Fathers and the Schoolmen, was well calculated to alarm those who had the interests of theological orthodoxy at heart." (p. 103.)

From the Catholic point of view Father Michael Maher, S.J., in his *Psychology*, describes the *Essay* as "the fountain-head of modern sensism, empiricism, materialism, and phenomenal idealism," and gives the following brief criticism of the philosophy of the *Essay* :

" (1) This conception of the mind as a passive receptionist tablet, this non-recognition of its supra-sensuous activity are fatal blemishes to his psychology.

(2) As a consequence he can give no adequate account of all our most important notions, such as those of God, self, substance.

(3) His view of knowledge as the perception of agreement or disagreement between ideas and not things, and his doctrine of mediate perception leads inevitably to subjective idealism. If we can only know our mental states then we have no knowledge of the existence of a material world beyond these states.

(4) His use of the important word *idea* is fatally ambiguous throughout his whole work, and he similarly confounds *mental* with merely intra-organic phenomena.

The vital deficiencies in his doctrine of sense-perception and his conception of intellect were evinced in the next generation by the Idealistic and Sceptical deductions by Berkeley and Hume on the one hand, by the Sensualism of Condillac, Helvetius and the French Materialists on the other." (p. 272).

The *Catholic Encyclopaedia* thus criticises Locke's theory of knowledge in the article on "Empiricism" :

" Sensism implies scepticism—(a) for if we do not immediately perceive external objects but only subjective sensuous modifications, then, since these differ with

different individuals . . . there could be no certain and objective truth, each individual would be the measure of truth, there would be no objective criterion of certitude, no universal truths.

"(b) In order to pass from a subjective affection to a knowledge of its object we must employ the principle of causality. Now, in sensism, either the concept of cause is not objective or cause is not perceived at all, therefore the principle of causality is either rejected or is pronounced doubtful. Hence, there can be no certitude of the objective existence of things. Hume was but logical when he deduced universal scepticism from the theory of Locke."<sup>1</sup>

The empiricism of Locke gave a mighty impetus to scepticism and rationalism both in England and France, and through the influence of the philosophers of these countries it spread throughout the western world. Of the author of the "Essay" that uncompromising Catholic, Joseph de Maistre, said: "In studying philosophy, contempt of Locke is the beginning of wisdom."<sup>2</sup> It is little wonder, therefore, that Pope Clement XII condemned the "Essay" by a special "Brief," 19th June, 1734, putting it on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*.

In his approach to the study of the Christian religion, including the Scriptures, Locke rejected authority and depended on the "light of reason," the "Candle of the Lord." He advocated the spirit of criticism and free enquiry, and preached a spirit of toleration—but not to Catholics. He strove to *simplify* the Christian teaching so as to make it comprehensive enough to embrace all types of Christians. He is the apostle of that "comprehensiveness" which has been the characteristic trait of the general body of the adherents of the Church of England. His religious influence passed into many lands and has done

<sup>1</sup> See *The Criticism of Experience*, by Rev. D. J. Hawkins, Sheed and Ward (1945), for detailed Catholic criticism of Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume.

<sup>2</sup> *Soirées de St. Petersbourg*, 6me Entretien.

immeasurable harm to religion in general, and to Protestantism in particular.

Locke's views on religion were largely taken over by Rousseau and further *simplified* by him. Like Locke, Rousseau had little regard for clergymen of any creed, and also like him he excluded Catholics and Atheists from the State. Rousseau's views on religion will be discussed later ; it is sufficient to state here his idea of "Civil Religion," as found in the *Contrat Social*—"The dogmas of civil religion," he says, "ought to be simple, few in number, stated with precision, and without explanations or commentaries." Rousseau has taken his religious ideas from Locke, only further "simplifying" them.<sup>1</sup>

Locke's last recorded words on his death-bed, 28th October, 1704, were very characteristic. He said that he died "in perfect charity with all men, and in sincere communion with the whole Church of Christ by whatever names Christ's followers call themselves." All the Christian "churches," no matter how contradictory, were to him but a Christian *mélange*, a composite Christian Church.

Professor Aaron of Aberystwyth in his excellent study, *John Locke*, thus summarises Locke's application of his individualistic principles to the idea of "The Church."

"A church is a voluntary institution of believers ; if a church appoints one from among its members to minister in a special way to its spiritual needs, his authority is as great as the members of the Church choose to make it. The opposite view that a priest, whether Pope, bishop or presbyter, has absolute authority over his flock in matters spiritual was as abhorrent to Locke as the other view that monarchs have absolute right over their subjects. In the religious sphere, more than in any other, the individual must enjoy perfect freedom. Religion begins with communion between God and the individual in the solitariness of the inner life. And it is a communion which the individual enters freely" (p. 296).

<sup>1</sup> See "The Creed of a Savoyard Priest" in *Emile*, Everyman's Library Edition, pp. 229 sq.

"Christianity in its essentials is a rational creed, natural and simple. It demands of the believer, first, that he should believe in Christ the Messiah, one sent from God to reveal His true nature; secondly that he should live in accordance with Christian morality, the morality based on this new revelation of God. These are the essentials, and anyone who fulfils them is a Christian. The theologian's creeds, the priest's elaborate ritual, do not make a Christian. Christianity is something simpler, although it may very well be more difficult." (p. 299.)

Under the caption "A National Cathedral," the following letter appeared in the *Sunday Express*, 28th May, 1944 :

"Sir,—My suggestion for a War Memorial is :—build a church or cathedral using some material taken from every blitzed church in the country, regardless of religion. Let this church or cathedral be used for services in any denomination. G. H. Turner, Manchester."

This composite building seems to be an excellent symbol of the comprehensive Christianity of *the Church* as understood by Locke.

His rationalist approach to Christianity is found chiefly in his *Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695). In his *Commentaries on the Epistles of St. Paul* he shows himself the forerunner of rationalist biblical criticism. In these books Locke made a special application of the principles of his *Essay concerning Human Understanding* to the Christian religion and scriptures.

Sir Leslie Stephen thus sums up the teaching of the *Reasonableness of Christianity*<sup>1</sup> in which Locke expounded his simplification of the Christian religion :

"Stated simply, it amounts to this: Christ and His apostles on admitting converts to the Church did not exact from them a profession of belief in the Athanasian Creed, the Thirty-nine Articles, or the Westminster

<sup>1</sup> This was placed on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* by a decree of the Holy Office, 25th February, 1737.

Confession, but were satisfied with the acknowledgment that Christ was the Messiah. This, then, is the essential article of faith, except, indeed, that it must be added, unless it be taken to include, a belief in the one true God. Nobody can add to these fundamental articles of faith, nor make any other necessary but what God hath made and declared to be so. Here, then, is a plain simple religion, fitted to the comprehension of 'labouring and illiterate men' and free from the niceties with which 'writers and wranglers in religion have filled it,' as though there were no way in the Church but through the 'Academy of Lyceum.''" (*English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 95-6.)

Though a professing Catholic all his life Alexander Pope (1688-1744) seems to have been affected by the Deism or the attenuated type of Christianity that prevailed in England after Locke's time. Locke's *Simplified Christianity* cannot be better summarised than in those two lines of Pope :

" For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight ;  
He can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

Locke's view of the Church is in perfect harmony with his idea of the State. In *A Letter concerning Toleration* he wrote : " A church I take to be a voluntary society of men, joining themselves together of their own accord, in order to the public worshipping of God, in such a manner as they may find acceptable to Him, and effectual to the salvation of their souls." M. Ch. Bastide thus comments on Locke's idea of the Church :

" As the State, so the Church is founded on a contract, with this difference that the members of a Church . . . can always leave it, as soon as they are persuaded that it offers them insufficient means of salvation. The Church, Locke says so expressly, may be compared to a workers' guild or a learned society . . . In order that the Church should exist, it is not necessary that it should have a bishop or a priest—' where two or three are gathered

together in the name of Christ, Christ according to His promise will be in the midst of them.' Protestant individualism has reached its extreme limit here. As a moving sand-bank of which the millions of grains come together and disperse at the caprice of the wind and the water—such is the ideal Church as Locke conceived it." (*John Locke*, p. 243.)

### THE SECULARIST STATE

In the dechristianisation of Europe Locke has played an outstanding part. Lecky as a Rationalist wrote appreciatively of him in his *Rationalism in Europe*:

" But, whatever may be thought of the influence which the inductive philosophy now exercises on the English mind, there can be no doubt that both that philosophy and the *Essay*<sup>1</sup> of Locke were peculiarly fatal to the medieval modes of thought (i.e. traditional Christianity or Catholicism), on account of the somewhat plodding character they displayed.

" By eulogising the domain of the senses, by making experience the final test of truth, and by greatly discouraging the excursions of theorists, they checked the exuberance of the European imagination . . . and taught men to apply tests both to their traditions and to their emotions which divested them of much of their apparent mystery.

" It was from the writings of Locke and Bacon that Voltaire and his followers drew the principles that shattered the proudest ecclesiastical fabrics of Europe, and it is against those philosophers that the ablest defenders of medieval theology exhibited their bitterest animosity" (p. 406).

Ernest Troeltsch in *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* points out Locke's sinister attitude to religion, and to " the Churches " which are conceived by him as being

<sup>1</sup> *Essay concerning Human Understanding*.

subservient to the State. He may be regarded as one of the chief sources from which modern "anti-clericalism" springs. Troeltsch says :

" The ecclesiastical communities in Locke's view, stand completely alongside of the State, and are free associations which in all political and moral questions must adjust themselves to the order of the State ; they are free only in worship and theology. Locke feared nothing so much as *priestly domination*, whether it be Catholic, Anglican or Presbyterian in form."

To Voltaire Locke was " the greatest philosopher." Of the former M. Seignobos says—" He desired to reduce the Church ' to the same status as it enjoys in England.' Such is the sense which came to attach to *Voltairian*, which signifies a struggle against *the power of the clergy* rather than any positive doctrine." (*History of the French People*, p. 227.) This spirit of anti-clericalism would seem, contrary to common opinion, to be English, not French, in its origin.

The immense influence of Locke on the dechristianisation of Europe is further confirmed by Othmar Spann :

" From Locke sprang this so-called philosophy of the Enlightenment,<sup>1</sup> and arid rationalism (its watchword was the ' rational shaping of human life ') which was by its very nature subjectivist, atomistic, mechanistic, and from the sociological standpoint individualistic. In England, there grew up from this root the teaching of Shaftesbury<sup>2</sup> whose leading notion was ' common sense ' ; and in France, the sensualism and materialism of Diderot, Condillac, Helvetius, and others, which influenced the whole of Europe " (op. cit., p. 55).

Of Locke's secularism and his desire to subject the Church to the State Harold Laski says :

<sup>1</sup> Rationalist philosophy of the eighteenth century.

<sup>2</sup> The Earl of Shaftesbury (1671–1713), leader of the English Deists ; a contemporary leader was Viscount Bolingbroke (1678–1751).

"Locke is, in fact, the first of English thinkers the basis of whose argument is mainly secular. . . . The central problem is with him political, and all other questions are subsidiary to it. Therein we have a sense, less clear in any previous writer save Machiavelli, of the real result of the decay of medieval ideals. Church and State have become transposed in their significance. The way, as consequence, lies open to new dogmas." (*English Political Thought*, p. 48.)

To the English people who had grown weary of religious controversy and religious wars Locke showed a way out of the impasse—simple, "compromising" in its nature and therefore suited to the national character. The State and Church should part company except for merely formal and ceremonial purposes. A spirit of general tolerance, of religious give-and-take, must prevail.<sup>1</sup> The "Churches" were to be pushed into a siding, as it were, out of the main thoroughfare of national life. Religion should not obtrude itself into public life and should be the private affair of each individual.

Christopher Dawson points out as follows how the Protestant Revolution of 1688, whose leaders had taken their views on religious "tolerance" from Locke, led to the secularisation of the English State:

"Just as the French religious wars of the sixteenth century had given rise to the party of *Politiques*, who placed national unity before all religious considerations, so, too, the religious struggle in England had caused statesmen to realise that the only hope of peace and order lay in the establishment of some form of mutual toleration. This is the real meaning of the Revolution Settlement and the cause of its wide significance in the history of European culture. It is true that the Revolution of 1688 was apparently a defeat for the principle of toleration since it was directed against the Declaration of Indulgence, and demanded the

<sup>1</sup> Catholics were, however, to be ostracised.

reinforcement of the Test Act and the Penal Laws. Actually, however, it marks *the end of the attempt to base society on a religious foundation, and the beginning of the progressive secularisation of the English State.* (P. 188.)

In France Secularism was developed during the eighteenth century by Locke's disciples, Voltaire, Montesquieu and Rousseau, and their satellites, and it passed during the nineteenth century throughout western civilisation in the form of what is known in the Papal Encyclicals as "Liberalism."<sup>1</sup> Of the influence of Locke's *Essay* on the French rationalist thinkers of the eighteenth century Professor Fowler writes in detail :

" Voltaire lived to see the philosophy of Locke, or rather an extreme phase of it, become almost the established creed of those who cared at all for speculative questions in France. Condillac, in his early work, the *Essai sur L'Origine des Connaissances Humaines* (first published in 1746) simply adopted Locke's account of the origin of Knowledge. . . . Condillac's system soon became the fashionable philosophy of his countrymen, and both friends and foes credited Locke with its parentage.

" With Joseph de Maistre, who may be regarded as the bitterest exponent of French Ultramontanism, Locke is the intermediate link through whom Helvetius, Cabanis, and the other enemies of the human race in France had derived from Bacon the principles which has been so destructive to their country and mankind. But it was not the followers of Condillac only who professed to base their systems on the principles of Locke. Degerando, writing in 1813, says ' all the French philosophers of this age glory in ranging themselves among the disciples of Locke, and admitting his principles.' The great names of Turgot, Diderot, D'Alembert, Condorcet and Destutt de Tracy alike appear in the roll of his professed disciples."

It may be added, as will be shown later, Rousseau borrowed all his major ideas from Locke.

<sup>1</sup> See section on *Liberalism*, p. 185.

It is rather disconcerting, when Europe is falling to pieces owing to the final working out of the political and religious ideas of Locke and Rousseau, to read what Professor C. E. M. Joad writes in "Praise of Locke."

"The virtues of this philosophy are many and great. It is Locke's political philosophy which, more fully than that of any other writer, is embodied in the principles and applied albeit intermittently, in the practice of the government of this country (England). It is, therefore, natural that, having lived for over two hundred and fifty years under a democratic (?) constitution which owes so much to Locke we should come to take as self-evident the principles upon which that constitution is founded, and for granted the conclusions which follow from the principles. It is only to-day that they are being challenged. Reflecting upon this challenge, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that a growing refusal to adhere to the principles of Locke's philosophy by the rulers of contemporary European countries is found to synchronise with a decline, which may shortly become a collapse of European civilisation, is in no sense accidental." (*Guide to the Philosophy of Morals and Politics*, p. 492.)

Many modern democrats find it extremely difficult to discern the cause underlying the present social collapse. Their panacea for all our ills is a Holy War to "make the world safe for democracy." They wish *to retain the foundation of Individualism*, and once more to rebuild society upon it. How different is the view of the Catholic who looks upon the international situation as the result of multiple "Individualism," that poisonous "Atomism,"—religious, political, economic—which since the Reformation has been a cumulative virus in the body politic! To him this social poison, through a final catharsis, is to-day working its way out of human society with an international rigor that convulses the whole world in its many nation-members.

In concluding his study of John Locke, M. Ch. Bastide asks, "What are the results?" and answers as follows:

"To-day an effort is necessary to appreciate their importance. Benefits, the enjoyment of which is uninterrupted, cease quickly to be appreciated at their true value. The essentials of the teaching of Locke are part of the mental equipment of the world of our day. The State is conceived only as the *lay* State;<sup>1</sup> one would blush at opposing religious toleration, at resisting liberty of thought. If at times the ultramontane or the jacobin has appeared unfaithful to the lessons of the *Letter concerning Toleration*, they have tried to justify themselves by invoking liberty itself. It is thus that one is led, by this indifference which custom engenders, to undervalue the merit of Locke."

According to M. Bastide, Locke's noble contributions to human *progress* are the secularisation of the State, religious latitudinarianism, and what is known as "free thought." In other words to Locke are attributable those subversive factors that have led to the collapse of our western civilisation!

One may well ask at this stage—"How has Locke influenced Ireland?" The answer to this question would indeed require a *special* study for itself, and it is to be hoped that someone will soon undertake it. However, the main outlines will be briefly indicated here.

#### LOCKE AND THE IRISH PROTESTANT ASCENDANCY

With the exit of James II and his young Catholic heir, and the advent of the Calvinist William of Orange and his Protestant wife, Mary, all hopes of the restoration of Catholicism in England finally faded away. Protestantism was now securely established and it was decreed that the sovereign must henceforth be a member of the Church of England.

<sup>1</sup> That is the *secularist* State with its secularised morality, marriage and education, against which recent Popes have been strenuously protesting.

Locke, as has been said, was the philosopher of the Glorious Revolution of 1688, of the limited monarchy, of political Protestantism, and of the autocracy of the propertied classes. In Ireland the Williamite War terminated with the Treaty of Limerick and the guaranteeing of the religious and civil liberties of Catholics. This guarantee but ill-fitted in with the ideas of Protestant Autocracy and so the Treaty was perfidiously violated ; hence arose what has been called the *Protestant Ascendancy* in Ireland ;—a Protestant Dictatorship would be a much more correct expression for this tyrannic suppression of the Irish Catholic majority by the alien Protestant minority.

The *Protestant Ascendancy* was, of course, but the final culmination of the many attempts to suppress the Irish Catholics by persecution and confiscation, and to put them under the dominance of Protestantism. With the Fall of Limerick the Catholic landed gentry went into exile in France and elsewhere, leaving the people without leaders or defence. The Penal Laws crushed the “Papists” into the very earth. Protestantism was the only power in the land. Protestant Ascendancy or Autocracy was at last established which lasted with diminishing strength until our own day. Writing of the Fall of Limerick Lecky says : “The last spasm of resistance had ceased, and the long period of unbroken Protestant Ascendancy had begun.” (*Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. i., p. 134.)

Professor Curtis says that the Protestant Ascendancy “was a replica on a small scale of that of England,” with this difference, however,—the Protestant majority in England crushed the Catholic minority, while in Ireland a small Protestant minority crushed the Catholic majority.

As Locke was the philosopher of the Protestant Autocracy in England, it was only natural that he should fill a similar role on behalf of the Protestant Garrison and Landlordism in Ireland. From Locke’s time his writings were imported into Ireland. Moreover, many editions of his books or commentaries on them were *published in Dublin*, obviously for the use of Irish Protestants. The following

is a list (which is very probably far from being complete) of some *Dublin printed volumes*.

*An Abridgement of the Essay concerning Human Understanding* (4th ed.), by Rev. John Wynne, 1728;<sup>1</sup> *The Essay*, 5th ed., 1734; do. 11th ed., 1737. *An Abstract of the Essay*, by Lord Chief Baron Gilbert, 1735. *Some Thoughts concerning Education*, 9th ed., 1728; do., 10th ed., 1737; do., 1738; do., 15th ed., 1778. *Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul*, 4th ed., 1738; *The Knowledge of Divine Things from Revelation*, etc., by T. Ellis, D.D., 1747. *Two Treatises of Government*, 1766; do., 1766; do., 1779; do., 1794. *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, 2 vols., 1777. *The Conduct of the Understanding*, 1782. *An Essay concerning the Origin, Extent and End of Civil Government*, Rev. Thomas Elrington, 1798. *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, 25th ed., 1816. *Contraction of Locke's Essay*, by A. M., 1829. *A Catechetical Compendium of Locke's Essay*, 1823. *Lectures Upon Locke's Essay*, by Rev. Dionysius Lardner, LL.D., 1831. *Locke's Essay Abridged for Collegiate and General Use*, 1852; do., 1852; do., 3rd ed., with questions for examination by Wheeler, 1857; *An Analysis of Locke's Essay*, 1873; do., 2nd ed., 1878.

Dr. R. B. MacDowell states in his *Irish Public Opinion, 1750-1800*, that Locke's *Civil Government*<sup>2</sup> had to be read by all Senior Sophisters in Trinity College, Dublin, and that Elrington's special edition of Locke mentioned above was published (1798) to negative the influence of Tom Paine's *Rights of Man*, then widely in circulation and very successful in spreading the ideas and spirit of the French Revolution.

"Elrington, a timid Tory," Dr. McDowell says, "thought it advisable to bring out a new edition of Locke's *Civil Government* for the use of the students (T.C.D.). The object of the notes was to establish a

<sup>1</sup> A Latin translation of the *Essay*, by an Irish Protestant clergyman, Rev. Richard Burridge, appeared in London, 1701.

<sup>2</sup> According to Bastide it was banned by Trinity College at the time of the French Revolution.

distinction 'between the system of Locke and the theories of modern democrats.' When Locke, for instance, talks about 'the people,' Elrington was sure he meant '*only those who were possessed of such property as was sufficient to secure their fidelity to the interests of the State*'; <sup>1</sup> but unfortunately the 'venerable advocate of political freedom' had sometimes exposed himself 'unguardedly' and so could be cited in support by Citizen Thomas Paine." (p. 164.)

It is interesting to note that "W. McGee, the most promising of the fellows of Trinity," described Paine's book as "Locke gone mad"; and Dr. McDowell quotes a letter written to Flood (1783), where it is stated "that even shopkeepers might be heard quoting Locke and Bolingbroke" (p. 92). Evidently Locke was then widely read in Dublin when he had a vogue with "even shopkeepers."

The influence of Locke's *Essay* in the spread of Scepticism and Secularism has been already referred to at some length; on account of its rationalistic character it was condemned in a special manner by a "Brief" of Pope Clement XII, and accordingly included in the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. From its first appearance the *Essay* found a warm welcome in Trinity College, Dublin. Soon after its publication, William Molyneux, the representative of Trinity College in the Irish Protestant Parliament, wrote to Locke saying that Dr. Ashe, the Provost, "was so wonderfully pleased and satisfied with the work (the *Essay*), that he has ordered it to be read by the bachelors of the College and strictly examined them in their progress therein." In his *History of Trinity College*, W. McNeill Dixon said that the *Essay* has maintained its favoured position till to-day: it "was introduced into the curriculum by Provost Ashe immediately on its appearance and has retained its place down to the present day." (p. 79.) . . . . "It still serves as an admirable prolegomenon to the philosophical works of a later date" (p. 152). It is obviously a book that the Catholic Church regards as unsuitable for

<sup>1</sup> Italics are mine.

Catholic students, unless read under certain conditions. It is unnecessary to say anything further on this matter; the rules regarding the *Index* can be found elsewhere.

A letter from Molyneux to Locke, September, 1696, shows how the rationalistic influence of the latter was already affecting some Irish Protestants. He writes :

“As to the *Reasonableness of Christianity*, I do not find but it is very well approved of here amongst candid, unprejudiced men, that dare speak their thoughts. I’ll tell you what a very learned and ingenious prelate said to me on that occasion. I asked him whether he had read that book, and how he liked it. He told me very well ; and that if, my friend Mr. Locke writ it, it was the best book he ever laboured at ; ‘but,’ says he, ‘if I should be known to think so, I should have my lawns torn from my shoulders.’”

Commenting on the “rationalisation” of Christianity put forward in the book referred to, Professor Fowler says :

“We may not be disposed to think highly of the ‘very learned and ingenious prelate,’ but the story shows, as, indeed, we know from other sources, to what a volume of opinion, both lay and clerical, on the expediency of presenting Christianity in a more ‘reasonable’ and less mysterious and dogmatic form, Locke’s treatise had given expression. Men were anxious to retain their beliefs in the supernatural order of events, but they were equally anxious to harmonise them with what they regarded as the necessities of reason. *The current of “Rationalism” had set in.*” (Locke, p. 80.)

#### LOCKE AND PROTESTANT INTOLERANCE

Passing reference must be made to Locke’s *Letter on Toleration* which, while advocating the toleration of Protestant sectaries,<sup>1</sup> is bitterly opposed to granting

<sup>1</sup> The English nonconformists were “tolerated” in the interests of national prosperity, as they had become leaders in the development of industry and commerce.

religious and civil liberty to Catholics. Indeed, the "Letter" may be said to have been the politico-philosophical basis and justification of the Penal Laws which operated so savagely against Catholics in the reigns of William and Mary, and particularly of Anne. This can be touched on but briefly here.

Recalling the religious and political conditions of the time, it is not surprising to find that Locke was bitterly hostile to Catholics. He was naturally opposed to the teaching of the Catholic Church like all his Protestant contemporaries, but his opposition to Catholics in the *Letter on Toleration* was based on political rather than on religious grounds. Locke set out "To establish the throne of our Great Restorer, our present King William." The only serious menace to the throne was that from the Jacobite Catholics. In order to cripple any attempt by them to restore Catholicism, Locke justified the penal system by declaring that allegiance to the king must be one and undivided and that any divided loyalty must not be tolerated. In the "Letter" Locke says :

"That Church can have *no right to be tolerated* by the magistrate, which is constituted upon such a bottom, that all those who enter it, do thereby, *ipso facto*, deliver themselves up to the protection and service of *another prince*. For by this reason the magistrate would give way to the settling of a foreign jurisdiction in his own country, and suffer his own people to be listed, as it were, for soldiers against his own government."

The "other prince" referred to, is of course the Pope. Locke's argument was frequently used some years ago in letters to the Dublin Press by a well-known Protestant controversialist who was appealing for undivided loyalty to Ireland, as against the divided loyalty of the Irish Catholic. The writer was evidently serious in his appeal and for that reason unconsciously afforded all the more amusement to his Catholic readers.

No doubt the religious influence of Locke has affected Irish Protestantism differently from the way it shaped Anglicanism proper, simply because national conditions were so different. Irish Protestants were a very small alien minority, ruling autocratically the suppressed Catholic majority whom they feared because they were acutely aware that they were living on the property that they or their forebears had plundered from the Catholics, not knowing the day nor the hour when the exploited majority might turn against them and mete out retributive justice. This sense of insecurity helped to bind Protestants together and prevented any inherent fissiparous tendencies from developing ; security lay in unity. Moreover, as all "patronage" was in the hands of the "Protestant Ascendancy," this was an inducement to place-hunters of all classes to support the Church that controlled it.

It is important to grasp fully the meaning of "Protestant Ascendancy." It is a specious term (Wolfe Tone called it "impudent") calculated to suggest merely social and cultural superiority and to conceal its essential autocracy —the tyrannical suppression of an overwhelming native Catholic majority by an alien Protestant minority. This obnoxious system, in all its unabashed aggressiveness, lasted throughout the whole of the eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth. It received two staggering blows in the Catholic Emancipation Act, 1829, and in the Dis-establishment Act, 1869. After this, little by little, and with a mighty struggle, its power waned ; till with the Treaty of 1921 it received its quietus. As Dr. Stanford, Trinity College, Dublin, said in his pamphlet, *Faith and Faction in Ireland Now* : "At the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 the epoch of Protestant privilege ended in Southern Ireland." (p. 31.)

What Protestant Ascendancy once meant may be seen from the following extract from the *Autobiography of Wolfe Tone*, an Irish Protestant who had broken from his politico-religious caste and from the tradition of his upbringing :

“ Though not above a tenth of the population, Protestants were in possession of the whole of the government, and of five-sixths of the landed property of the nation ; they were, and had been for above a century, in the quiet enjoyment of the Church, the law, the revenue, the army, the navy, the magistracy, the corporations ; in a word, of the whole patronage of Ireland. With properties whose title was founded in massacre and plunder, and being, as it were, but a colony of foreign usurpers in the land, they saw no security for their persons and estates but in the close connexion with England, who profited of their fears, and as the price of her protection, exacted the implicit surrender of the commerce and liberties of Ireland.”

The view of the Protestant public representatives on “ Ascendancy ” is to be found in a proclamation addressed by the members of the Protestant Corporation of Dublin, 1792, to their co-religionists in Ireland, in which they unblushingly assert and define their right to suppress Catholics :

“ Though the liberal and enlightened mind of the Protestant receives pleasure in seeing the Catholic exercise his religion with freedom, enjoy his property in security, and possess the highest degree of personal liberty (*sic*), yet experience had taught that without the ruin of the Protestant Establishment *the Catholic cannot be allowed the smallest influence on the State*” . . . They declared that—“ the Protestants of Ireland would not be compelled by any authority whatever to abandon that political situation which their forefathers won with their swords, and which is therefore their birthright.”

The tyrannical minority then proceeded with unspeakable arrogance to define what their “ birthright ” was :

“ A Protestant King of Ireland, a Protestant Parliament, a Protestant hierarchy, Protestant electors and government, the benches of justice, the army and

revenue, through all their branches and details, and their system supported by a connection with the Protestant realm of England."

In the Irish Protestant House of Commons in the same year (1792), according to Froude,

"Charles Sheridan gave a definition of Protestant Ascendancy which was universally accepted, and which the immense majority of the members declared themselves determined to uphold. 'By Protestant Ascendancy he meant a Protestant King, to whom only, being Protestant, they owed allegiance ; a Protestant House of Peers comprised of Protestant Lords Spiritual in Protestant succession ; of Protestant Lords Temporal with Protestant inheritance ; and a Protestant House of Commons elected by Protestant constituents, a Protestant legislature, a Protestant judiciary, a Protestant executive, in all and each of their varieties, degrees and gradations.' " (*The English in Ireland*, vol. iii., p. 60.)

Though those days of Protestant intolerance have passed, still their record cannot be erased from our history. The Christian-minded Irish Protestant of to-day cannot look back to the religious persecution of Catholics by his ancestors without a deep sense of humiliation and shame ; of this unhappy period W. E. H. Lecky wrote in "The Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland" :

"The code of penal laws against Irish Catholics has been described by Burke as 'a code well digested and well disposed in all its parts ; a machine of wise and elaborate contrivance, as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment, and degradation of a people, and the debasement in them of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man.' "

"It was framed by a small minority of the nation for the oppression of the majority who remained faithful to the religion of their fathers. It was framed by men who

boasted that their creed rested upon private judgment, and whose descendants are never weary of declaiming upon the intolerance of Popery; and it was in all its parts so strictly a code of religious persecution that any Catholic might be exempted from its operation by simply forsaking his religion." (p. 123.)

" It is impossible for any Irish Protestant, whose mind is not wholly perverted by religious bigotry, to look back without shame and indignation to the penal code. The annals of persecution contain many more sanguinary pages. They contain no instance of a series of laws more deliberately and ingeniously framed to debase their victims, to bribe them in every stage of their life to abandon their convictions, and to sow dissension and distrust within the family circle.

" That the Irish (Protestant) Parliament in the last years of William and in the reigns of his two successors, was *one of the most persecuting legislative assemblies that ever sat, cannot reasonably be questioned.* (p. 124.)

Protestant Ascendancy is now dead in Southern Ireland. It has not been replaced by Catholic Ascendancy, as the many tributes of the heads of the Protestant Churches to the fair treatment they have received prove.<sup>1</sup> However, Protestant Ascendancy reminiscent of the eighteenth century is still openly active in Northern Ireland—the only difference is that now the Catholic minority is being oppressed by the Protestant majority, and this notwithstanding the constitution which guarantees religious and civil liberty.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Green, the Protestant historian, pays tribute to the tolerance of Irish Catholics, as follows: "The Irish, true to their ancient horror of violence for religion, never made a religious war, and never desired that which was repugnant to the Irish spirit, temporal ascendancy for a spiritual faith." (*Irish Nationality*, p. 172.)

<sup>2</sup> For startling evidence see "Orange Terror," a reprint of an article on "The Partition of Ireland," *The Capuchin Annual*, 1943. Of the writer of this article Dr. Mageean, Catholic Bishop of Down and Connor, said: "He has fulfilled his task in a manner that is beyond all praise, and it is by no means his least merit that he has done it so temperately." (p. 30.)

It is little wonder that, with the haunting memories of the Penal Laws and the religious intolerance of their forebears, many Irish Protestants should have feared that, when political power would come into the hands of the majority, Catholics would pay back with vengeance the iniquitous wrongs they had suffered so long. This fear was used by the anti-nationalist politicians in their efforts to maintain the *Protestant Ascendancy*, and was propagandised through the well-known slogan—"Home Rule is Rome Rule." Notwithstanding the object lesson of the magnificent tolerance of the Catholics of Éire, the capitalist-politicians of Northern Ireland still play on the feelings of the benighted Orangemen with the bogey of this fear. The treatment of the religious minorities in Northern and Southern Ireland respectively has been admirably contrasted in a letter to a Dublin Daily occasioned by the following circumstance.

During the debate in the Dail, 25th October, 1945, Mr. James Dillon (one of the most prominent Deputies who sits as an Independent)<sup>1</sup> said that "there should be present at the earliest opportunity at the meetings of the United Nations representatives of at least one Catholic country free to propose solutions consistent with Catholic philosophy, for the problems besetting the world at present." The *Irish Times* devoted a leading article to Mr. Dillon in its issue of 27th October, which concluded with these words : "In our opinion to cast this country in the role of official champion of Catholic philosophy among the nations, admirable in itself as that role may be, would be a grievous blunder." The writer compared Mr. Dillon's assertion that Éire is a "Catholic State" with the claim of Lord Craigavon, Premier of Northern Ireland, that his was "a Protestant Parliament for a Protestant People." To this attack Mr. Dillon replied in the issue of 20th October as follows :

"In your leading article of 27th October, you question my wisdom in calling this State Catholic. Is it wise to avert your eyes from the truth ? The population

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Dillon became Minister for Agriculture, 1948.

of these 26 counties is well over 90 per cent. Catholic. It is, therefore, manifest that this is a Catholic State, and the people governing it accept Christian ethics as the foundation of their laws, with the result that our Protestant neighbours live here, a minority of less than one in ten, in peace, dignity and freedom, and, if there were ever an attempt made to victimise them for their faith, I am proud to believe that in this Catholic State the Catholics of our community would rise in their tens of thousands to defend their Protestant neighbours.

“Can the promoters of ‘a Protestant Parliament for a Protestant People’ make a similar claim in respect of the territory under their jurisdiction? They cannot. And so to call that Government which withholds from the Catholic minority under its jurisdiction their rights ‘a Protestant Parliament for a Protestant People’ is unwise, because it reveals that bigotry and injustice are the fruits of such an arrangement.

“To speak of Ireland being Catholic is to speak truly, and so to speak is to speak wisely, because we are proud of our record as a Catholic State, and proud that in our Catholic midst devout Protestants have been able to pursue honourable careers, develop prosperous industries and commercial undertakings, and serve God according to their conscience, not only untrammelled, but fully assured that all the resources of the State would be employed against anybody who tried to deprive them of any of these amenities.”

This has been admirably said: there was much need of saying it. There has been remarkable confirmation since then.

Replying to an attack by the Protestant Minister for Home Affairs, Northern Ireland, who said that “Our people (Protestants) are not happy there (Éire), and they do not prosper,” Mr. Childers, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Local Government, Éire, a Protestant, said:

"This was an entirely baseless allegation. . . . The Protestants of the 26 counties lived in an atmosphere of complete tolerance; their share in industrial and commercial activity far exceeding the proportion of their numbers, and in connection with all government and local appointments where examinations were held, there was no religious test whatever." (*Irish Times*, 16th March, 1946.)

However, little by little, the Protestant Ascendancy, nurtured by the philosophy of Locke, has been gradually liquidated. First came Emancipation (1829), Disestablishment (1869),<sup>1</sup> and then the Ballot Act, 1872, which replaced *open* by *secret* voting; Parnell said of it that "for the first time it enabled Irish electors to vote free from the coercion of their landlords." The first Land Act was passed in 1870, leading to the abolition of landlordism through tenant purchase. The new system of Local Government was inaugurated in 1898; this wiped out the *ex-officio* and nominated element in public bodies. Finally, the Rebellion of 1916 prepared the way for the evacuation of the British army of occupation: with this passed the "Protestant Ascendancy" in Southern Ireland—"the upas tree which had poisoned Ireland." In 1936 the Church of the "Ascendancy" in Southern Ireland had only 145,030 adherents; less than five per cent (4.9) of the population of Éire.

#### INFLUENCE OF LOCKE

The influence of John Locke on the development of the modern world has been immense. His individualistic philosophy was both intensive and extensive in its effects. It not only permeated and deeply affected the province of Politics, but also that of Religion and of Economics.

<sup>1</sup> Of Disestablishment Froude said: "But Mr. Gladstone's large purpose was to go at once to the root of the disorder. *Lex non curat de minimis.* He could not stay for trifles. He discovered that the bottom of it all was Protestant Ascendancy. *This was the upas tree which had poisoned Ireland.*" (*The English in Ireland*, vol. iii. p. 578.)

It lies behind the present-day system of alleged "representative government" and so-called "modern democracy." It has been a powerful factor in undermining Christianity and in the development of Secularism and the Secularist State. Its effect on Economics has been paradoxical in so far as the defender of private property supplied the dynamic idea to that movement that is bent on the destruction of private property. His influence on education is to be seen to-day in the undenominational education in Britain and Northern Ireland, and in the similar systems throughout the English-speaking world.<sup>1</sup>

Locke's political philosophy in its original form was localised both as regards its historical development and its application: it had relation only to the political conditions of his own day and of England. Locke's influence on the development of American democracy was also local. It was Rousseau who generalised it, and made it adaptable to the world at large. Seignobos says of the French Revolution: "Since the ideas were based upon a natural religion, common to all men, they were expressed in formulas that were universal, national, abstract and equally applicable to all peoples."

It was the French Revolution that implemented Rousseau's *Contrat Social* and carried Locke's ideas as developed by Jean-Jacques to the four corners of the world. It is, however, only when the influence of Rousseau, who borrowed all his major ideas from Locke, is understood that the power of the philosopher of the Protestant Revolution of 1688 can be adequately appreciated.

Having contrasted Locke with Hobbes, Harold Laski writes thus of Rousseau's political indebtedness to Locke:

"With Rousseau there is no contrast, for the simple reason that his teaching is only a broadening of the channel dug by Locke. No element integral to the *Two Treatises* is absent from the *Social Contract*.

<sup>1</sup> Rousseau greatly influenced the development of secularist education on the Continent; the leading ideas of his *Emile* are largely borrowed from Locke.

Rousseau, indeed, in many aspects saw deeper than his predecessor. The form into which he threw his questions gave them an eternal significance Locke can, perhaps, hardly claim. . . . It is yet difficult to see that the contribution upon which Rousseau's fame has mainly rested is in any point a real advance upon Locke." (*English Political Thought*, p. 60.)

However, there can be no doubt that Rousseau in his adaptation gave such dynamic vitality and forcefulness to Locke's ideas that, in their new form, they swept through France and throughout Europe, and as a consequence Rousseau became the maker of the modern world. How Rousseau developed and applied the teaching of Locke, and with what unhappy results for the civilisation of the West, will be shown in the next section.

In conclusion it must be said that Locke interpreted in an almost uncanny fashion the mind and philosophy of Protestant England. What has passed till now as "English Democracy," which owes its philosophic origin and justification to Locke, has been the expression of the religious and political traditions of the English people. To mention this fact alone is to show how ill-suited is such a democracy to the Catholic people of Éire. To be thoroughly convinced of this is the first essential condition for the development of a truly Irish Democratic State. Such a conviction must not be nebulous or merely founded on emotional nationalism ; it must be based on knowledge. To supply such knowledge in popular form has been the chief motive that has led to writing this brief dissertation on John Locke, the defender and philosopher of the Protestant Revolution of 1688, the offshoot of which in Ireland was the Protestant Ascendancy.

## MODERN DEMOCRACY

“ We are witnessing the historical liquidation of the world of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and bourgeois democracy. Now a genuine, a real democracy must be built up.” (Jacques Maritain, *The Twilight of Civilisation*, p. 44.)

### FOREWORD

“ We live at a time when so many of the maxims of government are worn out, that in casting our eyes upon the aphorisms of the great statesmen of Europe, we are astonished to find that the authority they attempted to defend is vanished, and the principles by which they defended it are no more. The book of ‘ The Prince ’ is closed for ever as a State manual and the book of ‘ The People ’—a book of perhaps darker sophistries and more pressing tyranny—is as yet unwritten. Nevertheless, the events of every day ought to impress upon our minds the necessity of studying that element which threatens us; and for a generation which is manifestly called upon to witness the solemn and terrible changes of the constitution of the empires of the earth, the deadliest sin is thoughtlessness, the most noxious food is prejudice, the most fatal disease is party-spirit.”

These words were written by Henry Reeve, 9th June, 1835, and form the opening sentences of the Introduction to his translation of Alexis de Tocqueville’s *De la Démocratie en Amérique*. The old order was then passing away all over Europe. The rule of kings was on the wane, and high over the horizon swung the rule of “ The People.” Democracy was in the air and men had become intoxicated with dreams and visions of liberty. To-day—*nous avons changé tout cela*. The sun of Rousseauist democracy is rapidly sinking below the horizon and men are waiting anxiously for the breaking of a new day and the coming of a new world. All the

dreams of "Progress" which buoyed humanity from the days of Rousseau till now have vanished : the world is waking from a terrible nightmare.

Lest there may be any misunderstanding, it is necessary to state explicitly that the writer of these pages is a convinced believer in Democracy : however, it is also necessary to add that there is no obligation on a Catholic to accept the democratic form of government. Democracy is either true or false in so far as it accepts the Christian teaching on the end of man and of the State. Rousseau eliminated Christ, eviscerated Christianity, and replaced them by Humanity and Naturalism, Rousseau built on false foundations ; and to-day Rousseau's Democracy or Liberal Democracy is crashing as a consequence. Rousseau's democracy was false.

It is scarcely necessary to say that in the limited space at disposal only some salient points of this vast subject can be touched upon. In doing so one must take the liberty of making one's own selection as regards what to stress and what is essential. It is, however, to be hoped that what follows may help to expose some of the outworn clichés and empty shibboleths about Modern Democracy which are only too frequently read or heard to-day without further questioning, and without any real appreciation of the fallacies involved.

Éire has, no doubt, a Christian Constitution which incorporates the political and social philosophy of the papal encyclicals—the solid basis of true Christian Democracy. Let us, then, as true democrats and Christians learn to appreciate the priceless principles enshrined in our Constitution and without further delay bend ourselves fearlessly and energetically to the work of building up a truly democratic State.

#### JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU

The French political thinkers of the eighteenth century drew their inspiration mainly from those of England. The intimate dependence of Rousseau and the "Philosophes"

upon Locke is referred to as follows in the *Cambridge Modern History*:

“But the political speculations of Hobbes, as well as his crude sensualist and utilitarian doctrine, influenced French thought not so much directly as through the teaching of his follower and opponent Locke (1632–1704). Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding* is the chief source of the French philosophy of the eighteenth century. . . . In the works of Locke may be found nearly all the most essential principles which influenced the political and social theories of the French writers. . . . As the *Contrat Social* of Rousseau is the outcome of Locke's *Treatises on Government*, so is the *Emile* of his *Thoughts concerning Education*; while the Englishman's *Letters on Toleration* gave a great impulse to the crusade led by Voltaire against intolerance.” (Vol. viii. p. 7.) In the same volume of the *Cambridge Modern History* the significance of the great Revolution of 1789 is referred to as follows:

“The French Revolution is the most important event in the life of modern Europe. Herder compared it to the Reformation and the rise of Christianity; and it deserves to be ranked with those two great movements in history, because like them it destroyed the landmarks of the world in which generations of men had passed their lives, because it was a movement towards a completer humanity, and because it, too, was a religion, with its doctrines, its apostles, and its martyrs. It brought on the stage of human affairs forces which have moulded the thoughts and action of men ever since, and have taken a permanent place among the formative influences of civilisation.” (Vol. viii. p. 754.)

It will, however, be seen further on that the doctrine of Rousseau, so acclaimed by secularists and liberals, is but the de-Christianisation of the social principles of Christianity. Rousseau merely popularised, while completely secularising some of the great fundamental truths

of Christianity: there has been no discovery whatsoever, as Rousseau's followers would have us believe.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau was born of parents of French origin, at Geneva, 1712: his father was a watchmaker and his mother was the daughter of a Calvinist Minister. She died in child-birth<sup>1</sup>; and from ten years of age he was practically abandoned by his father. His Calvinistic upbringing, at Geneva, left a lasting mark on his character and influenced his social outlook by reaction against his early restraint. When sixteen years old he met a priest in Savoy who directed him to a convert lady, Madame de Warens, at Annecy. She sent him to a college at Turin where he was instructed and received into the Catholic Church. This lady exercised a profound influence on his whole future life, especially his "naturalistic religiosity." He lived in her household and was imbued with her peculiar ideas of religion for about ten years. It was she who destroyed Rousseau's belief in original sin and hell, and filled him with the idea of man's natural goodness and God's *too natural* mercy. Rousseau says in his *Confessions*: "The Scriptures seemed to her to be too literally and too harshly explained. All that we read of eternal torments appeared to her merely comminatory or figurative . . . . In a word, faithful to the religion she had embraced, she sincerely admitted its whole profession of faith; but when it came to the discussion of each article, it turned out that she believed quite differently from the Church, whilst at the same time submitting to it."<sup>2</sup> He remained a Catholic till his return to Geneva, in 1754, when he reverted to Calvinism. The reason he gave for doing so was: "embarrassed by being excluded from my rights as a citizen by the profession of a creed different from that of my fathers, I determined to resume openly my former religion."

<sup>1</sup> Rousseau says: "I was born weak and sickly. I cost my mother her life, and my birth was the first of my misfortunes."

<sup>2</sup> This naturalistic Christianity, the rudiments of which he learned from Madame de Warens, he afterwards developed into a system under the influence of John Locke and his *Simplified Christianity*.

He met Thérèse Le Vasseur in 1743, made her his mistress, and had five children by her. It is said that he never laid eyes upon them ; they were all sent away to be brought up in a foundlings' orphanage. Yet, he preached sanctimoniously on the up-bringing of children, and wrote a long treatise on their education, entitled *Emile*.<sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding his immoral life, as recounted in his *Confessions*, he can unblushingly write : " I am very convinced that of all the men I have known in my life none was better than I." Of the immense destructive power of Jean-Jacques, M. Maritain says : " Rousseau really did a work in the sphere of natural morality of the same type as Luther's work in the evangelical sphere." M. Maritain refers as follows to the perverse influence of Rousseau's twenty-six years of Catholicism—" of which he never grasped anything but the outward air, the visible show : "

" Without this transit through Catholicism, without the misuse of holy things and divine truths of which his Catholic culture made him capable, Rousseau would not have been complete, there would have been no Jean-Jacques, I willingly grant that. But I add that he passed through Catholicism as certain pathogenic ferments pass into an organism or a culture to increase their virulence." (*Three Reformers*, p. 141.)

It should be noted, in passing, that Rousseau, like Montesquieu and Voltaire, spent some time in England and was deeply influenced by his stay. He went there, 1766, on the invitation of David Hume, the Scottish philosopher and Deist, and while there he wrote a large part of his *Confessions* ; he returned to France in 1770. He never lived to see the harvest of the Revolution of 1789, the

<sup>1</sup> John Morley described *Emile* as " one of the seminal books in the history of literature." (*Rousseau*, vol. ii. p. 148.) It may be regarded as " seminal " from the fact that it is one of the sources from which has come that secularist system of education so widespread to-day which is the chief cause of the secularisation of society. It was placed on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, 9th September, 1762.

seeds of which he had done so much to sow ; he died eleven years before that event, 1778. Such, in a few words, is the religious life-story of the brilliant genius and degenerate dreamer, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Father of the Modern World."

The influence of Rousseau's ideas on modern civilisation is almost immeasurable. Maine has said : "The world has not seen more than once or twice in all the course of history or literature a movement which has exercised such prodigious influence over the minds of man, over every cast and shade of intellect, as that which emanated from Rousseau between 1749 and 1762" (*Ancient Law*, ch. iv.). Voltaire's success depended on his appeal to men's common sense ; Rousseau's on his appeal to their feelings. "If it is an explanation of the popularity of Voltaire that he said what men were thinking, then we may say that Rousseau was popular because he gave the most perfect expression to what men were feeling." (*Cambridge Modern History*. Vol. iii., p. 28.)

#### PRE-REVOLUTIONARY FRANCE<sup>1</sup>

It is necessary to give a brief description of the historical conditions which prepared the way for Rousseau's mission. With the coming of William of Orange to England, 1689, internal peace was, after a century and a half of political unrest, finally established and "England settled down to a century of self-complacency." Harold Laski says : "The average Englishman of the eighteenth century was, if I may use a paradox, at peace even when he was at war." After the Williamite campaign, Ireland was at last "pacified" as the result of the perfidious treachery of the Violated Treaty of Limerick and of the iniquitous code of Penal Laws against Catholics. The embers of Stuart resistance still smouldered in Scotland until "the '45" when peace was restored there also. The aristocratic rule

<sup>1</sup> For the diversity of views on the origins of the Revolution, see Alfred Cobban's *The Causes of the French Revolution* (1946), The English Historical Society.

of the English landed-classes, associated with the name of Locke, was then unquestioningly accepted.

Louis XIV (1643–1715) who had ruled France as an absolute monarch, and by “right divine,” died in 1715; to him has been attributed the saying *L'état c'est moi* (“I am the State”).<sup>1</sup> He was succeeded by Louis XV who also reigned as a royal dictator till his death in 1744; he is responsible for the well-known aphorism—*Après moi le déluge* (“After me the deluge”). He saw with prophetic vision the tide of revolt gradually rising which ended the reign of his successor, Louis XVI, in the deluge of blood of the French Revolution.

Many causes led to this social upheaval. The critical condition of national finance; the luxury and corruption of the court; the growing burden of taxation; Gallicanism and Jansenism, both of which had undermined Papal authority in France; the moral decadence of some of the rulers of the Church<sup>2</sup>; and finally, and most important, the growth of a middle class, the “bourgeoisie.”

The population in pre-Revolution France was divided into what was known as “the three estates.” The clergy belonged to the *first estate*, the nobility to the *second estate*, and the rest of the population made up the *third estate*. But, if not constitutionally, at least in fact, the last was sub-divided into the bourgeoisie and the common people; this sub-division was most marked. De Tocqueville says of it: “the common people who lived side-by-side with the bourgeoisie within the bounds of the same town became strangers to them, almost enemies . . . What was particularly noticed in the acts of the bourgeoisie is the fear of seeing itself identified with the people, and the passionate desire of escaping their control by every means in its power.”

<sup>1</sup> Alfred Noyes says in his *Voltaire* that it was “invented by Voltaire himself, though, as Lord Acton remarks, it is profoundly true in its characterisation,” p. 459.

<sup>2</sup> Hilaire Belloc says: “France, in the generation before the Revolution, was passing through a phase in which the Catholic Faith was at a lower ebb than it had ever been since the preaching and establishment of it in Gaul.” (*The French Revolution*, p. 227.)

The bourgeoisie were isolated from the socially privileged classes above and from the peasants and town workers below, and so became the "middle-class." The nobility looked down with disdain on the bourgeoisie and shrank back from all social contact with them ; the bourgeoisie hoped one day to enter the charmed privileged circle, while at the same time their envy turned to hate. De Tocqueville says of the growing strained relations between nobility and the bourgeoisie : "they are going to find them rivals, soon enemies, and finally masters." The bourgeoisie looked down with contempt on the common people, exploited their grievances, stirred up their feelings of discontent, and used them as the spear-head of the Revolution. Such were the human factors of a movement that shook the world.

The bourgeoisie were gradually amassing wealth through business and commerce but they had no social or political privileges. They had no representation in parliament like their English trade rivals. They saw the growth of English and Dutch commerce and enviously wished to rid themselves of the industrial restraints of an antiquated feudalism. They chafed under the rule of an absolute monarch and a parasitical nobility, of a church and religion that the "Philosophes," the Intellectuals, had taught them to despise. Placing themselves at the head of the peasants and working classes they acted as the leaders of the *tiers état* ("third estate"); they set out to abolish monopolies, privileges, and the compulsory membership of the gilds, which had long since been abolished in England.<sup>1</sup> The bourgeoisie were the real makers of the French Revolution ; the town workers and peasants were but tools in their hands and used by them. "The bourgeoisie supplied the

<sup>1</sup> Little did the bourgeoisie think when it identified itself with the "third estate" and declared itself "the Nation" that it was laying the foundation of the "Classless State". Carl Schmitt says; "The French bourgeoisie of the eighteenth century, the "third estate", proclaimed itself "the nation". The famous pronouncement 'le tiers état, la nation' was more profoundly revolutionary than was suspected at the time, for when an individual class identifies itself with the entire nation, it tacitly abolishes the very principle of class." (*The Necessity of Politics*, p. 58).

great majority of lawyers, judges and civil servants, the contractors, who reaped a rich harvest in every war, and the financiers who farmed the indirect taxes. With a few illustrious exceptions, such as Mirabeau and Lafayette, the leaders of the French Revolution in every phase of its history, even during the years of the Terror, came from this class. The bourgeoisie had studied the writings of the philosophers and economists, and had lost its deference for the priest and the noble. It longed for a share of power and consideration proportionate to its talent and culture." Thus the *Cambridge Modern History* describes the bourgeoisie. (Vol. viii., p. 51.)

Louis Madelin, one of the most balanced of the historians of the Revolution, is emphatic in his estimate of the influence of the "philosophers" on the bourgeoisie.

"There can be no doubt," he writes, "about the influence the philosophers exercised on the Revolution in general and the bourgeoisie in particular. Who, but the philosophers stultified authority, disarmed the privileged classes, and filled the young bourgeoisie with the revolutionary spirit? Whether they are cursed by the foes of the Revolution, or glorified by its supporters, their responsibility is incontestable."

The peasants had long groaned under the multiple burdens of tithes, rents in money and kind, forced labour, royal taxes and service in the Militia. At times they momentarily revolted against their conditions, but, as Mathiez has said: "The Revolution could only come from above. The working classes, whose narrow horizon embraced nothing beyond their calling, were incapable of initiating it, still less of taking the control into their own hands." In the beginning, not a few of the nobility, and many of the parish clergy, carried away by a wave of mass-hysteria, threw in their lot with the Revolution; but as its true nature appeared they quickly abandoned it, and the bourgeoisie remained in control.

The bourgeoisie must not be regarded as idealists

filled with a deep sense of sympathy for the sufferings of their less fortunate countrymen. They were, as a class, sinister social-climbers preaching an equality which would raise them to the level of the nobility, but which would not raise the peasants and workers to a level with themselves. Madelin says of them : “ The men of 1789, with few exceptions, full as they were of their ‘ good citizenship,’ *were only longing for equality in order that they might attain to power* : for—and this is the second feature of importance in the period between 1789 and 1799—*they were as undemocratic at bottom as men well could be*, and their feeling for the masses was nothing but a mixture of scorn and fear. ‘ The perfect type of the bourgeois of ’89,’ writes M. Meynier de la Révellière, ‘ combining hatred of the nobles with distrust of the mob.’ ” (Chap. iii.) Such were the real makers and leaders of the Revolution.

The bourgeois character of the Revolution may be seen from the personnel of the National Assembly which E. Kohn Bramstedt describes as follows :

“ Of the 621 deputies to the National Assembly, 130 were merchants, bankers, and men of independent means, 15 were doctors, and only some 40 were peasants or farmers, the majority consisting of 300 lawyers from provincial towns—industrious people who had read their Voltaire and Rousseau with enthusiasm and combined a remarkable shrewdness and delight in definitions with a considerable lack of political experience.” (J. P. Mayer, *Political Thought*, p. 234.)

Pierre Maillaud points out how the Revolution led to the aggrandisement of *the bourgeoisie*, and how they climbed to power on the backs of “ the people.” He writes as follows :

“ Considered in its historical perspective, the main effect of the Revolution in France from a social point of view was the advance of a new class which had been striving to assert itself for a century and a half, and which was suddenly brought to the forefront : *the bourgeoisie*.

After the Revolution had been 'decanted'; after it had withdrawn from its most extreme dogmatic positions, it was that class which eventually emerged as the great victor.

"During the last stages of the Third Republic it became a habit for all parties to appeal to 'the principles of the French Revolution,' although politicians were in most cases referring to concepts which sprung up only during the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century. It had become a parliamentary practice to invoke the ideals of 1789 on behalf of a 'proletariat,' non-existent in these days, whose equivalent in terms of class was then allowed very few political rights. Yet once it had sown its wild oats, the French Revolution left only a strongly bourgeois social framework which became, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the main bulwark of national conservatism." (*France*, pp. 24, 25, 26.)

During the eighteenth century the French bourgeoisie fell under two malign influences that working together created the dynamic force behind the Revolution—*La Philosophie* (Rationalism) and *La Maçonnérie* (Freemasonry). The adherents were, writes R. L. Graeme Ritchie,

"recruited largely in the smaller provincial towns, where the leaders of the intellectual and social life were bourgeois—lawyers, doctors, merchants—who had education and learning to read the works of the 'Philosophes,' think out the implications and discuss these with their friends. Hard hit by the inequalities of the fiscal system, such men developed a critical spirit and began enquiring into the reasons for their low estate. And almost every town, large or small, had its Masonic Lodge, where the privileged themselves met in secret conclave. The Freemasons were still in France what they remained in England, a Friendly Society, without ulterior political motives. These appeared only in the

Grand Orient, created in 1773. . . . In the Lodges people discussed freely, in the light of reason, without theological predilection, Deism, Natural Religion, the cult of humanity, philanthropy, religious toleration—and no doubt, on occasion, the social conditions around them." (*France*, p. 219.)

There were only five Masonic Lodges in France in 1738; there were 423 in 1771, and 629 in 1789. Dr. Gustave Combès in *Le Retour Offensif du Paganisme* says of Masonry :

"There is no doubt whatever that Freemasonry has played an important part in the preparation for the French Revolution. The masonic historians are the first to recognise it. . . . The freemason historian, Louis Blanc, does not hesitate to assert: 'The explosion of 1789 is due to the mine which the revolutionaries—the Freemasons as deep and as active as the Encyclopédistes—laid beneath throne and altar.'" (p. 224).

The Grand Orient, established in 1773, was one of the chief centres from which that revolutionary force radiated which led to the great upheaval, sixteen years later, 1789. Dr. Combès says that "The Lodge of the Nine Sisters" alone counted among its members—Voltaire, d'Alembert, Helvetius, Chamfort, Condorcet, Florian, Lacépède, Benjamin Franklin (the American Republican), Mirabeau, le Prince de Rohan, Brissot, Garat, Bailly, Danton, André Cheniér, Rabaut—Saint-Etienne." He adds, "Freemasonry, certain that these illustrious disciples will henceforth make its business their business, strives to promote the issue of publications of all kinds directed against the Church, and especially the *Encyclopédie*" (p. 217). "La Philosophie" and "La Maçonnerie" were the duality—two forces in one—which created the Revolution by bringing national discontent to a head. It was by them that the seeds of the Revolution were sown which within a few years were to produce such a fateful harvest.

Professor Gettell writes of the English origins of this intellectual seeding of the French mind during the second half of the century as follows :

“ English thought, with the exception of the philosophy of Hobbes, was practically unknown in France during the reign of the ‘ Grand Monarque ’ (Louis XIV). In the half-century following there was scarcely a Frenchman of importance who did not either visit England or learn the English language. Among those who were especially impressed by English governmental institutions and ideas were Voltaire, Montesquieu, Gournay and Mirabeau. The writings of Locke became widely accepted, and the rationalist and critical thought of Shaftesbury and Hume worked as a leaven in French philosophy. The study of the English Revolution and the nature of the constitutional system that resulted from it was largely responsible for the revival of interest in political theory in France, and for the creation of a philosophical basis for the French Revolution in the work of Rousseau.” (p. 239.)

It is important to keep in mind the character of the men who were behind the French Revolution. *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11th ed.) says that “ it is unquestionable that in the period preceding the Revolution the bulk of French thinkers were ultimately Deists in various degrees, and that Deism was a most potent factor not only in speculative but also in social and political development.” It further adds that “ *French Deism was the direct progeny of the English movement.* ”

M. Siegnobos, Professor of Modern History in the University of Paris, thus points out the intimate connection of French rationalism with English rationalism :

“ In England the new ideas were able to find free expression, and it was from thence that the *philosophes* Voltaire and Montesquieu derived the formulas of religious toleration and political liberty that they

propagated in France. The *Encyclopédie*, too, edited by Diderot, was originally no more than an adaptation of an English work. The term 'natural religion' came from England, and the name *libre penseur* is obviously the French rendering of the English 'free-thinker.' It was on the English model, too, that lodges of Freemasons (*francs-maçons*) were founded, which introduced deism and the cult of humanity into France.

"This movement which had religion as its starting-point, spread to other departments of social life. Since morality adopted as its principle the happiness of all men, its logical consequence came to be the duty of 'doing good' to mankind; Christian charity was replaced by human beneficence. Human conduct became a duty." (*A History of the French People*, p. 274.)

The *Encyclopédie* was published in twenty-six volumes, the first of which appeared in 1751: with diabolical subtlety it spread subversive ideas and undermined the foundations of both Church and State in France.<sup>1</sup> This work was a carefully concealed, cunning attack on the Christian religion under the editorship of Diderot (1763-84) and d'Alembert (1767-83). Its rationalist contributors, many of whom were Freemasons, were known as the "Encyclopédistes." They worked consciously under English influence, d'Alembert openly acknowledging the indebtedness in the *Discours Préliminaire*.<sup>2</sup> Rousseau contributed an article on Political Economy to the fifth volume of the *Encyclopédie*, 1755, in which are to be found many of the ideas which he afterwards developed in the *Contrat Social*, 1762.

<sup>1</sup> "Plans for producing such a dictionary were mooted by the Paris Grand Lodge (of Freemasons) in 1737, and passed on for discussion to the Lodges which, though in that year masonry was declared illegal in France, were rapidly springing up in the provincial towns." (Dr. Graeme Ritchie, *France*, p. 179.)

<sup>2</sup> Viallatoux refers to the many-sided influence of Locke on the *Encyclopédistes* as follows: 'He was the teacher, in logic, in politics, in psychology, as well as in social, religious, economic and educational philosophy, of Condillac, Montesquieu, Voltaire, d'Alembert, Diderot, Helvétius, d'Holback, in a word, of all the writers of the "Encyclopédie." (*Philosophie Economique*, p. 126.)

After the Bible, perhaps, no book has had so much influence on the development of modern civilisation as Rousseau's *Social Contract*. It had a politically intoxicating effect on Europe. Men grew delirious with its advocacy of liberty and equality. Its message turned the Continent upside down, created revolutions and swept over the world with a destructive fury: it made the Liberal State and thereby the Modern World. Hilaire Belloc wrote of it:

"Rousseau's hundred pages are the direct source of the theory of the modern State; their lucidity and unmatched economy of diction; their rigid analysis, their epigrammatic judgment and wisdom—these are the reservoirs from whence modern democracy has flowed."

(*The French Revolution*, p. 36.)

And one may add that it is this Rousseauist individualism—derived from Locke, Hobbes and the Reformation—that is largely responsible for the terrible plight in which the world finds itself to-day. What follows will throw a searching light on Rousseau's "judgment and wisdom."

#### ROUSSEAU AND THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

In the introduction to his translation of the *Contrat Social*, Henry Tozer writes:

"The *Social Contract* has, perhaps, little claim to originality as regards its matter; but the borrowed doctrines are presented in a striking form. Rousseau's chief source was Locke's second *Treatise on Government*, and, in his *Letters from the Mountain*, he frankly admitted that he had treated the same subjects on exactly the same principles as Locke. . . .<sup>1</sup>

"To Hobbes, also, Rousseau was greatly indebted, especially for his accurate account of the attribute of

<sup>1</sup> John Morley says: "it was Locke whose *Essay on Civil Government* haunts us throughout the "Social Contract", and taught him (Rousseau) men are born free, equal, and independent." (Rousseau, ii, p. 123.)

sovereignty and for his doctrine of the complete subordination of the ecclesiastical to the civil power" (p. 37).

All through this essay the radical influence of Protestant individualism on the evolution of the modern world has been emphasised, especially that of English Protestantism. From Luther and Calvin, through Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau, there has been continuous and increasing "Progress," as it was called, throughout four centuries until the momentum is now sweeping humanity helplessly into the abyss. Of the influence of English "free-thought" on French Enlightenment, H. Tozer says :

"English thought was a factor of the highest import in the French *Aufklärung* or *Illumination*<sup>1</sup> of the eighteenth century. The individualistic philosophy and the democratic political theory of Locke were eagerly studied and assimilated ; and when carried out to their *logical* conclusions by such thinkers as Condillac, Diderot, Voltaire, and Rousseau, they bore an aspect that would have terrified their sober-minded author (Locke). The reverence for tradition and custom that had so long dominated French minds began rapidly to vanish before this awakening spirit of free enquiry. Scepticism in religion, destructive criticism of conventional morality, and scathing denunciation of royal misrule were the characteristics of the comprehensive movement which ushered in the 'age of reason.' " (p. 25.)

John Morley has said of Rousseau's famous tract : "Many pages of the *Social Contract* are mere logical deductions from verbal definitions, which the slightest attempt to confront with actual fact would have shown to be not only valueless, but wholly meaningless, in connection with real human nature and the visible working of human affairs." Morley's estimation of Rousseau's "judgment and wisdom" is in strange contrast with Hilaire

<sup>1</sup> Rationalist philosophy.

Belloc's. Yet, this *Social Contract* is the revolutionaries' handbook which has made revolution endemic and has thrown the world into political chaos.

Rousseau follows the essential ideas of Hobbes and Locke. There was, he says—antecedent to men entering into society—what is called a “state of nature.” Pre-society men were but isolated human atoms, equal and independent individuals, who came together through self-interest to form, by means of a social contract, the State. Rousseau's idea of primitive man, or, man in the “state of nature,” differs from that of Hobbes or Locke. With Rousseau man is naturally good, a “noble savage”—not a human brute like Hobbes's nor an aristocratic property-holder like Locke's. Men, as envisaged by Jean-Jacques, lived in idyllic conditions, in a fairyland or paradise, before they entered civil society. Their conduct was based not on reason but on the instincts of well-being and pity. It is only when they entered society that reason replaced instinct. The growth of private property, and divisions of rich and poor deriving therefrom, led to unhappiness and necessitated the establishment of civil society or the State.<sup>1</sup> The State was a necessary evil, Rousseau held, and was the source of all men's social evils. “Like all utopians, Rousseau framed a scheme not for men but for Man, for a creature abstracted from almost all the individualising conditions under which alone we know him.” (Graeme Ritchie, *France*, p. 53.)

As in other false philosophical systems, there is one radical, essential error in Rousseau's philosophy from which many others flow. It is supremely important to grasp what this is. It is the belief in the *natural goodness of man*; in other words, the *denial of original sin*. It is the antithesis of Luther's, who regarded man's nature as essentially corrupt. H. A. L. Fisher thus epitomises the central idea of the *Contrat Social*:

<sup>1</sup> “The first man who, having enclosed a piece of land, thought of saying ‘this is mine,’ and found people simple enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society.”

"Rousseau's sovereign remedy for human ills is very simple. It is the application of virtue. The good State is one in which every member (duly educated for the civic life) contracts to conform his will to the general good. Only a society of virtuous citizens, each agreeing to do to others as he would be done by, and spontaneously consenting to general laws framed, not for the furtherance of particular interests but for the common advantage, could be called good. Such is the essence of Rousseau's political doctrine. The good State is based not on force nor on greed, but on the virtuous will of all its members." (*A History of Europe*, p. 701.)

Jacques Maritain is much more explicit :

"Man, according to Rousseau, is not only free of original sin and any defects of nature, he possesses in its essence that pure goodness which renders him a participant in the divine life and which was manifest in him in a state of innocence. Here grace has been swallowed up by virtue. The true meaning of Rousseau's theory is that man is naturally *holy*, much more holy indeed than virtuous. (Jean-Jacques at the end of his life made no more pretence to be virtuous, but as for goodness, he was more good than he had ever been.) Man is holy if he is in divine union with the spirit of nature, which will render good and right all his inclinations.

"Evil comes from the constraints of education and civilisation, from reflection and artificiality. If we leave nature to itself pure goodness will burst into flames in the radiant epiphany of man." (*True Humanism*, p. 15.)

The first chapter of the *Social Contract* begins with the words "Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains. Many a one believes himself the master of others, and yet he is a greater slave than they." H. A. L. Fisher says that "rivers of revolutionary sentiment were released

by this single phrase." Man was free and happy before he entered civil society, and having entered it he loses liberty and finds himself a miserable slave. In the chapter on the "Social Pact" Rousseau states his ideas of the Social Contract. "Each of us puts in common his person and his whole power under the supreme direction of the *general will*; and in return we receive every member as an indivisible part of the whole." He explains this as follows:

"Forthwith, instead of the individual personalities of all the contracting parties, this act of association produces *a moral and collective body*, which is composed of as many members as the assembly has voices, and which receives from this same act its unity, *its common self (moi commun)*, *its life and its will*. This public person, which is thus formed by the union of all the individual members, formerly took the name of *city*, and now takes that of *republic* or *body politic* . . . with regard to the associates, they take collectively the name of *people*, and they are called individually *citizens*."

Rousseau holds that sovereignty resides in "the people" and is inalienable. "The general will alone can direct the forces of the State according to the object of its institution, which is the common good. . . . Sovereignty, being nothing but the exercise of the general will, can never be alienated, and the sovereign power, which is only a collective being, can be represented by itself alone; power, indeed, can be transmitted but not will." "The general will is always right and always tends to the public advantage."<sup>1</sup>

Rousseau is never so much the political visionary as when he attempts to reconcile the "free will" of the individual with the "general will"—this he does as follows:

<sup>1</sup> In *Democracy Face to Face with Hugeness*, G. D. H. Cole wrote: "Representative democracy was atomistically conceived, in terms of millions of voters, each casting his individual vote into a pool, which was somewhat mystically to boil up with a General Will."

" Each individual as a man may have a particular will contrary or dissimilar to the general will which he has as a citizen. . . . In order, then, that the social pact may not be an empty formula, it tacitly includes the undertaking, which alone can give force to the rest, that *whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be compelled to do so by the whole body.* This means nothing less than that he will be forced to be free: for this is the condition which, by giving each citizen to his native land, secures him against all personal dependence."

T. S. Gregory's comment on this is illuminating:

" The modern English reader can see in primitive simplicity the design which modern State philanthropists carry in their heads, the design which secures the citizen from personal dependence, by abolishing his personal independence, and having merged the man in the citizen, gives him an integral share in a sovereignty which has no attribute but absolute despotism within and infinite lawlessness without."

The *general will* is the will of the "moral and collective body" ("the People") resulting from the act of association of the social contract. It is the author of law, it creates morality; it is always right; it is infallible. This is the apotheosis of "the People," its substitution for God—the Author of the State and the Author of law, from Whom all authority in fact derives.

Henry Tozer makes the following comment on the sovereignty of the people:

" Rousseau's hostility to knowledge and culture had led him to exalt the uneducated masses, and to trust to the free play of their natural instincts for the regeneration of society. The very vagueness of his general principles commended them to the multitude, and their plausibility made them dangerous in the mouths of demagogues. The people are sovereign by 'natural right,' and the sovereign is everything it should be; the

people are the only source of legitimate power, and are supreme over all individuals and all property. The name 'citizen' acquired a new significance, for it now implied participation in the sovereign power. The pauperised peasant and the social outcast were at length to rank, civilly and politically, on an equality with their oppressors. *Vox populi, vox dei*, was no longer an empty, phrase, but an indubitable truth." (op. cit., p. 89.)

#### ROUSSEAU AND THE RIGHTS OF MAN

The distinguished English lawyer, Sir Frederick Pollock, has said that the "historical importance" of "Rousseau's political system" "is that it is in great measure answerable for the "Declaration of the Rights of Man," and he continues :

"The Declaration (which belongs to the earliest stage of the Revolution) carries the confusion of legal right and political expediency, and the enunciation of pompous platitudes under qualifications so wide as to make them illusory, to a pitch seldom, if ever, equalled in any political document. The birth of all men free and with equal rights, the collective sovereignty of the nation, and the *volonté générale* ('general will') which positive laws express, are taken straight from Rousseau. It would be unjust to deny all merit to the Declaration . . . but so far as the declaration embodies a political theory, it is a standing warning to nations and statesmen not to commit themselves to formulas.

"The effect of the Principles of 1789, as the Declaration of the Rights of Man is often called, has been to hinder and prevent the development of politics in France, in practice as well as in theory, to an almost incalculable extent." (*An Introduction to the History of the Science of Politics*, pp. 83-4.)

This is, certainly, a damning indictment and has been amply justified by the history of France, not least of France to-day.

The National Assembly of the French Revolution, 1789, issued the "Declaration of the Rights of Men and Citizens" which incorporated Rousseau's teaching, and also adopted some ideas from the States of the new American Republic which, like Rousseau, was much influenced by Locke. The following are some of the pertinent articles of the Declaration :

(1) Men are born, and always continue, free and equal in respect of their rights. Civil distinctions, therefore, can be founded only in public utility.

(2) The end of all political associations is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man ; and those rights are liberty, property, security and resistance to oppression.

(3) The principle of all sovereignty resides in the nation ; nobody and no individual can exercise any authority which is not expressly derived from it.

(6) Law is an expression of the general will. All citizens have a right to concur, either personally or by their representatives, in its formation.

(10) That no one ought to be interfered with because of his opinions, even religious, provided that their manifestation does not disturb public order.

The sixth article of the Declaration prefixed to the Constitution of September, 1795, makes (6) above clearer. "Law is the general will expressed by the majority of citizens and their representatives." This implies (and indeed states more than implicitly) that what Parliament, representing "the People," declares to be binding as law is so, even though the matter commanded by the law is immoral. In other words morality derives from and is determined by Parliament. This is the working out in practice of the doctrine of the Sovereign Will of the People.

Edmund Burke referred to the "Declaration" with contempt as a "digest of anarchy," and the French Catholic philosopher, Georges Renard, said that "the doctrine of Rousseau is a doctrine of anarchy, national and international." (*La Théorie de l'Institution*, p. 188.)

Those who are now the elders of the nation will recall with mixed emotions the slogans of the old days of the Land War in Ireland, when one read on bunting over the political platforms of the day the words : *Vox Populi, Vox Dei*—“ The Voice of the People, the Voice of God.”<sup>1</sup> This was, to use Carlyle’s expression in his *French Revolution*, “ the gospel of Jean-Jacques,” the full significance of which, of course, was not then understood by those who are the present-day grandfathers of the nation.

The Sovereign Power of the People is limited by the last article of the Declaration of 1793 which runs : “ When government violates the rights of the people, insurrection is for the people, and for every portion of the people, the most sacred right and the most indispensable of duties.” This is the revolutionary doctrine from which has sprung a goodly crop of revolutions since the days of the French Revolution.<sup>2</sup>

Doctor Lindsay comments on the “ General Will ” and the “ Sovereignty of the People ” as follows :

“ French democratic theory assumes that there must be one supreme will in the State ; that there are and can be no limits to that will ; that if all citizens are allowed to take part in the formulation of that will, either directly or through their representatives, the result will be the general will, ‘ which can ordain only what is just and useful to society : and can forbid only what is harmful to society.’ This seems to mean, and was taken to mean, not that if the sovereign assembly passes something which is not just, it is not expressing the general will, but that whatever the sovereign assembly passes is just and therefore must be obeyed.

“ The only limit on the absolute power of the democratic assembly is to be found in the last articles of the

<sup>1</sup> “ When, in 1816, Metternich heard the mob yelling outside the Hofburg, he turned to his friends and said : ‘ That, my friends, is what they call the Voice of God.’ ” (*Anthony*, by the Earl of Lytton, p. 336.)

<sup>2</sup> For the conservative attitude of the Catholic Church towards rebellion, see Don Luigi Sturzo’s *Politics and Morality*, chap. xi. “ The Right to Rebel,” p. 195 sq.

Declaration of 1793. 'When government violates the rights of the people, insurrection is for the people and for every portion of the people the most sacred of rights and the most indispensable of duties.' Some one has defined eastern government as 'despotism tempered by assassination.' This revolutionary theory is despotism of the assembly tempered by insurrection." (*The Modern Democratic State*. Vol. i., pp. 127-8.)

Rousseau is the apostle of "divine discontent" leading men to rebellion. As Harold Laski wrote: "It was his special genius less to determine what men thought in matters of social constitution than to disturb their minds so profoundly as to provide new foundations for their thinking. He incarnated in himself all the dissatisfaction and discontent of his time." (*The Rise of European Liberalism*, p. 211.)

As one looks across "liberated" Europe to-day and sees the mad onrush of the modern "democrats," with their destructive vandalism and "anti-Fascist" <sup>1</sup> mass-hysteria, one is witnessing the effects of a century and a half of the demagogical influence of Rousseau which, developing strength and force as it passed down the years, is now sweeping whole nations into social chaos.

Lecky, discussing the widespread revolutionary influence of Rousseau's doctrines, which filled the European masses with a revolutionary emotionalism similar to that of "religious revivalism," wrote:

"Formerly they had been advocated with a view to special political exigencies or to a single country, or to a single section of society. For the first time, in the eighteenth century, they penetrated to the masses of the people, stirred them to their lowest depths and produced an upheaval that was scarcely less general than that of the Reformation."

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Attlee said at the British Trades Union Congress (1946): "Everyone who does not take his orders from the Communists is described as a *Fascist*."

He adds that this "influence is even now vibrating to the furthest limit of civilisation." Since Rousseau's time "liberty" has been deified and revolution has been raised to the dignity of a quasi-religious cult. The *Contrat Social* has been styled the "Koran of the Revolutionaries." Lecky continues: "there is no fact more remarkable in this movement than the manner in which it has in many countries risen to the position of a religion—that is to say of an unselfish enthusiasm uniting vast bodies of men in aspiration towards an ideal, and proving the source of heroic virtues." Professor Butterfield refers to this revolutionary *mystique* as follows: "The overthrow of 1789 became a matter for glory and emulation—a thing to be repeated. There emerged, therefore, a romantic hypostatisation of the Revolution as such . . . Hence for the modern secular world, *le nouveau Messie, c'est la Révolution.*" (*The Englishman and his History*, p. 104.) This romantic hypostatisation of revolution is still to be found in every country that has been affected by the Great Revolution of 1789.

#### RIGHTS AND DUTIES<sup>1</sup>

It must be noted that in the French "Declaration" emphasis is laid on the "Rights of Man" but there is no corresponding reference to "Duties"; "duty" simply meant the obligation of asserting one's "rights." This vicious, unchristian doctrine of the French Revolution has deeply penetrated and affected human society. To-day we still hear of the "Rights of Women," the "Rights of Labour," the "Rights of Property," the "Rights of Capital," etc. The first signs of a healthy condition of society is when men proclaim the "Duties of Man" and subordinate to them the exaggerated demand for their "Rights." We are still far off from that happy social condition in Ireland and we owe that nefarious doctrine

<sup>1</sup> The organic society of the pre-Reformation period was based on "duties"; the individualist society of the post-Reformation, especially of the French Revolution, is based on "rights."

of "Rights" in no small way to the political individualism described above.

It will not be an undue anticipation to indicate a practical application of the distinction of "rights" and "duties" as regards *property* in our present capitalistic society.<sup>1</sup> In his well-known book, "*The Acquisitive Society*," R. H. Tawney makes a vigorous protest against the "doctrine that the particular forms of private property which exist at any moment are a thing sacred and inviolable, that anything may properly become the object of property rights and that, when it does, the title to it is absolute and unconditioned." He then points out that this doctrine finds a prominent place in the programme of the three great modern revolutions—the English (1688), the American (1776) and the French (1789).

"The modern industrial system," he says, "took shape in an age when this theory of property was triumphant. The American Constitution and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man both treated property as one of the fundamental rights which governments exist to protect. The English Revolution of 1688, undogmatic and reticent though it was, had in effect done the same. The great individualists, from Locke to Turgot, Adam Smith and Bentham, all repeated, in different language a similar conception. . . . The dogma of the sanctity of private property was maintained as tenaciously by French Jacobins as by English Tories; and the theory that property is absolute which is held by many modern conservatives, is identical, if only they knew it, with that not only of the men of 1789, but of the terrible Convention itself" (pp. 55-6).

Tawney advocates "the organisation of society on the basis of *functions* instead of *rights*"; this implies the revolutionary reversal of the relations of "rights" and "duties" of our present individualistic system of society.

<sup>1</sup>This will be discussed at length in Part III.

“ Functions,” he defines as “ an activity which embodies and expresses the idea of social purpose.” His proposal is as follows :—

“ The application to property and industry of the principle of function is compatible with several types of social organisations. What it means in effect is that society should be organised primarily for the performance of “ duties,” not for the maintenance of “ rights,” and that the rights which it protects should be those which are necessary to the discharge of social obligations. But duties, unlike rights, are relative to some end or purpose, for the sake of which they are imposed. The latter are a principle of division ; they enable men to resist. The former are a principle of union ; they lead men to co-operate. The essential thing, therefore, is that men should fix their minds upon the idea of purpose, and give that idea pre-eminence over all subsidiary issues ” (p. 96).

That purpose, he said, is “ to provide the material foundation of a good social life.” This implies the stressing of “ duties ” towards our neighbour rather than personal rights and interests.

Professor Butterfield makes a similar proposal for the transposition of “ rights ” and “ duties ” when he says : “ The whole system which in the ‘ rights of man ’ had seemed for a moment to put the individual at the top of the world, cried out, in fact, to be inverted ; it stood asking to be transposed into the ‘ duties of man ’ ” (op. cit., p. 130).

In one of his latest books, *Slavery and Freedom*, Berdyaev says : “ Freedom ought not to be a declaration of the rights of man ; it ought to be a declaration of man’s obligations, of the duty of a man to be a personality, to display the strength of the character of personality.” Dr. R. H. Murray thus comments on Mazzini’s attitude towards the assertion of the “ Rights of Man ” :

"Mazzini contends that the idea of *right*, that is, of the individual asserting himself, constituted the life, the soul, the strength which guided the Revolution of 1789. *Duty* meant nothing more than fighting for the *rights* of each. That is, in the eyes of Mazzini, it committed the crime of enslaving duty to right. To the ardent patriot to whom *duty* and sacrifice meant everything, right meant nothing." (*History of Political Science*, p. 358.)

It is well, also, to recall here the words of James Bryce spoken in a lecture given at Yale University, before the First Great War :

"When the struggle for political liberty began by the wresting of power from kings or ruling groups, the war was waged in the name of *rights* . . . rights to be won were the cry of battle. Rights to be enjoyed were the crown of victory. In the long conflict the other side of civic relations fall out of sight. Whoever claims a right for himself must respect the like right in another. . . . *Duty is the correlative of Right.*"

With his characteristic incisiveness Nicholas Berdyaev contrasts the bourgeois liberal who separates "duties" from "rights" with the true Christian who links them together with the emphasis on "duties." He says :

"The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen cannot be said to have given much attention to 'man.' He was rather put in the background by the 'citizen,' who was understood as a political animal and his rights as *formal* rights. So the declaration easily degenerated into a character of protection for bourgeois interests and the capitalist system. Furthermore, in the bourgeois liberal conception of the world, rights were severed from obligations and hence expressed only interests and claims. But in reality 'right' cannot be disassociated from 'duty' (as in the bourgeois estimation of it, which cloaks a class greed), since one involves the other, and in a certain sense 'right' is itself a 'duty.'

"The declaration has a very different meaning for the Christian consciousness than it has in the liberal democratic systems. In Christianity it is not the citizen but the man who enjoys *absolute* rights, in his capacity of a free spiritual being, and these rights cannot be separated from their corresponding duties. The very freedom of a man is not a claim but an obligation, it gives less than it demands." (*Christianity and Class War*, pp. 64-5.)

The practical conclusion to this very condensed section on "Rights and Duties" is—that it is of paramount importance that in building the new Irish Democratic State every effort should be made to emphasise "duties" rather than "rights." This implies primarily that while in our schoolrooms and pulpits the First Commandment of the Law shall receive that traditional attention which it deserves, a new emphasis must be placed on the Second Great Commandment, so that Social Christianity with its stress on *duties* to our neighbours must get a prominence in our programmes of teaching and instructional preaching such as it has not hitherto known. In a word, our whole system of education both secular and religious, which has up to the present been so pronouncedly individualist, must get a marked social orientation so that the child or youth may not grow up self-centred and self-satisfied—looking for his "rights"—but that he be trained and formed to live acutely conscious of his duties to his fellows, considered both as individuals and as constituting the Community. In a word everything possible should be done to develop a Christian-community sense.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Since the above was written an important pronouncement was made by Mr. W. McMullen, President of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, at the annual conference at Youghal, 18th June, 1947. He is reported to have said: "In the working-class movements of every country, perhaps, there had been too great insistence on the rights of the worker, and too little emphasis on his duties. . . . This was understandable in an age when the worker had all the duties and no rights; but in their age, living under a democratic system, where a working-class party could attain to power and the most coveted and responsible offices of State were within the grasp of the most humble citizen, workers required to be conscious of their duties as well as their rights, for the closer they attained to power the greater were their responsibilities."

We live in the age of Social Heresy. Its seductive theories will be successfully countered only by the strenuous development of Social Christianity, especially through the teaching and application in practice of that doctrine so vigorously sponsored by the present Pope, Pius XII—the “Mystical Body of Christ.” That we are “members one of another,” must be preached from the house-tops with a similar insistence with which Communists proclaim their pernicious gospel of hatred and class-warfare,—that we are brothers in Christ, that we are our brothers’ keepers, and that as often as we did it “to the least of these” we did it unto Christ Himself. The Gospel of Christ is the Gospel of duty to and service of our neighbour, and this is but the practical expression of our love of God and indeed its assured test.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

From 1789 a mighty wind swept over Europe levelling altars and thrones. Within three or four years the expropriation of church lands, crown lands and the lands of emigré nobles had been effected in France. Feudal serfdom was abolished on 4th August, 1789; tithes were abolished, 11th August; the Declaration of the Rights of Man was proclaimed, 27th August; the nationalisation of Church property, 10th November; complete break of Church and State, May, 1790; Atheism was decreed and the churches turned into Temples of Reason, 1793.

Much evil had been done; much good also had been

<sup>1</sup> But to succeed in teaching the masses to place “duties” before “rights” and to develop a sense of social responsibility will require earnest concerted national action and, moreover, the establishment of a system of “education for democracy”: much emphasis on, and more than one reference to, this system will be found in the following pages.

Soon after Mr. McMullen spoke, a most important resolution was proposed at the International Trade and Employment Conference, I.L.O., Geneva, by one of the Irish Delegates, Mr. John O’Brien, Irish Employers’ Delegate, —“Mr. O’Brien insisted on the inclusion of a specific reference to the individual’s corresponding duties and obligations to the community, and a clause drafted by him was incorporated in the final document” (*Irish Press*, 15th July, 1947). This is marked progress in the right direction and the fact that it received international sanction is significant.

achieved. The ancient tyranny of kings had given place to the new tyranny of "The People," only to be supplanted by the dictatorship of Napoleon. The watchwords of the new France were *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*—and what noble and what awful deeds have since been done in their name, even in our day? Any real good that has been achieved has resulted, as will be shown, from the old Christian ideas and ideals which were stripped of their religious or supernatural character and presented as the discovery of the Revolution.

Special attention must be drawn to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, August, 1790, by which bishops and priests were reduced to the condition of civil servants and the Church was made a department of State,—for this device for the enslavement of religion has been an exemplar for all the modern secularist States. Dr. Barry summarises this legislation as follows :

"They (bishops and priests) became salaried officials governed by a Minister of Worship, and a department of State like any other. Priests were to be appointed by election, that is to say, by votes of citizens no matter what their belief; the Holy See was no longer to institute bishops. In one word, the Rights of Man had brought forth a National Church unable to move hand or foot without permission of a State official who need not be a Christian. *This pattern has been imitated in all constitutions moulded on the principles of 1789. It is the Latin democratic model.* It led up to the flight and execution of Louis XVI, the Reign of Terror, the War in La Vendée. It created the deep gulf which on the Continent separated Rome from the modern States . . . France entered on the path of anti-clerical persecution which it is treading still, 120 years after religious liberty was proclaimed to be the inalienable right of Man." (*The Papacy*, pp. 190–191.)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Pope, Pius VI, formally condemned the legislation in March, 1791.

It is little wonder that de Maistre wrote : " The French Revolution does not resemble anything we have seen in the past. It is essentially satanic " (*Du Pape*, p. 32).

Professor Brogan says that the attack on the Church arose from the extreme individualism of the Revolution which would brook no intermediary between the individual and the State ; he describes it as " political Protestantism."

" There was present in the dispute over the Civil Constitution an element in the French national temper that we find it hard to understand or to recognise, a totalitarian dislike of rivals to the State, both because they were rivals to the State, and because they diminished the individual's direct relationship to the Sovereign. There were to be no mediators between the individual citizen and the nation ; it was a kind of political Protestantism." (*French Personalities and Problems*, p. 21.)

Fraternity in the French system was not the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God but rather the union of citizens in the service of a single great purpose. Fraternity was said to have been the child of parents called Liberty and Equality. It was put in another way in the republican handbook of the training of a citizen.

" Who are you ? I am a child of the Fatherland (*La Patrie*). What are your riches ? Liberty and Equality. What do you bring to society ? A heart to love my country and an arm to defend it."

It is sad to think what was the actual result of this democratic romanticism of the French Revolution. E. Kohn Bramstedt sums it up as follows :

" The real victors were the capitalists, the army surveyors, generals and deputies whose often corrupt dealings led to an accumulation of capital and so to a new start of industry and trade. According to Mathiez the ' robberies ' under the Directory prepared the way for industrial growth under the Consulate and the Empire " (pp. 244-45).

One may add—just as the confiscation of the Church property in the Reformation enriched the harpies who supported Henry VIII in his amours and thus laid the foundation of England's capitalist system, so the robberies under the Directory were the beginning of French industrial capitalism.

At the Revolution the old economic organic life of France was broken up. The Gilds were dissolved and individuals were allowed to make and sell at will. Contracts were recognised only between individuals. Organisations of both workers and employers were prohibited, and "striking" was punishable with imprisonment.<sup>1</sup> With the confiscation of the property of the nobility and the Church, wealth passed into the hands of the bourgeoisie and the entrepreneurs. This, together with the unrestricted development of individualism, prepared the way for the rapid growth of capitalism. Simultaneously the individual was detached from both political and economic society and soon found himself isolated and helpless before the State. The consequences have been thus described :

"What happened in fact was that all constituted bodies, all classified, recognised, traditional authorities, all natural or historical groupings, were contested, shaken, disorganised, dissolved. A whirling multitude of men were led to fancy themselves free because they had broken away from the old framework of society, and they could see the distance narrowing, and at the same time the gulf growing deeper that separated them from an authority both distant and immediate" (Père de Grandmaison, S.J., in *The Life of the Church*, p. 276).

It is no wonder that the writer said of it that it was "one of the greatest outbursts of individualism that humanity had yet known."

<sup>1</sup> "The Loi Chapelier" was passed in 1791. It opens with these words : "The annihilation of Corporations of citizens belonging to the same condition or profession being one of the fundamental bases of the French Constitution, it is forbidden to re-establish them on any pretext or under any form whatever."

J. P. Mayer describes the aftermath of the "democratic" Revolution of 1789, in his *Political Thought in France*, as follows :

"Henceforward the framework of a *bourgeois* society was established. *Liberty meant freedom of opportunity to become rich. It involved an inherent contradiction to the postulate of equality.* Every consequent phase of the French Revolution arose out of this conflict between liberty and equality. The French nation attempted . . . various solutions of this fundamental inconsistency of the revolutionary idea until the very idea of the revolution itself was destroyed and refuted." (pp. 11-12.)

### DEMOCRACY

Out from the French Revolution came one dominant idea—one mystic word—"Democracy." It was Rousseau, not Locke, made Democracy such as we know it to-day. But what is Democracy? Democracy is a protean, an elusive term which on the lips of different men has different meanings. As a term it is, in its nebulous vagueness, akin to "Protestantism." To the Englishman it means one thing; to the Catalan anarchist, to the authoritarian Portugese<sup>1</sup> or Spaniard,<sup>2</sup> it is quite another; to the totalitarian Russian, it is something else. It has been defined or described by Lincoln as "Government of the People, *by* the People, *for* the People." But the Italian, German, and Russian totalitarian forms of government have been supported by the mass of the people—and so have been "democratic" according to Lincoln's loose interpretation. Mussolini described Fascism as "an organised, centralised and authoritative democracy." (*The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism*, p. 23.) Foerster wrote in

<sup>1</sup> Salazar described the Portuguese Corporative State as "an organic democracy."

<sup>2</sup> In the first interview authorised for publication since he assumed power, in 1939, General Franco said to A. L. Bradford, "It might surprise some if I said that Spain is a real democracy. . . . This is a fact. Spain is an organic democracy." (*The Observer*, 5th November, 1944.)

*Europe and the German Question*, in 1941 : "From the democratic standpoint, Hitler is the most legitimate ruler Germany has ever had, a Kaiser who owes his crown to the most genuine popular vote."

Vyshinsky, Soviet Deputy Foreign Commissar, in his speech at Cluj, Rumania, 13th March, 1945, defined Soviet "Democracy," or democrats, as follows :

"Democrats are those who give their efforts to the service of 'the people,' who are ready to sacrifice even their lives, who work for 'the people'—for peasants, workers and intellectuals, for all who with their labour and toil created the things which they have the first right to use." (*The Observer*, 25th March, 1945.)<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, it is impossible to have a real democracy in the full sense of the word in one of the great modern sovereign States. Real democracy existed among the handful of free people such as in the Greek City-State and similar small units ; and even in these City-States the majority of the people were slaves ! Democracy does, indeed, still exist to some extent to-day, but only in the ultimate cell of local government as found all over Europe, from Portugal to Russia and from Finland to Italy, viz., in the Statutory Village, or Parish, or Local Community Council. Rousseau, in the fourth chapter ("Democracy") of the *Contrat Social*, says :

"Taking the term in its strict sense, there never has existed, and never will exist, any true democracy. It is contrary to the natural order that the majority should govern, and the minority should be governed. It is impossible to imagine that the people should remain in perpetual assembly to attend to public affairs, and it is easily apparent that commissions could not be established for that purpose without the form of administration being changed.

<sup>1</sup> It is now many decades since Oscar Wilde wrote : "High hopes were once formed of democracy ; but democracy means simply the bludgeoning of the people, by the people, for the people. It has been found out."

"Moreover, how many things difficult to combine does not this government presuppose ! First, a very small State, in which the people may be readily assembled, and in which every citizen can easily know all the rest ; secondly, great simplicity of manners, which prevents a multiplicity of affairs and thorny discussions ; next, considerable equality in rank and fortune, without which equality in rights and authority could not long subsist ; lastly, little or no luxury, for luxury is either the effect of wealth or renders it necessary."<sup>1</sup>

The difficulty of defining Democracy is obvious. In the chapter on "The Definition of Democracy" Bryce discusses at length the difficulty of a satisfactory definition, and has recourse to a description instead. He says :

"No one has propounded a formula which will cover every case, because there are governments which are 'on the line,' too popular to be called oligarchies, and scarcely popular enough to be called democracies. But though we cannot define Oligarchy and Democracy, we can usually know either the one or the other when we see it. Where the will of the whole people prevails in all important matters, even if it has some retarding influences to overcome, or is legally required to act for some purposes in some specially provided manner, that may be called a Democracy." (*Modern Democracy*, p. 25.)

He adds that a Democratic State is one in which "the will of the majority of qualified citizens rules, taking the qualified citizens to constitute the great bulk of the inhabitants, say, roughly, *at least* three-fourths."

<sup>1</sup> Writing of "Democracy in America," de Tocqueville directs attention to the parish as the primary source of real democracy. "At the period of the first emigrations (to North America) the parish system, that fruitful germ of free institutions, was deeply rooted in the habits of the English ; and with it the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people had been introduced even into the bosom of the monarchy of the House of Tudor." (Reeve's translation, vol. i, p. 15.)

Quoting from his essay on "Charles Maurras and the *Action Française*," in an appendix to *The Things that are Caesar's*, M. Jacques Maritain says: "Philosophy must distinguish three meanings in the word 'democracy' or everything will be hopelessly confused." The first he calls "demophily" or the Christian Democracy of the Popes, which is "simply the ardent desire to procure for the working classes . . . the human conditions of life required not only by charity, but also and in the first place by justice." This type of democracy as such is beside the purpose of the present enquiry. The second meaning is "political democracy or *Politeia*," as conceived by Aristotle and St. Thomas—true democracy. The third is:

"Democratism, or democracy as conceived by Rousseau, that is to say the religious myth of democracy, an entirely different thing from the legitimate democratic regime (*politeia*). Democracy in this sense becomes confused with the dogma of the Sovereign People, which combined with the dogma of the General Will and Law as the expression of Number, constitutes, in the extreme, the error of pantheism (the multitude-God).

"It must, however, be observed that what makes the condition of nations in modern times so tragic is that in fact, in concrete reality, the religious myth of Democracy has everywhere invaded and contaminated political democracy, and even every actual form of government." (*The Things that are Caesar's*, p. 132.)

The fanatical determination of some of the victors of the Second World War to impose "democracy" on the vanquished peoples strongly recalls the fanaticism of the French Revolutionaries in their triumphant march across Europe with a like end in view. The alleged "liberation" of nations to-day, and the *forcing* of "freedom" on them brings to mind the messianic decree of the National Convention of December, 1792; it ran as follows:

"The French nation . . . will treat as enemies

every people who, refusing liberty and equality or renouncing them, may wish to maintain, recall, or treat with a prince and privileged classes; on the other hand, it engages not to subscribe to any treaty and not to lay down its arms until after the establishment of the sovereignty and independence of the people whose territory the troops of the Republic shall have entered, and until the people have adopted the principles of equality and founded a free and democratic government."

We know how some of the irreligious democracies founded by the French Revolutionaries have ended; who can tell how the alleged "democracies" of our day will end?

If Rousseauism has contaminated every form of government, it is vitally necessary for the people of a new State such as Éire, planning the reconstruction of society, to have a thorough grasp of the radical errors of this subversive type of democracy.

### CIVIL RELIGION

Rousseau had supreme contempt for Christianity in general and for the Catholic Church in particular. He had an obsession that Christianity and liberty were incompatible, that slavery was the badge of the Christian. The irreligious "democracy" so much in evidence all over Europe to-day derives from Rousseau and is violently opposed to the Catholic Church. In the chapter on "Civil Religion" in the *Contrat Social* Rousseau expressed his conviction unequivocally:—"Christianity preaches only servitude and dependence. Its spirit is too favourable to tyranny for the latter not to profit by it always. True Christians are made to be slaves." A lover of France and a great French democrat, Alexis de Tocqueville, wrote of the effects of irreligion on the French Revolution as follows:

"The universal discredit into which all forms of religious belief fell at the end of the last (eighteenth) century has exercised without any doubt the greatest

influence on all our Revolution ; it has stamped its character. Nothing has contributed more to give to it the terrible expression it bears." (*L'Ancien Régime*, p. 161.)

Rousseau completed what Luther had begun, though each started with diametrically opposing concepts of the nature of man. Luther regarded man's nature as so vitiated by original sin that it was impossible for him to do any good. This fact coloured all his religious system and gave direction to his teaching on grace and the sacraments. Rousseau conceived man as being naturally good and his primal condition to be that of a state of innocence : in other words he denied the doctrine of original sin. " And this ' natural man ' who had no need of political society, was readily conceived as not needing the aid of God either. He was naturally perfect or at any rate perfectible. He had not fallen and therefore needed no Redeemer."<sup>1</sup> Natural religion was quite sufficient for him.

Owing to the perpetual conflict which he conceived as existing between the State and Religion, Rousseau determined to establish a lasting peace by completely subjecting the Church to the State, and by eliminating those differences of religious opinion which separated men into rival camps : this latter he proposed to effect by reducing the essential dogmas of religion to as few as possible. The influence of Locke's *Simplified Christianity* is obvious here.

Rousseau held that " no state was ever founded without religion serving as its basis " : his State rests on " Civil Religion." Indeed Rousseauism or Liberal Democracy itself is but a new type of religion ; and furthermore it is most intolerant. In his preface to his *History of the French Revolution*, Michelet, wrote : " The Revolution, someone said, ought to have placed itself under the banner of Luther or Calvin. I consider this would have been an abdication. The Revolution adopted no Church. Why ? Because it was itself a Church."

<sup>1</sup> F. R. Hoare, *The Papacy and the Modern State*, p. 160.

Of the quasi-religious fanaticism associated with this revolutionary democracy, Lecky says in his *History of England in the Eighteenth Century* :

“ That which distinguishes the French Revolution from other political movements is that it was directed by men who had adopted certain speculative *a priori* conceptions of political right with the fanaticism and proselytising fervour of a religious belief, and the Bible of their creed was the *Contrat Social* of Rousseau.” (v., p. 345.)

A. de Tocqueville writes in a similar strain :

“ The French Revolution has worked, in relation to this world, precisely in the same way as religious revolutions worked as regards the next world ; it has considered the citizen in an abstract manner, apart from all particular societies, just as religions consider man in general as independent of country and time. It has not asked what was the particular right of a French citizen, but what were the general duties and rights of man in the political order.

“ As it had the appearance of tending to the regeneration of the human race much more than the reform of France, it has kindled a passion that, up to then, the most violent political revolution had never been able to produce. It has inspired proselytism and fired propaganda. In this way it has been able to assume the appearance of a religious revolution which has so much stirred contemporaries ; or rather it became itself a sort of new religion, an imperfect religion it is true, without God, without cult, without another life, but which, nevertheless, as Mohammedanism, has flooded the whole earth with soldiers, apostles and martyrs.” (*l'Ancien Régime*, p. 22.)

The following is the outline of the dogmas of Rousseau’s “purely civil profession of faith” taken from the section of the *Contrat Social* on “Civil Religion.”

“Without having power to compel anyone to believe them : the Sovereign may banish from the State whoever does not believe them ; it may banish him not as impious, but as unsociable, as incapable of sincerely loving law and justice and of sacrificing at need his life to his duty. But, if anyone, after publicly acknowledging these dogmas, behaves like an unbeliever in them, he should be punished with death : he has committed the greatest of crimes, he has lied before the laws.

“The dogmas of civil religion ought to be simple, few in number, stated with precision, and without explanations or commentaries. The existence of the Deity, powerful, wise, beneficent, prescient and bountiful, the life to come, the happiness of the just, the punishment of the wicked, the sanctity of the social contract and of the laws ; these are the positive dogmas. As for the negative dogmas, I limit them to one only, that is, intolerance.

“Now that there is, and can be, no longer any exclusive national religion we should tolerate all those which tolerate others, so far as their dogmas have nothing contrary to the duties of a citizen. But whoever dares to say : ‘Outside the Church there is no salvation,’ ought to be driven from the State, unless the State be the Church and the Prince be the Pontiff.”

This last sentence, of course, has special reference to the Catholic Church. Rousseau’s Civil Religion may be regarded as a development of Luther’s heresy. It may be said that Luther decatholicised Catholicism and the residuum was Protestantism ; and that Rousseau dechristianised Christianity, and the resultant was Deistic-Naturalism or Civil Religion.

M. Maritain analyses the religious myth of Rousseauism, the evisceration of Christianity, the laicisation of the Gospel,—in his *Three Reformers* ; the salient points are as follows :

“It was Jean-Jacques (Rousseau) who completed

the amazing performance, which Luther began, of inventing a Christianity separated from the Church of Christ: it was he who completed the *naturalisation* of the Gospel. It is to him that we owe that corpse of Christian ideas whose immense putrefaction poisons the universe of to-day. Rousseauism is 'a Christian body of mystical type,' says M. Sellière. A heresy fundamentally and radically, I grant; a complete realisation of the Pelagian heresy through the mysticism of sensation: let us say more exactly that Rousseauism is a radical naturalistic corruption of Christian feeling.

"That very fact, it seems to me, shows us how useful the study of Jean-Jacques Rousseau is for us. It provides us with a certain principle of discrimination. If we discover in ourselves, if we meet in the world, any principle that depends on Rousseauism, we shall know that this principle is not a new one, a young principle that we might be tempted to adopt and christianise, but that it is an old principle working itself out, that it is Christianity liquefying and rotten." (pp. 146, 147, 148.)<sup>1</sup>

This is a terrible indictment not merely of Rousseauism but of all types of spurious and corrupt Christianity besides. Luther began the corruption of the Christian religion, Rousseau finished it: civilisation is collapsing as a result. Anything of good in Rousseau's democracy has been detached from the living stem of the Church and though dead and corrupting it passes as if alive. In *Theonas* M. Maritain develops this idea at length, and concludes by saying that "Jean-Jacques Rousseau who completed what Luther had begun—the divorce of Christianity from the Church and from its necessary connection with the Supernatural—is truly the father of the modern world, in so far as it is a world of humanism centred upon man." (pp. 139-141.)

<sup>1</sup> Trotsky, whose hatred of democracy was surpassed only by his hatred of Christianity, said that democracy was only "a paraphrase of the Christian religion, a secularised version of Christianity."

Christopher Dawson supports M. Maritain's views on the borrowed creed of Rousseau and the Revolution. He writes :

" But in spite of its unorthodox and even anti-Christian character, all the positive elements in the new creed were derived from the old religious tradition of Christendom, . . . Eighteenth-century Deism was but the ghost or shadow of Christianity, a mental abstraction from the reality of a historical religion, which possessed no independent life of its own. It retained certain fundamental Christian conceptions—the belief in a benevolent Creator, the idea of an overruling Providence which ordered all things for the best, and the chief precepts of the Christian moral law ; but all these were desupernaturalised and fitted into the utilitarian rational scheme of contemporary philosophy. Thus the moral law was divested of all ascetic and other-worldly elements and assimilated to practical philanthropy, and the order of Providence was transformed into a mechanistic natural law. Above all this was the case with the idea of *Progress*, for while the new philosophy had no place for the supernaturalism of the Christian eschatology, it could not divest itself of the Christian teleological conception of life. Thus the belief in the moral perfectibility and the indefinite progress of the human race took the place of the Christian faith in the life of the world to come, as the final goal of human effort. (*Progress and Religion*, p. 190.)

Perhaps it may seem that too much emphasis has been laid on the philosophico-religious basis of Liberal Democracy and that too much space is devoted to this discussion. It is absolutely necessary to grasp the significance of this factor if one is to understand the world situation to-day. What we see round about us is fundamentally a continuation of the struggle between Rousseauism and the Catholic Church which began in the declining years of the eighteenth century and has been gathering force until our own day.

Joseph de Maistre said of his time, "The present generation beholds the greatest spectacle ever staged before the eyes of men ; the duel of Christianity and the Enlightenment. The lists are open, the two contestants are at grips and the world is looking on." It is a life and death struggle between Secularism and Catholicism. Harold Laski asserts that " the principles of 1789 are nothing so much as an attack upon the kind of world for which the authority of Rome has in general stood sponsor ever since the days of Constantine." (*Faith, Reason and Civilisation* (1944), p. 85.)

This battle is being fought with intensity. And through the many political divisions of men all over Europe to-day we can see the grouping and mustering of forces for the great final clash which will give success to those who stand for God and His Christ or to those who stand in opposition. Impressed by the great issues at stake, Pope Pius XI said in his encyclical, *Caritate Christi Compulsi* (1932) :

" It is necessary that we likewise unite all our forces in one solid, compact line against the battalions of evil, enemies of God no less than of the human race. For in this conflict there is really question of the fundamental problem of the universe, and of the most important decision proposed to man's free will. *For God or against God*, this once more is the alternative that shall decide the destinies of all mankind ; in politics, in finance, in morals, in the sciences and arts, in the State, in civil and domestic society, in the East, in the West, everywhere this question confronts us as the deciding factor because of the consequences that flow from it. . . . In the name of the Lord, therefore, We conjure individuals and nations . . . to put aside that narrow individualism and base egoism. . . . Let them all unite together even at the cost of heavy sacrifices, to save themselves and mankind."

These words were written in 1932 ; how very much more pressing is the need of united action to-day !

E. Kohn-Bramstedt wrote in *France Since 1815* :

“ The French Revolution was a major operation on the social body of France and the scar is still visible to-day. The revolutionary heritage is *Les deux Frances* . . . the forces of the counter-revolution on the one side, those of revolutionary tradition and liberty of thought on the other.

“ French history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been simultaneously a battle for and against the *Weltanschauung* of the free-thinkers, for or against the *idée laïque*. For amidst the vicissitudes of modern development the Church has never lost its vigour and is still to-day, if not the only, at least the only important religious body in France.” (Mayer, *Political Thought*, p. 251.)

This battle is being fought not alone in France to-day ; it is being fought all over Europe. Not only are there *les deux Frances*, there are also *les deux Europes*. Sect-sundered Protestantism, which is disintegrating into colourless “ non-institutionalism,” is a waning force. The future lies between a Catholic counter-revolution and the revolution of the secularists ; not a mere negative or obstructionist counter-revolution, but a positive Christian Revolution fearlessly asserting the principles of social justice of the Encyclicals and boldly implementing them.

It is indeed encouraging to hear the sincere appeals of the leaders of the different Protestant Churches, pleading for *united Christian action* against the secularist hordes massed under the banner of Anti-Christ. The work of Luther is reaching its finale ; the so-called “ liberty of a Christian man ” is ending in social chaos and anarchy. Rousseau and the French revolutionaries, who learned in the school of Locke and the English Deists, have speeded up the work of destruction ; and to-day the world stands disillusioned and questioning at the verge of the great abyss. Perhaps, even now at the eleventh hour nations will retrace their footsteps and return to Christ and His

Church. At least it is possible, as suggested by Pope Pius XI and Pope Pius XII, that all those who "acknowledge Christ as their Master" should under the leadership of the Catholic Church—the greatest, the oldest, the Mother Church—form a United Christian Front in the defence of the common Christian Civilisation of the West; such organisation has been outlined in the conclusion of Part I.

A recent happening gives promise of much hope. The Conservative Popular Party of Switzerland invited the leaders of the Christian Democratic Parties in sixteen countries to a conference at Lucerne which lasted from 27th February to 2nd March, 1947. Seven countries participated actively; the French M.R.P. was represented by observers. The Czech Popular Party and the Hungarian Smallholders' Party regretted that they could not be present. Each of the participating groups reported on the religious, economic, political and social conditions of their countries. There was unanimous agreement that "Europe, shaken to its foundations, cannot be consolidated till the principles of respect for human personality, of liberty and of social progress are carried into effect."

Another conference, at which prominent Christian Democrats from fourteen nations were present, was held at Liège the following June. Among those present were Madame Peyrolles, the Vice-President of the French National Assembly; Dr. Hurdes, the Austrian Minister for Education; the Basque President Aguirre; the Belgian ex-Premier, M. Paul Van Zeeland. Reports on the condition of labour in each country were submitted. The conference expressed disapproval of large-scale nationalisation and advocated instead the extension of ownership and the admission of workers to a share in both profits and management.<sup>1</sup>

#### LIBERALISM

In his opening address at the Social Summer School of the Christus Rex Society, Drogheda, August, 1947, His

<sup>1</sup> This movement is but yet embryonic: further interesting developments may be expected.

Grace Dr. D'Alton, Primate of All Ireland, referred to *Liberalism*, and its condemnation by Pope Pius IX, as follows :

“ In the light of the tragic history of recent years we can best assess Pius IX’s marvellous insight into the dangerous trends of his age, and we can thank God for the divinely inspired guidance of Catholic teaching in these and kindred problems. When the *Syllabus* was published in 1864, the so-called advanced thinkers of the day came out in full cry that the Church was the enemy of progress and enlightenment. Yet, if the Pope’s warnings had been heeded, the world would have been spared much of the suffering and disorder that now weigh so heavily upon it.”

It is necessary to examine *Liberalism* briefly, for it is little understood by Catholics and it is much misunderstood by non-Catholics.

From Rousseau, as from a major source, sprang that pestilential substitute for religion, that philosophy of licence, known to Catholic philosophy and theology as *Liberalism* : further back in the line of descent are John Locke and Martin Luther. It would need a special volume to deal in any detail with the religious, political, and social errors which have been grouped together by the Catholic Church under the comprehensive term *Liberalism* : this, indeed, must *not* be in any way confused with the political use of the term as identified with the *Liberal Party* in Britain. Liberalism as understood here is a *synthesis of the modern secularist errors* to which we have referred in the course of the preceding pages. Jacques Maritain says of it :

“ Liberalism as is commonly known is a condemned error. It was Liberalism above all which Pius IX had in mind when he condemned the following proposition : ‘ The Roman Pontiff can and ought to reconcile himself to and compromise with Progress, Liberalism and

Modern Civilisation.' (Syllabus of Errors, Prop. 80.) Leo XIII summed up the whole error in a single phrase, 'Every man is a law unto himself,' which is merely the fundamental axiom of Rousseau in the social order and of Kant in the moral order; 'obey nobody but yourself.' It expresses the central claim of modern immanentism.

"Pope Leo has developed a full and important doctrine on this question, more particularly in the Encyclicals *Immortale Dei* and *Libertas Praestantissimum*, the importance of which is as urgent as ever." (*The Things that are Caesar's*, pp. 133-134.)

Christopher Dawson described Liberalism as a secularist substitute for the Christian religion which men had lost owing to the influence of the Reformation and Rationalism:

"European Liberalism," he writes, "is a temporary phenomenon which belongs to the phase of transition between a Christian culture and one that is completely secularised. European culture had already ceased to be Christian in the eighteenth century, but it still retained the inherited moral standards and values of a Christian civilisation. And so it attempted to erect these standards into an independent system by providing a rational philosophic justification for them. This was the Liberal Idealism that was the faith of the nineteenth century—not a religious faith, but a quasi-religious substitute for one." (*Religion and the Modern State*, p. 64.)<sup>1</sup>

Elsewhere he has analysed Liberalism as follows:

"This creed—and the social and economic order which arose from it—is entirely inconsistent with Catholic principles and was in fact the most dangerous enemy and rival that the Catholic Church had to meet in modern

<sup>1</sup> In his address at Rome, 1879, on the occasion of his receiving the "biglietto," Newman referred to Religious Liberalism so clearly associated with Locke and Rousseau as follows: "Liberalism in religion is the doctrine that there is no positive truth in religion, but that one creed is as good as another and this is the teaching which is gaining substance and force daily. It is inconsistent with any recognition of any religion as true. It teaches that all must be tolerated, for all are matters of opinion."

times. It is a philosophy of separation and irresponsibility which breaks up the moral organism of society into a chaos of competitive individualism. It denies the sovereignty of the moral law in the economic world, the principle of authority in politics, and the existence of an objective divine truth in religion. It makes self-interest the supreme law in economics, the will of the majority the sovereign power in the State, and private opinion the only arbiter in religious matters."

At the moment when Europe was held spellbound by the revolutionaries' doctrine of "Progress," Pius IX startled the political and intellectual worlds by issuing the *Syllabus of Errors* on the same day as the Encyclical *Quanta Cura*, 8th December, 1864, exactly ten years after the definition of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. Probably no papal document in recent times evoked such widespread indignation and hostility. It was a challenge to the spirit of the times, a frontal attack on Rousseauism and the Gospel of "Progress." Its publication was forbidden in Russia, France and the Italy of Victor Emmanuel; Bismarck and other European statesmen protested vehemently against it. Writing in 1931 of this incident, Christopher Dawson said :

"When Pius IX denied that it was the duty of the Church to come to terms with Liberalism and Progress and Modern Civilisation, his pronouncement was greeted with a chorus of execrations from every country in Europe. It seemed as though the Papacy was pronouncing its own sentence of death, for the triumph of material progress seemed inevitable and no one could conceive the possibility of its failure.

"To-day all this is changed—Liberalism and Progress and Modern civilisation appear in a very different light from that of seventy years ago.<sup>1</sup> . . . Liberalism is

<sup>1</sup> Viewing this papal condemnation in the light of World War II, W. A. Orton in his book, *The Liberal Tradition*, made the following comment: "We can hardly avoid the reflection that modern civilisation, 1944 style, is, indeed, pretty difficult for Christian men to come to terms with."

everywhere in decline and Parliamentarism and democracy have suffered a general loss of prestige. Nationalism alone is still powerful, but in a grim and menacing shape which bodes little good to the cause of civilisation." (General Introduction to *Essays in Order*, pp. 13 and 17).

Nevertheless, the social virus of Liberalism, which is almost a synonym for Individualism, is the great obstacle to the restoration of Christian civilisation to-day.

The *Syllabus* contained eighty condemned propositions grouped under ten different heads. It is a highly specialised and technical document. Each error must be read in conjunction with the source from which it has been taken or in connection with some previous papal condemnation.

Proposition 80 referred to above, must be read in the light of the Allocution "Jamdudum," 1861, in which Pope Pius IX said : "They ask the Roman Pontiff to reconcile himself with Progress, with Liberalism (to use their own expression) and modern civilisation. . . . Let true names be restored to things, and then this Holy See will be found to be always consistent. In fact, it was always the protector and initiator of true civilisation." The *Catholic Encyclopaedia* comments on the *Syllabus* as follows :

"The importance of the *Syllabus* lies in its opposition to the high tide of the intellectual movement of the nineteenth century which strove to sweep away the foundation of all human and divine order. The *Syllabus* is not only a defence of the inalienable rights of God, of the Church and of Truth against the abuse of the words *freedom* and *culture* on the part of unbridled Liberalism, but it is also a protest, earnest and energetic, against the attempt to alienate the influence of the Catholic Church on the life of nations and of individuals, on the family and the school."

Once again it must be emphasised that a cursory reading of the errors of the *Syllabus* may lead to serious misunderstanding ; they must be read against the background as

already indicated. These errors<sup>1</sup> have been amplified and explained both by the Vatican Council and in various encyclicals, especially in the following issued by Pope Leo XIII : *Immortale Dei* ("On the Christian Constitution of States") 1885 ; *Liberatas Praestantissimum* ("On True Liberty") 1888 ; *Sapientiae Christianae* ("On the Civic Duties of Christians") 1890 ; and also in *Ubi Arcano Dei* ("On the Troubles left by the First World War") of Pius XI, 1922.

The number of educated lay Catholics in Éire who have seriously studied these encyclicals or the *Syllabus* is, it is to be feared, depressingly small. Reference to the *Syllabus*, outside Catholic publications, is almost unknown in Éire. There has, however, been one striking instance which deserves mention. The *Syllabus* was vigorously attacked by a distinguished Irish Protestant lay-leader. The attack appeared in a pamphlet, *Faith and Faction in Ireland Now* (1946), by Dr. Stanford, Professor of Greek, Trinity College, Dublin, and is as follows :

" The honourable and long-honoured word ' liberal ' —it has a place in the Bible and in the noblest writings of classical antiquity—has been condemned by the Papal *Syllabus* of 1864. The terms of that document do not encourage the hope that the traditional liberalism (in the best sense) of Irish Nationalism will survive without a struggle. . . .

" Non-Roman Catholics in Ireland must wonder whether the policy of the Roman Church is to be based on this *Syllabus* or not, and whether the Governments of Éire intend to abandon the traditional liberalism when the opportune time comes."

<sup>1</sup> Proposition 3 of the *Syllabus* runs : " Human reason, having no regard whatever of God, is the sole arbiter of truth and falsity, of good and evil ; it is a law unto itself, and of its own natural resources it is adequate to secure the good of men and peoples " : this is Rationalism. Proposition 39 of the *Syllabus*, runs : " The State, as the origin and source of all rights, possesses a juridical competence that is circumscribed by no limits." This leads to the Totalitarian State. The *Syllabus*, with its 80 condemned propositions and appropriate references to papal pronouncements, is given fully in *The Mystical Body of Christ in the Modern World*, by Dr. Denis Fahy, C.S.Sp., pp. 120-31.

As this pamphlet was written in a rather provocative manner (though no doubt unintentionally), it is not surprising that when it was reviewed in a leading article (of almost two columns) in the *Standard*, 12th April, 1946, the reviewer showed some irritation in his criticism. The following are some typical passages :

“ Coming from one who represents an alien-planted Church of a small minority, whose blood-stained history reaches from penal laws to the tithe war, it would be hard to beat this for sheer effrontery. Coming from a professed Christian, it shows an amazing lack of justice and charity. Yes, these fellows (Catholics) are all right now, they are treating us decently in a way we did not behave when *we* (Protestants) were the top dogs—but wait till an opportune time comes and they will wipe out all us Protestants. Having been perforce acquitted of intolerance to-day, Irish Catholics are indicted by dark hints about a hypothetical future.

“ Moreover, coming from a university professor living in a city with splendid libraries and with distinguished Catholic theologians accessible, this crude charge displays appalling irresponsibility and culpable ignorance. Were we to make critical and textual pronouncements, say on the Greek dramatists, Professor Stanford would rightly say : *Ne sutor supra crepidam*. How then, we may well ask, can such a man make foolhardy incursions into regions—such as Catholic doctrine and jurisprudence—without precautions or preparations ? There must be a streak of gullibility or prejudice in his academic make-up.

“ The assertion that Liberalism—in its relevant modern sense—is lauded in classical antiquity and in the Bible is puerile enough, and it is shockingly naïve, for this Trinity don to inform us that the word ‘ liberal ’ has been condemned by Rome, and that our present Constitution is based on “ traditional liberalism ” and consequently opposed to Papal teaching.”

The extent to which the principles of Liberalism have unconsciously penetrated into some Irish Catholics, notwithstanding their Catholic upbringing, is at times rather disconcerting. This is especially apparent in some of those who pose, or who wish to be regarded, as "intellectuals." It would not be difficult to pick out, not infrequently, from letters or articles or pronouncements (appearing in Irish papers and journals) by professing Catholics, passages which are quite at variance with the official teaching of their Church; this is particularly the case where there is question of *Liberty* in some form or another, especially what they regard as "intellectual liberty,"—the right to think, say, and write as one pleases. It would be quite outside the purpose of this Essay to examine in detail this alleged "liberty," which is really "licence," advocated by Liberalism.

Reference has just been made to the ignorance of educated Catholics of the Papal Encyclicals and of the *Syllabus*. In his book, *What is Education?* Dr. Leen, C.S.Sp., a distinguished Irish educationist of wide experience, made some striking comments on this lack of knowledge which would seem to imply that the thoroughly Catholic formation of youth in Irish secondary schools is not quite all that it should be,—at least, if one is to judge by post-school results. Dr. Leen said :

" The indifference of our ' educated ' classes to acquiring an enlightened and advanced knowledge of the faith in which they have been reared is one of the disheartening features of our native Catholicity. With few exceptions they take little interest in works devoted to the exposition of Catholic dogma and Catholic philosophy. They are content to go through life with the meagre and rather jejune instruction they have had at school. They do not take the trouble to read the Papal Encyclicals. At heart they tend to regard them as a pious theorising that has little practical significance. They look upon them as containing just those statements which the Pope

from his position is expected to pronounce at regular intervals. The Papal pronouncements on social questions, it is true, attracted some attention because it was impossible to shut one's eyes to the fact that they were extremely topical. But what little heed is given to the warning words of the Popes of the last hundred years as they analysed the philosophic errors of their days and gave warning that these errors would be the fertile source of the evils that have actually come upon the world ! How few of our 'educated' Catholics are conversant with the *Syllabus* of Pius IX ? The truth is, that as a direct consequence of our schooling, those who pass through secondary and university and professional courses attach little importance to ideas and much to facts. The positive trend of our instruction produced this mentality. All this should make one seriously doubt of the value of the knowledge acquired, and make one fairly certain that it does not serve to make a perfect Christian." (p. 150.)

#### AN ANTIDOTE TO LIBERALISM

The above educational defect should be remedied. *Educated Catholic Leaders* are vitally essential for a nascent Christian democracy such as ours and no effort should be spared to develop them. A *special course* for training them should be included in the programme of the last year, or last two years, of secondary school life, and should be such as to develop an interest in and give an impetus to further study of social problems when the young folk go out into the world of men.

But when it is recalled that *three out of every four* complete their *general* education in the *primary* school, and that these will constitute three-fourths of the electorate who may have at times to decide big issues and perhaps even the fate of the country, one can see a compelling reason for the promotion of courses of *Adult Education* and for the education of Catholic lay leaders among the workers, directing special attention to the false principles

deriving from Liberalism. Adult Education is a special term having relation to *general culture and social education*: it is distinct from Technical and Vocational Education as such. The British White Paper on "Educational Reconstruction," 1943, refers to it as follows:

"Without provision for adult education, the national system must be incomplete, and it has been well said that the measure of the effectiveness of earlier education is the extent to which in some form or other it is continued voluntarily in later life. It is only when the pupil or student reaches maturer years that he will have served an apprenticeship in the affairs of life sufficient to enable him fully to fit himself for service to the community. *It is thus within the wider sphere of adult education that an ultimate training in democratic citizenship must be sought.*"<sup>1</sup>

Before the Great War the Workers' Educational Association had set up in Britain a network of classes, organised by regional officers and local committees, subsidised by the Ministry of Education, and very frequently affiliated to the local university. During the War, the Army Bureau of Current Affairs (A.B.C.A.) had organised a widespread system of general education within the Forces.<sup>2</sup> In June, 1946, the National Foundation of Adult Education was formally constituted as a link between (a) local education authorities ; and, (b) voluntary bodies. In the former group (a) are the following among others: the County Councils' Association, the Association of Municipal Corporations, the Federation of Education Committees. In the (b) group the following have representation on the executive: the Workers' Education Committee, the Y.M.C.A., the Universities' Council for Adult Education, the National Federation of Women's Institutes, the Co-operative Union, the Trades

<sup>1</sup> See chapter iv., "Adult Education," in *The Future of Education*; also chapter vi., "Education for Citizenship," in *Education for a World Adrift*, both by Sir Richard Livingstone.

<sup>2</sup> See *Adult Education—The Record of the British Army*, Hawkins and Brimble, 1947, 15s.

Union Congress Education Committee, and a representative from the Ministry of Education. The purpose of this National Foundation of Adult Education is "to promote understanding between the bodies engaged in adult education with a view to co-operation whenever possible on matters of common interests."<sup>1</sup>

A speeding-up of post-school education, as envisaged in the Education Act, 1944, took place in March, 1947, when the Minister of Education sent to local education authorities in England and Wales a circular (No. 133) which directed them to prepare schemes of further education providing for the educational and leisure-time needs of all who have left school. Schemes and plans were to be submitted to the Minister by 31st March, 1948. To aid the authorities the Minister issued a 200-page volume entitled *Further Education*.<sup>2</sup>

The volume referred to is very valuable as giving a detailed conspectus of the system of post-school education under the Education Act of 1944. The following are a few of the subjects dealt with ; they will give an idea of the contents : Adult Education, Community Centres, Local Colleges, County Colleges, Correspondence Courses, National Colleges, Regional Colleges, Evening Classes, Films, Libraries, Playing Fields, Rural Problems, Village Colleges, Village Halls, Visual Methods, Youth Centres, Youth Leaders, Youth Service, etc., etc. It sets forth the object of Adult Education as follows :

" The aim of any programme of adult education must be to provide men and women with opportunities for developing a maturity of outlook and judgment, for increasing their sense of responsibility and awareness, for helping them to evolve a philosophy of life, and to develop interests which will enrich their leisure. This

<sup>1</sup> The Scandinavian democracies (Sweden, Norway, Denmark) have an excellent system of Adult Education in their many Folk Schools which may be studied with profit by Irish democrats. S. Africa moved in April, 1946. See Thompson's *Adult Education in New Zealand* and the report—“ Further Education for Adults ” (New Zealand).

<sup>2</sup> Pamphlet No. 8, Stationery Office, 2s.

is an immense task: since the potential student body is not, as in secondary schools or in universities, selected by age or by ability, but comprises the entire adult population of all ages and of all degrees of ability and taste. It is well, however, that the reach of all concerned with adult education should exceed their grasp, and that they should keep before them a clear idea of the ultimate aim; applying this as a touchstone to experiment, so that quality may be preserved and education be more than entertainment."

Reference was made above to "a philosophy of life." Is it "a philosophy of life" deriving from Christianity? This seems scarcely possible owing to the de-Christianised condition of the masses in Britain as described in Part I of this Essay. One must, therefore, conclude that the "philosophy of life" will derive from Liberalism,—not the *anti-religious* type so common on the Continent, but a peculiarly British type, that of Religious Indifferentism; all the more dangerous, perhaps, because it is so insidious.

Another marked development of Adult Education in Britain was announced in the Annual Report of the Labour Party Executive, presented to the Annual Meeting of the Trades Union Congress, May, 1947,—*The Labour Party Educational Trust*. This Trust was established to finance a system of political schools,—day-schools, week-end schools, period-schools—study groups, lectures, university courses, central or other libraries, publications, correspondence courses. The trustees are P. Noel-Baker, M.P., Arthur Greenwood, M.P., Morgan Philips,<sup>1</sup> Emanuel Shinwell, M.P., and T. Williamson, M.P. The aims of the Trust are:—"To educate the public to a higher conception of social ideas and values and of the personal obligations of duty and service which are necessary for the realisation of social civilisation." The system is destined in particular for prospective candidates for election to Parliament or to local authorities; for speakers, lecturers, labour leaders,

<sup>1</sup> Secretary of the National Executive of the Labour Party.

organisers, etc. The education will embrace Social Ethics, Economics, History, Parliamentary Constitution and Procedure, Local Government, Law and Conduct of Elections, Party Administration, Literature, Philosophy, Art and Science.

Two great national schemes of Adult Education are being launched simultaneously in Britain ; the Government scheme envisages the people irrespective of political affiliations, while the Educational Trust is directed to Trades Unionists and those who support the Labour Party. All this is a very striking advance ; but the value of these and similar schemes will obviously depend upon the nature of the social education given and upon the philosophy upon which it is based. It can scarcely be doubted that, in the present condition of England, both systems will stem from that Liberalism which has been described above.

As many Irish Trades Unions (Amalgamated Unions) are linked up with Trades Unions in Britain, the working of the British Labour Educational Trust will be followed with deep interest by the members of the Amalgamated Unions in Éire, and not only by them but by Irish Labour as a whole, especially when national unity is restored to the Trades Union Movement, for at present it is divided into two sections. But, while the system of social education in Britain will be that suited to the conditions of the British masses and will therefore be "liberal," it must be remembered that roughly ninety-five per cent. of Irish workers are Catholics, and moreover practising Catholics,<sup>1</sup> and that their Church supplies them with a social philosophy, political and economic, which is directly opposed to Liberalism.

The first signs of Adult Education in Éire have recently appeared. At the instance of the Irish Labour Leaders, an experimental course was given by Dr. George O'Brien in University College, Dublin, 1945-46 ; and again in 1946-47. The Trades Union Congress entered into an arrangement with the Vocational Education Committee,

<sup>1</sup> Catholics are 94.6 per cent. of the total population.

Dublin, and as a result a series of eleven weekly lectures, beginning 17th January, 1947, was given at the High School of Commerce, Rathmines : the main subjects were Economics, and Economic Organisation. The movement is at yet only in its exploratory stage, but there can be little doubt that after this empirical period has passed, there will be considerable development of Adult Education under Trades Union patronage, at first in Dublin and then elsewhere. Indeed, there has been already a development in Cork where a " Workers' Diploma Course in Social and Economic Science " was inaugurated by Dr. Alfred O'Rahilly in University College, 4th October, 1946. He said in his opening address : " This was the first real attempt of any University in Ireland to open its doors as fully as possible to the workers, and to put them on the same level as other students." It is interesting to note, in passing, that the Labour Party Conference in Wexford, September, 1946, passed a resolution calling for the establishment of an Irish Labour College.<sup>1</sup>

These various signs indicate that we are on the eve of an extension of Adult Education in Éire. But it is necessary to add that for Catholics Political Education and Economic Education cannot, as it may appear to some, be divorced from Religion ; this has been amply demonstrated throughout this Essay. There is, therefore, serious need of formally guiding the nascent adult educational movement according to the principles officially laid down by the Church, and which are to be found in the Social Encyclicals (political and economic) already referred to. Organisations such as the English Catholic Social Guild and the Catholic Workers' College, Oxford, supply admirable precedents ; and their long and wide experience will be readily available to Catholic Progressives in Éire. Most valuable information

<sup>1</sup> Since the above was written, Mr. John Swift in his Presidential address at the annual meeting of the Irish T. U. C., Waterford, 29th July, 1947, said : " The Congress should give more thought and time to developing adult education, particularly in economic and social matters. The aim of the outgoing Executive for a week-end school in Dublin was a modest one ; they should ask the unions to support a summer school for next year." (*Irish Press*, 30th July, 1947.)

on all this subject would also be forthcoming from the "Action Populaire" which has done such magnificent work for the French Social Movement and which has made a notable contribution towards the formation of *Le Mouvement Républicain Populaire*—the French Christian Democrat Party, M.R.P.—so very much in the news since the recovery of France.

It is obvious that in the new era of adult suffrage in which the "common people" are to play such an important part, it is of primary importance to organise a system of adult education to help the masses to realise and discharge their *social responsibilities*. The need for adult education in Éire, where three out of every four voters have but a primary school education, needs no further stressing. And considering also that nearly ninety-five per cent. of the organised workers of Éire are Catholics, the need of special adult education in Catholic political and economic principles as an antidote to the widespread Liberalism of the present-day Labour-world is a pressing necessity.

In an article in *The Month* (May-June, 1946) Rev. L. de Coninck, S.J., gives a summary of the many discussions held by the 2,500 priests who were his fellow-prisoners in the notorious camp at Dachau. One point discussed throws an interesting sidelight on the problem of Adult Education:

"How is it that we (Catholics) have given practically no thought to 'humanism for the working man'? The explanation may lie in the fact that we have been pre-occupied (and justly so) with the formation of leaders and men of influence. There was a time when the middle classes were in virtual control of public affairs. That time has passed, and now, whether we like it or not, the proletariat influences and puts its stamp on the direction of the public policy. From its ranks have been recruited and are being recruited, I will not say all, but very many leaders in social and political life. The people that provides a country's leaders needs education: it is time for the proletariat to benefit from true educational effort."

It is also time that public leaders in Éire became aware of the pressing need of Adult Education as a *sine qua non* in the building of the new Christian Democratic State.

#### LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY

Luther and his revolution prepared the way for Rousseau and the French Revolution : the precursors of the men of 1789 were the German rebel peasants of 1525. The *Modern Cambridge History* referring to the "Peasants' Revolt" says :

" The movement started by Luther was in its essence revolutionary. . . . It is the indefeasible rights of the *sovereign laity* which he asserts against the temporary and illegitimate tyranny of the priesthood. . . . The revolution being, however it may disguise itself, a fact, it is natural that a party should arise to take the Reformers at their word, and assert that all Christians were equal, not only as priests but as *kings*. If a hierarchial order was proved either noxious or superfluous by the famous text, 'Who hath made us Kings and priests,' —how was it better with the civil authority ? The connexion of all this with the principles of the Reformation and its extension of the ideas at the bottom of Luther's 'Liberty of a Christian Man' becomes evident in comparing with this tract the Twelve Articles of the peasants. Professor Pollard says—' It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the German peasants of 1525 anticipated most of the French ideas of 1789.' "

It was Luther's ideas, reduced to their logical conclusion, that led to the Peasants' Revolt. Professor George O'Brien points out as follows the *nexus* between Luther's Revolution and that of 1789 :

" The French Revolution exactly corresponded in politics to the Reformation in religion ; both were uprisings against authority, and both attempted to place

society upon the basis of rights rather than upon that of duties, on which it had previously reposed. Rousseau was the Luther of the political revolution."

Luther's "Universal Priesthood"—that all men are equal as priests—finds its echo in the *sovereign equality* of citizens as proclaimed by Rousseau. Châlier, a French revolutionary leader, addressing the Club at Lyons, cried out: "You are Kings and more than Kings; do you not feel the sovereignty circulating in your veins?" Luther's idea of the untrammelled liberty of the individual in religion found its parallel in Rousseau's idea of "the Citizen" in politics.

It is rather interesting to compare the paradox with which Luther begins his famous tract *The Liberty of a Christian Man* and the paradox with which Rousseau formally opens *The Social Contract*.

*Luther*

"The Christian is free, lord of all things, the servant of nobody.

"The Christian is bound, servant of all things, slave to everybody."<sup>1</sup>

*Rousseau*

"Man is born free and everywhere is in chains.

"Many a one believes himself the master of others and yet he is a greater slave than they."

The French social revolutionary of the eighteenth century is but the echo of the German religious revolutionary of the sixteenth. Liberty and Equality are the central shibboleths of each. Men are free; men are equal. But, then, what is Liberty; what is Equality? Dr. R. Murray says that "*The Freedom of a Christian Man* breathed the very spirit of individualism and was one of

<sup>1</sup> This translation has been taken from a Protestant source: Luther's words are as follows:

Christianus homo omnium Dominus est liberrimus, nulli subjectus: Christianus homo omnium servus est officiosissimus, omnibus subjectus.

the most important political pamphlets ever published." (*The Individual and the State*.) Yet, side by side with this intense individualism Luther preached the *absolute power* of the Prince; and Dr. Murray does not hesitate to affirm that modern dictatorship derives from Luther, and adds that "Hitler and Mussolini lay hidden behind him." But they were also hidden behind Rousseau.

In existing human society and from the beginning of the history of man, liberty and equality in the natural order have not been found co-existent. Men are not equal in their moral, intellectual or physical powers. If equality of citizens in a State is to be achieved, it must be accomplished by ruthless suppression and mass murder ; this happened during the first years of the French Revolution and during the early stages of the Bolshevik Revolution, nor has it ended yet in Soviet Russia. If men are free to develop their intellectual and physical powers, there will inevitably result inequality.

The more that either liberty or equality is stressed, the more the one or the other is suppressed.<sup>1</sup> The French emphasise *equality* with the result that *liberty* suffers as French Catholics know to their cost. The English emphasise *liberty* with the result that there arises great social inequality. A. de Tocqueville said that the French revolutionaries "had sought to be free in order to make themselves equal; but in proportion as equality was more established by the aid of freedom, freedom was thereby rendered more difficult of attainment" (*Oeuvres* iii).

One of the pivotal ideas of Rousseau's political philosophy is that of "liberty," but it is a false, a spurious liberty. Contrast Edmund Burke's reasoned notion of liberty with the wild licence of the Revolution. Burke wrote as follows in a private letter to M. Dupont in which he contrasted the revolutionaries' idea with his own :

" Of all the loose terms in the world liberty is the

<sup>1</sup> Writing of the time of feudalism, Christopher Dawson says : " On the whole there was a lot of freedom and no equality, while to-day there is a lot of equality and hardly any freedom." (*The Judgment of the Nations*, p. 79.)

most indefinite. *It is not solitary, unconnected, individual, selfish liberty, as if every man were to regulate the whole of his conduct by his own will.* The liberty I mean is *social freedom.* It is that state of things in which liberty is secured by equality of restraint. A constitution of things in which the liberty of no one man, and no body of men, and no number of men can find means to trespass on the liberty of any person or any description of persons, in the society. This kind of liberty is, indeed, but another name for justice; ascertained by wise laws, and secured by well-constructed institutions. I am sure that liberty so incorporated, and in a manner identified with justice, must be infinitely dear to everyone who is capable of conceiving what it is. But whenever a separation is made between liberty and justice, neither is, in my opinion, safe." (Correspondence, Vol. i., p. 312.)

Burke has said elsewhere: "Abstract liberty, like all other abstractions, is not to be found." ("Speech on Conciliation with America.")

It is important to note that Burke's idea of liberty is the traditional Christian, that is (let it be emphasised) the *Catholic* idea. Lest this assertion may seem to be merely rhetorical it is well to support it by no mean authority. Referring to the period after the French Revolution, 1792 to 1797, the year in which Burke died, Lord Acton said: "*In the writing of his last years whatever was Protestant or partial or revolutionary of 1688 in his political views disappeared, and what remained was a purely Catholic view of political principles and of history. . . .*" This judgment of one of the greatest modern historians on one of the greatest political philosophers is a magnificent tribute to Catholic philosophy.

Rousseau's political philosophy is an illogical tissue of glaring contradictions; yet the unsubstantial dreams of this mad genius were accepted by a clever people and passed out through a monstrous revolution to shake civilisation to its very foundations. Henry Tozer says of him:

“ His truisms and verbal propositions, his dogmatic assertions and unreal demonstrations, savour more of theology than political science, while his mathematical method of reasoning from abstract formulae, assumed to be axiomatic, gives a deceptive air of exactness and cogency which is apt to be mistaken for sound logic. He supports glorious paradoxes with an army of ingenious arguments ; and with fatal facility and apparent precision he deduces from his unfounded premises a series of inconsequent conclusions which he regards as authoritative and universally applicable ” (op. cit., p. 41).

The cause of real democracy has suffered immeasurable harm owing to the confusion of Rousseauism or Democratism (to use M. Maritain’s synonyms) with true or Christian Democracy. Dr. A. D. Lindsay, Master of Balliol, has written much, and with great learning, on the subject of Democracy. In a broadcast lecture on “ The Faith of a Democrat,”<sup>1</sup> 27th May, 1940, (the day the Germans reached Calais during the French retreat) he discussed the “ democratic trinity ”—Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité—which, if it has any religious foundation has only that of the “ Civil Religion ” of the *Social Contract*, and that of course is wholly un-Christian. Dr. Lindsay said :

“ Brotherhood is a very serious element in this democratic trinity. If we discuss as we often do, liberty and equality, without thinking of brotherhood, they become unreal abstractions. But think of the democratic ideal as meaning freedom and equality in a brotherhood or fellowship, and we know by experience what that means ” (p. 10).

He then refers to the American Declaration of Independence which stated : “ We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are born equal : ” Dr. Lindsay added—“ Self-evident indeed ! It might be answered ‘ Is it not self-evident that they are born unequal : with unequal

<sup>1</sup> In the series of Radio Talks : “ I Believe in Democracy.”

capacities, with most varying dispositions?" He then replied to the difficulties that he himself raised, saying :

"But democracy does not say that all men are equal in their capacities, physical, intellectual, or moral; but that they all count. They are equally members of the brotherhood. That is not in any scientific sense self-evident. It is *a belief, a faith*. It asserts that what men have in common as being men, persons, moral beings, matters so much that, compared with it, their great and obvious differences are neither here nor there. *The doctrine of human equality is ultimately an utterance of religion*. It is simply expressed when we say that we are all children of one Father, or, in the phrase of Jesus 'the least of these my brethren.'" (p. 11).

Dr. Lindsay said that "the doctrine of human equality is ultimately an utterance of religion." Certainly, but not of the "Civil Religion" of Rousseau—but, as the Master of Balliol admirably stressed, of the religion of Jesus Christ. There is oftentimes confusion between the false democratic ideal of the *Fraternité* of Rousseau rooted in the dechristianised religion of humanitarianism, and the *Brotherhood* proclaimed by Jesus Christ, our Elder Brother, who put on the lips of high and lowly, of saint and sinner alike, the equalising words, "Our Father Who art in Heaven,"—regarding us all as *equal*, as brothers before our common Father, and at the same time gifting us with "the *liberty* of the sons of God." It is this same doctrine that Rousseau has borrowed and debased, as M. Maritain remarks :

"He perceived great truths which his age had forgotten, and his strength lay in recalling them; but he perverted them. That is his mark, that of true Rousseauists: corrupters of hallowed truths. . . . But they are Christian truths emptied of substance, of which nothing is left but the glittering husk. They fall in fragments at the first blow, for they no longer derive

their existence from the objectivity of reason and faith. Above all—and this is the most important point—Jean-Jacques has perverted the Gospel by tearing it from the supernatural order and transposing certain fundamental aspects of Christianity into the sphere of simple nature. One absolute essential of Christianity is the supernatural quality of grace. Remove that supernatural quality, and Christianity goes bad. What do we find as the source of modern disorder? *A naturalisation of Christianity.*" (*Three Reformers*, pp. 141-2.)

In this matter it is to be observed that Rousseau's alleged discoveries are taken wholesale from the Gospel and have been debased by him in transit. Dr. Lindsay seemed conscious of this when he said in the broadcast lecture referred to :

" The doctrine of human equality has, of course, been affirmed and acted upon by men who have repudiated the religion which gave it birth—and, indeed, all religion. The belief can survive, for a time at least, what produced it. *But it is a religious faith, and nothing but faith will maintain it*" <sup>1</sup> (p. 13).

Is not this the reason that, with the growing secularisation or dechristianisation of society, this true human equality and brotherhood have not survived to-day? *True* democracy postulates the full acceptance of the Christian Faith. The *false* democracy of Rousseau has failed because it was derived from the "unreal abstractions" of *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*, and was nourished by the sapless creed of Rousseau's naturalism.

To sum up in a few words:—the *false democracy* of Rousseau derives from Christian principles completely stripped of their supernatural content, from a desupernaturalised or naturalised, spurious, Christianity. On the other hand *true democracy* is intimately and essentially connected with the fundamental supernatural principles of

<sup>1</sup> See his article on "Christian Individualism and Scientific Individualism," *The Dublin Review*, October, 1940.

the teaching of Jesus Christ; true democracy, cannot exist except rooted in Christianity. The "Brotherhood of Man" is an unreal myth except conceived under the "Fatherhood of God"—Christ being our "elder Brother."

James Bryce brings out forcibly and pithily the connection between true Democracy and Christianity as follows:

"What, then, is the relation to democracy of the fundamental ideas of the Gospel? Four ideas are of special significance.

"1. The worth of the individual man is enhanced as a being to whom the Creator has given an immortal soul, and who is the object of His continuing care.

"2. In that Creator's sight the souls of all His human creatures are of like worth. All alike need redemption and are to be redeemed. 'In Christ there is neither barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free.'

"3. Supremely valuable is the inner life of the soul in its relation to the Deity. 'The Kingdom of Heaven is within you.'

"4. It is the duty of all God's creatures to love one another and form thereby a brotherhood of worshippers."

(*Modern Democracies*. Vol. i., p. 100.)

To be a true democrat one must be a Christian; indeed as G. K. Chesterton pointed out when speaking of democracy: "Nothing can bring about true freedom except stark, undiluted and omnipotent Christianity."<sup>1</sup> Central and essential to the idea of democracy is that of true liberty. False Democracy connotes false liberty,—"the anarchic caricature of Liberty," Libertarianism, Liberalism. True democracy connotes Christian liberty in its two-fold aspect of the *individual* and the *community* and regulates their mutual relations according to Christian principles. In order fully to appreciate the Church's teaching on this important question it is necessary to study closely the

<sup>1</sup> *Father Brown on Chesterton*, p. 54.

Encyclical *Libertas Praestantissimum* and the other papal encyclicals previously mentioned.

Christopher Dawson, in *Beyond Politics*, points out the fatal results of the Rousseauist social creed in the early years of the Revolution :

“ The great Revolution of a hundred and fifty years ago was a deliberate attempt to moralise political relations and to create a new social order based on moral principles which would vindicate the human rights of every individual whatever his economic and social position. Under the guidance of men who believed most wholeheartedly in their ideals, it led nevertheless to as complete a subversion and denial of these rights as it is possible to conceive. It led to the denial of the freedom of conscience and freedom of opinion ; it led to terrorism and wholesale judicial murder, until every man of principle, whatever his principles were, had been exterminated or outlawed, and society turned with gratitude and relief to the absolute dictatorship of an unscrupulous military despot. For Bonaparte appeared to his contemporaries as an angel of light in comparison with the idealists and social reformers who, instead of creating a Utopia, had made a hell on earth.” (p. 125.)

In his well-known work, *France*, which appeared in 1889, J. E. C. Bodley described the results of “ the glorious principles of 1789,” as seen a hundred years after the Revolution. In the Preface he says that “ the capital subject of these volumes is Political France after a century of Revolution.” Bodley was a great lover of France and very sympathetic towards its people ; nevertheless he is forced to confess the complete failure of the ideals with which the Revolution was launched on its way. He writes of Liberty :

“ A century after the Declaration of the Rights of Man proclaimed the free exercise of opinion, so much intolerance lingers in the land that it has been said that a

Frenchman's conception of Liberty is liberty for ideas in accordance with his own. Intolerance is a vice not peculiar to France . . .

" My design merely is to show that the French Revolution, for all its boasted doctrine of emancipation of the human race, has perhaps been the cause of France enjoying less liberty than other countries where its principle has not been enunciated as an abstract formula at seasons of insurrection." (pp. 108-9.)

Of Equality he says :

" The first stage of the Revolution did appear to produce relative equality in the French nation . . . But soon human passion asserted itself, and the accredited leaders of the movement, members of the long suppressed middle-class, revealed that their idea of equality was equality with people who pretended to be of superior rank to them. As was said sixty years later by Tocqueville, than whom none knew better the true results of the Revolution, the word Equality on the lips of a French politician signifies, ' No one shall be in a better position than mine.' This was the sentiment of the Jacobins of the Terror." (p. 132.)

His view on Fraternity in France is :

" *Homo homini lupus*<sup>1</sup> is as true in our day as when the nations of Europe were semi-barbarous tribes. But most modern peoples reserve the latent savagery within them for the chastisement of their enemies abroad ; whereas the French show themselves most inhuman in fratricidal strife, as though to substitute for the old aphorism a new version, *Gallus Gallo lupus*.<sup>2</sup> In the time of war the French show generosity to foreign foes ; but when Gaul meets Gaul, quarter is neither given nor expected." (p. 173.)

<sup>1</sup> Man in his dealing with his fellow-man is a wolf.

<sup>2</sup> "A Frenchman in his dealing with his fellow-Frenchman is a wolf." This has been proved only too true in the happenings after the "Liberation" of France from the Germans at the end of the recent war.

Bodley quotes the cynical remark of Metternich on French Fraternity :

“ Prince Metternich who was reaching manhood when the French Republic erected the guillotine as the symbol of brotherly love, said in later life, after his varied visits to Paris, ‘ Fraternity as it is practised in France has led me to the conclusion that if I had a brother I would call him my cousin.’ ” (p. 168.)

Such is the liberté, égalité, fraternité, that derive from secularisation of the great Christian social principles by Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

*True* liberty, *true* equality, *true* fraternity are possible only through the full acceptance of the Christian teaching that God is the common Father of all, that men are the children of God, brothers, “ members one of another,” and that whatever each does to the other he does it unto Christ Himself. True democracy in its fulness cannot exist outside Christianity. Jacques Maritain has said in *Christianity and Democracy* : “ *Not only does the democratic state of mind proceed from the inspiration of the Gospel, but it cannot exist without it.* . . . To sustain and revive the sense of equality without sinking into a levelling equalitarianism . . . , to have faith in liberty and fraternity, an heroic inspiration and an heroic belief are needed which fortify and vivify reason, and which is none other than Jesus of Nazareth brought forth in the world.” (pp. 39-40.)

It would seem that the overwhelming catastrophe of the late war (1939-45) has begun to make some of the leaders of the democratic States recognise the necessity of Christianity, if democracy is to survive. The following are some notable instances. The Vice-President of the United States, Henry A. Wallace, declared in a speech made on 8th May, 1942, that : “ *The idea of freedom . . . is derived from the Bible with its extraordinary emphasis on the dignity of the individual. Democracy is the only true expression of Christianity.* ”

For the first time in the history of British labour a Prime Minister addressed the British Trades Union Congress at its annual meeting at Blackpool, 12th September, 1945. On this occasion Mr. Attlee made the following remarkable pronouncement :

“ Unless we have a conception of human rights belonging to all human beings, not for our own race only, but of all people, we shall fail. Unless we mean what we say when we declare all men to be brothers, we shall fail to create the world we desire. You may say that all these things are an essential element in the conception of society held by labour men and women. I think that they are, but they are not accepted in many countries, and they are rejected by some who claim to be of our faith . . .

“ I appeal to you my comrades of the Trade Union Movement, my fellow citizens of Britain, to rise in peace as in war to the height of the occasion. *There is only one principle that can save the world*, the principle that you practise in your great movement, *the Christian principle that all men are brothers one of another.*”

Shortly after this pronouncement Mr. Attlee addressed the United States Congress when once again he emphasised the necessity of a return of the nations to Christian principles in the following words :

“ The greatest task that faces us to-day is to bring home to all peoples, before it is too late, that our civilisation can survive only by the acceptance and practice in international relations and in our national life of *the Christian principle that we are members of one another.*”

Sir Stafford Cripps, one of the dynamic personalities in the successful building up of the British Labour Party, has written a very remarkable book, *Towards Christian Democracy*, published in 1945. In this he stated his political confession of Faith—nothing less than the full acceptance in the political and economic life of Britain of

the social teaching of Jesus Christ. In concluding the chapter "A Creed for the Times" he writes :

" I would like to hear a new and more practical creed spoken from the heart of every Christian in the world in terms somewhat like these :

" I believe in the brotherhood of all men, whatever their race, colour, creed or class, as taught by the divine life of Christ, and I pledge myself, without thought of my own interests, to work unceasingly to establish by my daily actions that measure of justice and equality in my own country and throughout the world which can alone form the basis for a happy Christian community of life amongst all the peoples . . .

" I will never give in to the powers of evil or injustice and inequality, however much I may suffer personally by my resistance. I will fight on ever, here or there, because I believe that thus alone can Christ's Kingdom be established here on earth." (p. 81.)

These are noble words, nobly spoken. There is a ring of the Ages of the Faith and Christian Chivalry about them. Sir Stafford is a truly Christian Knight, *sans peur et sans reproche*. He confesses however :

" Perhaps one of the difficulties in our struggle to establish Christian and democratic principles in times of peace is the lack of violence and the unromantic terms in which it may present itself. If we could ride out, with all the romantic glamour of the Knight Errant or the Crusader, to conquer the dragon of evil or the unbeliever, it might be easier to stir up our courage and determination. But when the struggle is carried on in terms of meetings and demonstrations, of pamphleteering and ballot-boxes, it is more difficult to inspire oneself or the people. Yet, the evils are there, and only by our concerted action will they be removed." (p. 81.)

Yet he fails to see the vital and essential difficulty—that he stands almost isolated and alone as a Christian romanti-

cist, overlooking in his ardour for the cause the fact that England is to-day de-Christianised, and that he speaks in a language not understood by the majority of the rank and file of British Labour.<sup>1</sup>

While these magnificent statements of Mr. Attlee and Sir Stafford Cripps must be warmly welcomed, it is not possible in the light of what has been said in Part I of this Essay on the religious condition of Britain to accept the implication that Christianity is a vital force in the British Trade Union Movement or in the lives of the British people.

A distinguished English convert, Rosalind Murray, said in her *Time and the Timeless* : "On any conceivable basis of judgment the present population of Great Britain is not a Christian population." What solid hope then can there be for the rise of a Christian Democracy in Britain ?

Before Mussolini and Hitler had yet fully emerged as national leaders, and when Atheistic Communism was but just raising its forbidding head, Hilaire Belloc was penning the concluding words of his great book *Europe and the Faith*.<sup>2</sup> He there pointed out what the needed return to Christianity meant :

" We have reached at last, as the final result of that catastrophe three hundred years ago, a state of society which cannot endure, and a dissolution of standards, a melting of the spiritual frame-work, such that the body politic fails. . . . This awful edifice of civilisation which we have inherited, and which is still our trust, trembles and threatens to crash down. It is clearly insecure. It may fall in any moment. We who still live may see the ruin. But ruin when it comes is not only a sudden, it is also a final, thing.

<sup>1</sup> Since the above was written Mr. Churchill has declared that the first objective in the new programme of the Conservative Party (which he set forth at their annual conference at Blackpool, in October, 1946) is "to uphold the Christian religion and resist all attacks upon it." He also included in the programme the building of a "property-owning democracy" and to establish "free, independent families" instead of "a mass of State-directed proletarians."

<sup>2</sup> Published 1920.

"In such a crux there remains the historical truth : that this our European structure, built upon the noble foundations of classical antiquity, was formed through, exists by, is consonant to, and will stand only in the mould of, the Catholic Church.

"Europe will return to the Faith, or she will perish.

"The Faith is Europe and Europe is the Faith" (pp. 330-1).

But it may be objected that "Christianity has failed." G. K. Chesterton supplied the answer in his own striking way. "*It is not that Christianity has been tried and found wanting ; it has been found difficult and not tried.*" Contrasting Communism with Christianity, Lord Bryce said :

"Communist politicians propose to carry out their programmes (whatever form they may take) by law, i.e. by the compulsive power of the State using physical force. The Gospel contemplates quite other means of bettering human society. It appeals to the sympathy and conscience of the individual, bidding him love his neighbour as himself, and, since he is bound to rejoice in his neighbour's happiness equally with his own, to treat his neighbour, not as a competitor, but as a partner or brother, giving to him freely all he needs."

He concludes with words that recall those of G. K. Chesterton : "*Had Christianity been put in practice, forms of government would have mattered little. But Christianity never has been put in practice.*" (op. cit., vol. i., pp. 97-8.)

Indeed, the answer to the above objection has been given with more authoritative emphasis by our present Holy Father, Pius XII, when speaking to the world in his Christmas message, 1941. "*True Christianity has not failed, but humanity has set up a false Christianity, an idol, a new religion, a deathmask of Christianity.*" His Holiness went further in His Christmas address, 1944, when speaking of "Democracy, True and False," he said, in concluding :

" If the future is to belong to democracy, an essential part in its achievement will have to belong to the religion of Christ and to the Church, the messenger of Our Redeemer's word which is to continue His Mission of saving men. For He teaches and defends supernatural truths and communicates the supernatural forces of grace in order to actuate a divinely established order of being and ends, which is the ultimate foundation and directive norm of every democracy. . . . By her very existence the Church rises before the world as a shining beacon to remind us constantly of that divine order. Her history reflects clearly her providential mission. The struggles which, coerced by the abuse of power, she has had to sustain in defence of the liberty given her by God, were, at the same time, struggles for man's true liberty. The Church's mission is to announce to the world which is looking for better and more perfect forms of democracy, the highest and most needed message that there can be : the dignity of men, called to be sons of God. It is a powerful cry which, from the manger of Bethlehem to the furthest confines of the earth, rings in the ears of men at a time when that dignity is tragically low."<sup>1</sup>

When we see the condition of the alleged and swindle democracies of Europe and elsewhere to-day, the truth of what Joseph de Maistre said is borne home with irresistible force : " Where a religion other than the Christian Religion holds sway, there slavery is sanctioned ; and wherever the Christian Religion weakens, the nation becomes in exact proportion less capable of general liberty." (*Du Pape*, Bk. iii., ch. 2.)

There is no doubt that a Christian who appreciates the extent of the secularisation of our present-day society may be strongly tempted to despair of the future. To such Dr. James Hogan makes answer in his excellent brochure, *Modern Democracy* :

<sup>1</sup> See *European Civilisation*, by Balmez, chapter on " Two Sorts of Democracy," p. 342 sq.

“ What are Christians to say and do in the present situation ? Whatever happens there is one thing they may not do. It must never enter their heads to despair of the redemptive power of Christianity, that Christianity which even from the purely human point of view is still the source from which flow the vital energies of our Westernised civilisation and to which still belongs the task of determining its destiny. Either Western society must re-christianise itself or it will lapse into slavery and perish as so many of the civilisations of antiquity have perished.” (p 22.)

#### IRISH DEMOCRACY

It may be reasonably asked “ What is the necessity of these dissertations on Locke and Rousseau for the Ireland of to-day ? ” The answer is :—they have been necessary, in the first place, in order to help towards understanding the present world-collapse ; and secondly, in order to prepare the way for the building up an Irish and Christian democracy, the all-important work before the nation at present. It must be stressed that while the Irish *Nation* is among the oldest in Europe, the Irish *State* (Éire) is but of yesterday.

In the past the Irish people has been influenced by two types of democracy—(a) the one (and that the English) associated with the name of Locke ; and (b) the other associated with that of Rousseau. The former (a) which lasted from the Fall of Limerick, 1691, till the second decade of the present century, arose as a Protestant Autocracy which after two centuries began at last to assume the outlines of a democracy ; the latter (b) took its rise from the French Revolution and was introduced by the United Irishmen at the end of the eighteenth century. Both these influences, as has been said, are grave obstacles to the development of a *true or Christian Democratic State*. The present generation of Irishmen has the grave responsibility of evolving a system of democracy that will be in line with our national traditions as a liberty-loving and

tolerant people, and that will also be in complete harmony with the ideals of an ancient Catholic nation that has suffered centuries of enslaving persecution for love of its Faith.

Don Luigi Sturzo, founder of the Italian Partito Populare, writing on "The Crisis of Democracy," says: "Democracy as something generic and abstract does not exist. Democracies exist, in the concrete: the British, the French, the American, the Belgian, the Swiss, the Dutch, and those of the Scandinavian countries, Denmark, Sweden and Norway" (*Politics and Morality*, p. 36). In other words, each country has to evolve a type of democracy that is connatural with the national character, the history and traditions of its people. Democracy does not grow up overnight. American Democracy has been developing since 1776; that of Britain since the Revolution of 1688;—its peculiar character has already been commented on. Don Sturzo says:

"France cannot date her democracy from either the First or Second Republic (democracies lasting but a few years, revolutionary in character, and both ending in Napoleonic dictatorships), but from the Third Republic. Born in 1871, with the Commune, its existence was made possible by the Constitution of 1876, which did not aim at creating a democratic State, but merely a representative State. What happened indeed was the French democracy, which had *been ripening for a century*, became a reality." (*Id.*, p. 58.)

Irishmen are now faced with the difficult task of building up a democratic State which will be both thoroughly Christian and thoroughly Irish. We start off with one immeasurably valuable asset—we have a national constitution which incorporates the fundamental political and social teaching of the Papal Encyclicals; this has been accepted by the overwhelming mass of the citizens. In the present circumstances of our nascent democratic State, it is vitally important to understand and appreciate the

false philosophies of Locke and Rousseau which have been such powerful factors in the development of all modern democracies, and to see them in the light of the "philosophia perennis" of the Church. This is the chief reason for these rather lengthy disquisitions on the political individualism of Locke and Rousseau found in the preceding pages.

It may not be out of place at this point to make, in passing, a practical suggestion which naturally arises from what has just been said. A democracy takes time to evolve. Twenty-five years in existence, our democratic State is quite undeveloped yet and our Constitution is largely but an academic document. The vast majority of the electorate have not read the Constitution ; and it would not be imprudent to say that those who have even glanced through it hurriedly (not to speak of studying it) are but a negligible percentage of the population. If we are to hasten the evolution of an Irish and Christian democracy, the more knowledge of the Constitution and its social and political principles the general body of the citizens has, the more hopefully shall we move forward ;— hence the following suggestions :

- (1) The study of the Constitution<sup>1</sup> should be made compulsory, according to age and capacity, in all classes of schools for those twelve years of age and upwards ; and for the students of all the faculties of our universities.
- (2) One or two handbooks of Christian Citizenship for Secondary Schools should be drawn up by expert educationists. Two would be admirable, one for Intermediate and the other for Leaving Certificate : with a special arrangement of chapters they could be included in a single volume.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Not a mere jejune commentary on the articles of the Constitution but rather a course of Christian Citizenship based on them.

<sup>2</sup> To those who have been following the development of ideological training in the schools of the new European States this will not be so novel as it may appear to others. If these States are so very intense on developing young citizens according to their ideals, why should not the Christian State of Éire be equally keen on education in Christian Citizenship and in Christian Democracy ?

(3) Following the precedent of the Catholic Schools in U.S.A., the school-readers in the different standards of our primary schools should be availed of to give the younger children some general notions, according to their varying intelligence, of what the Christian idea of the "*community*" should imply in their lives. In U.S.A. there are in use in many Catholic schools *progressive* school-readers dealing with social life in the home, in the parish, the town, the State, and the Federal Union. A similar set of school-readers for our children incorporating the principles of the social and political encyclicals as found in our Constitution, and applying them to the small world of the child, is a pressing necessity.

Lest this proposal of publishing school-readers as suggested may seem fanciful and unpractical, it will be useful to recall what led up to the series in use in U.S.A. This series was undertaken under the patronage of the American Hierarchy and with the co-operation of the Catholic University of America. A very representative committee consisting of a bishop, university professors, educationists, and school-teachers (who included men and women, lay and religious, some of the most prominent collaborators being nuns) spared no efforts in producing a set of school-readers for use in the primary schools, in order that the child should be prepared on leaving school to live his life integrally as a Christian citizen. Thus was the primary plan for "educating for democracy" or "Christian Citizenship" worked out by the Church in U.S.A.

Moreover, the American Hierarchy was moved to action by the message received by them from His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, on the occasion of the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the Catholic University of America. Shortly after receiving it the American Bishops issued a Pastoral Letter inaugurating the plan referred to. The following extract from the Pastoral will explain their Lordships' action in promoting the publication of the special school-readers :

" Alarmed by the spread of subversive teachings and by the audacity of subversive propaganda His Holiness called the Bishops of America to the defence of their democratic institutions, regulated by a constitution which protects the inalienable rights of man. The Pope explicitly recommended to the Catholic University ' to evolve a programme of social action, fitted in its details to local needs, which will command the admiration and acceptance of all right-thinking men.'

" The accomplishment of this order of the Holy Father necessitated that the American people from childhood to mature age, be ever instructed in the true manner of Christian democracy. They should be given a precise definition of democracy, envisaged in the light of truth and Catholic tradition, and also of the rights and duties of citizens in a representative republic such as theirs. They should be led to the conviction that love of country is a virtue and disloyalty to this love a sin.

" To promote this Christian conception of the duties of the citizen, the Bishops entrusted the American Catholic University the task of compiling immediately a larger series of graduated texts for all standards of teaching. On the base of the religious education which characterised their schools, these texts would serve to form conscientious and enlightened American citizens."

The Committee referred to above was called " The Commission on American Citizenship " and had its headquarters at the Catholic University, Washington, with the late Bishop Joseph M. Corrigan as president. The resultant series of Catholic Citizenship Readers is known as the " Faith and Freedom Series " : they were graded and titled as follows, from the very Junior or Pre-Primer Grade to the Leaving or Eighth Grade.

*For the Pre-Primer*—" This is Our Home " ; for the *Primary Grades*—" This is Our Family " ; " These are our Friends " ; " These are Our Neighbours " and " This is Our Town." For the *Intermediate Grades*—" This is Our

Land"; "These are Our People"; and "This is Our Heritage." For the *Seventh and Eighth Grades*—"These are Our Freedoms," "These are Our Horizons." *Catholic Action*, the Official Journal of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, said of them:

"In every reader emphasis has been set upon the basis of all true democracy: the dignity and worth of the individual. All readers are basically Catholic books, written for the definite purpose of presenting a Catholic Way of Life." (October, 1942.)

There is a parallel set of *Teachers' Handbooks* corresponding to the readers of the various grades. In addition there is an exposition of the whole curriculum entitled "Guiding Growth in Christian Social Living," in three large volumes, dealing with the primary, intermediate and senior grades respectively. They are described as "a complete programme for the elementary school, including at each level a description of the child's Christian living, an organised programme of school subjects, and specific teaching materials and procedures." Finally there are small specialised handbooks such as that on "Social Christian Teaching" and that on "Catholic Civic Clubs in Schools"; this last is very stimulating as it points out the different methods by which the young may be interested in the life and activities of their local community.

The only comment necessary is to suggest that, with this American Catholic precedent before them, Irish Catholics who are striving under very great difficulties to build a Christian Democracy would be well advised in following the example of their brethren in U.S.A. by devising a similar system of "education for democracy."

The great importance of social and political education for the Catholic laity was stressed by M. Maritain in a broadcast to Canada, as reported in *The Wanderer*, U.S.A., 9th September, 1943:

"The stupendous work awaiting Christians in the post-war days concerns the re-making of a temporal

civilisation, the world of the profane, social and political life of nations. In this the Catholic laity must play a capital role.

“ The more firmly a soul is established in the knowledge of the eternal principles the more fearless it is in the application of the principles to the moving realities of the times, and the more it is open to these realities the better it understands them.”

M. Maritain warned the Catholic laity, engaged as they will be in the difficult problems of re-making a temporal order, that a *religious formation* perfect as one may suppose it to be, will *not* be sufficient.

“ Their intellectual equipment must be completed by a serious knowledge of the history of civilisation, and by a solid social and political philosophy,” he said. “ Before the war great progress had been made in the order of *social formation* and education. Unfortunately, it was not the case in the order of *political formation* and experience. One of the most urgent tasks was to make up for this lack.

“ On this condition alone can we avoid one of the gravest misfortunes to which the action of a Christian is exposed and which consists in wrongly applying the principles. For the fate of Christianity and of the world it is clear that good principles wrongly applied are as catastrophic as evil principles.”

The re-making of our country is in the hands of the rising generation ; it is vitally necessary that they should be adequately prepared for “ responsibilities which in the post-war days will assume proportions never before attained in history.” We can no longer afford to adopt a *laissez-faire* attitude as regards social and political education ; immediate action is necessary. There is one grave danger looming large to-day, an imminent menace to Democracy, —the Omnipotent State ; it is necessary to have clear ideas about this.

## THE MENACE OF TOTALITARIANISM.

The practical conclusion of all that has been said may be stated thus. Following the break-up of Christendom into a number of independent sovereign States, the modern Nation-State gradually disintegrated under the influence of Political Individualism, lost its organic character, and thus led to the isolation of the "Citizen" before the State. As Pope Pius XI has said in *Quadragesimo Anno*:

"On account of the evil of 'individualism' as We called it, things have come to such a pass that the highly developed social life, which once flourished in a variety of prosperous institutions organically linked with each other, has been damaged and all but ruined, leaving thus virtually only individuals and the State."

After the First Great War (1914-18) there was a sudden intense revulsion (which had been slowly growing for many decades) against political and economic individualism, resulting in the totalitarian State. The wheel swung full circle so that the *individual* was swallowed up wholly by the *community*. During the recent war there has developed a violent swing back of the wheel against the Omnipotent State in its present forms. Fascism has disappeared: Naziism has also gone: totalitarian Soviet Russia still remains.

But, there is grave danger of the appearance of a new political monster, a hybrid, none other than Totalitarian-Democracy. This is the evil that all democracies must fear to-day. Fighting to make "the world safe for democracy" they are being driven by unseen forces into the hated totalitarianism hidden under the mocking mask of democracy. The paradox of Locke, the defender and philosopher of private property, supplying the dynamic idea to the destroyers of private property has been pointed out. Rousseau supplies another paradox in the fact that his theories tend to lead to (a) *anarchy* on the one hand and (b) totalitarian *despotism* on the other according as (a)

*equality and individual liberty*, or (b) the *General Will and the Sovereignty of the People* are selected and stressed to the ignoring of the other. Rousseau borrowed from Hobbes as from Locke ; and it is the influence of the Leviathan of Hobbes that leads modern democracy towards totalitarianism.

Christopher Dawson lays much emphasis on the innate connection between democracy and totalitarianism in his thought-provoking volume—*Beyond Politics* :

“ The truth is, unpalatable though it may be to modern progressive thought, that democracy and dictatorship are not opposites or mortal enemies, but twin children of the great Revolution . . . Continental democracy was essentially the affirmation of the supremacy of the General Will as against class privilege. It attached more importance to equality and to freedom and to the sovereignty of the people than to the toleration of minorities.” (pp. 40-1.)

“ Anyone who studies the history of the First French Republic in the light of recent political developments cannot fail to be impressed by the way in which the Jacobins anticipated practically all the characteristic features of the modern totalitarian régimes : the dictatorship of a party in the name of the community, the use of propaganda and appeals to mass emotion, as well as of violence and terrorism, the conception of revolutionary justice as a social weapon, the regulation of economic life in order to realise revolutionary ideals, and above all the attempt to enforce a uniform ideology on the whole people and the proscription and persecution of every form of political thought. Moreover, the Jacobin democracy of 1793-4 was not only the prototype of the Proletarian State, it was also the matrix in which the main types of modern totalitarian ideology had their origin.” (p. 71.)

He develops this idea with clarity and in detail in an article in the *Month* (March-April, 1945) :

“ During its brief career the Jacobin republic developed all the characteristic features which have become so familiar in the totalitarian states of our own times : the party ideology and the party slogan, the party purge (*épuration*), the liquidation of opposite groups, the use of intimidation and terror as political weapons and the exclusion from political rights of classes and individuals that were regarded as socially or ideologically unreliable. Above all, it developed the technique by which a minority which claimed to represent the general will imposed itself on the majority by an organised system of propaganda, and the formation of an artificial public opinion by the suppression of all opposite views.”<sup>1</sup>

With almost uncanny prescience Alexis de Tocqueville foretold over a hundred years ago the coming of the totalitarian-democratic state in his *Démocratie en Amérique*. Writing in 1835 he described with apocalyptic vision the new type of State that threatened democracy and to which he hesitates to give a name :

“ I think, then, that the species of oppression by which democratic nations are menaced is unlike anything which ever before existed in the world : our contemporaries will find no prototype of it in their memories. I am trying myself to choose an expression which will accurately convey the whole of the idea I have formed of it, but in vain ; the old words of despotism and tyranny are inappropriate : the thing itself is new ; and since I cannot name it, I must attempt to define it.

“ I seek to trace the novel features under which despotism may appear in the world. The first thing that strikes the observation is an innumerable multitude of men all equal and alike, incessantly endeavouring to procure the petty and paltry pleasures with which they glut their lives. Each of them, living apart, is a stranger

<sup>1</sup> Up to the present British Democracy has been saved owing to its *aristocratic character* ; but a great change has been rapidly taking place since the coming of adult suffrage in 1918 and 1928, as has been pointed out already.

to the fate of all the rest,—his children and his private friends constitute in him the whole of mankind ; as for the rest of his fellow-citizens, he is close to them, but sees them not ;—he touches them, but he feels them not ; he exists but in himself and for himself alone ; and if his kindred still remain to him, he may be said at any rate to have lost his country.<sup>1</sup>

“ Above this race of men stands an immense and tutelary power, which takes upon itself alone to secure their gratifications, and to watch over their fate. That power is absolute, minute, regular, provident and mild. It would be like the authority of a parent, if, like that authority, its object was to prepare men for manhood ; but it seeks, on the contrary, to keep them in perpetual childhood : it is well content that the people should rejoice, provided they think of nothing but rejoicing. For their happiness such a government willingly labours, but it chooses to be the sole agent and the only arbiter of that happiness : *it provides for their security*, foresees and supplies their necessities, facilitates their pleasures, manages their principal concerns, directs their industry, regulates the descent of property, and subdivides their inheritances—what remains, but to spare them all the care of thinking and all the trouble of living ?

“ Thus it every day renders the exercise of the free agency of man less useful and less frequent ; it circumscribes the will within a narrower range, and gradually robs a man of all the uses of himself. The principle of equality has prepared men for these things : it has pre-disposed men to endure them, and oftentimes to look on them as benefits.

“ After having successfully taken each member of the community into its powerful grasp, and fashioned them at will, the supreme power then extends its arm over the whole community. It covers the surface of society with a network of small complicated rules, minute and

<sup>1</sup> This is the completion of the development of Individualism ; society becomes a mere “ conglomeration of individuals.”

uniform, through which the most original minds and the most energetic characters cannot penetrate, to rise above the crowd. The will of man is not shattered, but softened, bent and guided : men are seldom forced by it to act, but they are constantly restrained from acting : such a power does not destroy, but it prevents existence ; it does not tyrannise, but it compresses, enervates, extinguishes, and stupefies a people, till each nation is reduced to be nothing better than a flock of timid and industrious animals of which the government is the shepherd.

“ I believe that it is easier to establish an absolute and despotic government among a people in which the conditions of society are equal, than among any others ; and I think that if such a government were once established among such a people, it would not oppress men, but would eventually strip each of them of several of the highest qualities of humanity. Despotism, therefore, appears to me peculiarly to be dreaded in democratic ages. I should have loved freedom, I believe, at all times, but in the time in which we live I am ready to worship it.” (Fourth Book, chap. vi., vii.)

Thus has this vision-endowed lover of liberty seen, a century before its coming, the detailed features of the *paternal, omnicompetent*, “ *Totalitarian Democracy*, ”—“ *the Social Security State*, ”—the awful monster that is encompassing helpless humanity to-day.<sup>1</sup>

One hundred years later in *Religion and the Modern State* (1935) Christopher Dawson described the present-day position of democracy in Britain and U.S.A. as follows :

“ We may not have a Totalitarian State in this country of the same kind that we find in Germany or in Italy. Nevertheless, as I have already pointed out, the same

<sup>1</sup> Dostoievski’s Grand Inquisitor also foresaw present-day conditions and the age of “ Social Security ” : “ They will come to us in the end, and they will lay their freedom at our feet and say to us, ‘ *make us your slaves, but feed us.* ’ They will understand themselves at last that freedom and bread for all are inconceivable together.”

forces that make for governmental control and social uniformity are at work here also and in the U.S.A., and it seems to me highly probable that these forces will result in the formation of a type of Totalitarian State which bears the same relation to Anglo-Saxon political and social traditions, as the Nazi State bears to the traditions of Prussia and Central Europe. Such a State might be nominally Socialist, but it would not be the Socialism of the Third International ; it might be Nationalist, but it would not be the militant racial nationalism of the Nazis. Its ideals would probably be humanitarian, democratic and pacific. Nevertheless, it will make the same universal claims as the Totalitarian State in Russia and Germany and it will be equally unwilling to tolerate any division of spiritual allegiance." (p. 54.)

It is necessary to note that the above was written in 1935, before Britain was gripped by the irresistible iron-control of total war (which has incalculably speeded up the coming of totalitarian democracy), and before the ruling caste of the aristocracy was overthrown by a Socialist Government. After the war this bureaucratic control yet remains, but camouflaged under a paternalism which will scarcely deceive the short-sighted supporters of Social Security and all that this term implies. Within twelve months of coming to power the British Labour Government had drafted a scheme of Nationalisation, involving of necessity the widespread extension of State-control and the growing subjection of the ordinary citizen—thus evolves that Mass-Democracy of de Tocqueville which swallows up the individual and human liberty.

The extension of State-control has been growing steadily and pushing its way gradually into the lives of citizens in such a way that they are not sufficiently conscious of its advance : no European country has escaped and Éire is no exception. All over the world Democracy is being totalitarianised and a new form of despotism is being

evolved. Democrats cannot be too convinced of the imminent danger involved in this new political development. Christopher Dawson once again warns democrats in these words : “ The centralisation of control represents one of the most *epoch-making changes in the history of civilisation*. It means that a democratic state, like our own, exercises a tremendous power over the details of the lives of its individual members, such as *no ancient oriental Despotism, however powerful and absolute its claims, ever possessed.*” (*Dublin Review*, April, 1944.) Citizens of every democratic State must be alert and must not allow themselves to be “ lulled ” (to use the present Pope’s expression) into a false security : vigilance is the sole condition and price of liberty.

#### THE PARTY SYSTEM IN IRELAND

This rather lengthy dissertation on Modern Democracy has been written with the purpose of helping the people of Éire in their efforts to build a new democratic State which will be both Christian and Irish. Hence, the origins of our present hybrid-democracy, deriving from Locke and Rousseau, have been examined at length and the vital differences between true and false democracy have been indicated.

There has been growing criticism of, and dissatisfaction with, what to-day passes as Irish democracy. The *Irish Times*, which in the past has stood so uncompromisingly for the English political traditions, stated the case forcibly yet temperately in a leading article in its issue of 20th June, 1945 :

“ There is no doubt, unfortunately, that citizens are becoming increasingly sceptical about the values of our political systems and institutions. Finding that many promises are unfulfilled, and, that hopes of progress too often are shattered, elder members of the community are disposed to wring their hands in despair and to take

up an attitude of a 'plague o' both your houses.' Even more marked and menacing is the fact that members of the younger generation tend to develop a cynical view of political life. To them democracy becomes the mere catchword of party interests, and talk about freedom and liberty a mask for those with personal axes to grind. Something quite different from present systems of national and local government, they say, must be discovered before things can improve. What that 'something' might be nobody knows. 'Shirts' of various colours have been tried on with very uncomfortable results, and short-cuts have led only to disaster. Nevertheless, the machinery of democracy and representative institutions as we have it is little other than a tool in the hands of clever party managers.

"If—as there is much reason to fear—that be the prevalent attitude of youth to problems of government, it becomes the duty of statesmen to seek for more intimate and effective contacts between the citizen and those who occupy seats of executive or administrative authority."

It must be emphasised that the Party System so severely criticised by the *Irish Times* was adopted from Britain when Saorstát Éireann was established. There can be little doubt that cynicism as regards politics and politicians is much in evidence among the Irish public to-day, and particularly among the younger generations. This is a rather disquieting feature of our national life and may easily become a grave national menace.

Moreover, owing to necessity arising from the Great War, there has been an increasing centralisation of authority leading to bureaucratic rule; this is obviously a very serious obstacle to the development of a nascent democratic State. In an address on Vocational Organisation at the Rural Week at Waterford, August, 1945, Most Rev. Dr. Browne, Bishop of Galway, referred to this growing menace as follows:

“ When a government interferes with the smallest details of industry, commerce and agriculture, or when the Dáil delegates to officials the power to legislate by orders, we should remember that the International Labour Office—an unprejudiced authority—has put on record that the fundamental problem of modern democracy is to prevent State intervention from degenerating into dictatorship.” (*The Irish Catholic*, 9th August, 1945.)

#### DECENTRALISATION.

Bureaucracy and the trend towards mass-democracy have been growing in Britain at an alarming rate since 1939 ; lovers of freedom there, in their anxiety for the future, are beginning to turn their eyes back wistfully to the primal origins of English liberty. The *Sunday Times*, April 14, 1946, sees in the Parish Councils a remedy against the growing invasion of the people’s liberties. The leading article of that date was entitled “ Parish Pumps ” and began as follows :

“ Over the centuries of our history, British freedom was not bestowed from above, but built up from below. There were parish meetings before there was a national Parliament, boroughs were democracies while our Kings were still dictators.”

The article concludes :

“ Whether it be personal covetousness or economic materialism that inspires the enemies of freedom, they will be confused only by a faith stronger than their own. If faith in freedom revives it will spread its missionaries from every village hall, from every parish pump, until it has resumed from below its ancient power in their land.”

In Ireland, as in England, the well-spring of freedom will be found in the Parish Council—the Parish Pump.

Indications of a tendency towards mass-democracy are

not wanting in Ireland. The peculiar world conditions of to-day afford a certain justification. But it is unwise to say—"It cannot happen here." Since the ending of World War I, and especially since the breaking-out of World War II, unseen forces have been unconsciously driving towards a growing centralisation of power. Unless some counter-system of decentralisation of authority be devised to put an effective brake upon this tendency, the advent of mass-democracy cannot be stayed. Mr. Seán MacEntee, the Minister for Local Government, has said : "*Once we enter on a 'planned economy' our planning must inevitably lead to dictatorship*,—because dictatorship is the most effective instrument of coercion, and as such is essential if the 'planned economy' is to become a reality." (*Irish Press*, May 9, 1945.) Six years previously when addressing the Vocational Organisation Commission, October 4, 1939, Mr. de Valera, referred to the growing danger of "centralisation" which "is going ultimately to mean that we are going to be driven into the regimentation of every individual in the State."<sup>1</sup>

Both political and economic factors contribute to the growth and development of mass-democracy: "government by order" works together with "planned economy" in leading to the Leviathan. A beginning should be made at once to counteract the growing centralisation of power. "At present there is no administrative unit in rural Ireland smaller than the county, an area too large to admit of personal participation and interest in local affairs."<sup>2</sup> At the moment the most pressing necessity, in the *sphere of politics*, is decentralisation or the conferring of authority upon smaller units of self-government. The structure of

<sup>1</sup> Mr. de Valera said on the same occasion : "I am a believer in the greatest amount of decentralisation possible. One form of organisation which a number of people have been thinking of, and which appeals to me, is a type of parish organisation—a small community which will be able to look after its own interests better than any organisation the Government could set up. These organisations would be able to look after local needs, and, in so far as State machinery is to be called into play, would be one of the means by which State machinery could operate and be effective."

<sup>2</sup> *Vocational Organisation Commission's Report*, par. 545.

the State must not be from above downwards, but from below upwards, and it should be accordingly organic and hierarchic in character. The minds of the Irish statesman and every Irish democrat should therefore be focussed on the lesser community—especially and *at first* on the rural parish (or part-of-parish) community which should be the primary basis of national organised life.

In his Pastoral Letter of 24th June, 1945, Mgr. Graf Konrad von Preysing, Bishop of Berlin, surveying the ruins of the Third Reich, wrote as follows :

“ Concerning the structure of the State, the Popes have never ceased to demand in their Encyclicals the observance of the laws of organic growth from below. One of the causes of our misfortune can be found in the uniform centralisation of the State. Weighed down by the power of bureaucracy and police, the spontaneous and organic forces of the Nation became atrophied, and the sense of responsibility was crushed. The wisdom of our Holy Church, based on thousands of years of experience and on the valid principles of the ‘*philosophia perennis*’ teaches that all the functions of government must not be confined in one apex. The procedure which corresponds to human nature, and which is alone the guarantee of a healthy political life, is to leave to the lower and secondary organs or units of human society—to the family, to the commune, to the group of communes—all the functions which they can fulfil.”

The German Gemeinde or Commune is the *Statutory Community Council*, or Parish Council, as we would call it. The group of Community Councils leads to a *County Council*, and the group of County Councils to a *Provincial Council*—thus relieving the Central Government of its unbearable burden and allowing it to devote adequate time and attention to the *national* interests as such.

It will no doubt be objected that the Local or Parish Council will be narrow-minded, petty and ineffective.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For other objections see Vocational Organisation Commission's Report, par. 547.

The answer is that unless people be trained to develop a sense of social responsibility which they can exercise on their own small local affairs, thus giving them practical experience in the use of democracy, they will become socially and democratically atrophied,—leaving as the only alternative in the present condition of world affairs a rapidly growing bureaucracy leading to the Omnipotent State. Lord Bryce thus replies to the objections against Statutory Parish Councils :

“ Criticisms are often passed on the narrowness of mind and the spirit of parsimony which are visible in *rural local authorities*, and those who elect them. These defects are, however, a natural product of the conditions of local life. The narrowness would be there in any case, and would affect the elector if he were voting for a national representative, but there would be less of that shrewdness which the practice of local government forms. Such faults must be borne with for the sake of the more important benefits which self-government produces. The main thing is that everybody, peasant and workman, as well as shopkeeper and farmer, should join in a common public activity and feel that he has in his own neighbourhood a sphere in which he can exercise his own judgment and do something for the community. Seeing the working, on a small scale, of the principle of responsibility to the public for powers conferred by them, he is better fitted to understand its application in affairs of larger scope.” (*Modern Democracies*. Vol. i., p. 149.)

Moreover (and what is of supreme importance in such a highly individualistic people as the Irish) the *community-sense* and the spirit of *social solidarity* will be developed according as the people get habituated to the exercise of authority and to the control of their own local affairs. In addition, the development of this community-spirit will soon pass out from the sphere of local government and will lead in the more progressive centres to co-operation in the

economic order,—to co-operative buying, production and marketing.<sup>1</sup>

The Vocational Organisation Commission referred to the Parish Council's need of effective powers as follows :

“ We strongly recommend that sufficient powers of local administration should be granted to make it worth the while of the inhabitants to give their time, energy, thought and goodwill to making the scheme a success. Moreover, the possession and exercise of effective powers for the good of the small local community will both train legislators and administrators and encourage every resident to use his talents in the service of the parish.”<sup>2</sup>

It is necessary that the local community area should be circumscribed so that there be a sure basis for the development of a true *community* sense. In *large* parishes the people at either extremity have little social contact with each other. What should be the determining factor of circumscription is the church or chapel and the people who frequent it : there the people meet weekly and are known to each other in a peculiarly intimate way. Ex-Senator Martin Dwyer described it as “ the chapel area.”<sup>3</sup> It may happen that, in some cases, people at the extremities of two different parishes will attend the same

<sup>1</sup> See my pamphlet *Guide to Parish Councils* (Kevin Kenny, Abbey Street, Dublin), and that on *Parish Councils* (with valuable pamphlet-bibliography), published by the National Council of Social Service, 26 Bedford Square, London, W.C.1.

<sup>2</sup> For suggestions as regard the effective powers of an Irish Parish Council, see Senator Martin Dwyer's proposals in his articles in the *Irish Independent*, 3rd–4th September, 1939.

<sup>3</sup> In passing it may be noted that Mr. de Valera appealed to the Fianna Fáil Convention at Carrick-on-Suir, 3rd November, 1946, for the establishment of 2,000 “ Cumainn ” or local Fianna Fáil organisations, “ *based on the chapel area*.” With his long organising experience he evidently regards the “ chapel area ”—not the parish as such—as the best social unit on which to build the Fianna Fáil organisation. There are roughly 1,000 rural parishes in Éire ; the number of local councils based on the “ chapel area ” would be about 2,000. In Switzerland there are 3,000 Local Community Councils in which democracy is firmly rooted—the smallest commune has only fourteen inhabitants. There is in this many-rooted democracy a useful precedent for Éire, and it supplies a valuable example of effective protection against a growing bureaucracy.

church ; it is the people who know and meet each other and not the parish as such that in such cases should decide the electoral personnel of a local council.<sup>1</sup>

The local council area should be divided (as in England) into electoral divisions ; these should be based on the family (as in Portugal) which is the ultimate social unit, and not merely on territory. This will help to build up local social solidarity. Let us take an example. In a community of 1,200 people there will be roughly 240 families. The Council will consist of twelve members, so that therefore each neighbouring group of twenty families will elect one representative. Each division will thus be represented ; and it will be to its interest to select the best representative. Such a system will be the best device for preventing political racketeering or undue influence by a local gombeen man. Some plan should be devised for preventing the people on the land being dominated in the election by those of a large village or small town ; for instance, the number of families in a village having a representative could be considerably extended. In such a local-community system alone, as Rousseau pointed out, can *real* democracy function. The more that local groups of people function democratically, the safer will democracy be in any country as a whole.

Much confusion has arisen owing to the different meanings attached to the term " Parish Council." It was first popularised in a series of lectures broadcast from Radio Éireann, the first of which dealt with the English Local Government Act, 1894, often-times referred to as the *Parish Councils Act*. Up till then the term " Parochial Council " held the field ; soon after the lectures this was replaced by " Parish Council." Later on the Emergency Councils set up during the war became known as Parish Councils. The same term was applied to the Approved Local Councils of the Local Government Act, 1941, and to various isolated councils or groups of councils. Then in an attempt to differentiate the Parish Council as such (that established by statute) from the others, the latter became known as

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Report of Vocational Organisation Commission*, pars. 545, 546.

“voluntary” councils. Incidentally, vehement protests began to be made against *compulsion* which it was alleged was involved in the establishment of Statutory Councils. It is necessary to examine this objection briefly.

The establishment of a Parish Council by statute is necessarily accompanied by the delegation of authority by the central government to a small local community to manage its own local affairs: bureaucracy thereby ceases and administrative freedom is given accordingly. If the conferring of *freedom* from bureaucracy and *freedom* and power to administer one's own local affairs be described as *compulsion*—then all that can be said is that words have lost their meaning.

The main objections that have been advanced against Statutory Councils are (i) that of “compulsion” and (ii) the incompetency of the rural community. If “the men on the land” in Finland, Poland, Holland, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, France, Portugal, Denmark, England, etc., are competent to manage the affairs of a small local community;—on what grounds can it be alleged that the Irish “men on the land” are alone incompetent to do so?

The various types of Irish Parish Councils referred to above have been a failure, because they had no real power of administration and therefore there was no adequate inducement for the people to come and remain together. During the war emergency there was much interest in Parish Councils as the Government gave encouragement and appointed Commissioners. Long before the emergency had passed the Councils withered and vanished, as the Government interest ceased. Here and there where a priest had been personally active, a local council survives; but on his being changed the tendency is that the council grows anaemic and dies. Stability and continuity are essential, and they are possible only through statutory action.

Throughout Part II of this Essay emphasis has been laid on one central idea, namely, that *true* democracy, with its full appreciation of the dignity of the human personality, is rooted in *integral* Christianity. *False* democracy, which

to-day is heading for anarchy on the one hand and for totalitarianism on the other, derives from the anaemic or "simplified Christianity" of Locke and from the pseudo-Christian naturalism of Rousseau. Committed as they are by their Christian Constitution, the course before the Irish people in building a democratic State is obvious. The following words of M. Maritain will serve as a happy summing-up and a fitting conclusion :

"Faith in the dignity of the human personality, in brotherly love, in justice, and in the over-worldly worth of the human soul as outweighing the whole material universe—faith, in a word, in the conception of man, and his Destiny which the Gospel has deposited at the very centre of human history—this faith is the only genuine principle by which the democratic ideal may truly live. Any democracy which by its very nature as a political entity lets this faith be corrupted lays itself open to that extent to disruption." (*France, my Country*, pp. 14-15.)

"This form and this ideal of common life, which we call democracy, springs in its essentials from the inspiration of the Gospel and cannot subsist without it. . . . Although its roots are evangelical . . . it is none the less by aligning itself with erroneous ideologists and with aberrant tendencies that it manifested itself in the world. *Neither Locke nor Jean-Jacques Rousseau nor the Encyclopaedists can pass as thinkers faithful to the integrity of the Christian trust.*" (*Christianity and Democracy*, pp. 26-7.)

Let the final words of this section on "Rousseau and Modern Democracy" be those with which it began—those of M. Maritain :

"We are witnessing the historical liquidation of the world of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and bourgeois democracy. Now a genuine, a real democracy must be built up." (*The Twilight of Civilisation*, p. 44.)

PART THREE  
ECONOMIC INDIVIDUALISM



## PRE-CAPITALISM

"If you had told any typical Christian thinker in any century from the twelfth to the sixteenth that religion had nothing to do with economics . . . he would either have trembled for your faith or feared for your reason. He would have regarded you, in short, as either a heretic or a lunatic." (Maurice B. Reckitt in *Religion and Social Purpose*, p. 12.)

"It is demonstrable that historically Industrial Capitalism arose out of the denial of Catholic morals at the Reformation. It has been very well said by one of the principal enemies of the Church, and said boastfully, that Industrial Capitalism is the 'robust child' of the Reformation, and that the vitality of the effect proves the enduring strength of the cause. It is equally clear that the more Catholic a country is the less easily does it accommodate itself to the social arrangement of a proletariat subjected to millionaire monopolists." (H. Belloc, *Essays of a Catholic*, p. 288.)

As an introduction to Part Three it will be helpful to link up briefly with the argument already developed. The religious individualism of Luther, Calvin, and their followers destroyed the unity of the Western Church, dismembered the Mystical Body of Christ, led to the lamentable growth of numerous conflicting Protestant sects, and finally to what is known to-day as "non-institutional religion," which implies the isolation of the individual from the religious society of his fellows so that it may be said that each one becomes religiously self-sufficient—indeed a "church" to himself.

Political Individualism developed out of Religious Individualism. With the rise of the National Church there arose simultaneously the National State; the unity of Christendom was therefore broken. Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau rejected the organic nature of the State and

conceived of it as a "conglomeration of individuals" who were driven by self-interest or necessity to come together and found political society on the basis of a "social contract." They regarded not God but the individuals as the author and source of authority in the State; this is the basic cause of the secularisation of the Modern State. The result of Political Individualism was the gradual detachment of the individual from political society until to-day the "citizen" stands isolated and unprotected before the great Leviathan—the State.

In addition to the religious and political isolation of man there developed concomitantly his economic isolation. Up to the social and religious upheaval of the Reformation the economic life of the West was founded on the organic concept of human society known as Feudalism. In the Middle Ages man was regarded as a living, active, functional cell in the body corporate or the community; he lived intensely conscious of his social obligations and responsibilities. In the days of the medieval merchant and craft gilds, and under the vital influence of the living Catholic Faith, the consciousness of the brotherhood of Christian men was all-pervading and influenced the social relations of daily life in a way that can be but dimly appreciated to-day. With the break-down of Feudalism, and especially with the undermining of the religious influence of the Church by the Protestant Revolt in the sixteenth century, an extraordinary change took place: unless this change is thoroughly grasped it will be impossible to appreciate adequately the economic developments that have taken place during the last four hundred years, and which are reaching finality in the economic chaos of the world to-day. It is therefore necessary to make a very brief survey of the social economic life of the pre-Reformation period.

#### THE MIDDLE AGES—FEUDALISM

The history of Europe may be conveniently divided into three periods of five hundred years each. During the first

five centuries Christianity was slowly emerging, struggling for its place in the sun, through the all-surrounding obstructive paganism of Imperial Rome. From A.D. 500 to A.D. 1000 it was battling for its very existence against the barbarian hordes who swept in successive waves across Europe, and also against the invasions of the Mohammedans. In the middle of the eighth century Christian civilisation was on the point of collapsing before the latter and at the end of the ninth before the former, when it was providentially saved. In the turbulent conditions of these centuries the scattered people of the West (for Europe was then very thinly populated) had of necessity to arm and band themselves together locally in order to defend their lives and properties. The small local communities were forced by circumstances to place themselves under the leadership of some man of outstanding courage and resourcefulness. Mutual relations and obligations developed between the war-leader and his followers and out of this grew the system of Feudalism.

It is very difficult to describe briefly what this system was, for it varied not only in different countries at different times but in the same country and at the same time. Hilaire Belloc summarises it thus :

“ Briefly it was this : the passing of actual government from the hands of the old Roman provincial centres of administration into the hands of each small local society and its lord. On such a basis there was a reconstruction of society from below ; these local lords associating themselves under greater men, and these again holding together in great national groups under a national over-lord. In the violence of the struggle through which Christendom passed, town and village, valley and castle, had to defend itself alone.” (*Europe and the Faith*, p. 232.)

During this turbulent period Feudalism was based on military service and on the tenure of the land. In the course of time a legal fiction evolved by which the King

was regarded as holding the land of the realm from God, the great over-lords as holding their lands from the king, and the lesser lords from the greater lords, and finally the villeins and the serfs from some local lord or leader. Under the influence of the Church the harsh system of slavery which obtained under the Roman Empire was gradually softened and changed to what is known as Serfdom;<sup>1</sup> this was an intermediate state between ancient slavery and modern freemen. In return for the land he held, which varied from thirty acres to one or two acres, the serf gave military service when necessary. He also spent some days each week in labour on the lord's estate, and in addition made some payments in kind. In return, he had his land and the protection of his lord against aggression. The serf was not free to leave the locality nor to abandon the service of his lord. He was *ascriptus glebae*, or "tied to the land," and in case the land passed from one lord to another he passed with it. But if he was tied to the land "the soil was also tied to him" as Professor Ashley says. He was not therefore a propertyless wage-slave like the modern proletarian of the servile state.

In medieval Europe each man was considered as a living member of organic society and had a fixed place or status which was regarded as God-appointed. He remained in the class in which he was born, and to leave this status was very exceptional. The operative economic idea of medieval society was the principle of *subsistence*, that is, a man's income was determined by the needs of his particular social status. The economic urge of acquisitiveness, or thirst for profit or gain, which is so universal in modern times was controlled then. A man was content with what was sufficient for him in bringing up a family according to his social position and there was no stimulus for him to rise above his class-status. It is necessary to add that, for obvious reasons, these medieval conditions must not be set up against and measured by those prevailing to-day.

<sup>1</sup> There were various grades—villeins, borders, cotters—according to the amount of land held and the extent of their liberty.

"Medieval life was characterised by the subordination of all other interests to religion and society. Life in the economic sense was regarded, not as an end in itself, but as a contribution to a fuller life." (Roy Glenday, *The Future of Economic Society*, p. 279.)

The medieval village was largely self-contained, a self-sufficient community ; it produced its own food, grew its own wool, spun its own cloth, milled its own flour and baked its own bread. As more settled conditions developed towards the end of the eleventh century local fairs and markets were held, roads began to be made, fords or bridges were built, and some of the larger villages developed into towns.

It must be specially noted that, during the Middle Ages and well up into the sixteenth century and even later, the social life of Western Europe was based on the small agricultural village community ; the people led a socially intimate and community-conscious existence. Community-working of the land in close co-operation, each with the others, was the order of the day. And not alone some land, but also the neighbouring wood then so widespread, was owned by the community as such. There was no place for the individual or for individualism as we know it to-day. Dominating the social economic life of the little village-community and intimately influencing the lives of its members, of lord and serf alike, was the universally accepted *social* Christianity of the Church which has to-day been seriously crippled in its activity by the all-pervading individualism which developed in the sixteenth century.

Up to the eleventh century when towns began to develop, the people of Europe were almost entirely devoted to agriculture.<sup>1</sup> They lived in small communities or villages of twenty to forty households, and at times up to one

<sup>1</sup> Speaking in general it was about this time that towns began to grow in number and in size. The Domesday Book mentions forty-one provincial towns or boroughs ; there were also ten fortified towns of greater importance than the others. All these were apart from London, the only town which had a civic constitution. This was in 1086.

hundred households. The village grew up under the shadow of the baronial castle and in times of danger the villagers and their cattle found protection behind its drawbridge and its walls. In the village stood the Parish Church ; it is hardly necessary to say that it was both Catholic and Roman. The Church was not merely a place for religious worship, it was also a meeting place where at times the villagers discussed their secular affairs under the chairmanship of the Parish Priest, especially when difficulties with the over-lord arose. Out of such meetings later developed the local government system based on parish councils which is to be found all over Europe and in rural England to-day.

The land round about the village not included in the lord's demesne was partly commonage and was partly divided into strips owned by individuals. A villager's strips did not lie side-by-side but were mixed up with those owned by the other villagers. The land was worked not by each individual looking after his own, but in a spirit of brotherly co-operation and with a pooling of beasts, men and implements. Writing of this communitarian village system, Professor E. Lipson says :

" The intermixture of strips was due to the presence of a strong element of communalism in the medieval village, in which the principle of private ownership of land received ample recognition, but the free play of individual enterprise and initiative was obstructed. This communalist side of village life found further expression in the system of joint husbandry. Medieval tillage was co-operative in character and all the principal operations of agriculture were carried on in common. Indeed the association of all the tenants in the open field in a general partnership was rendered necessary, in any case, by the fact that a peasant would seldom possess sufficient oxen to do without his neighbour's assistance. Accordingly the villagers worked together, ploughing and reaping every strip as its turn came round. On the other hand, the produce of the strips went to the individual

owners, for rural life was communistic only in one direction. There was co-operation for purposes of production, but there was no communistic division in produce, and no general sharing out of the crops among those who had taken part in the work.”<sup>1</sup> (*The Middle Ages*, p. 66.)

In his *Planned Economy or Free Enterprise* the same writer throws further light on how this rural co-operation worked, and how individualism broke it up:

“The village community of the Middle Ages constituted an agrarian partnership. The occupiers of the soil were shareholders in an agricultural concern, and their ‘shares’ consisted of scattered strips of arable land together with rights of usage over the waste and meadow. When the sixteenth century had run its turbulent course, individualism had made great inroads upon the communal system; and in many localities the partnership had been dissolved. Nevertheless, a considerable part of the realm was covered with open fields, where no man was ‘truly master of his own’ and the control was vested in an association of shareholders: the routine of husbandry, the rotation of crops, the seasons of ploughing, were settled by common agreement: the whole rhythm of village life was determined by joint decisions. Until the enclosure movement was accelerated under the Hanoverians a large section of the English nation formed a co-operative commonwealth, in which a detailed code of by-laws was laid down for its guidance by the village courts.” (p. 77.)

The enclosure movement just referred to *began* to manifest itself towards the end of the fifteenth century; it grew and spread to such an extent after the Reformation that whole villages were depopulated and their inhabitants set

<sup>1</sup> In order to succeed against the intense agricultural competition that lies ahead, the Irish farmers may learn a salutary lesson from this spirit of brotherly co-operation of the Middle Ages: at times one has to go back, in order to go forward.

adrift on the world as paupers. The main forms of enclosure were the union of the scattered strips, the conversion of arable into pasture land, and the confiscation of the common lands. A special feature was the turning of arable land into sheep-farming. The enclosure system meant evictions and clearances and the consequent development of a propertyless class, a proletariat. E. Lipson, says of it, writing of the Reformation period : " This was the theme of countless sermons, pamphlets, ballads and acts of parliament, and filled the minds of statesmen, preachers and writers to an extent which only finds an adequate parallel in the religious changes contemporaneous with it."

As the result of this system of enclosures there were frequent uprisings of the dispossessed ; Kett's Rebellion, 1549, is the most notable. Finally, it became necessary to protect society against the pauperised proletarians who were driven to steal in order to save themselves from starvation. The old system of poor relief identified with the monasteries passed with their suppression, and the modern Poor Law System had to be inaugurated—not so much in the interests of the poor as of the well-to-do who began to feel the anti-social pressure of the dispossessed, pauperised villagers. The country swarmed with sturdy beggars and aggressive vagrants. A familiar tract of the time, " Certayne Causes," asks : " Whither shall they go ? Forth from shire to shire, and to be scattered thus abroad . . . and for lack of masters, by compulsion driven, some of them to beg and some to steal. . . . If the sturdy fall by their stealing and robbing, then are you the causers thereof, for you dig in, enclose, and withhold from them the earth out of which they should dig and plough their living."

There is no more striking contrast in the every day life of pre- and post-Reformation times in England than is to be seen in the attitude of the rich to the poor. In the days of the Old Faith wealth carried social responsibility, poverty was looked on as something godly, as something

sanctified by the Saviour in His Person when He walked among men. After the break with Rome and the confiscation of the property of the monasteries and the gilds, poverty began to be regarded as a social stigma, the poor became neglected and despised ; and even at times they were branded with the red-hot iron and had to carry through life this infamous stigma.

The real starting-point of the Poor Law was the Act of 1536 which placed on each parish the obligation of relieving its own destitute poor. Sir William Ashley makes the following interesting comment on this Act :

“ Notice in passing that this was one, and the most important, of those Statutes which made the ecclesiastical division of the country, the parish, i.e. the area attached to the village church, the unit of administration for civil purposes. The authority of the local Justice and the machinery of the parish now began to take the place which the lord of the manor previously occupied.” (*The Economic Organisation of England*, p. 110.)

The system of pauper laws and pauperism thenceforward developed, ending in the establishment of the wretched “ Poor House.” The Act of 1547 prescribed that a vagabond should be branded with the letter V on the breast and serve as a slave for two years. If he ran away he was to be branded on the forehead with “ the sign of an S,” and become his master’s slave for ever. For running away a second time the penalty was death. “ Houses of Correction ” for herding the growing pauper class were established in every county by the Act of 1576. These prepared the way for the modern Poor House, the first of which was established at Bristol in 1696. It is scarcely necessary to say that the Irish Poor House, so dreaded by the poor in the past, is a legacy from the Economic Individualism of the Reformation.

Cardinal Gasquet comments on the changed attitude of the rich towards the poor as follows, contrasting Catholic with Protestant times in England :

"While fully recognising as a fact that in the very nature of things there must ever be the class of those who 'have' and the class of those who 'have not,' our Catholic forefathers in pre-Reformation days knew no such division and distinction between the rich man and the poor man as obtained later on, when pauperism, as distinct from poverty, had come to be recognised as an inevitable consequence of the new era. To the Christian moralist, and even to the bulk of Catholic Englishmen, whether secular or lay, in the fifteenth century, those who had been blessed by God's providence with worldly wealth were regarded not so much as the fortunate possessors of personal riches, their own to do with what they listed, and upon which none but they had right or claim, as in the light of stewards of God's good gifts to mankind at large, for the right use and ministration of which they were accountable to Him who gave them." (*The Eve of the Reformation*, p. 310.)

Unless one appreciates the social responsibility of wealth then accepted and the relations of the rich to the poor, of those well-off to those not so fortunately placed, one cannot properly understand the accumulation of wealth in the possession of the monasteries which was one of the major occasions of the secession of Henry VIII from the Church, with all that that entailed for future generations: and what is said of England is also applicable to Germany and the other Northern countries that then apostatised.

Land was then practically the only form of wealth, and in discharge of their religious obligation as the stewards of God's gifts landed owners gave or bequeathed to monasteries, to the gilds and other corporate bodies, portion of their land to be used in helping the poor, the afflicted, or for the promotion of education and other similar purposes, and for the offering of the sacrifice of the Mass for themselves or their deceased friends. Some English Protestant writers, obsessed with blind prejudice against the Ancient Faith of their forefathers, have given a most biased account of the monasteries and the gilds and of

the confiscation of their possessions by Henry VIII and Edward VI. Arthur Penty, a Protestant, points out how this falsification of history arose :

“ The Modern State has become what it is because for the last four hundred years the governing class has sought to perpetuate the injustices established by the Reformation. It was because the governing class was living on the plunder of the monasteries and the gilds that they were in the past led to blacken Catholicism, to condone usury, to misrepresent the gilds and to give support to false political and economic theories. They did this because in no other way could they justify themselves.” (*The Gilds and the Social Crisis*, p. 45.)

Another honest Protestant, William Cobbett, in his well-known *History of the Reformation*, refers to the calumnies on medieval Catholic England as follows :

“ Writers have, for ages, been so dependant on the government and the aristocracy, and the people have read and believed so much of what they have said, and especially in praise of the ‘ Reformation ’ and its effects, that it is no wonder that they should think that in Catholic times England was a poor, beggarly spot, having a very few people on it, and that the Reformation, the house of Brunswick and the Whigs,<sup>1</sup> have given us all we possess of wealth, of power, of freedom. These are monstrous lies, but they have succeeded for ages.”

### THE MERCHANT GILDS<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps nowhere was the Christ-like spirit of the Ages of the Faith so much in evidence as in what is known as the “ Gilds ”—the medieval organisation of merchants and craftsmen : these will be described at some length. As an introduction, it will be helpful to have the judgment of the

<sup>1</sup> The Protestant Revolution of 1688.

<sup>2</sup> “ Gild ” has been used even where in quotation “ Guild ” is found. In what follows on the Gilds I am deeply indebted to Professor Lipson’s “ The Middle Ages,” Vol. i of his *Economic History of England*. (4th ed.)

distinguished Protestant historian, Bishop Stubbs, on this brotherhood of Catholic men—the Gilds :

“ I can only suppose that the brotherhood tie was so strongly realised by the community that the weaker ones were succoured by the stronger, as out of a family store. The brotherhood tie was, no doubt, very much stronger then, when the village community was from generation to generation so unalloyed by anything foreign, when all were knit together by one faith and one worship and close kindred ; but further than this the Gild fellowships must have enhanced all the other bonds in drawing men to share their worldly goods as a common stock. Covertly, if not overtly, the gildsman bound himself to help his needy brother in sickness and age, as he expected his fellow-gildsman to do for him in his turn of need ; and these bonds, added a far stronger sense of the duty of children towards aged parents than is now found, did, I conceive, suffice for the relief of the poor, added only by the direct almsgiving which flowed from the parsonage house, or in favoured localities from the doles or broken meat of a monastery.”<sup>1</sup>

With the coming of peace on the overthrow of the European invaders—barbarian and Mohammedan—roads and means of communication, central markets, and towns began to develop. Agricultural life was still paramount, but in the towns the merchant and the artisan began to appear. Economic life was no longer confined to the village and commerce soon extended from town to town. The community spirit which was the life of the village began to take new shapes in the towns, and as a consequence the Merchant Gilds and the Craft Gilds dominated town life. They have their modern counterparts in city life to-day in the Chambers of Commerce and the Trades Unions ; but how different are their respective spirits. The medieval associations radiate charity and

<sup>1</sup> *Churchwardens' Accounts* (Somerset Record Soc.), p. xxiv—quoted by Cardinal Gasquet, op. cit., p. 315.

brotherliness and the true Christian community-spirit ; while their modern counterparts express in action the individualism of the "Protestant Ethic" (as Max Weber styles it) in class consciousness and the class struggle. This is particularly true in the great pluto-democracies.

The Merchant Gilds directed the commerce of the town and held a monopoly of it, but its exercise by the members was very strictly controlled in the interest of (i) the fellow-gildsmen and (ii) of the community. As regards the former, the trading of the gild merchant was limited by what was known as the "right of lot." Of this E. Lipson says :

"If a gildsman made a purchase, whether in markets, fairs, or in his native town, it was open to other gildsmen to claim a portion of it at the original price at which the commodity had been bought. The Mayor alone was exempted from the obligation to share his bargains.

. . . The privilege was intended to foster equality, and protect the poor from the rich by preventing the monopoly of trade falling into the hands of a few. It embodied the principle that every burgess should have a share in trade 'sufficient for the maintenance of himself and his family.'" (*The Middle Ages*, p. 243.)

The community-spirit is also apparent in what was known as "Common Bargains." Of these Professor Lipson writes :

"The communal aspect of the gild merchant was also marked in the efforts made to promote co-operation and collective bargaining among gild-brethren. The gild itself, as an organised body of traders, engaged in commercial transactions. In some towns the gild officers claimed the sole right to deal in certain commodities, the profits of which went into the common purse. At other times they could make the first bid for the wholesale purchase of imported cargoes, which were then distributed among the gildsmen at retail prices ; these joint purchases were known as 'Common Bargains.'" (Op. cit., p. 245.)

In this way the cut-throat competition, so characteristic of modern society, was prevented and equality of opportunity afforded to rich and poor alike.

But if the Merchant Gild "enjoyed extensive privileges which served to strengthen the solidarity of its members, on the other hand it was burdened with corresponding obligations. In each town the merchants formed a close corporation sharing mutual responsibilities and common liabilities ; in particular they were held responsible for debts contracted by any of their fellowship in the way of his trade." (Op. cit., p. 260.) Nothing could more forcibly show the close bonds that bound the members of the gild together than this fact of mutual liability.

But over and above all this friendly system of trading and sharing of profit and liability is the spirit of religion, shown by the gildsmen in their devotion to the Catholic Faith and in their support of brother-gildsmen in their distress. The Merchant Gilds had chaplains. Each gild had its own patron saint whose feast was celebrated with great solemnity, all the gildsmen in their livery attending Mass in the local church where it was customary to maintain an altar of their own. Attendance each quarter at a special Mass offered for the members and their families, living and dead, and for benefactors, was also customary. When a member of the gild died a Mass was chanted for the repose of his soul by the chaplain, at which all members were present : in the case of the poorer members all funeral expenses were paid from the common fund. In addition, the gilds maintained houses for the aged or infirm. The same spirit of religion and charity found in the Merchant Gilds also characterised the Craft Gilds. Contrast all this with the Chambers of Commerce and Trades Unions of to-day, not merely in the semi-paganised cities of the capitalist countries but even in some of our own intensely Irish Catholic cities ! Here at a glance one can see the sad legacy left to humanity by the Reformation, with its Religious and Economic Individualism.

Like all human institutions the Merchant Gild had its

imperfections. While it united the merchants of a town for their mutual protection and in the town's commercial interests, it involved the isolation of one town from another. Nevertheless, as E. Lipson points out, it developed "a sense of solidarity, a co-operation of social and economic forces for the common welfare, which made the English borough of the Middle Ages a storehouse of political ideas and a valuable school for political training."

### THE CRAFT GILDS

Towns began to appear after the pacification of Europe, roughly about A.D. 1000. As they developed, the Merchant Gilds took root; later on the Craft Gilds appeared. The history of these Gilds—with their religious outlook, their community-sense and spirit of brotherhood—should be an essential study of young educated Irish men and women in their endeavour to build up a new country: an admirable and popular handbook has been provided for them by an Irish priest, Father George Clune, Ph.D., in *The Medieval Gild System*.<sup>1</sup> The return, *mutatis mutandis*, to the community spirit and life of the Middle Ages as suggested by Roy Glenday, Commercial Adviser to the Federation of British Industries, will be referred to later on; E. Lipson adumbrates such a return also. When writing of the Craft Gilds, he says:

"In the effort to provide a fair remuneration for the worker and to reconcile the conflicting claims of producer and consumer, were developed principles of industrial control and conception of wages and prices to which we may perhaps one day again return." (p. 279.)

The Craft Gild was composed of (a) apprentices, (b) journeymen or fully trained craftsmen, and (c) master craftsmen. Very much has been heard in recent times of the training of apprentices both in Britain and in Éire. It is interesting to see what apprenticeship meant when the community-

<sup>1</sup> 300 pp. Browne & Nolan, Ltd. Price 7/6d.

sense was highly developed in medieval times and to contrast it with that of the individualism of to-day. In the Middle Ages the apprentice lived as a member of the family in the house of his master. He was "fed and found," taught his craft, and received a small salary in the nature of pocket-money. The Master was *in loco parentis* and was responsible for the education and the religious and moral formation of his apprentices. E. Lipson says, supporting by authority, that "at Dublin<sup>1</sup> and Waterford every citizen had to answer for his apprentice's wrong-doing by day and by night 'as he would for his son if he were of age.'" Of these good Christian times when boys were not treated as little galley-slaves but as adopted sons, E. Lipson adds :

" It would be erroneous, however, to regard the institution of apprenticeship as simply a system of technical training, for above all it was a system of social training. It was intended to fashion not only good craftsmen, inspired with loyalty to their city, but good citizens willing to give active service on its behalf when summoned to the field or the council-chamber. The bond between master and apprentice was of the closest description ; the master stood *in loco parentis* to the apprentice, who lived in his house, sat at his board and associated with him in the workshop and the home on terms of the most personal intimacy (p. 282). . . . Drawn from the same social status, united by a sense of common interests, masters and men in the early days of industrial development toil side by side in willing co-operation, undivided by the antagonism of capital and labour." (p. 288.)

The apprentice passed, having served his time of training, into the ranks of the " journeymen " or trained craftsmen. With the progress of time the journeyman went not only from master to master, but from town to town. As opportunity offered the journeyman passed later on into the

<sup>1</sup> See also Dr. Webb's *The Guilds of Dublin*, Ernest Benn, 1929.

select band of Master Craftsmen who ruled the Gild, regulated wages and prices, and directed all its subsidiary activities. Of these E. Lipson says :

“ It embraced within its scope not only the strictly technical but also the religious, the artistic and the economic activities of medieval society. It was first and foremost undoubtedly an industrial organisation, but the altar and the pageant, the care for the poor and the education of the young were no less part of its functions than the regulation of wages and hours and all the numerous concerns of economic life.” (p. 296.)

If, as was the case, the Catholic Faith was such a dominant factor in the lives of medieval men, regulating not merely their private lives but also their industrial relations, it is no matter of surprise that this Faith should find a special place in the organised community-life of the Gild. Each Craft Gild had its patron saint (as had each Merchant Gild) whose feast was celebrated with great solemnity by all the members and their families. It had a chaplain whose duty it was to care for the spiritual welfare of the members, both living and dead. If it had not a church of its own it had an altar, or at least a shrine before which a perpetual lamp or candle was kept burning. The Gilds vied with each other in the decoration and maintenance of their chapels and in the splendour and solemnity of their periodical religious ceremonies. Another form of expression of the religious community-life of the Gild was the religious play or pageant out of which the modern theatre and drama grew.

Can one dream of the day when a modern trades union in an Irish city, with one hundred per cent. Catholic membership, will revive if not the actual conditions at least the consciously religious and brotherly spirit of the old Craft Gild ? And what a visionary one should be who would contemplate the members of a modern Chamber of Commerce in a small Irish Catholic city, ninety per cent. and more Catholic, acting in the way described above as the merchants of a Medieval Gild did ? Nevertheless such a

dream and such a vision can be realised to-day if young Irish Catholics, men and women, would have the same deeply-conscious sense of conviction of their religion and its social and economic principles, as the youth of Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Atheistic Communist Russia had of their respective ideologies at the beginning of the recent Great War.

It has been pointed out how the members of a Merchant Gild came to the help of one of their members in distress. The same brotherly spirit is to be found in the Craft Gilds also ; they discharged the functions of a modern Friendly Society, but with the dominant motive of Christian charity consciously operating in their giving of relief. They set up special houses as rest-centres for the old or incapacitated brethren. E. Lipson says : " The institution of almshouses marked an important step towards the establishment of an organised system of poor relief, and in this direction also the Gilds anticipated state regulation." Moreover, they endowed special schools for the education of deserving youth of which the same authority writes :

" Many free grammar schools were founded and maintained by the gilds, which formed one of the main sources of education in the Middle Ages ; and one gild, that of Corpus Christi, Cambridge, perpetuated its memory by founding the famous college that still bears its name. In this way the Gilds contributed to the spread of learning, and the voluntary efforts of artisans helped to keep burning the lamp of knowledge." (p. 307.)

The Report of the Commission on Vocational Organisation (Éire), 1943, concludes its brief sketch of the history of the Gilds in these words :

" The decay of the gilds was due to many causes and was a long process varying as to duration and intensity in different countries. . . . The downfall of the gilds was not due to the fact that they were based on false or vicious principles. ' The attempt to preserve

a rough equality among "the good men of the mystery," to check economic egotism by insisting that every brother shall share his good fortune with another and stand by his neighbour in need, to resist the encroachments of a conscienceless money-power, to preserve professional standards of training and craftsmanship, and to repress by a strict corporate discipline the natural appetite of each to snatch special advantages for himself to the injury of all—whether these things outweigh the evils of conservative methods and corporate exclusiveness is a question which each student will answer in accordance with his own predilections.<sup>1</sup> The right of workers and employers to associate; the principle of the regulation of prices and conditions by a domestic authority subject to municipal and State control; the principle that the local or central authorities should regulate industry and trade for the common good; the principle that master and craftsman each has a right to the necessaries befitting his station in life; these are not false or vicious principles. The downfall of the gilds was due partly to the fact that they were not able to preserve these principles sufficiently in a time of transition and industrial revolution, but mainly to the fact that these principles had been temporarily overshadowed in the public mind by contrary ideas and ambitions which glorified individual freedom, expansion of trade and colonial exploitation, and took too optimistic a view of the consequences of freedom of contract."

The "contrary ideas and ambitions which glorified individual freedom," the development of Economic Individualism or Capitalism, will be briefly discussed in what follows.

#### MEDIEVAL ECONOMICS

The modern science of Political Economy found no place in the economic life of the Gilds. Trade and commerce were

<sup>1</sup> Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, pp. 27-28.

regulated solely according to the moral teaching of the Church. J. P. Mayer thus summarises the main principles of the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas on this subject :

“ In so far as trading profit is the reward of social labours, it appears to St. Thomas to be justified, but he condemns the striving merely for the sake of profit. He also regards the taking of interest as impermissible, since it means exchanging money for more money, or the acquisition of another’s labour, thereby expressly infringing the principles of the law of nature. Money ought to be lent to relieve necessity or to make it possible for a man to live a life befitting his class. The idea of credit as a function of normal economic activity was not at that time established. The fulcrum of St. Thomas’s economic theory is the doctrine of ‘the just price’ . . . The just price is for St. Thomas a principle of natural law in so far as the community life of men is derived from their nature. And a community life without the principle of the just price is unthinkable.” (*Political Thought*, p. 93.)

It is necessary to distinguish between *usury* as such and *interest*. Usury is the taking of interest, no matter how small, for the *mere* loan of money ; this was *per se* unlawful, for money was regarded as barren or unfruitful. But circumstances may arise, and often did, extraneous to the loan which would justify the lender in taking compensation for the loan. On this point Dr. George O’Brien remarks : “ It cannot be too emphasised at the present day that the medieval teaching on usury was a complete and consistent code, which at no time went the length of refusing to allow all forms of interest on loans ; and that the so-called exceptions to it, were not exceptions at all but logical and necessary corollaries from the ethical and juristic axioms on which it was based.” (Op. cit., p. 18.) The failure to grasp the above distinction has led writers hostile to the Church and the medieval economic system to misunderstand the Church’s teaching.

The penalties against usury were very severe. The Church deprived the usurer of the Sacraments when living, and of Christian burial when dead. The condition for readmission to the Sacraments was the full restitution of all usurious gains. In England the chattels of the dead usurer were confiscated to the Exchequer.

Notwithstanding the severity of the penalties—human nature being what it is—men were found to take the risks involved. “Even in the twelfth century there was a William Cade, ‘a Christian usurer, the first one known to us, who worked on a large scale’; we might call him the first English financier of whom record has been found.” (Lipson, *op. cit.*, p. 527.) With the growth of trade and commerce other individuals followed in Cade’s footsteps. During the fifteenth century (especially towards the end) small groups of them were to be found in the bigger commercial centres. But, the vast majority of the people were devoted to agriculture, and usury did not penetrate into Society: both Church and State were still resolutely opposed to usury. An Act against usury was passed in England in 1487. But within two generations, and less than ten years after the first looting of the monasteries, the situation had become impossible. “*In 1545 it was stated that statutes against usury had been ‘of little use and effect,’ and they were repealed, interest being fixed at ten per cent.*” (Lipson, p. 529.) But the end had not yet been reached: another generation had yet to pass before the final acceptance and ratification of usury was accomplished. The Act of 1545 was repealed in 1552; it was, however, revived by Parliament in 1571. As far as it is possible to define it, this Act, which ended the controversy on the legality of usury, may be regarded as the end of the old economic order in England.

Writing of the development of usury and its economic effects on Catholic and Protestant countries H. Belloc makes the following comment:

“In general the governments which broke away from the unity of Christendom one after the other introduced

legalised usury, and thus got a start over the conservative (i.e. Catholic) nations which struggled to maintain the old moral code. To the new moral, or rather immoral, ideas thus introduced we owe the rapid development of banking in the 'reformed' nations, the financial hold they acquired and maintained for three centuries." (*Essays of a Catholic*, p. 35.)

By the principle of "the just price" and the teaching on "usury," which in practice were closely allied, all attempts to circumvent another by what are known as "keen business methods" or to take advantage of another's necessity were strictly forbidden in medieval times. The fixing of a "just price" was based on "the common estimation of men" and must be fair to the producers, to those who sold, and to those who bought. Charlotte Waters in her admirable handbook, *An Economic History of England*, shows what this entailed:

"In the Middle Ages men thought that there was a 'just price' for all things, a price such that all who contributed to produce the article could make thereby an honest living suitable to his station, no more, no less. They refused to recognise the law of supply and demand as a reason for rising prices; the fact that you could get people to pay more in times of scarcity did not justify you in doing so. Therefore there was no commercial crimes in their eyes equal to those of the *forestaller* and *regrater*. Cheating was a minor offence; all traders, especially men of the victualling trades, were liable to cheat, and elaborate checking and supervision were enacted to prevent it. But to try to corner (or *forestall*) the market by buying supplies before they reached it, or by purchasing (or *regrating*) large quantities to re-sell at a higher price, was the last stage of commercial immorality. The men of the thirteenth century had no use for the middleman, even the merchant of foreign goods was only justified in making a living—he might not make what was possible, only what was fair. . . . As

a modern writer puts it : ' The economist of that period had not grasped the fact that cleverness shown in buying an article cheap and selling the same thing, without any further expenditure of labour, dear, if done on a sufficiently large scale, justifies the bestowal of the honour of knighthood or a peerage.' " <sup>1</sup> (p. 58.)

The " Just Price " was such as to allow both the merchant and craftsman to live a decent Christian life, each according to his particular status. It was fixed by the merchant-gild and the craft-gild. Not only did the gild fix the price but it also insisted on sound workmanship and good quality of the product or goods ; in addition the gild required fair wages to be paid to the journeymen or wage-earners. The cost of production was the chief factor in determining the Just Price ; of this E. Lipson says :

" The determination of prices and the quality of wares sought to protect both the seller and the buyer and to establish rates of remuneration for the craftsmen that were commensurate with the labour involved. It has often been remarked that medieval authorities endeavoured to fix prices according to the cost of production. Starting from the conviction that the labourer was worthy of his hire, this principle was to reward him with a recompense suitable to his station. They did not hold what we may call the theory of minimum subsistence—the iron law of wages—where wages are forced down to the lowest level at which the workman can subsist. Instead they seem to have recognised that wages should be made to conform to a fit and proper standard of life. Another feature of the gild system was that the scope of individual enterprise was restricted, on the ground that the interests of the community were paramount." (p. 389.)

The reason for all this was that the men of the Middle Ages, the Ages of the Faith, were deeply impressed with the dignity of the human person, of man's sonship of God.

<sup>1</sup> Salzmann, *English Industries of the Middle Ages*, p. 209.

They were convinced that in their dealings with their fellow-men they should behave not only as brothers, but, moreover, that whatever they did to each other they did unto Christ Himself. Unfortunately with the passing of the influence of the Old Religion, and with the expansion of Protestantism and its spirit of Economic Individualism, men began to be treated as chattels and wage slaves ; and as a result sweating, class consciousness and class warfare, have led to the economic anarchy of to-day.

Recently those outside the Church are realising the value of the economic teaching of the Schoolmen. Not long before his death, the late Dr. Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury, paid a striking tribute to the Angelic Doctor and the medieval economic doctrine as follows :

“ No one disputes that the most complete map ever drawn is that of St. Thomas Aquinas. In his conception of property and in the principles which underlie the doctrine of the Just Price and the Prohibition of Usury, I am convinced that St. Thomas offers exactly what the modern world needs. Of course adjustments to new conditions are required.

“ No one is equal to St. Thomas as a map-maker of the spiritual and moral world. If our need is, as I think, first and foremost for such a map, we do well to go back to him, making such modifications as our own survey may dictate.”

Maurice B. Reckett, the well-known Anglo-Catholic layman, refers as follows to the Church's teaching on the “ Just Price ” and the kindred subject of “ Usury ” in the days when England was both Catholic and Roman :

“ We find the keystone of medieval economics in the principle of the ‘ Just Price,’ abandonment of which has left us with no measure by which to assess a standard of living for the producer and no objective valuation of true cost.

“ In her doctrine of usury the medieval Church had a basis of teaching by which might not only the individual

be restrained from avarice, but society be protected from financial exploitation. To-day, it is the claims of money and not the needs of mankind which are the 'first charge' upon production, for money is treated not primarily as a means of distribution, but as a commodity to be dealt in, with charges exacted for its use. As a consequence, not only what are in reality social assets to be accounted as debt to the banks, but financial agencies are steadily becoming the principal owners of industrial enterprises, and even of the land." (*Prospect for Christendom*, p. 96.)

He concludes by saying that the true solution to the economic chaos of to-day is a return to the medieval tradition :

"Catholics should be urged to insist that their social tradition is no romantic foible of their own, but a treasure held in trust for mankind, and one which, since it is based upon the only truly realistic diagnosis of man and society, can alone sufficiently indicate the prescriptions which our modern sickness demands." (Op. cit., p. 97.)

The Middle Ages were coming to a close at the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century—though the feudal spirit endured in many places well into the eighteenth century. The Gilds were abolished in France only at the time of the French Revolution. They continued in Germany well into the nineteenth century. What had been built into the very texture of European society for a thousand years could not easily perish.

It may be then said that the opening of the sixteenth century ushered in the Modern World. The economic life of man was hitherto simple, trade being confined to very circumscribed areas. First, it was the *village*; then it linked up neighbouring *towns*, and later it tended to become *national*. With the invention of the mariner's compass, the discovery of the New World, 1492, and the rounding of the Cape of Good Hope and the passage to India by Vasco Da Gama, 1497-98, the horizon of men was expanded and with the exchange of goods between the new and the

old worlds trade became *international*. In the medieval world *land* was wealth, but with the discovery and importation of gold and silver from the newly-found countries *money* replaced land and opened the way for the development of Capitalism. It was while the world was in this economic ferment that Luther and the Reformers introduced the New Evangel which supplied the great economic dynamic of individualism (which they neither intended nor foresaw) to the exploitation of the new opportunities of amassing wealth; at the same time they furnished the necessary means to the prospective *entrepreneurs* for doing so, through the spoliation of the monasteries and the gilds. R. H. Crossman sums up the situation in a few words :

“ The landholder, enriched by the spoliation of the monasteries, looks for fresh fields of capital exploitation and sometimes finds them in the new worlds discovered by the explorers: and the new order blesses economic individualism and private enterprise, protecting them with a paternal system of State Control.” (Mayer’s *Political Thought*,” p. 180.)

*Subsistence*, according to one’s *status*, was the central idea of medieval economics; now it is to give way to *acquisitiveness*, and every stimulus will be given to this by the abolition of the medieval moral controls placed by the Church on selfish enterprise and usury as already described. Opportunism and expediency will now replace morality, and the working motto of the capitalist will be, “ Business is Business.” Not only did Protestantism detach the individual from the religious society of his fellows, but it also detached him from the economic. The sequel—the present day economic isolation of the individual is thus described by Peter Drucker :

“ Through the collapse of Economic Man the individual is deprived of his social order, and his world of its rational existence. He can no longer explain or understand his existence as rationally co-related or co-ordinated to the world in which he lives; nor can he

co-ordinate the world and the social reality to his existence.

"The function of the individual in society has become entirely irrational and senseless. Man is isolated within a tremendous machine the purpose and meaning of which he does not accept and cannot translate into terms of his experience. Society ceases to be a community of individuals bound together by a common purpose, and becomes a chaotic hubbub of purposeless isolated monads." (*The End of Economic Man*, p. 52.)

## CAPITALISM

### THE LOOTING OF THE MONASTERIES AND GILDS

In the Middle Ages, in addition to the many charitable institutions established and endowed by the Gilds, England was studded with monasteries and religious houses, all centres for the relief of suffering humanity. Much land had been given or bequeathed to them by the rich who were deeply impressed with the social teaching of the Church, viz., that the wealthy did not own their wealth absolutely, but rather held it in trust as the administrators of God who gave it. Over seven hundred and fifty medieval hospitals are known to have existed in England. Moreover, there were many leper-houses; at one time they numbered two hundred.

There were, in addition, many rest-houses for wayfarers and pilgrims, homes for the aged, feeble and destitute. All these were conducted under the direction of the monasteries or religious. Attached to the monasteries were also the schools. Such was Catholic England down to the time of that royal tyrant, Henry VIII.

This monarch, described apologetically in the school-books and popular literature as "bluff King Hal,"<sup>1</sup> was a notorious *roué* and spendthrift and was sunk hopelessly in debt. It was suggested to Henry by Thomas Cromwell that an easy way out of both personal and national liabilities would be to seize the wealth of the monasteries. He looted the smaller monasteries in 1536, the larger in 1539: all the monasteries were suppressed and their land and property confiscated. According to Dr. G. Constant: "All told, the monastic property must have been worth

<sup>1</sup>Charles Dickens, however, said of him: "Henry the Eighth has been favoured by some Protestant writers, because the Reformation was achieved in his time. . . . The plain truth is, that he was a most intolerable ruffian, a disgrace to human nature, and a blot of blood and grease upon the History of England."

£50,000,000 of our money.”<sup>1</sup> (*The Reformation in England*, p. 148.) Here is what happened as described by the Protestant historian, Dr. Jessop, in an article on “Parish Life in England before the Great Pillage.”

“In the general scramble of the “*Terror*” under Henry the Eighth, and of the *anarchy* in the days of Edward the Sixth . . . the monasteries were plundered even to their very pots and pans. The almshouses in which old men and women were fed and clothed, were robbed to the last pound, the poor almsfolk being turned out in the cold at an hour’s warning to beg their bread. The splendid hospitals for the sick and needy, sometimes magnificently provided with nurses and chaplains, whose very *raison d’être* was that they were to look after and care for those who were past caring for themselves, these were stripped of all their belongings, the inmates sent out to hobble into some convenient dry ditch to lie down and die in, or crawl into some barn or hovel, there to be tended, not without fear of consequences, by some kindly man or woman, who could not bear to see a suffering fellow-creature drop down and die at their own door-posts.”<sup>2</sup>

In such circumstances was Protestantism introduced into Catholic England. Thorold Rogers writes thus of the rapacious Henry who was not satisfied with looting the monasteries but who also turned his grasping hands towards the gilds, the chantries:

“The second injury which Henry put on his people was the destruction and the confiscation of their property. The sums he had received from the monasteries, and the profits which he made by debasing the currency, were still insufficient for his wants, and he resolved on confiscating the rest of the corporate revenues which still survived. In the last year but one of his reign a Bill

<sup>1</sup> The value of this sum to-day must be determined by the fact that this book was published in France in 1931; the English translation appeared in 1934.

<sup>2</sup> *Nineteenth Century Review*, March, 1898.

was actually passed by both Houses for the dissolution of all colleges, chantries, hospitals, free chapels, etc. ; and it is probable that the universities, the colleges, and the public schools would have been swept away into the all-devouring exchequer, had not Henry died before the Act was carried out.”<sup>1</sup> (*Work and Wages*, p. 46.)

Dr. Constant gives some details of the Great Pillage as follows :

“Buildings and churches were given at a low price to the gentry and to all those who desired to possess lands of their own. Lords and courtiers received the greater part of the loot and increased their fortunes with monastic spoils. The king gave them away as presents, as stakes in a game of dice, in exchange for uncultivated and denuded lands, or for practically nothing at all. . . . Two things prompted his liberality : he had to reward the majority in parliament for their vote, and he had to gain the goodwill of the most influential men, by linking up their interests with the dissolution of the monasteries, so that they would become the most ardent champions of that dissolution. There was a scramble for the abbey lands. Audeley, the Chancellor, obtained eight religious houses, Cromwell six (amongst them the great Benedictine Abbey of Ramsey, afterwards inherited by Oliver Cromwell), Lord Clinton twelve, Norfolk and Somerset thirteen each, and Suffolk, the King’s brother-in-law, thirty.” (Op. cit., p. 190.)

Thus the wealthy and influential were linked up irrevocably with the Reformation. Any attempt to restore the Old Faith would in the future be regarded as a personal attack on them, for, if it succeeded they would have to disgorge the loot of the monasteries. A similar system of confiscation and plunder of monasteries and of the lands of the Catholic gentry, with like implications, took place

<sup>1</sup> He began to debase the currency in 1543 and “repeated this criminal action in 1545 and 1546.”

The spoliation of the Gilds was effected by an Act of Edward VI, cap. 14 (1547).

in Ireland, and was only completed after the setting up of the "Protestant Ascendancy."

It is outside the present purpose to enter into the reasons alleged by Henry for the suppression of the monasteries; his methods of examination into the lives of the monks are strongly reminiscent of the Morality Trials instituted by the Hitler Régime in Germany. J. Gardiner says: "The defaming of the monasteries was simply a step towards the confiscation of their endowments." (*Lollardy* ii., 88.) There is, however, question here only of the *economic fact* of the robbery of the monasteries and the gilds which laid one of the main foundations of the capitalist system in England; the causes alleged for the suppression lie outside the purpose of this Essay. The common people who had been overwhelmed by taxation were won over to acquiescence by being led to believe that the confiscation of the monasteries would relieve them of their insupportable burthen and prevent further taxation. J. E. Thorold Rogers says:

"The public was reconciled to the Dissolution by the promise made that the monastic estates should not be converted to the King's private use, but be devoted towards the maintenance of a military force, and that therefore no more demands should be made on the nation for subsidies and aids. Similarly, when the gild lands and chantry lands were confiscated at the beginning of Edward's reign, a promise was made that the estates of these foundations should be devoted to good and proper uses, for erecting grammar-schools, for the further augmentation of the universities, and the better provision for the poor and needy. They were swept into the hands of Seymour and Somerset, of the Dudleys and Cecils, and the rest of the crew who surrounded the throne of Edward." (*Work and Wages*, p. 84.)

The result of this heartless robbery by the titled looters was, together with the system of enclosures, to create an army of beggars and paupers, the "men without property."

The first extensive development of a proletariat began with the robbery of the church and her associate corporations by the "reforming" bandits of the sixteenth century. H. de B. Gibbins, writing of the confiscation of the monasteries, says :

" Such were the acts instituted or actually performed by that miserable monarch, whom nevertheless not a few people who write history seek to glorify. Possibly they do so in ignorance of the facts. This much is certain, that Henry the Eighth's reign witnessed the growing of pauperism in a country which had been a few years previously in a state of considerable material comfort. But before the close of his reign the labouring classes became impoverished, and the tenant farmers were ruined with high rents exacted by the new nobility." (*The Industrial History of England*, p. 88.)

With the spoliation of the Church and the amassing of wealth in the hands of the supporters of the Reformation there opens up the *era* of Capitalism and of the Money Power. Harold Laski says of the Great Pillage :

" But what, quite unquestionably, made the policy of suppression popular was the opportunity it opened up to the King, the nobility, and the upper middle class of self-enrichment. The grasping cupidity with which men, from great nobles like the Duke of Norfolk, to country gentlemen like Humphrey Stafford, and even unknown members of the urban bourgeoisie, petitioned, bargained and bribed to get their share of the spoils is highly significant. It created a solid party in favour of maintaining the new order of things.<sup>1</sup> It facilitated the building up of great estates, and, hence, the progress of the

<sup>1</sup> This recalls Lloyd George's castigation of the irate noble lord who had described the Welsh Disestablishment Bill as "robbery of God." "Look at the story of the pillage of the Reformation. They robbed the Church, they robbed the monasteries, they robbed the alms-houses, they robbed the poor, and they robbed the dead. Then they come here, when we are trying to recover some part of this pillaged property for the poor, to whom it was originally given and they venture, with hands dripping with the fat of sacrilege, to accuse us of the robbery of God."

enclosure movement. It stimulated the accumulation of capital, and thereby, the numbers of men prepared to risk their surplus wealth in the new commercial adventures.<sup>1</sup> There can be little doubt that the policy represented by the Reformation is, psychologically, the expression of nothing so much as the breakdown of the medieval economic order." (*The Rise of European Liberalism*, p. 40.)

The Reformation has often been described as a revolution ; it was so in more ways than one. In its economic aspect it has been described by Abbot<sup>2</sup> Gasquet as follows :

" It was a revolution indeed, but a revolution not in the ordinary sense. It was a rising, not of people against their rulers, nor of those in hunger and distress against the well-to-do, but it was in truth *the rising of the rich against the poor*, the violent seizure by the new men in power of the funds and property which generations of benefactors had intended for the relief of the needy, or by educational and other endowments to assist the poor man to rise in the social scale." (*Christian Democracy in Pre-Reformation Times*, p. 11.)

The Reformation, not only in England but in the other Protestant countries, made the rich richer, the poor poorer, Dollinger says that " The depression, detriment, and spoliation of the lower classes have everywhere followed in the revolutionary change called the Reformation." (*The Church and the Churches*, p. 148.) The poor grew weaker and the rich grew stronger, till in our day the process is about to be reversed by another revolutionary change as big with consequences for humanity as that of the sixteenth century.

In a few striking sentences the Cambridge Modern

<sup>1</sup> " Contrary to the popular impression, the first ' Industrial Revolution ' occurred, not in the eighteenth century, but in the hundred years that followed the Reformation and the dissolution of the monasteries." (Roy Glenday, *The Future of Economic Society*, p. 123.)

<sup>2</sup> Afterwards Cardinal.

History points out the sad spiritual and material condition to which that degraded despot, Henry VIII, reduced his people :

“ The King’s high-handed proceedings, alike as regards the Church, the monasteries, and the coinage, lowered the moral tone of the whole community. Men lost faith in their religion. Greedy courtiers sprang up eager for grants of abbey lands. A new nobility was raised out of the money-getting middle classes, and a host of place-men enriched themselves by continual peculation. Covetousness and fraud reigned in the highest places.” (p. 470).

The development of the control of England by the monied classes after the Reformation robberies is briefly described by Hilaire Belloc as follows :

“ The squires, twenty years after Henry’s death, had come to possess, through the ruin of religion, something like *half* the land of England. With the rapidity of a fungus growth the new wealth spread over the desolation of the land. The newly enriched captured both the Universities, all the Courts of Justice, most of the public schools. They won their great civil war against the Crown. In little more than a century after Henry’s folly they had established themselves in the place of what had once been the Monarchy and central government of England. The impoverished Crown resisted in vain ; they killed one embarrassed King—Charles I—and they set up his son Charles II, as an insufficiently salaried puppet. Since their victory over the Crown they and the capitalists who had sprung from their avarice and their philosophy, and largely from their very loins, have been completely masters of England.” (*Europe and the Faith*, pp. 307–308.)

This is a brilliant summing up of the growth of capitalism from the Reformation and the organised attack on the Old Faith till its completion and the final establishment

of Protestantism as the result of the “Glorious Revolution” of 1688.

In concluding this section on the dissolution of the monasteries it may be said that no intelligent Catholic who moves amid the grass-grown ruins of an ancient English abbey can do so without being deeply affected as he thinks of the “might-have-been”: indeed, no thoughtful Protestant with a sensitive soul and a sense of history can do so without similar feelings. One such Protestant historian, the Rev. J. H. Blunt, thus writes:

“On the whole question it may be said that we must ever look with shame on that dissolution, as on a series of transactions in which the sorrow, the waste, the impiety that were wrought, were enough to make angels weep. . . . A blot and a scandal were indelibly impressed upon our history; and every bare site, every ruined gable, is still a witness to what was nothing less than a great national tragedy.” (Vol. I., p. 389 sq.)

#### CAPITALISM—AN ECONOMIC SYSTEM

It is now more than fifty years ago since Pope Leo XIII addressing the Catholics of the world in his encyclical letter, *Rerum Novarum*, 1891, severely criticised Capitalism. He was regarded at the time as an alarmist or a revolutionary and his words of warning passed unheeded by the multitude. He wrote as follows:

“Public institutions and the very laws have set aside the ancient religion. Hence, by degrees it has come to pass that working men have been surrendered isolated and helpless to the hard-heartedness of employers and the greed of unchecked competition. The mischief has been increased by rapacious usury, which, although more than once condemned by the Church, is nevertheless, under a different guise, but with like injustice, still practised by covetous and grasping men. To this must be added that the hiring of labour and all manner of trade

are concentrated in the hands of the comparatively few; so that a small number of very rich men has been able to lay upon the teeming masses of the labouring poor a yoke little better than slavery itself."

As will be seen in the following pages Capitalism is essentially rooted in self and self-interest, in insatiable greed, in the economic isolation and exploitation of the individual; its working motto is—"Each for himself, and the devil take the hindmost." Its characteristic individualism is the complete antithesis of the brotherly spirit of the medieval economic system of the Gilds. Its philosophy may be crystallized in the expression—Economic Individualism; this term has been used throughout this Essay as a synonym for Capitalism. The evolution of Capitalism will be now briefly described, but only the barest outline can be given. Before proceeding it is necessary to define terms, for much confusion has at times arisen owing to the fact that Capitalism has not been clearly defined and distinguished. R. H. Tawney makes a distinction in this connexion which is all-important.

"Capitalism," he says, "in the sense of great individual undertakings, involving the control of large financial resources, and yielding riches to their masters as a result of speculation, money-lending, commercial enterprise, buccaneering, and war, is as old as history. Capitalism, as an economic system, resting on the organisation of legally free wage-earners, for the purpose of pecuniary profit, by the owner of capital or his agents, and setting its stamp on every aspect of society, is a modern phenomenon."<sup>1</sup>

It is Capitalism as a modern economic system that there is question of in this Essay.

Furthermore, it must not be imagined that the Reformers foresaw the economic effects that sprung from their teaching. Professor Butterfield of Cambridge, says:

<sup>1</sup> Foreword to English translation of Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

"If we to-day were to mention some of the things we most prize in the Reformation and Martin Luther could hear us, he would say that he had never meant his quarrel with the papacy to lead to anything which he considered so wicked and preposterous." (*The Englishman and His History*, p. 103.)

This is especially true of the economic effects of the Reformation and in particular as regards Luther.

With the disruption of Christendom and the undermining of the Church's authority by the Reformation, the Nation-State and the National Church arose simultaneously. The immediate sequel was the rapid submergence of the Church by the State in Protestant countries : Luther's conception of the Prince was that of *Summus Pontifex*. In former days the Church guided and regulated economic life and relations by her teaching and was supported by the State and its laws ; at the Reformation the State stepped in and took over control from the Church. Utilitarianism will henceforth replace morality in the world of business. Harold Laski writes thus of the economic effect of Protestantism :

"Broadly, we may say that the contribution of the sixteenth century is the destruction of ecclesiastical authority in the economic sphere. This enables property-relations to develop unhampered by theological considerations. There emerged from this a secular State which sought, and found, its mission upon the basis that it replaced the Church as the guardian of social well-being. It builds its own morality, based upon utility, to suit its new prestige." (*The Rise of European Liberalism*, p. 58.)

Professor Tawney has described the new relations of Church and State as follows :

"As a result of the Reformation the relations previously existing between the Church and the State had been almost exactly reversed. In the Middle Ages the

former had been at least in theory, the ultimate authority on questions of public and private morality, while the latter was the police-officer which enforced its decrees. In the sixteenth century, the Church became the ecclesiastical department of the State, and religion was used to lend a moral sanction to secular social policy.” (Op. cit., p. 154.)

Rev. W. Cunningham, D.D., admits the impotence of Protestantism to guide the consciences of men when Capitalism began to develop ; *expediency* then became the motivating power of men’s commercial transactions.

“ The duty of work and the evil of greed,” he says, “ had been the two great foundations of Christian teaching on social matters ; and in the Tudor times, the maxims which had been thought out and formulated by Christian moralists became inapplicable for guidance in actual life. The change was due to the introduction of capital.<sup>1</sup> The duties of employers could not be laid down as duties of strict obligation, nor could the right and wrong use of capital be stated with perfect precision ; both were constantly treated and regulated not as matters of right and wrong, but with a view to political expediency ; their bearing on the power of the State came to be the criterion of what was allowable. In this way enclosures were deprecated, and on this ground the State did much to control the direction in which capital was employed ; but *Christian moralists were no longer able to give positive teaching as to what was right or wrong* ;<sup>2</sup> they were contented to appeal to sentiments which practical men regarded as merely fanciful.” (*The Growth of English Industry During the Early and Middle Ages*, Part I, p. 558.)

No doubt, with the discovery of the New World and the development of international trade many new and complex

<sup>1</sup> Not merely the introduction of *Capital* but rather the rise of *Capitalism*, two different things as Tawney has pointed out.

<sup>2</sup> Italics mine.

moral problems arose, very difficult of solution. But the key-point to remember is that, with the rejection of the Teaching Authority of the Church, the establishment of Private Judgment, and the persistent and vicious attacks on "papal" doctrine not only dogmatic but economic-moral, ample opportunities were offered to and availed of by the conscienceless adventurers of the time—and they were many—to cast off the restrictions of the Church's economic teaching and to give free rein to their avid acquisitiveness. Even piracy on the high-seas by the Elizabethan freebooters found approval in the highest places and, more striking still, it is romanticised and lauded by many of the modern English historians.

This piracy was no small factor in the development of English capitalism in the days of Elizabeth.<sup>1</sup> It was organised on a business basis, that of the joint-stock company which was later to become so characteristic of the capitalist system. The Queen and court set the example to the people who were not slow to follow. Lipson says: "In the financing of privateering expeditions the Queen, her ministers, her court and others participated on a joint-stock basis, which served to familiarise the nation with the methods of a joint-stock." (Vol. iii., p. 210.)

Of the failure of the Reformation preachers Dr. Cunningham says:

"The preachers were a great power in all the reformed countries, and they do not appear to have made much use of their influence in upholding a new standard of commercial morality. The 'Pope's laws' were treated with contempt, as containing much that was evil, in all the regions where the Reformation had made any way; and, when the leaders of the Calvinist and Zwinglian parties explained away the scriptural prohibitions no firm ground was available for reproving any usurious practices that were permitted by civil or municipal law . . . (p. 156). Changes in the circumstances and conditions of business transactions had brought about

<sup>1</sup> See *Essays in Persuasion*. J. M. Keynes, p. 362.

a modification of public opinion, and it was possible for men of high standing to engage openly in transactions, which would have been regarded as disreputable in the fifteenth century" (p. 159) . . .

The Church of England had failed to lead and teach, or rather she had been deposed and replaced by the State which was henceforth to guide the economic life of the people.

There has been much misunderstanding of the Church's position in the medieval period as regards the frustration of economic enterprise. Sir William Ashley corrects this as follows :

" It is often said that the teaching of the medieval Church with regard to usury, enforced as it was by secular legislation and by the law courts, failed to recognise ' the productive character of capital ' and put obstacles in the way of the progress of trade. Such assertions show ignorance of the historical development. During the later Middle Ages, what we know as ' capital ' was only beginning to come into existence ; the world, that is to say, was only beginning to see accumulations of wealth which could be invested in any direction in trade and industry, and to realise that opportunities for such investment actually existed. Now any investment in which the owner of capital actually ' adventured ' his property and took a real risk, in the hope of obtaining some return over and above the sum he had put in, was regarded by theologians and the ecclesiastical (or ' canonist ') lawyers as perfectly legitimate. So that, instead of retarding the free growth of trade, the Church may be even said to have stimulated it, by employing its influence to turn this disposable wealth of the time away from mere loans to impecunious rulers or extravagant grandes or mismanaging monasteries—loans which might fairly be described in most instances by the modern term ' unproductive ' or the medieval term ' barren '—into the more productive paths of commercial venture." (*The Economic Organisation of England*, p. 82.)

Professor Tawney, as already pointed out, made a necessary distinction between the large-scale use of Capital and Capitalism proper : it is also helpful to distinguish between (a) *Merchant Capitalism*, as it developed in England from the breakdown of the Gilds at the Reformation until the middle of the eighteenth century ; and (b) *Industrial Capitalism*, as it became with the Industrial Revolution. It is this latter form with which we are so familiar to-day and which is commonly called, without qualification, Capitalism.

The growth of Merchant Capitalism will be outlined in the following Sections—"Mercantilism," "Calvinism," and "The Protestant Revolution of 1688"; and that of Industrial Capitalism in the sections on "Adam Smith," "The Industrial Revolution" and "The Revolt against Economic Individualism." Since the closing years of the eighteenth century Capitalism has grown with amazing rapidity: in the present century it has reached colossal proportions in the national and international trusts, combines and cartels, which have continued to destroy or swallow up their little rivals, preparing the way unconsciously for Nationalisation, Socialism and Communism.

### MERCANTILISM

The intense spirit of acquisitiveness which took possession of individuals as the result of the rejection of the traditional religious and economic controls at the Reformation soon entered into the life of the Nation-State as a whole. As a result, the acquisition of national wealth became the supreme concern of statesmen and governments. To promote this end it became the interest of each country to export its own manufactured goods as much as possible and to import as little as possible, receiving the difference of the two values in gold or silver. This is the central idea of the economic system which is known as Mercantilism. This term is generally used to indicate the economic

activities of the State in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This system naturally involved the encouragement by the State, by every means in its power, of the production of home-manufactured goods and the discouragement of imports.

As a consequence tariffs, subsidies, prohibitions, commercial treaties, increased and multiplied. The Navigation Acts of 1651 required that imports to England and her colonies from Asia, Africa and America should be carried in English ships, and those from Europe in English ships or in those of the country from which the imports came. This gave a great impetus to the English shipping trade and to the development of English commerce. Colonies were forbidden to trade with any save the parent country. National rivalries developed as each nation strove selfishly for its own commercial aggrandisement. "Each nation, as a whole, working for its own power, and the greater ones for predominance, they entered into a competitive struggle in the economic no less than in the political field, success in the former being indeed, by the rulers, regarded as instrumental to pre-eminence in the latter. A national economic interest came to exist, of which the government made itself the representative head."<sup>1</sup> Mercantilism, in a word, was Nationalism in the economic sphere.

But in considering these commercial struggles between States it is easy to lose sight of an underlying fundamental cause which gave rise to them—the deposition of the Church by the State in the realm of economics and the divorce of economics from ethics. Professor Laski, who is not a Christian, comments on this as follows :

"The root of the mercantilist idea is its recognition of the need for a new discipline, *a code of economic behaviour* which will make for prosperity instead of misery, for work instead of indolence. It was natural to look to the State, in these circumstances, as the great regulator from whose beneficent action abundance might be won. *Mercantilism, in the first stage, therefore*

<sup>1</sup> Article on "Mercantile System," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed.

*simply transfers the idea of social control from the Church to the State in the economic realm. It is, of course, a momentous transference. For the motive of State-action is no longer the good life, but the attainment of wealth.* This attitude can be seen with abundant clearness in Englishmen like Hale and Cecil. . . . Their outlook in these matters is wholly secular. The recommendation of their policy is simply that it will add to the wealth of the Kingdom. What is new in their outlook is its frank utilitarianism, their acceptance of the idea of plenty as a self-sufficient social idea. This emerges, above all, in their attitude to the poor. It is not, I think, too much to say that they look upon the unemployed as social criminals ; they detract from the wealth that is attainable. This is the spirit of the Elizabethan poor law.” (*The Rise of European Liberalism*, pp. 59–60.)

This is the spirit that the individualism of Protestantism introduced into the economic sphere : the unchristian attitude towards poverty has already been referred to.

Professor E. Lipson thus describes the basic principles that underlay Mercantilism of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries :

“ The age of Mercantilism was the battle-ground in which was fought out the issue whether individualism should be allowed a free hand or kept rigorously under control—whether the dissolving forces of commercialism should ruthlessly destroy the corporate fabric of society or remain subject to the traditional checks and balances. The issue was a momentous one for the future destiny of the English people. Every economic regime prescribes its own standards of conduct, and there was a fundamental difference in the basic concepts of the old order and of the new.

“ The old order did not divorce economics from ethics, but judged economic behaviour by an ethical standard which took account of the social reactions. In subordinating sectional claims to the common good it

reflected the current precepts of morality. Hence the insistence on righteous dealing between landlord and tenant; hence the view of commerce as the means to promote the welfare of the community and provide a 'sufficient' recompense to the trader; hence the doctrine of a 'just price' that was fair alike to producer and consumer; hence the efforts to extirpate the 'corrupt practices,' as they were styled, of commercial speculation which manipulated supplies with the object of forcing up prices; and hence the unsparing denunciation of enclosures for sheep-farming. *The new order judged economic behaviour by the standard of enlightened self-interest; and the frank recognition of the latter as the dominant motive force registered a stage in the evolution of economic thought.*" (*A Planned Economy or Free Enterprise*, pp. 139-140.)

Only a passing reference can be made to Ireland. "Mercantilism, conceived in the narrowest spirit, produced its bitterest fruits" there, says E. Lipson. In 1667 the exportation of Irish cattle to England was prohibited and the trade thereby ruined. The export of Irish butter and cheese to England was prohibited by the Act of 1681. The export of Irish woollen manufactures except to England was prohibited in 1699: Arthur Young said that "the Irish woollen fabrics were destroyed by one of the most infamous Statutes that ever disgraced a legislature." Mr. Lipson's comment on this iniquitous system is as follows:

"But behind the façade of economic nationalism, stripped bare of trappings and pretences, lay the sombre influences of racial domination and religious bigotry, which kept apart in relentless antagonism the two nations whom Nature and History had linked together in indissoluble union. These complex forces created the atmosphere in which the clamour of sectional interests yielded an abundant crop of repressive legislation." (*The Age of Mercantilism*, p. 198.)

## CALVINISM—"THE PROTESTANT ETHIC"

An outstanding factor in the growth of Economic Individualism was Calvinism—especially in developing the middle-class capitalists, the "bourgeoisie." Capitalism in its opening stages was identified with the landed aristocracy; but with the rise of the Calvinist sects a new element of capitalists appeared, men who had worked themselves up to social position and wealth from humble origins—*nouveaux riches*. The capitalist aristocrats were traditionalists, who held their wealth mainly in land and retained much of the old spirit of medievalism; to them the established Church was a national institution organised in dioceses and in a hierarchy. The Calvinists, on the other hand, rejected the episcopacy and set up local congregations each independent of the other. They opposed any religious control by the State and maintained a strong sense of spiritual and individual independence. They largely rejected the sacramental system and developed a peculiar spirit of asceticism which linked up the spiritual with the material. Their natural energy was directed to industry rather than to the land. In their pursuit of wealth they were aided not only by their natural strength of character developed out of their highly individualist creeds, but they had moreover the constant urge of their religion in their capitalistic pursuits. The classic study of this phase of Capitalism is Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Professor R. H. Tawney wrote the "foreword" to the English translation in which he summarised Max Weber's thesis as follows:

"The pioneers of the modern economic order were, he argues, *parvenus*, who elbowed their way to success in the teeth of the established aristocracy of land and commerce. The tonic that braced them for the conflict was a new conception of religion, which taught them to regard the pursuit of wealth as not merely an advantage but a duty. The conception welded into a disciplined force the still feeble *bourgeoisie*, heightened its energies,

and cast a halo of sanctification round its convenient vices. What is significant, in short, is not the strength of the motive of economic self-interest, which is the commonplace of all ages and demands no explanation. It is the change of moral standards which converted a natural frailty into an ornament of the spirit, and canonised as the economic virtues habits which in early ages (the medieval) had been denounced as vices. The force which produced it was the creed associated with the name of Calvin. Capitalism was the social counterpart of Calvinist theology." (p. 2.)

Commenting on this particular development of Capitalism, Christopher Dawson writes :

" The Protestant asceticism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries did not lead men to fly from the world and to give up all their goods to the poor and the Church, as in the Middle Ages. It inculcated the duty of unremitting industry and thrift, while at the same time it discouraged rigorously every kind of self-indulgence and extravagance in the expenditure of what had been gained. Thus there grew up a new social type, the hard-working, conscientious, abstemious man of business, whose only interests were in his counting-house and in the meeting-house of his sect; men who spared themselves no more than their employees, and who looked on their work as a kind of religious vocation. It was men of this stamp who supplied the driving power of the Industrial Revolution, and were the founders of the economic power of Britain and the United States." (*Progress and Religion*, p. 204.)

André Siegfried makes lengthy and interesting comment on the influence of Calvinism on the economic life of the United States in his *America Comes of Age*, from which the following is taken :

" Calvin united religion and daily life for the first time since the days of the ancients, for, according to his creed, the better the faithful performed their daily

task, the more they worked for the glory of God. Though the Catholic Church has always allied itself to riches, it has never held up wealth as a symbol of godliness, believing that the poor man can retain his nobility of soul, and possibly be even nearer to God. The Puritan, on the contrary, regards his wealth as an honour, and when he hoards up his profits, he says smugly that Providence has been kind. In his eyes and in the eyes of his neighbours, his riches become the visible sign of divine approbation, and in the end he cannot tell when he is acting from a sense of duty, and when from self-interest. In fact he has no wish to make any distinction, for he is accustomed to regard as a duty everything that is most useful to his own advancement. As a result of this more or less deliberate lack of psychological penetration, he does not even rise to the level of a hypocrite. The same confusion of thought is also found among nearly all English Protestants, and it is difficult to say whether it is astuteness or simply naïveté." (pp. 34-35).<sup>1</sup>

Nicholas Berdyaev is violently opposed to the Puritan's claim that the acquisition of wealth is the sign of God's approval of a virtuous life. He says: "There is nothing more inconsistent with Christianity than the optimistic idea that the economically strongest and most successful are of necessity the best, that wealth is a favour granted to man as a reward for his virtues." (*Christianity and Class War*, p. 51.) In the prosperous period of Victorian England one of the most frequent arguments used against the claims of the Catholic Church by English Protestant controversialists was that the Catholic nations were backward and the Protestant nations progressive. This argument would scarcely be used to-day.

The fact that Dissenters were excluded from Parliament until 1828 was an incentive for the more active to turn to industry. H. A. L. Fisher points out how "the descendants of the Puritans came into their own:"

<sup>1</sup> See his amusing account of Rotary Clubs and their members, p. 54.

“ Excluded from an active concern with politics until 1828, the Nonconformists applied a grave and intrepid energy to the pursuit of opulence. Labour they regarded as a sacrament, pleasure as a sin, the making of wealth a sign that their service was acceptable to the Lord. Entering with a rigid determination into almost every form of industrial and commercial enterprise, but especially attracted to iron, they had a large share in the making of a new England, less tranquil and lovely, but richer, more powerful, and vastly more crowded than the old.” (*A History of Europe*, p. 779.)

Lutheranism was largely identified with conservatism and the land ; Calvinism with “ progressiveness ” and commerce. It was Calvinism that prepared the way for and led up to the Industrial Revolution. “ Calvin did for the bourgeoisie of the seventeenth century what Marx did for the proletariat of the nineteenth.” But, it must be stressed that the religious-economic influence of Calvinism was not confined to the dissenting sects, for it passed far beyond them. R. H. Tawney emphasises the importance of this factor in the economic life of England :

“ Calvinist leaders,” he says, “ addressed their teaching not of course exclusively, but none the less primarily to the classes engaged in trade and industry, who formed the most modern and progressive elements in the life of the age. In doing so they naturally started from a frank recognition of the necessity of capital, credit and banking, large-scale commerce and finance, and the other practical facts of business life. They thus broke with the tradition which, regarding a preoccupation with economic interests ‘ beyond what is necessary for subsistence ’ as reprehensible, had stigmatised the middleman as a parasite and the usurer as a thief.

“ The influence of Calvinism was not simple but complex, and extended far beyond the circle of churches which would properly be called Calvinist. Calvinist theology was accepted where Calvinist discipline was

repudiated. . . . In the version of Calvinism which found favour with the English upper classes in the seventeenth century, individualism in social affairs was, on the whole, the prevalent philosophy. It was only the fanatic and the agitator who drew inspiration from the vision of a New Jerusalem descending on England's green and pleasant land, and the troopers of Fairfax soon taught them reason." (*Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, pp. 104, 112-13.)

Writing of these Puritan merchants and industrialists of the seventeenth century Tawney adds :

" To such a generation, a creed which transformed the acquisition of wealth from a drudgery or a temptation into a moral duty was the milk of lions. It was not that religion was expelled from practical life, but that religion itself gave it a foundation of granite. In that keen atmosphere of economic enterprise, the ethics of the Puritan bore some resemblance to those associated later with the name of Smiles.<sup>1</sup> The good Christian was not wholly dissimilar from the 'economic man.' " (op. cit., p. 253.)

The Calvinist influence in developing Economic Individualism has been immense both in England, Scotland, Wales, and the United States; and has been very considerable in France through the Huguenots. The blessed alliance of business with religion is seen in Ireland also, especially in the north-east corner, the home of the Irish Calvinists and of the "civic virtues"—to use Sir Horace Plunkett's phrase: as already said, this Calvinist economic spirit invades other religious domains outside the non-conformist sects and is by no means confined in Ireland to the Six Counties or to non-Catholics.

In *The Individual and the State* (1946) Rev. R. H. Murray, Litt.D., contrasts the spirit of "an effete medievalism" with that of the post-Reformation era of "progress," and,

<sup>1</sup> Evidently Smiles of "Self-Help" fame.

notwithstanding the present-day economic chaos, pays the following glowing tribute to the "Protestant Ethic":

"The state of poverty was once the sign of a saint: now it was the mark of failure. A good citizen of this earth was preparing for his citizenship in the New Jerusalem.

. . . Business henceforth became a sacred office in which it was man's bounden duty to do his utmost *ad majorem Dei gloriam*. The Reformers were fortunate in the moment in which they launched forth this idea, for Europe was about to change from the agricultural to the capitalistic system. This new industrial form gave rise to an enormously potential revolutionary force. . . .

"Formerly it was *orare est laborare*; now it was *laborare est orare*, with the outcome that a justification was at once given to social service, the worth of which the world is only beginning to realise. Individualism in business and individualism in religion marched hand in hand together." (pp. 83-84.)

And one may add by way of comment—"they marched hand in hand together" spreading religious and economic anarchy (and political anarchy) all along the way, the tragedy of which "the world is only beginning to realise!"

#### THE PROTESTANT REVOLUTION OF 1688

The seventeenth century was the century of the Puritans in England. The Whig Revolution of 1688 was the culminating point of the Reformation. Professor Tawney says: "Puritanism, not the Tudor secession from Rome, was the true English Reformation, and it is from its struggle against the old order that an England which is unmistakably modern emerges." (*Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, p. 180.) The Old Faith was then (1688) overthrown without hope of revival. The Protestant Succession had been established; from henceforth England was unequivocally a Protestant State to be ruled only by a Protestant King. With the Protestant Revolution of 1688 Economic

Individualism received a new impetus opening the way to the coming of *laissez-faire*. The *parvenus* of whom Max Weber wrote have grown in numbers and in strength. From henceforth England will be in the hands of the descendants of those who shared in the robbery of the monasteries and the gilds in the sixteenth century and of the *parvenus* who had grown wealthy in commerce and industry under the urge of the Calvinist "economic virtues" in the seventeenth century. The power of the Monarch is now broken and an oligarchy of wealth will henceforth rule England.

Soon after the "Glorious Revolution" the dissenting sects were granted freedom of religion by the passing of the Toleration Act, 1698; the Dissenters did not, however, become eligible for Parliament till 1828. (The Catholics, of course, remained utterly suppressed under the Penal Laws.) This toleration was mainly due to the desire to promote national prosperity owing to the important place Puritans held in the commercial and industrial life of the nation. Professor E. Lipson describes the change wrought by the Revolution as follows :

"Owing to the movement which culminated in the Revolution of 1688, Parliament came directly under the influence of a capitalist régime which had successfully challenged the right of the Crown to limit its power, and proceeded to demand its liberation from the shackles laid upon it by the legislature. Nothing was to be allowed to stand in the path of the *entrepreneur*; even the case for religious toleration was based on the plea that persecution was a bar to prosperity in view of the prominence of the Dissenters in the business world. Henceforth Parliament concentrated its energies upon commercial policy, which was now systematically designed to protect the interests of the producer and insure him the undisputed possession of the home market: it grew less concerned to control industry, regulate labour conditions, and promote social stability. In accordance with the change of attitude, the old industrial code was allowed gradually to fall into

desuetude. *The whole economic outlook of the eighteenth century was permeated by an encroaching individualism which insisted upon unfettered freedom of action and imposed upon the government the course that it must pursue.* Owing to this reversal of roles, the State renounced the right to dictate to *entrepreneurs* the terms on which they should employ their workfolk, and exhibited an increasing disposition to tolerate their claims to make their own contract regarding the rates of remuneration, the length of service, the quality and supply of labour, the nature of the products. Parliament pronounced the maxim in 1702 which was to mould its policy throughout the century :—‘ *Trade ought to be free and not restrained.*’ ” (A *Planned Economy or Free Enterprise*, pp. 152–3.)

Much has been written in laudation of the Revolution of 1688 as the foundation of the liberties of the English people. It led however to the oligarchic rule of the wealthy classes, the creation of a nation-wide proletariat, and to the iniquitous exploitation of the common people by the industrialists. The King’s power was, no doubt, crippled, but Mammon, the Money Power, replaced it.

That the “Glorious Revolution” of 1688 had as one of its objectives the “liberties of the people” is a myth believed by very many Protestants, particularly by those in Northern Ireland. The truth is rather that it aimed at securing liberty for the landed aristocrats and capitalists to exploit “the people.” One need not accept the teaching of Karl Marx’s *Das Kapital* while appreciating his views on the Revolution.

“ The Glorious Revolution,” he says, “ brought into power, along with William of Orange, the landlord and capitalist appropriators of surplus-value. They inaugurated the new era by practising on a colossal scale thefts of state lands, thefts that had been hitherto managed more modestly. These estates were given away, sold at a ridiculous figure, or even annexed to private estates by direct seizure. All this happened without the slightest

observation of legal etiquette. The crown lands thus fraudulently appropriated, together with the robbery of the Church estates, as far as these had not been lost again during the republican revolution, form the basis of the to-day princely domains of the English oligarchy. The bourgeois capitalists favoured the operation with the view, among others, to promoting free trade in land, to extending the domain of modern agriculture on the large farm system, and to increasing their supply of the free agricultural proletarians ready to hand. Besides, the new landed aristocracy was the natural ally of the new bankocracy, of the newly-hatched *haute finance*, and of the large manufacturers, then depending on protective duties." (Vol. ii, ch. xxvii.)

Lest it may be thought that Marx was biassed, here is the judgment of Sir Charles Petrie, who sees the Revolution from the angle of a convinced monarchist :

" The Whigs . . . carried to its logical conclusion the work of Henry VIII in creating a vested interest that it should be impossible to uproot. As has already been shown, the Revolution was the logical sequel of the Reformation, for the latter called the new class into existence, and the former placed it in power. Never did a faction intrench itself so securely as did the victorious Whigs after 1688. Not an office in Church or State but was awarded to a reliable partizan, and long before the word Tammany was known in the English language its methods were being employed by the Whigs in a manner that Croker himself never excelled. Wars were commenced, prolonged, or concluded as best suited the interests, not of Britain, but of the Whigs, while the whole sordid business was defended in the name of liberty and patriotism, and the apology has deceived the majority of historians down to the present day.<sup>1</sup> Those, however, who wish to know the exact benefits

<sup>1</sup> Professor Basil Williams, in his *Stanhope*, even calls William III "the Great Deliverer." Note the capitals.

which the 'Glorious' Revolution conferred upon the British Isles would do well to forsake the glowing accounts to be found in the pages of Macaulay, Trevelyan, and Oldmixon, for the study of the Newgate Calendar, the pictures of Hogarth, and the working of the Penal Laws in Ireland." (*Monarchy*, pp. 47-48.)

There are few greater distortions of history than the Whigs' assertion that civil and religious liberty was the objective of the Great Revolution in England: its offshoot in Ireland, Protestant Ascendancy, gave the world a unique example of civil and religious tyranny.

The whole period of English history from the Reformation onwards has been written with distorted vision by many of the leading English Protestant historians—"Whig History." H. Butterfield, Professor of Modern History, Cambridge, refers to the anti-Catholic bias of the Whig historians as follows:

"It is astonishing to what an extent the historian has been Protestant, progressive and Whig, and the very model of this nineteenth-century gentleman. . . . But whether we take the contest of Luther against the Popes or that of Philip II and Elizabeth, or that of the Huguenots with Catherine de Medici . . . it appears that the historian tends to adopt the Whig or Protestant view of his subject, and very quickly busies himself with dividing the world into the friends and enemies of progress. . . . Further, this Whig tendency is so deep-rooted that even when piecemeal research has corrected the story in detail, we are slow in revaluing the whole and reorganising the broad outlines of the theme in the light of these discoveries." (*The Whig Interpretation of History*, pp. 3 and 5.)

The Protestant Revolution of 1688 is a turning point in the history of England and of Capitalism. Not only did great political changes take place with the coming of William of Orange but also a great economic revolution. It was in his reign that the National Debt appeared, and with it the establishment of the Bank of England: from

thence forward England came increasingly under the control of the Money Power.

#### THE BANK OF ENGLAND

“ The Bank of England was founded in consequence of the Revolution of 1688, which by making England a participant in the continental struggle against France created the national debt. The Government did not know where to turn for money to carry on the war, and eagerly embraced the proposal made by William Paterson for a loan of £1,200,000 to the State at 8 per cent. in return for the incorporation of the subscribers as a bank.” (Lipson’s *Economic History*. Vol. iii., p. 240.)

The proposal was accepted and the founding of the Bank of England was authorised by the Act of 1694. England was thereby put in pawn to the Money Power, a condition in which she has remained till to-day. Professor Lipson adds :

“ The history of the Bank of England is an epitome of the financial history of England since the Revolution ; and it enjoys the distinction shared by few other institutions that not only from the first did it occupy a dominating position, but its importance to the community has steadily grown until to-day it is both the Government’s banker and the banker’s banker.” (Ibid, p. 241.)

Hilaire Belloc asserts that the foundation of the Bank of England was “ after the Reformation and the destruction of the monasteries, the most important event in modern English history. In four years the national debt was £20,000,000, and in twenty years it was already over £50,000,000. It became a permanent institution.” Dr. Cunningham says that the establishment of the Bank changed the centre of gravity of the State so that the Bank overbalanced the Crown.

“ It had long been notorious,” he writes, “ that the possession of wealth gave the command of power ; the

concentration of wealth in the hands of the Directors of the Bank enabled them to exercise an economic influence ; the resources at their command were not exceeded by the sums which the King could control ; it was hardly too much to say that the Bank overbalanced the Crown as a power in the State." (*Growth of English Industry and Commerce*, p. 412.)

Karl Marx's views on the financial operations of the Bank of England are well worth quoting :—

" The Bank of England began with lending its money to the Government at 8 per cent. ; at the same time it was empowered by Parliament to coin money out of the same capital, by lending it again to the public in the form of bank-notes. It was allowed to use these notes for discounting bills, making advances on commodities, and for buying the precious metals. It was not long ere this credit-money, made by the bank itself, became the coin in which the Bank of England made its loans to the State, and paid, on account of the State, the interest on the public debt. It was not enough that the bank gave with one hand and took back more with the other ; it remained, even whilst receiving, the eternal creditor of the nation down to the last shilling advanced. Gradually it became inevitably the receptacle of the metallic hoard of the country, and the centre of gravity of all commercial credit." (Vol. ii, ch. xxxi.)

In the Autumn of 1945 a Bill for the Nationalisation of the Bank of England was introduced and soon passed through both Houses of Parliament. Thus ended an important chapter in the economic development of England. The nationalisation of the Bank followed immediately on the passing of the aristocratic rule and the transference of power to the "common people" and their representatives, the Labour Government. A new era has opened for Great Britain and for the British Empire. Nationalisation on an immense scale is the avowed policy of the Government. What the result of State Monopoly will be, with its social

reactions and implications, time alone can tell. Britain has broken her traditional conservatism and has entered an uncharted sea.

H. A. L. Fisher states that "the first step on the road to the Industrial Revolution, which has spread the factory system over the world, and so multiplied its wealth and population, was taken when English credit was put upon a modern basis" by establishing the Bank of England (*A History of Europe*, p. 776). The evolution of Capitalism has progressed slowly through the Reformation proper, Mercantilism, the Calvinists, the Protestant Revolution of 1688, the establishment of the Bank of England, and finally the Industrial Revolution—in England first and then throughout the world.

#### THE GROWTH OF ECONOMIC INDIVIDUALISM

It was after the advent of the aristocratic oligarchy and the Money Power in England that the capitalist spirit asserted itself freely and that the way was prepared for the full expression of Economic Individualism or *laissez-faire*. Of this Professor Lipson writes :

"The history of wage regulation, more especially in industry, affords clear indication that the fall of the absolute monarchy was the turning point in the evolution of capitalism. The Early Tudors had sought to set limits to the growth of industrial capitalism; and their immediate successors, while abandoning the attempt to check the development of a capitalist class, endeavoured to regulate its activities. After the Revolution of 1688, however, capitalism was allowed a freer hand in industry.

"The industrial legislation of the sixteenth century was allowed to fall into disuse, and the spasmodic efforts to revive it only threw into sharper relief the contrast between the old order and the new. The Revolution completed the process of disintegration, and Parliament came directly under the influence of a capitalist regime which now demanded its liberation from the shackles of

State control. Under the influence of changed political conditions the State moved steadily in the direction of *laissez-faire*, and the capitalist classes did not hesitate to challenge its right to dictate to them the terms on which they should employ their labour. The whole industrial outlook of the eighteenth century was permeated by a growing economic individualism which resisted, or ignored, occasional attempts to fetter the unrestricted freedom of action which it henceforth claimed. And the success of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* was largely due to the fact that he gave articulate expression to ideas, towards which the leaders of industry had long been feeling their way." (Op. cit., pp. 254-255.)

The Williamite invasion of Ireland followed on the Protestant Revolution of 1688 ; with the Fall of Limerick, 1691, Ireland was completely vanquished. Ireland then came not only under the complete political rule of England but she also became an integral part of the English system of Economic Individualism. The Irish people became so habituated to these English political and economic systems that when Southern Ireland was liberated from English rule she automatically, indeed of necessity for the time being, accepted the English type of representative government with little adjustment, and she also took over the system of Economic Individualism under which she had lived for well over two centuries and which still flourishes to-day.

Until Éire struggles with determination to rid herself of this unchristian economic system born of the Reformation, and builds her economic life on the teaching of the great Social Encyclicals of the Popes, there will be little hope for a happy future. This will mean a revolution ; but it will be a bloodless Christian Revolution. It was the pagan Clemenceau who said, "The greatest of all Revolutions will be the Christian Revolution"—that is when men lead integrally Christian lives. The Middle Ages may well, *mutatis mutandis*, supply the general character and spirit

for such a revolution. Some of the greatest Christian revolutionary thinkers of our time—Belloc, Chesterton, Maritain and Berdyaev—have looked back to the Ages of the Faith for inspiration, and have looked forward in their dreams, with hope, to the “New Middle Ages.”<sup>1</sup>

#### ADAM SMITH—*LAISSEZ FAIRE*

Luther proclaimed the liberty of Christian Man, Rousseau that of Political Man, and Adam Smith that of Economic Man. Since the sixteenth century society has moved further and further away from the religious, social, and economic ideals of the Middle Ages. In the seventeenth century, the Calvinists covered up their self-seeking by alleging that worldly success was the sign of their approval by God. In the eighteenth, the century of the Deists, Secularism began to replace the “Protestant Ethic” while Adam Smith announced to the bourgeois capitalists the solacing doctrine of “enlightened self-interest.” It was then only one step further for the grasping *entrepreneur* to move from God’s gracious approval of his personal gain to the conviction that in making money for himself he was benefiting the public as a whole. No doubt, God was being eliminated in the transition and Naturalism was replacing the Deity. The age of Reason and Progress had broken on the world; the Industrial Revolution was on its way.

Adam Smith’s social philosophy synchronised with the beginning of the “factory system”; and the conditions of the time facilitated and hastened the spread of his doctrine. Erich Roll points out how this took place:

“The results which followed Smith’s efforts were amazingly rapid and complete. The impact of the ‘Wealth of Nations’ upon business men and politicians alike was very great. But, although the apostle of economic liberalism spoke in lucid and persuasive terms,

<sup>1</sup> See Berdyaev’s splendid Essay on “The New Middle Ages” in the collection, *The End of Our Time*, Sheed and Ward.

his success would not have been so great if he had not spoken to an audience that was ready to receive his message. He spoke with their voice, the voice of the industrialists who were anxious to sweep away all restrictions on the market and on the supply of labour—the remnants of the out-of-date régime of merchant capitalism and the landed interest. Moreover, the class of industrial capitalists was not yet matured enough to have acquired respectability. Smith presented this class with a theory which supplied what was still lacking. By analysing economic activity against a background of naturalist philosophy, this theory gave to the conduct of the prospective leaders of economic life an imprint of inevitability. They recognised in the *self-interest* which he put at the centre of human conduct the motive which inspired their everyday business life. And they were delighted to know that their pursuit of profit was now to be regarded as unselfish. Gone was any lurking suspicion that trade might be sinful or beneath the dignity of gentlemen. These remnants of platonic and canonist thought were swept aside; the business man became now in theory what he already was in practice—the leader of the economic and political order.”<sup>1</sup> (*A History of Economic Thought*, pp. 151-2.)

A distinguished Protestant ecclesiastic prepared the way for Smith and gave expression to the then half-formed thoughts of English capitalists. Josiah Tucker, Dean of Gloucester, wrote in 1757—“The self-love and self-interest of each individual will prompt him to seek such ways of gain as, by serving himself, will promote the public welfare at the same time.” Such a statement made by a Dean in pre-Reformation England would be heard with horror and would be regarded as utterly unchristian. Warburton said of Tucker that he made religion his trade and trade his religion.

<sup>1</sup> Max Weber says that “The specifically middle-class outlook of the Puritans stood at the cradle of the modern economic man” (op. cit., p. 174).

Smith envisaged man without any relation to a future life and as conditioned only by economic circumstances ; man was to him merely an economic animal. This materialist view was summed up in the well-known expression "Economic Man." The economic licence of Smith had its counterpart in the political licence of Rousseau ; of course both spoke of "liberty" when licence was really meant. According to Smith, man was to be freed from all economic restraints and from all interference in his economic action by the State, whose duty was merely to keep the ring : competition free and unrestricted was the economic ideal.<sup>1</sup> Erich Roll thus described it :

"Preservation of free competition, if necessary by State action, was the principal duty of economic policy. Only complete competition was consistent with natural liberty ; and only complete competition could ensure that everybody obtained the full reward of his efforts and added his full contribution to the common good."

(Op. cit., p. 151.)

Cut-throat competition was now justified and established. Humanity had entered the economic jungle and the law of the jungle alone was to prevail.

The fundamental principle of Adam Smith is found in the *Wealth of Nations*, Bk. I, ch. ii : "It is not," he says, "from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, and the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from regard to their own interest. We address ourselves not to their humanity, but to their *self-love* ; and never talk to them of our own necessities, but of their advantages." *The Wealth of Nations* appeared in 1776 ; in the economic order, its importance may be compared to Rousseau's *Contrat Social* in the political. Harold Laski thus appraises it :

"It is secular in tone, rationalist in method, and individualist in outlook. It starts from the assumption

<sup>1</sup> "The insistence of the capitalist on the removal of all restraints by the State is strictly analogous to the insistence of the Protestant on the removal of all restraints by the Church. It is private judgment translated into the realm of industry." (G. O'Brien, op. cit., p. 91.)

that each man is best fitted to be the judge of his own actions ; as he has written in the *Moral Sentiments*, 'every man is by nature first and principally recommended to his own care.' That is his real task, and it is his good fortune that, as he attends to his own wants, he is 'led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention.' For Adam Smith the myriad spontaneous actions of individuals, made for their own private benefit, results by a mysterious alchemy, in social good. . . . If man is left alone, he will work out his own salvation. Whatever disturbs the order of nature makes for evil and not for benefit." (*The Rise of European Liberalism*, p. 178.)

Reference has been made above to the part the Reformation and the Protestant Revolution of 1688 (with which Locke is identified as its philosopher) played in the development of Economic Individualism : of these factors and Locke's part in linking up with Smith, Harold Laski says :

" In a sense, perhaps, it is true to say that Adam Smith completes an evolution that had been continuous from the Reformation. The latter substituted the Prince for the Church as the source of the rules which regulate social behaviour. Locke and his school substituted Parliament for the Prince as being better fitted to pervade them with social purpose. Adam Smith went a stage further and added that, with minor exceptions, there was no need for Parliament to interfere at all." (p. 180.)

The following is a summary of Smith's economic teaching in his own words. He pleads for freedom for worker and employer, and with as little State interference as possible. He starts from his idea of property already explained and gives it an industrial application. He alleges that in promoting his own individual interest man is moved by " an invisible hand " to promote the common good :

" The patrimony of a poor man lies in the strength and dexterity of his hands ; and to hinder him from

employing this strength and dexterity in what manner he thinks proper without injury to his neighbours, is a plain violation of this most sacred property. . . . The affected anxiety of the lawgiver is evidently impertinent as it is oppressive. . . .

“ Every individual is continually exerting himself to find out the most advantageous employment for whatever capital he can command. It is his own advantage indeed and not that of the society, which he has in view. But the study of his own advantage naturally, or rather necessarily, leads him to prefer that employment which is more advantageous to the society.

“ By directing that industry in such a manner as its produce may be of the greatest value, he intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was not part of his intention. By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of society more effectively than when he really intends to promote it.”

Alexander Pope, a contemporary of Smith, stated the theory of “ enlightened self-interest ” in these words :

“ So two consistent motions act the soul,  
And one regards itself and one the whole.  
Thus God and Nature link’d the general frame,  
And bade self-love and social be the same.”

—(*An Essay on Man,*)

Othmar Spann’s summing up of the working out of Smith’s teaching in daily life is excellent :

“ Economic activities, when left perfectly untrammelled, develop harmoniously, and enable free competition to do its work. Thanks to this competition the self-love of every individual promotes the general advantage. Competition forces everyone to pursue his own economic aims with the utmost vigour, to develop all his forces to the maximum, and to produce as cheaply as possible. Every one keeps watch over his neighbour,

with consequent benefits to all sections of society. Consumers are supplied with the best goods at the lowest prices; *entrepreneurs* can devote their energies to their tasks unhindered; and workers can seek employment wherever wages are highest. In this way a condition of social harmony is attained." (Op. cit., p. 104.)

Spann says of the *Inquiry into the Wealth of Nations*:

"Smith's economics were in conformity with the time spirit, an individualist spirit, which he made vocal. His *Inquiry*, translated into many tongues, and actually compared with the Bible, had a speedy and lasting influence on science, public life, and practical politics in all civilised lands, and especially in Germany where Marwitz wrote: 'Next to Napoleon, Adam Smith is now the mightiest monarch in Europe.' (p. 106.)

Of the *Wealth of Nations*, Harold Laski wrote in *English Political Thought*:

"It would be tedious to praise the *Wealth of Nations*. It may be doubtful whether Buckle's ecstatic judgment that it had more influence than any other book in the world was justified when he wrote it; but certainly it was one of the seminal books of the modern time." (p. 232.)

The following appreciation of Smith from the *Christian* viewpoint is taken from an article in the *Weekly Review*, London (17th August, 1939); it is well-balanced, though caustic.

"His contention was, that no man could serve the community better than by building up his own fortunes; that self-interest promoted the maximum social good. From this irresponsible doctrine arose the policy of *laissez-faire*, the elevation of profit-making into a major virtue, the identification of poverty with vice, the industrialisation of England, and the sacred smell

of money. . . . There is no irony for us in Voltaire's gibe, that in England 'the Stock Exchange applies the term "infidel" only to those who go bankrupt.' The statement is sober fact since wealth is virtuous and poverty sinful."

### THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Maurice B. Reckett, Editor of *Christendom*, and well-known Anglican Sociologist, stresses the English origin of the Industrial Revolution and of "Economic Man" in his essay, "Catholic Sociology and the English Situation," in these words :

"The Economic Man was born, bred, and blest in England, born of a shameful union between avarice and science; bred in an atmosphere in which already economic energy was accepted as an automatic index of moral virtue; blest by the godless dynasty of the Political Economists, who encouraged society in the name of Science to transform gain from a legitimate stimulus into an over-riding social purpose. As a result, the vast technological achievement of the last two hundred years, developing in a moral vacuum, has mocked man as a curse far more than it has rewarded him as a blessing, till he may be forgiven for suspecting that the road to hell is paved with good *inventions*." (*Prospect for Christendom*, p. 94.)

Secularism and Materialism had made continuous advance in England from the Reformation until, with the coming to power of the plutocracy after the Revolution of 1688 and the founding of the Bank of England, the worship of Mammon tended to become a national cult. The success of Adam Smith was due to the fact that his philosophy appealed to the capitalist classes in such a way that his argumentation was to them a justification of their dubious conduct. The time was more than ripe for the alluring slogan of "enlightened self-interest." If not in theory, at least in practice this simply meant the right to

exploit the weak and the poor, to sweat women and little children.

Certain factors had prepared the way for the development of the Industrial Revolution, namely, (i) materialism crystallized into a creed by Adam Smith ; (ii) the growth of Capital seeking for new ground to exploit ; (iii) the development of machinery ; and (iv) cheap labour made available through the creation of a proletariat by the system of enclosures.

The inventive genius of the English manifested itself in a remarkable manner in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Watt patented his steam-engine in 1769 ; Hargreaves, the spinning-jenny, 1770 ; Arkwright set up his "water-frame" in 1771. These were superseded by Crompton's "mule," 1779. This last invention increased production enormously, 12,000 spindles were often worked by it at once and by one spinner. By 1811 more than four and a half-million spindles were in use in England. Cartwright patented his power-loom in 1785, though it did not come into general use till 1813—and after several improvements. In 1774 the steam-engine was used in the pumping of coal-mines and was introduced into factories, 1785. In 1760 there was extraordinary advance in iron production through Smeaton's blowing apparatus and other inventions.

The spinning and woollen industries had been carried on in the homes of the people till the invention of machinery. The "domestic" form of production was soon to be replaced by the grouping of operatives under the control of industrialists or their overseers ; the "factory" had come with its impersonal management and its "hands"—the Industrial Revolution had broken on England and on the world.

Factories required "hands" to work them and it was to the industrialists' benefit (and according to Adam Smith's theory to the good of the community) that they should get as much work as possible out of the worker and at the smallest possible wage ; woman labour and child

labour, being cheap, were particularly desirable. There were no trade unions yet and the unfortunate proletarians were completely at the mercy of the industrialist slave-drivers.

The proletariat began to appear in England towards the end of the fifteenth century ; but it was not till after the enclosures at the Reformation that they became a serious social problem. Hilaire Belloc writes of Protestantism and the proletariat as follows :

“ Before the Reformation, the proletariat was highly restricted in numbers and confined to few places. . . . When that (Catholic) society, however, broke up there was nothing left to restrain the growth of the proletariat wherever favourable conditions could be found for that growth. . . . Wherever life was complicated and economic forces active, a proletariat took root and expanded under Protestantism, until it became the dominant feature in the social landscape. This was particularly the case with England. . . .

“ In England therefore, based on the vast economic revolution of the sixteenth century, the sudden enrichment of a new class which battened on the spoil of all collegiate property—hospitals, and schools as well as monastic establishments and religious endowments of all kinds—a proletariat was formed even upon the land.”

With the slow decline of the feudal system *serfdom* had largely disappeared in England during the course of the fifteenth century ; the majority of the former serfs had then become peasant farmers. The smaller among these worked in their spare time as farm labourers on large estates ; in addition to a cottage and some *arable* land they had the right to use the commonland as pasturage, and also to procure fuel from the woods. Karl Marx describes the growth of enclosures in England as the result of the spoliation of the monasteries and the gilds as follows :

“ The process of forcible expropriation of the people received in the sixteenth century a new and frightful impulse from the Reformation upon the consequent

colossal spoliation of the Church property. The Catholic Church was, at the time of the Reformation, feudal proprietor of a great part of the English land. The suppression of the Monasteries, etc., hurled their inmates into the proletariat. The estates of the Church were, to a large extent, given away to rapacious royal favourites, or sold at a nominal price to speculating farmers and citizens who drove out, *en masse*, the hereditary sub-tenants and threw their holdings into one." (*Das Kapital*. Eng. Trans. Vol. ii., p. 780.)

The proletariat therefore arose from the expulsion of the working agriculturists from the land through the system of enclosures ; men thereby became completely isolated economically and as a consequence the prey and victims of the capitalists. J. L. and Barbara Hammond describe, in a few words, the condition of the land-workers before and after the great enclosures of the eighteenth century under the alleged liberty-loving oligarchic parliament. " The effect (of enclosure) on the cottager can be described by saying that before enclosure the cottager was a labourer with land, after the enclosure he was a labourer without land. The economic basis of his independence has been destroyed." (*The Village Labourer*, p. 42.) In other words he was forced into the ranks of the propertyless proletariat and was soon reduced to the condition of a wage-slave or factory-hand.

The enclosures had begun to be a social problem under the Tudors, but it was not until after the Protestant Revolution of 1688 that they became a social menace. " The General Report on Enclosures " gives the acreage enclosed from Queen Anne's reign to 1805 as 4,187,056. There was a rapid development of enclosures after 1760, and thereby " hands " were created for the " dark satanic mills " that began to arise on all sides with the expansion of machinery. Space forbids any adequate description of the appalling slavery that took place under, and with the approval of, the oligarchic government which is said to have introduced " democracy " into England.

Fathers were reluctant to allow their wives and children to work in the factories owing to the vile hygienic and moral conditions ; but necessity compelled them to do so. A glimpse at the condition of child-labour in those days will throw a lurid light on the hideous conditions of labour. The industrialists raked the workhouses of England for "apprentices" and child-labour. Before accepting the little victims the mill-owner "would come and examine their height, strength, and bodily capacities, exactly as did the slave-owners in the American markets." H. de B. Gibbins thus describes the horrors of these days of child-slavery in liberty-loving England :

" Their treatment was most inhuman. The hours of their labour were limited only by exhaustion, after many modes of torture had been unavailably applied to force continued work. Illness was no excuse ; no child was accounted ill till it was positively impossible to force him or her to continue to labour, in spite of all the cruelty which the ingenuity of a tormentor could suggest. Children were often worked *sixteen hours* a day, by day and by night. Even Sunday was used as a convenient time to clean the machinery. . . . They were fed upon the coarsest and cheapest food, often with the same as that served out to the pigs of their master. They slept by turns and in relays, in filthy beds which were never cool ; for one set of children was sent to sleep in them as soon as the others had gone off to their daily or nightly toil. There was often no discrimination of sexes ; and disease, misery, and vice grew as in a hotbed of contagion. Some of these miserable beings tried to run away. To prevent their doing so, those suspected of this tendency had irons riveted on to their ankles, with long links reaching up to the hips, and were compelled to work and sleep in these chains ; young women and girls, as well as boys, suffering this brutal treatment. Many died, and were buried secretly at night in some desolate spot, lest people should notice the number of the graves ; and many committed suicide."

He adds that

"The catalogue of cruelty and misery is too long to recite . . . I need only remark that during this period of unheeded and ghastly suffering in the mills of my native land, the British philanthropist was occupying himself with agitating for the relief of the woes of negro slaves in other countries. . . . The spectacle of England buying the freedom of black slaves by riches drawn from the labour of her white ones, affords an interesting study for the cynical philosopher." (*Industrial History of England*, 26th ed., pp. 180-1.)

To such a pass had England sunk since the abandonment of the Old Faith somewhat over two centuries before. To understand the significance of the change one has only to contrast the conditions of the medieval apprenticeship in Catholic times already described, with those facts set forth by Dr. Gibbins. Economic Individualism had torn the "worker"—man, woman, and child—from the framework of society, had isolated them and rendered them helpless with the result that they had been reduced to the condition of slaves. Some details of the exploitation of child-labour have been given to show the unchristian and inhuman character of Capitalism. No doubt much amelioration of the conditions of the workers, both child and adult, has after years of violent struggle been achieved by the Factory Acts; nevertheless the essential *spirit* of Capitalism with its exploitation of the weak still remains largely unchanged.

#### REVOLT AGAINST ECONOMIC INDIVIDUALISM

It is unnecessary to pursue further the growth of Capitalism. With the coming of the Industrial Revolution of which Adam Smith was the philosopher, Industrial Capitalism—"fully-developed individualism"—(to use Spann's term) appears, growing in intensity as it spreads, leading to increasing competition between peoples with the

inevitable reactions. During the nineteenth century industrialisation extended throughout Europe and America and pushed its way onwards to the Far East, to Japan and the large cities of India and China—indeed encircled the earth. Capitalism essentially includes two interdependent elements—the capitalist proper and the proletarian. The growth of one involves the growth of the other. So much has Hilaire Belloc been impressed by this that he has said that “the root evil which we roughly term ‘Capitalism’ should more accurately be termed ‘Proletarianism.’” With the exploitation of the proletariat growing as the Industrial Revolution spread, efforts were made by the workers to set up organisations to protect themselves against the capitalists; but for years they were largely unavailing. After the French Revolution, owing to the sympathy between the workers and the revolutionaries, all combinations of English workers for political or economic purposes were regarded as “seditious.” The great struggle then began for the legal recognition of Trades Unionism, the salient points of which are as follows.

In 1811–12, the Luddites started a campaign of protest and violence against machinery; among them were several Irish workers. In 1824 the Combination Laws which prohibited workers from combining in defence of their interests were repealed, only to be largely negatived the following year by Parliament at the instigation of the employers. Realising that they could effect little without parliamentary representation, the workers launched the Chartist Movement (1838–1848), one of the chief leaders of which was Feargus O’Connor. This followed on the Reform Act of 1832 which had extended the vote to the middle classes. The Chartist proposals which appear so reasonable to-day were then regarded as dangerously revolutionary; they were as follows—voting by ballot, the abolition of property qualification for electors, the payment of members of parliament; and they also demanded universal suffrage. At this time (1844) the Workers’ Co-operative Movement was started at Rochdale by a

couple of dozen of Chartists and Owenite workers : the immense development of this organisation has had considerable influence on the growth of Political Labour in England. In 1867, in the Boilermakers' Case, the Judges headed by the Lord Chief Justice declared that Trade Unions were illegal associations : in the same year the vote was extended to some of the workers. The Elementary Education Act was passed in 1870 in order " to educate our masters," as it was said. By Gladstone's Act of 1871 the Trades Unions were again legally recognised ; and by Disraeli's Act of 1875 " peaceful picketing " was legally sanctioned. The Great Dock Strike took place in 1889 ; and in 1901 the Judges, by the Taff Vale decision, laid down that a Trades Union could be " sued in tort for the acts of its members " and that Trade Union funds became liable for any damage that might be awarded. The reaction against this was the establishment of the British Parliamentary Labour Party, 1906. The Trades Disputes Act, 1906, restored Trades Unions to their position under the Act of 1871. In 1908 the Eight Hours' Day in mines was passed by Parliament. A severe blow was struck against Trades Unions by the " Osborne Judgment," 1909, when the House of Lords, the highest court of appeal, decided that the enforced levy from the Trade Unionists for the maintenance of parliamentary representatives was *ultra vires*. The agitation that arose from this decision resulted in provision being made in the Budget of 1911 for the payment of Members of Parliament. In that year there were roughly forty Labour Members of Parliament ; thirty Labour Candidates had been elected at the 1906 election—this was the beginning of the political Labour Party. To-day, a Socialist Government has in its keeping the fate of Britain and her Empire. In the General Election, 1945, the following members were elected, 390 Socialists, 195 Conservatives ; all others totalling 42.

The struggle of the British proletariat against Economic Individualism was simultaneously paralleled by similar movements all over Europe. During the last century

intense class-consciousness and class-hatred developed out of the prolonged social struggle. The more the workers swung away from Economic Individualism, the more they swung towards Socialism ; they dreamed of the latter as a Utopia in which all their earthly sufferings would end. As the result of the Secularism which spread rapidly after the French Revolution, the working classes became detached from the Christian religion and readily listened to and accepted the new secularist gospels preached by social revolutionary leaders. It was during the period of European revolutions of 1848 that two remarkable men, Marx and Engels, appeared ; the gospel that they produced later, "*Das Kapital*," has changed the history of the world.

Capitalism was no doubt an evil economic system which created the proletarian or the propertyless man ; against it the "dispossessed" protested vigorously. But this much must be said for it, though it created a proletariat it did not destroy the idea of or right to property. The systems which were to replace it, Socialism<sup>1</sup> and Communism, destroy the idea of private property and eventually reduce all men to the condition of the proletarian ; they complete the iniquitous proletarian system that Capitalism had begun and developed. It is a strange and ironic anomaly that in England the descendants of the men who created the proletariat by the vast system of enclosures already described have now emblazoned on their banner—"a property-owning democracy."

It was two Catholic laymen, the one always a Catholic, the other a convert, Hilaire Belloc and G. K. Chesterton, who initiated in Britain the campaign for the restoration of property, and in the pages of a small journal, untrammelled by the grip of capitalist advertisers, insistently and persistently preached the gospel of "liberty through

<sup>1</sup> That is, if fully developed. Pope Leo XIII proclaimed the Church's teaching when he said : "Every man has by nature the right to possess private property as his own. As many as possible of the people should be induced to become owners."

property.”<sup>1</sup> For years they were but voices in the economic wilderness of capitalism. Their failure to obtain a response would have killed the enthusiasm of men who had not their deep conviction of Catholic truth, and their great lion-hearts and pugnacious spirit. At last the light is beginning to break, and in strange places,—in the ranks of the Conservative Party whose leaders have begun to wake up from their dream of false security as they see their property melting away by taxations and death duties that are akin to capital confiscation. It is under the banner of Belloc and Chesterton that they are now closing their ranks in a campaign for “a property-owning democracy.” It is not impossible, as they look further into that philosophy so ably expounded by Belloc and Chesterton, that some of them may find their way to the fulness of truth in matters besides economics. After this digression let us return to the social evangelists of the new millennium.

During the nineteenth century there developed all over Europe a deep hostility to Economic Individualism. This opposition, becoming more conscious and organised, began to take shape under the form of Socialism—first within the framework of the capitalist system and finally in an attempt to destroy it. Watching the growth of class-consciousness and the class-conflict, Engels and Marx determined to foster the discontent of the workers and to organise them in a revolution against their masters. They issued the Communist Manifesto in 1848; this was the beginning of a new social era in the history of Europe. Engels, who had entered a commercial firm in Manchester in 1842, was sickened by the appalling conditions of the English factory-hands and published his *State of the Working Classes in England*, 1844. Gibbins says that its “burning pages” are “little more than a sympathetic resumé of

<sup>1</sup> It is thirty-four years since Belloc wrote *The Servile State*, the motto on the title page of which was: “If we do not restore the institution of property, we cannot escape restoring the institution of slavery; there is no third course.” How prophetic were his words, the present condition of “liberated Europe”—and indeed of Britain, prove!

the facts set forth in official documents"—though of course written for a propagandist purpose. In 1844 he went to Paris and there met Marx. They became from that on fast friends and close collaborators in their work of formulating the system of Scientific Socialism or Communism. Marx settled down in London in 1849 and remained there till his death in 1883: he is buried in Highgate cemetery. In the reading-room of the British Museum, and under the, to him, poignantly stimulating surroundings of industrialist London, Marx wrote *Das Kapital*. The first volume appeared in 1861, the second and third posthumously, edited by Engels before his own death in 1895.

If the *Wealth of Nations* was the Bible of the Bourgeoisie, *Das Kapital* was the Bible of the Proletariat. Contrasting them, H. A. L. Fisher said that "where Smith sees only the sunlight, Marx sees only the shadows thrown upon the human scene by the unimpeded exercise of individual liberty." Both, however, agreed in seeing the individual as merely "Economic Man" whose final end and activities found place only within the economic order; but, to Smith the individual was an isolated human unit, to Marx he was a collectivist. Lenin took up the torch from Marx, developing and perfecting the revolutionary effort. He it was who initiated the first great revolution, with world-wide repercussions, since the time of the French Revolution. Other revolutions—Fascist, Nazi—followed rapidly; they and the First and Second Great World Wars were but further stages of advance in the overthrow of Capitalism.

#### THE TOTALITARIAN STATE

Since the First Great War there has been a tendency in Europe to eliminate completely Economic Individualism and to supplant it by some form of all-absorbing "communityism." This appeared primarily and in its fulness in the Totalitarian States of Soviet Russia, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. The revulsion against the evils of individualism, political and economic, became so intense

that the wheel swung full circle round, leading to the complete absorption of the individual in the State. The two extremes are Individualism and Totalitarianism and between these the world finds itself to-day.

Totalitarianism had its origin in the Russian Revolution of 1917. The *Times Literary Supplement*, 7th September, 1946, has said of it: "It was one of the great turning points in history, comparable with the French Revolution and perhaps surpassing it in significance. No country in the world has remained indifferent to it; no form of government has been able to evade its challenge, no political or economic theory has escaped its searching criticism; nor according to all signs and portents has its influence yet reached a peak."

This revulsion against individualism was also to be seen in the new *authoritarian States*, such as Pétain's France, Hungary, Rumania, Austria, Greece, and in Spain and Portugal. It is not possible to examine all these individually; but the three totalitarian states proper cannot be passed over. These will be dealt with in the order of their origin. It may be said that fundamentally there is essential agreement by them in the idea of the absorption of the individual by the National Community or the State; but this was accomplished in different ways.

René Fülöp Miller gives an excellent exposé of Soviet philosophy in the chapter on "The Collective Man" in his valuable book—*The Mind and Face of Bolshevism*.

"The Bolsheviks," he writes, "find in the complete absorption of all individuals in a million-headed impersonal mass, the ideal of all development, for which they must strive with all their strength. The 'collective man' means to them a 'superior category,' a higher, more valuable form of organisation of existence, the realisation of which is worth any sacrifice. . . .

"Once the primacy of collectivism had been so decisively settled, and the creation of the impersonal mass-man had been deemed to be the highest aim of the Bolshevik revolutionary upheaval, everything that stood

in the way of the coming of this new 'collective man' had forthwith to be fought with all weapons. Naturally, it was first the turn of the soul, the root of all particular life, which had to be mercilessly exterminated. The 'soul-encumbered individual man' must no longer be suffered to lead his pernicious separate life unchecked; above all, for the sake of the future, he must be annihilated in his premises. These premises include all particular ideas, all conceptions, of whatever nature, of the importance of individuality, of the possession of spiritual and material assets; of the value of personal achievement and the struggle for an isolated inner development. But, further, all those precious cultural possessions accumulated by the individualism of past centuries, all the acquisitions of personal thought, all the creations of individuals, must be sacrificed without any 'sentimentality,' for they might hinder the arising of the new collective man." (pp. 5 and 7.)

The next of the monster or individual-devouring states was that of Fascist Italy. Mussolini thus speaks of individualism when expounding the Fundamental Ideas of Fascism:

"Outside history man is a nonentity. Fascism is therefore opposed to all individualistic abstractions based on eighteenth-century materialism; and it is opposed to all Jacobinistic utopias and innovations. . . . Anti-individualistic, the Fascist conception of life stresses the importance of the State and accepts the individual only in so far as his interests coincide with those of the State which stands for the conscience and the universal will of man as a historic entity. The Fascist conception of the State is all-embracing; outside it no human or spiritual values can exist, much less have any value. Thus understood, Fascism is totalitarian, and the Fascist State—a synthesis and a unit inclusive of all values—interprets, develops, and potentiates the whole life of a people. It is not the nation which

generates the State ; that is an antiquated naturalistic concept which afforded a basis for nineteenth-century publicity in favour of national governments. Rather is it the State which creates the nation, conferring volition and therefore real life on a people made aware of their moral unity." (*Fascism : Doctrine and Institution*, pp. 10-11.)

In the Russian system the individual is lost in the Mass-Man ; in the Fascist, the individual derives his existence from the State and exists only in the State and for the State. In the Nazi, the individual derives his being from " the blood " and is merged as a drop of blood in the blood-stream of the German people—the " Volk. "

Hitler's idea of the National Socialist State, the *Volksstaat*, may be seen in his contrast of it with the Liberal Democratic State in his speech on 7th October, 1933, soon after assuming power. He said :

" National Socialism takes as the starting-point of its views, its position, its decisions, neither the individual nor humanity. It puts consciously into the central point of its whole thinking *the people* (Volk). This people is for it a blood-conditioned entity in which it sees a God-willed building-stone of human society. The individual is transitory, the people (Volk) is permanent. If the liberal *Weltanschauung* in its deification of the single individual must lead to the destruction of the people, National Socialism, on the other hand, desires to safeguard the people as such, if necessary even at the expense of the individual. It is essential that the individual should slowly come to realise that his own ego is unimportant when compared with the existence of the whole people, and that therefore the position of the single ego is exclusively determined by the interests of the people as a whole."

Blood is the unifying principle. " What makes a people or, to be more correct, a race is not the language but blood." (*Mein Kampf*, p. 326.) Each German is but a

drop of blood in the national blood-stream of the Germanic Volk. The Nazi mystical unity of the blood replaces the Christian unity of the spirit—the Mystical Body of Christ.

Rosenberg, appointed by Hitler in supreme charge of Nazi ideological training, thus formulated the new creed of the "blood" in the "Myth of the Twentieth Century":

"To-day there is rising a new belief, the myth of blood, the belief that in the blood the divine character of man is being defended, the belief, enshrined in the clearest knowledge, that Nordic blood represents the mystery which has overcome and replaced the old Sacraments. . . . The God whom we worship would not exist if our souls and our blood were not."<sup>1</sup>

Rosenberg established the basis of social unity in the deification of the blood—the "eternity of the blood." Personal immortality as such does not exist; it derives from the immortality of "the blood."<sup>2</sup> Hitler declared that conscience is but the thin small voice of the blood. "You must do your duty, you must act according to your conscience, that is, the voice of your blood, that God has poured into your veins."

It has been pointed out that Rousseau borrowed his philosophy from Christianity and in doing so distorted it. In the basic idea of the "Community" found under various shapes in the Totalitarian States can be seen the distorted reflection or caricature of the Christian teaching of the Mystical Body of Christ. Christians are living members of the Mystical Body, Christ is the head; Christians are members one of another under Christ. This sense of Christian community has been the subject of an Encyclical of Pope Pius XII—*On the Mystical Body of Christ*.

<sup>1</sup> Early in 1938 the Sacred Congregation condemned eight propositions among which is the following: "From the blood, in which the genius of the race resides, spring all the intellectual and moral qualities of man as from their principal source."

<sup>2</sup> See Encyclical of Pope Pius XI, *Mit brennender Sorge* for papal comment.

The submergence of the individual and individual interest and the united action of the community have been the driving power behind the Totalitarian States. The success of the Irish Christian State in the future difficult world will depend on how far the sense of "community" can be successfully developed among its Christian citizens—a community based not on "class," or "state," or mere "blood and soil," but a community of the spirit akin to that of the medieval Christian world which has been described in detail already.

#### VOCATIONAL ORGANISATION : THE MODERN GILD SYSTEM

Professor Carr thus briefly sets forth the economic situation in the world to-day:

"The Mercantilism which stood for 'wealth for the nation but wealth from which the majority of the nation must be excluded' is dead. But the *laissez-faire* individualism which purported to interpose no effective economic unit between the individual at one end of the scale and the whole world at the other is equally gone beyond recall." (*Nationalism and After*, p. 46.)

The great problem of our time is: What is going to replace the Industrial Capitalism of the last century and a half? Two of the great totalitarian systems have been completely overthrown; this does not mean that the world may not learn a lesson from them for application in the future. Communism still remains, having pushed its imperial way across half of Europe. Fascism and Nazism fell because they were national and localised: Communism (like the French Revolutionary creed) makes a general appeal to humanity and for that reason transcends national boundaries.

Nations to-day are forced into a planned economy by pressure of circumstances over which they have no control. This leads along the road to the Omnipotent State and Dictatorship. Even in a State of such a highly indivi-

dualistic people as that of Éire there is much danger from a "planned economy."<sup>1</sup> Mr. McEntee, the Minister for Local Government, warned the nation against planning for "Full Employment." He has been reported in the *Irish Press* as saying :

"Once we enter on a 'planned economy' our planning must inevitably lead to dictatorship, because dictatorship is the most effective instrument of coercion, and as such is essential if the 'planned economy' is to become a reality. This is why we have a dictatorship in Russia, a dictatorship under which, as Burnham tells us—'every shred of freedom and democracy has by now been purged from Russian life.' " (9th May, 1945.)

Two extremes lie before us as regards the future. (i) The further attempted continuation (as in U.S.A.) of that system of individualism through the break-down of which our civilisation is jeopardised ; (ii) The Omnipotent State. A middle course must be steered by the Christian so that the individual may retain his God-given rights and his personal dignity, and be at the same time integrated into the active life of the community. This implies what the French call "Pluralisme," or the setting up of many small local corporations or associations linked together, discharging certain minor functions and thereby relieving the State of its burthens and at the same time putting a check on State Bureaucracy.

In *Quadragesimo Anno*, Pope Pius XI said that owing to "the evil of individualism" the *organic* character of the State had been "all but ruined, leaving thus virtually only individuals and the State"; as a consequence the State was "submerged and overwhelmed by an infinity of occupations and duties." He added that, though "much that was formerly done by small groups can nowadays only be done by large associations":

"None the less, just as it is wrong to withdraw from the individual and commit to a group what private enterprise and industry can accomplish, so too it is an

<sup>1</sup> The Irish Labour Party's policy is—*Planned Economy under State Control*.

injustice, a grave evil and a disturbance of right order, for a larger and higher association to arrogate to itself functions which can be performed efficiently by smaller and lower societies. This is a fundamental principle of social philosophy, unshaken and unchangeable. Of its very nature the true aim of all social activity should be to help members of the social body, but never to destroy or absorb them.<sup>1</sup>

“ The State therefore should leave to smaller groups the settlement of business of minor importance, which otherwise would greatly distract it ; it will thus carry out with greater freedom, power and success, the tasks belonging to it alone, because it alone can effectively accomplish these : directing, watching, stimulating, restraining, as circumstances suggest and necessity demands.

“ Let those in power, therefore, be convinced that the more faithfully this principle be followed, and a graded hierarchical order exist between the various subsidiary organisations, the more excellent will be both the authority and the efficiency of the social organisation as a whole and the happier and more prosperous the condition of the State. Now this is the primary duty of the State and of all good citizens, to abolish conflict between classes with divergent interests, and thus foster and promote harmony between the various ranks of society *The aim of social legislation must therefore be the re-establishment of vocational groups.*”

It is interesting to note that the eminent economist, Sir William Ashley, in one of a series of lectures given at Hamburg in 1912 and published in 1914, has given expression to views very similar to those of Pope Pius XI :

“ Society is feeling its way, with painful steps, towards a corporate organisation of industry on the side alike of employers and of employed ; to be then more harmoniously,

<sup>1</sup> Edmund Burke has said : “ To be attached to the sub-division, to love the little platoon we belong to in society, is the first principle (the germ as it were) of public affections.”

let us hope, associated together—with the State alert and intelligent in the background to protect the interests of the community. The world has never yet had complete individualism ; it will never, I believe, have complete socialism, for the egoistic sentiment is as permanent an element in human nature as the social. It has to create a working compromise suited for each age ; and we are also beginning to realise that the old antithesis, which Herbert Spencer in his *Man v. The State* exaggerated into an antagonism, no longer exhausts the possibilities of the situation. A place must be found in our social organisation, and therefore in our social theory, for the activity and mutual relation of groups, of divers kinds and scales and degrees of compactness, intermediate between the individual and political Government." (*Economic Organisation of England*, p. 191.)

There has recently appeared a very valuable book, *The Future of Economic Society*, by Roy Glenday ; it is all the more valuable because its author is stated to be "Economic Adviser to the Federation of British Industries." He advances the same thesis, that is, that the break-down of society to-day is largely due to the exaggerated importance given to the *individual* ; and that we must return to the "group" or "community" and to all that this idea stands for—if our civilisation is to survive. He summarises his views in the following passage :

" That I am not alone in placing on uncontrolled individualism a large share of the blame for the present economic and moral disorders of the world, is evident from books such as Nicholas Berdyaev's *The End of Our Time*, Karl Mannheim's *Man and Society*, and Reinhold Niebuhr's *Reflections on the End of an Era*, and many others. The story begins with the Renaissance and the Reformation ; its last chapter covers the period between the French Revolution and the opening of the first World War in 1914.

"There are many indications that we are in the throes of a great spiritual upheaval, one of those turning-points in history like the Renaissance or the emergence of Christianity in the Roman era. Atomic and free individualism is fighting for its life against the idea of the organised community. While the outcome is still obscure, there will certainly not be a return of the ideas of the nineteenth century. (pp. 274-275.)

Looking to the future development of our civilisation it is stimulating to find the "Economic Adviser to the Federation of British Industries" giving expression to the following forecast :

"Whenever a new kind of economic conduct is forced on man by historical events, a corresponding type of thought necessarily emerges to accompany it. It is therefore no accident that the break-down of economic life in our time should lead to the break-down of the individualistic idea. This does not mean that there will be a reversion to the old medievalism, only that it is possible that the medieval idea might reappear in a transfigured form at a higher level of organisation. Life might then cease to be business and become living. Man the *individual* might again become subordinated to man the member of a *group* : no longer isolated from his fellows by pride, but united to them by new bonds of social comradeship. *The new social emotion might be the counterpart (or a revival) at a higher level of the social cement provided by the Church in pre-Reformation times.*" (p. 280.)

A striking statement by Dr. Temple, the late Archbishop of Canterbury, on "What Christians Stand for in the Secular World" appeared in *The Christian News Letter* and was afterwards published as a pamphlet, 1944. In the preface to the latter it is said that this "statement" is remarkable not so much because drawn up by the Archbishop but because "drafts of the paper were at

various stages submitted to, and discussed with, persons representing widely different traditions" and accepted by them as "common ground." There is something that makes it still more remarkable to be found in the fact that the Archbishop, a distinguished Thomist scholar, drew his inspiration from Catholic teaching and, incidentally, mentioned his indebtedness to the great Thomist philosopher, Jacques Maritain, at present French Ambassador to the Holy See. Dr. Temple says:

"As the first great commandment is that we love God with all our being, so the second is that we love our neighbour as ourselves. Here we are not concerned with that duty, but with the fact that underlies it whether we do our duty or not—not with what ought to be, but with what *is*. This is that we stand before God—that is, in ultimate reality—as bound to one another in a complete equality in His family. Personality is inherently social; only in social groupings can it mature, or indeed fully exist. These groupings must be small enough to enable each individual to feel (not only to think) that he can influence the quality and activity of the group, so that he is responsible for it, and also that it needs his contribution, so that he is responsible to it. He must feel that he belongs to it and that it belongs to him.

"It is characteristic of much democratic thought that it seeks to eliminate or to deprecate all associations intermediate between the individual and the State. These, as the foci of local or other departmental loyalties, are nurseries of tradition and, therefore, obnoxious in the eyes of some prophets of progress. But it is in and through them that the individual exercises responsible choice or, in other words, is effectively free. The State is too large; the individual feels impotent and unimportant over against it. In his local, or functional, or cultural association he may count for something in the State, so that through his association he may influence the State itself, as alone he can scarcely do.

"Thus the limitless individualism of revolutionary thought, which aims at setting the individual on his own feet that he may, with his fellow, direct the State, defeats its own object and becomes the fount of totalitarianism. If we are to save freedom we must proceed, as Maritain urges, from democracy of the *individual* to democracy of the *person*, and recollect that personality achieves itself in the lesser groupings within the State—in the family, the school, the guild, the trade union, the village, the city, the county. These are no enemies of the State, and that State will in fact be stable which deliberately fosters these lesser objects of loyalty as contributors to its own wealth of tradition and inheritance. Christianity has always fostered these lesser units. . . . And the civilisation which the Church most deeply influenced was characterised by an almost bewildering efflorescence of local and functional gilds of every sort (p. 9).

After what has been said on Vocationalism by the distinguished authorities just quoted, it is heartening to see that a beacon-light has appeared in the sky beckoning the Irish people to build the economic life of their new State on the vocation or gild system and to abandon Economic Individualism as such. It seems providential that the Commission on Vocational Organisation was appointed on 10th January, 1939, before the greatest of wars had begun, and that it had issued its Report on 4th November, 1943, long before the war ended: its five hundred odd pages are the result of much thought and labour. This Report has opened up a new era of development not only in national economics, but also in the development of Irish democracy.

The pith of its recommendations is that there should be established an economic system of vocational organisation in which individuals will be associated with each other as members of the same vocation and "form an organic body with powers to speak and act for the vocation." In a word, it is proposed that, *mutatis mutandis*, the *organic* or *functional economic system* of pre-Reformation society

which was undermined by the religious, political and economic individualism that came in the wake of the great revolution of the sixteenth century, should be established in Ireland. Not only will this development affect the economic life of the people, but owing to the emphasis laid upon the "group" rather than upon the "individual," political development (as a democracy) will also be affected; and from this there is well-grounded hope that a new type of democratic State will emerge.

The Report opens with a short account of the organic or functional character of society from the eighth to the eighteenth century—briefly describing the Gild System until its almost complete break-down after the French Revolution. It makes but the following summary reference to Individualism as a cause of the social collapse:

"The most powerful influence operating against the Gilds was the spirit of intense individualism and optimism which swept the eighteenth century. There was a wide-spread demand that individuals and society would be freed from every restriction and allowed the fullest freedom."

One would have wished that the Report would have dealt at greater length with the growth of Individualism. In the reshaping of our social system, political and economic, it is of the utmost importance to grasp the destructive influence of Individualism in the religious, political, and economic orders since the Reformation. The need of vocational organisation will appear all the more reasonable and more pressing when the evils arising from Individualism are adequately understood. It is, therefore, suggested that this Essay may prove useful as an introduction to the study of the Report referred to above.

As has been said in concluding Part II, the political structure of a State can be either from above downwards, or from below upwards. So, too, its economic structure from the point of view of vocationalism can be hastily imposed from above by some form of dictatorship as in Fascist

Italy, or built up slowly but more sanely and securely by democratic evolution from below upwards. *True* democracy and *true* vocational organisation work hand in hand together towards mutual development and support. Hence Most Rev. Dr. M. Browne, the Chairman of the above-mentioned Commission, called vocational organisation the "Bulwark of Freedom : Democracy in Action." And Eric Gill has said : "What we mean by democracy is *not* what we have got at present but government of free men and free families developing through gilds and corporations and real control of their own and their country's affairs."

It falls outside the province of this Essay to make a detailed examination of the Commission's recommendations as to the means by which the Gild System is to be established in Ireland. The Report itself and the explanatory pamphlets published will supply the necessary information.

On its appearance the Report received a rather chilly reception in governmental circles; nevertheless, it is now being officially examined. There is little doubt that a serious effort will be made to organise Irish economic life on the basis of a modern gild-system. It would be easy to achieve this if dictatorial methods were permissible, but it will be a very slow process (i) to develop along democratic lines the various individual vocations; and (ii) to lead those mutually repellent rivals, Capital and Labour, to meet, if not in a friendly embrace, at least in an attitude of mutual forbearance and in a recognition of mutual interests. However, a beginning has been made as will be seen from what follows.

In answer to a question in the Dáil, 16th April, 1947, as regards implementing the recommendations of the Commission on Vocational Organisation Mr. de Valera said "that the Government was in favour of co-operation and, in general, of development of vocational organisations, provided that the community's interests were adequately safeguarded. A number of the Commission's recommendations had already been implemented; others were in the

course of being implemented, and others still under examination. Among recommendations already implemented were the Hire Purchase Act, the Industrial Relations Act, the Auctioneers and House Agents Act, and the Consultative Medical Council set up by the Minister for Health. . . .

"The report covered a wide range of complex subjects, and it was not yet possible to indicate finally the extent to which the Commission's recommendations would be implemented."

Here once again, as was emphasised in Part II, the need of an intensive education of a *new* kind becomes obvious. Our present system of education is dominated by the spirit of individualism. It sets child against child and youth against youth in a spirit of rivalry and competition. The schools are not free: they are in the grip of an educational machine imposed upon them which compels the teachers to set before the child the ideal of *individual success*, of "getting-on," or "making good." In the background is the parent with a similar ideal. Little or no provision is made in the various educational *programmes* for the development of a "community-sense" and the spirit of co-operation,—for the preparation of the child or youth to live his life as a *member of society*. The formation of a "team-spirit" does not arise formally out of the programme as such, but in an *incidental* way from playing games. This is all the more to be deplored for the Irish are by nature a race of individualists.<sup>1</sup> How can vocational organisation be achieved if the members of each vocation have been trained from childhood to see from the angle of personal interest, of rivalry and competition, and have not been educated to sink their own personal gain before the good of the group or the community?

In an article on "The Future of Japan" (*The Tablet*,

<sup>1</sup> Vendryes has said of the Celts: "Individualism has led them to isolate themselves, to dismember themselves, to destroy themselves." To what extent is this true of the Irish Celt?

8th June, 1946) Father Van Straelen, S.V.D., the well-known Japanese missioner, said: "While the education of the children proceeds, care is taken that they grow up deeply conscious of the community ideal, and they are taught to be always ready and willing to put themselves in the background in order to serve the interests of the family, the district or village." This recalls the similar ideals incorporated in the "Faith and Freedom" series of Catholic school books in the U.S.A., already referred to. The Japanese system was no doubt based on paganism or naturalism. Is there any reason why in Ireland the "community" ideal in education should not be rooted in the Catholic Faith, in the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ?

In building a Christian economic order, as well as in the making of a true democracy, there is *one vitally essential and fundamental element*—the complete revision of the present philosophy of education; too much emphasis cannot be laid on this factor. The attempt to develop vocational organisation on the basis of individualism and individualists is akin to making ropes out of sand. All efforts at material reconstruction on truly Christian lines will prove futile, especially in the peculiar conditions of the world to-day, unless the human material is adequately prepared, through a deep consciousness of membership—*one of another*—of membership of the Mystical Body of Christ. Not merely must religion find a place in this plan, but every natural device that helps to build up the "team-spirit" in child and youth must be adopted. And in the natural order many useful lessons in the technique of youth training, *mutatis mutandis*, can be learned from some of the modern systems of youth-formation, such as have been described in *Challenge from Youth*.<sup>1</sup> It is obvious that in eliminating the evil of individualism, the evil of over-developing the community-sense (so that the individual disappears) must be avoided. *The young person must be developed, but his development must be conditioned by the*

<sup>1</sup> *A History of Modern Youth Movements* by the present writer.

*fact that he has to live his life as a consciously active member of society.*

It is evident that the system of "Industrial Capitalism," which has plunged humanity into an economic morass and has led to the economic enslavement of the masses, has broken down all over Europe. To-day various attempts are being made to supplant Economic Individualism and under three main categories—but with localised adaptations: (i) the Christian Corporativism of the Papal Encyclicals; (ii) Socialism; and (iii) Communism. In the West the U.S.A. stands still recalcitrant as the final home and fortress of Capitalism. Between U.S.A. and Europe, Britain (with her traditional spirit of compromise) is at present partly capitalist and partly socialist; but the government is pledged to Socialism. In a world that is largely secularised in its outlook it is little wonder that Socialism and Communism, with their contempt for the dignity and rights of the human person, are spreading further and further afield. Into such an economically chaotic world does the little nascent State of Éire thrust up its head; what economic system will she adopt?

Capitalism has broken down, Socialism and Communism are unchristian and anti-Christian; all that is left is that Christian form of Corporativism for which recent Popes have been pleading, under which individualism will give place to the organic community (local, professional, national) of which each person will be a living cell and at the same time retain his personality and his personal rights. The main outlines of such an economic system have been (one may say, providentially) drafted in the Report of the Vocational Organisation Commission. But (let it be once again emphasised) the implementing of the recommendations of this report will be impossible until the education of our people—child, youth and adult—receives a new orientation; until the calculated development of individualism which exists in our present educational systems gives place to the formation and preparation for living one's life in the economic group or vocation;

until each will have learned to subject his individual interest to that of the community as such; until, in a word, he has learned what is meant by the divine Teacher's insistence that we are "members one of another," that each is his brother's keeper, and that the misfortune of each should be the concern of all.

## EPILOGUE

The primary and fundamental cause of the break-down of the civilisation of our time is anarchic individualism—religious, political, economic. Religious Individualism which had its origin in the Protestant Revolution of the sixteenth century undermined traditional Christianity and morality and has led to non-institutional religion, indifferentism, secularism, atheism. Political Individualism which derived from Locke and Rousseau undermined and disintegrated civil society and isolated the individual citizen so that he became the helpless plaything and the slave of the State ; this has finally led to Stateolatry and Totalitarianism. Economic Individualism created the propertyless proletariat, reduced them to the condition of human beasts of burthen until their unbearable social conditions drove them to revolt, to adopt the pagan policy of class-hatred and class-warfare which has ended in godless Socialism and militantly atheistic Communism. The end of the long road that began at the Reformation has now been reached ; and the final issue is *anarchy or slavery*. If men wish to escape this awful impasse they must return to Christianity. The very few really Christian nations that remain, and the Christian remnants of the secularised nations, must organise and lead the way back to God and to Christ. How the Christians in each nation must act in this greatest, perhaps the last, of the Crusades must be determined by the particular conditions of each country. Here, in the briefest possible outline, are some suggestions for the Irish Crusade.

The nature of heresy has varied in different periods of the Church's history. In the early centuries it was chiefly directed against the person and natures of Christ ; in the sixteenth century against the nature of the Church, Grace, the Sacraments, etc. The last two and a half centuries may be described as the period of *social heresies* which have

centred round the origin of civil authority, political and economic society, the State. *Social heresy* demands a social antidote—nothing less than the intense development of *social Christianity*: it is necessary to explain this very briefly.

The nature of man is twofold. He is an *individual person* standing before the Supreme Being and with personal relations to his Maker. These *personal* relations are regulated by the First Great Commandment of the Law—*Love and Serve God*. But, man is not merely an isolated person, he is by his nature *social* and destined by God to live his life among his fellows to whom he has obligations also. These *social* obligations are regulated by the Second Great Commandment—*Love and Serve your Neighbour*. To attempt to love and serve God and *not* to love and serve one's neighbour is an unbalanced and spurious Christianity; to love and serve one's neighbour whilst neglecting the love and service of God is a lop-sided and spurious religion. Balanced or integral Christianity must rest on and include both the Great Commandments of the Law.<sup>1</sup>

The centuried cumulative effect on Irish life of the composite individualism described throughout this Essay has been so powerful and so all-pervading that it has seriously affected even the religious life of many individual Irish Catholics so that their religion has become unbalanced, —stress being laid on the love of God to the forgetfulness or undue neglect of the love of their neighbour. It is not uncommon to meet Irish Catholics living apparently godly lives, frequenting the Sacraments, members of pious associations, whose religion is individualistic or *self-centred* to such an extent that they seem to be unconscious that the Second

<sup>1</sup> "The popular 'catch' phrase of to-day is that it is everybody's duty to serve the community. It is a well-sounding phrase, but there *is* a catch in it. It is the old catch about the two great commandments: 'Love God and your neighbour; on those two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.' The catch in it, which nowadays the world has largely forgotten, is that the second commandment depends upon the first, and that without the first, it is a delusion and a snare."—Dorothy Sayers in *Why Work*, p. 19.

Commandment of the Law has equal sanction with the First and that they cannot, as the Gospel teaches, love and serve God without at the same time loving and serving their neighbours.

It is very necessary to correct this religious lop-sidedness, which really comes from ignorance or lack of proper education, and to emphasise the need of *social Christianity* especially in an age when social heresies can be met successfully only by social or *applied Christianity* as it has been called. Hence the insistence in several places in this Essay on the Mystical Body of Christ (that Christians are members one of another), on the need of developing a "community sense," of submerging one's personal interest to that of the group, and that of the group to that of the community. This implies that special care and attention must be shown to the under-privileged classes, the service of whom must be considered as service to Christ himself.

With this premised, it will be helpful to draft an Irish progressive social programme and to recapitulate some suggestions already found in this Essay. Everything begins in the world of ideas and too much stress cannot be laid on the development and spread of sound fundamental principles such as the following :

(1) True democracy, Democracy of the Person, presupposes and demands Christianity as its vital principle ; true democracy cannot survive without integral Christianity.

(2) Decentralisation of authority is a necessary support and defence of true democracy ; hence the need of re-casting our Local Government system as already suggested.

(3) Many grave evils of Economic Individualism can be avoided by the restoration of the organic structure of society or "the re-establishment of Vocational groups." (*Quadragesimo Anno.*)

(4) All this presupposes the complete remodelling of our present individualistic educational system and replacing it by a system of "education for democracy."

(5) It follows naturally that the social principles of the Constitution, which derive from the papal encyclicals, should be an important subject of study in all our schools and universities.

(6) In teaching Irish history special attention should be drawn to the national tendency towards "faction" (or the lack of the spirit of co-operation) which has so often proved the cause of national failure in the supreme moments of our history.

(7) The driving power of Youth in the building of modern States has been demonstrated and described in detail in *Challenge from Youth*. Unfortunately, owing to the false philosophies or "ideologies" of the neo-pagan nations their youth has been hopelessly exploited. There is no reason, however, why an Irish Youth Movement, based on Christian principles and under the same control as our present education system and with similar co-operation between Church and State, should not prove as effective and successful in building the Irish Christian State as the Youth of other peoples have been in building a Neo-Pagan State. Stirring examples of the dynamic power of youth in national construction may be seen in the volume referred to: and the self-sacrifice of nations in the formation and organisation of their youth, as shown there, will prove a valuable stimulus to Ireland.

All this will appear revolutionary to the conservative elder and to the quiescent votary of *laissez-faire* whose motto is "leave very well alone." But the world to-day is seething with wrong-headed "leftish" revolution which is ending in social chaos. Is it impolitic or unpractical or imprudent to advocate a Christian Revolution against the godless Revolution that is sweeping across Europe and from the repercussions of which we cannot possibly escape?

In the sixteenth century the Reformation gave rise to, and was stemmed by, the Counter-Reformation. To-day the godless Revolution can only be met successfully by the Counter- or Christian-Revolution. We have no choice

in the matter, it is the Age of Revolution. *We must move or we shall be moved.*

Finally, it is necessary (as in many modern States) to have a "mythos," an Irish national ideology, which will appeal to the imagination and call out all that is best not only in the adult but also, and particularly, in romantic and chivalrous youth. The following suggestions are merely *skeleton ideas* which must be developed at length by the intelligent, imaginative reader.

I.—(a) This is the first generation of Irishmen who have been *born truly free men* : 1922-1948. For the first time young Irishmen have the power to build an Ireland to their heart's desire.

(b) This is also the first generation of those Irishmen *born under alien rule* who now stand erect as free men.

(c) This is a generation of commercialised dance-halls, dog-tracks, licensed bookmaking, cinemas, and of touch-line onlookers, non-participants in manly games. It is a generation obsessed by the cult of pleasure, of "shorter hours, less work and more pay." Not with such human material can the Ireland of one's dreams be built amid the titanic economic struggles of to-day.

(d) However, there has recently been a marked revival of public interest in Athletics. This movement should be encouraged by establishing a Government-aided national body similar to the Central Council of Physical Recreation in Britain. The purpose of this Council may be seen from the preamble to "The Physical Training and Recreation Act, 1937," upon which it is based ; it runs as follows : "An Act to provide for the development of facilities for, and the encouragement of, physical training and recreation, and to facilitate the establishment of centres for social activities."<sup>1</sup> Increased production is a vital necessity for the nation to-day, and a virile youth and manhood is the most essential element in stepping-up production. The appeal to Youth to develop their muscle and will-power

<sup>1</sup> See the Annual Report of The Central Council of Physical Recreation ; The Physical Recreation Act, 1937 ; and *Challenge from Youth*, pp. 248-58,

for the upbuilding of their nation is heard all over Europe to-day ; why not in Ireland also ?

(e) With national reconstruction and increased production there is necessarily associated the idea of Work. The Christian philosophy of Work should find a prominent place in our educational curricula and in our youth organisations. The modern neo-pagans, and those many Christians influenced by their philosophy, regard Work as an unmixed evil, as something to be studiously avoided. The pagan ideal of life is to work as little as possible and to have as much leisure as possible—*panem et circenses*—plenty of food and plenty of fun. As there is no hereafter a man, they think, should make this world his heaven.

To the Christian who regards life as a time of trial and probation Work is a sacred duty, an essential penance, the gage and bond of eternal reward. The ex-Communist Berdyaev, the philosopher of the “New Middle Ages,” thus writes of Work as he sees it in the new era that is just about to dawn :

“ The problem will present itself as a religious one, the sanctification of work, a problem which has no interest for modern history because it has tried frenziedly to free all men from the burden of work ; both Capitalism and Socialism have ‘ solved ’ it by mechanisation. Work must be understood as a participation in creation, and great occupational activity combined with a cutting-down of ‘ wants ’ will characterise the whole society in this new period of history. It is only thus that impoverished man can continue to exist.”

It is not possible to develop this subject further here.<sup>1</sup>

(f) Britain is now attempting to evolve a philosophy of work which will move her war-weary, hungry masses, but she does not appeal to their higher instincts. She is using such slogans as “ Work or Want,” “ Produce or Perish.”

<sup>1</sup> See *A Philosophy of Work*, by Etienne Borne and François Henry, Sheed and Ward ; *Why Work*, by Dorothy Sayers, Methuen and Co. For Hitler’s views on the dignity of work, see *Challenge from Youth*, pp. 133-7.

This appeal is merely minatory ; it shows a complete lack of appreciation of the psychology of "The Crowd." *Threat* is an appeal made to slaves ; enthusiastic service to the nation cannot be evoked by such.<sup>1</sup>

Supplementing the Christian philosophy of Work, we also need a national appeal that will stir the soul of the ordinary Irishman and rouse him to give his best to the nation in this period of storm and stress. This mass appeal should be made by every means available.

II.—To-day the world is in a similar plight to that after the Fall of the Roman Empire when the Barbarian hordes swept across Europe spreading ruin and desolation in their wake ; the only difference is that the "civilised" barbarians of our time unspeakably surpass the Huns and the Goths in their savagery and destructive power. During the "Dark Ages," the Irish monks went out from this little island in the Western Seas and helped to save Christianity and civilisation. Cannot the Irish of to-day, by building a truly Christian State, teach other nations how to live sanely and thus prove that the resources of Christianity are still vital and have not failed ? This they can do by making a truly democratic State, which is possible only through Social Christianity—learned, and lived, and applied in the daily life of the nation.

III.—Since the Reformation continuous and concerted attempts have been made to pervert the Irish from the Faith or to destroy the race. While other small nations such as Portugal, Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, have magnificent achievements—economic, cultural, social—to show to-day, the really outstanding achievement of the Irish is that they were unconquerable, that they survived all the many attempts aimed at breaking their spirit of endurance or destroying them. Why did God preserve the Irish ? Has His special Providence destined for them a rôle similar to that they played from

<sup>1</sup> Contrast the Soviet appeal crystallized in the slogan : "From everyone according to his ability ; to everyone according to his need."

the sixth to the tenth centuries ? One would hesitate to answer in the affirmative if one had not two such outstanding students of the philosophy of history as Hilaire Belloc and Cardinal Newman to give the answer. In his masterpiece, *Europe and the Faith*, published in 1920, Belloc wrote the following remarkable prophecy just before concluding :

“ Against the loss of Britain, which had been a Roman province, the Faith, when the smoke of battle cleared off, could discover the astonishing loyalty of Ireland. And over against this exceptional province—Britain—now lost to the Faith, lay an equally exceptional and unique outer part which had never been a Roman province, yet which now remained true to the tradition of Roman men ; it balanced the map like a counter-weight. The efforts to destroy the Faith in Ireland have exceeded in violence, persistence, and cruelty any persecution in any part or time of the world. They have failed. As I cannot explain why they have failed, so I shall not attempt to explain how and why the Faith in Ireland was saved when the Faith in Britain went under. I do not believe it capable of an historic explanation. It seems to me a phenomenon essentially miraculous in character, not *generally* attached (as are all historical phenomena) to the general and divine purpose that governs our large political events, but *directly* and *specially* attached. It is of great significance ; how great, men will be able to see, many years hence or to-morrow, when another definite battle is joined between the forces of the Church and her opponents. For the Irish race alone of all Europe has maintained a perfect integrity and has kept serene, without internal reactions and without their consequent disturbances, the soul of Europe which is the Catholic Church.”

With his eagle eye piercing the future a hundred years from his own time, Cardinal Newman made even a more startling prophecy ; he thus refers to Ireland :

“ I look towards a land both old and young ; old in its Christianity, young in the promise of its future. . . . I contemplate a people which has had a long night, and will have an inevitable day. I am turning my eyes towards a hundred years to come, and I dimly see the island I am gazing on become *the road of passage and union between two hemispheres, and the centre of the world.* I see its inhabitants rival Belgium in populousness, France in vigour, and Spain in enthusiasm. . . . Thither, as to a sacred soil, the home of their fathers, and the fountain head of their Christianity, students are flocking from East, West, and South, from America and Australia and India, from Egypt and Asia Minor, *with the ease and rapidity of a locomotion not yet discovered,* and last, though not least, from England—all speaking one tongue, all owning one faith, all eager for one large wisdom ; and thence, when their stay is over, going back again to carry peace to men of good will over all the earth.” (*Site of a University.*)

Surely, to-day “ the definite battle is joined between the forces of the Church and her opponents ”—to which Belloc referred above. Whether “ men will be able to see ” the “ great significance ” of the Special Providence of God in preserving the Faith of the Irish (“ to me a phenomenon essentially miraculous in character ”) will depend on the present generation of young Irish men and women,—and even more especially on their leaders who should realise that vision and courage and a Christian Revolution are vitally necessary in this our time. And, to-day, has not Ireland in the prophetic words of Newman truly “ become the road of passage and union between two hemispheres, and the centre of the world ? ” What a soul-stirring stimulus should not the words of these two great Englishmen, Belloc and Newman, be to the spirit of religious chivalry and national romanticism of Young Ireland in launching the Christian Revolution, perhaps the last and greatest of the Crusades !

Before concluding these necessarily condensed suggestions for an Irish national philosophy and programme of action, it is well to meet a difficulty that will have occurred to the cynic and to the faint-hearted who suffer from an inferiority complex similar to that of Nathaniel when he asked—"Can any good come out of Nazareth?" The objection is—"What can a poor small country such as Ireland effect in the mighty world of our day?" Again one is forced to reply by falling back on distinguished authorities. Was it not the great Newman also who once wrote?

"It is not giants who do most. How small was the Holy Land! Yet it subdued the world. How poor a spot was Attica! Yet it has formed the intellect."

And H. A. L. Fisher, the historian, has written:

"Almost everything which is most precious in our civilisation has come from small States—the Old Testament, the Homeric Poems, the Attic and Elizabethan drama, the art of the Italian Renaissance, the Common Law of England. Nobody needs to be told what humanity owes to Athens, Florence, Geneva or Weimar.

... The quantitative estimate of human values, which plays so large a part in modern political history, is radically false and tends to give a vulgar, instead of a liberal and elevated tone to public ambitions."

Why, therefore, cannot that little Christian nation so miraculously preserved from extinction and to-day the link between two hemispheres, the "centre of the world," become a beacon-light to the apostate nations groping amid the thickening darkness of materialism and infidelity, and by her socially constructive example lead them back again to social sanity and to Christ? Let the words of our present Holy Father ring in the ears of the Irish Crusaders: "The time for reflection and planning is past; now is the time for action. Are you ready? The opposing forces in the religious and moral fields are becoming ever more clearly defined. The time of the test is here."

Múscail do misneac, a Óanba.







