

Theocracy or Democracy?

By Arnold Petersen



**Published Online by
Socialist Labor Party of America**

www.slp.org

February 2007

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PUBLISHING HISTORY

PRINTED EDITION August 1944

ONLINE EDITION February 2007

NEW YORK LABOR NEWS
P.O. BOX 218
MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA 94042-0218
<http://www.slp.org/nyln.htm>

THE moment religion organizes into a specific creed it becomes a political force. From Moses down to Brigham Young, every creed-founder has been a State-builder. Creeds being in their essence political, they fatedly reflect economic and social, in short, material conditions—and struggle for the same. As a final consequence, every creed, like every political party, naturally and sincerely holds all others wrong, itself alone the one entitled to survive. . . .

It is important to realize this great historic fact. It tears away the mask of religion behind which political aspirations love to conceal themselves. The tearing away of the mask serves the double purpose of thwarting deception, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, of promoting a spirit of intelligent fair play on the part of any one political body toward all others, including of course the unmasked political bodies as well.

—*Daniel De Leon* (1912)

PREFACE.

The Catholic Church is a splendid model to learn from.—*Adolf Hitler, in Mein Kampf.*

This essay is not an attack on religion as such, nor an affirmation of atheism, monism, “philosophical materialism,” or any of their kindred. It is not an assault on Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism, Buddhism, Shintoism, or any other religious faith or belief. It is primarily and emphatically an affirmation of the principle (the American principle, we may justly call it, because of its first practical and originally sincere and serious application by the founding fathers of America) that governments derive “their just powers from the consent of the governed,” and that it is only the “governed”—the people—who can and must determine the foundation and form of government; and that “it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such [outmoded or unsatisfactory] Government and to provide new Guards for their future security.”

This brief essay, then, is an effort to expose and repel the attempts made from whatever quarter to subvert the revolutionary democratic principles of the founders of America. It is, in its negative sense, a denial of the theocratic claim that “The powers that be are ordained of God,” hence a denial that this country is a “Christian” country or the country of any other creed; that this government is a “Christian” government, or the government of any other creed; that this civilization which we acclaim in the name of American democracy is a “Christian” civilization, or the civilization of any other creed. It is, obviously, a denial of the impudent claim that any person can, or does, hold this world (or any part thereof) in custody, or that he can determine the fate and well-being (or otherwise) of the people, or that he can and should rule them (directly or indirectly) in behalf of a divine power as the vicar or super-representative of such supposed divine power. It is, moreover, a denial of the equally impudent claim, most characteristically made by an industrial feudalism, the late Pennsylvania coal baron, George F. Baer, that “The rights and interests of the laboring men will be protected and cared for—not by the labor agitators [how true!], but by the Christian men to whom God, in His infinite wisdom, has given the control of the property interests of the country.”

This essay, to repeat, is in its positive sense an affirmation of the Jeffersonian principle that power and supreme authority derive solely from the mass of the people and that there is “no safe depositary of the ultimate powers of the society but

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the people themselves” (Jefferson); that even as power can reside safely only in the mass of the people, so, ultimately, wisdom springs alone from the genius of the people in the mass, irrespective of occasional lapses and incidental aberrations; and that government, to be just and effective, must not alone derive its powers from the mass of the people, but must be directly responsive to the everyday needs of the mass of the people, which in our day means that it must be responsive to the needs of the people primarily in their capacities as industrial workers; hence, their democracy must be a “workshop democracy,” or an Industrial Democracy of, by and for the working people, without intervention by usurping powers, whether supernatural or otherwise.

It is with these negative and positive claims that this work deals. In so far as there appear to be attacks in this work on so-called religious bodies, they are, first, not attacks, properly speaking, but counterattacks on those whose claims and pretensions deny the American principle that governments derive their powers from the mass of the people—attacks by those who affirm the reactionary principle that governments derive their powers from a divine source, or are ordained by a divine or supernatural power, be the specific designation of that source or power what it may. Secondly, they are attacks on those very mundane and material interests and individuals who appear in the guise of representatives of a supposed *ipso facto* divinity, shielding themselves in the cloak of religion, and operating, as said, in behalf of political and private property interests. These latter are, in fine, the *de facto* attackers and subverters of the basic American (and potentially universal) democratic principles—principles without which there can be neither liberty nor an untrammelled pursuit of attainable happiness. And when, or if, the cry is set up that this work is an attack on “religion,” etc., it should be clear that those who would thus react to the “attacks” in this essay speak for and in behalf of vested interests, whether vested church interests, or vested political and private property or ruling class interests generally.

This, then, is manifestly no assault on religion nor in any sense a plea for atheism. Atheism, as commonly understood, is essentially reactionary and sterile. It rests its case (if it can be said to have a case) on a mere negation, and, for the rest, accepts the very social and politico-economic principles which prepare and preserve the soil in which grow the doctrines, and in which are nurtured the theocratic claims and dogmas, thereby to that extent insuring the continuation of class rule and the uninterrupted fleecing of labor by capitalism. To attack religion, pure and

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simple, is to engage in the pastime of fools. Socialism has no patience with such infantile practices.

Were every vestige of religion wiped out, and the social and economic principles of capitalism left undisturbed, nothing essential would be changed. This the crafty leaders of organized creeds well understand. And they understand, too, that the “menace” of Socialism, or Marxism, is a menace only to the grossly materialistic substance on which subsist the hordes of church-politicians (theocratic and Ultramontane politicians), and not to the simple faith to which cling the oppressed and exploited masses—a faith which, stripped of the irrelevant supernatural or superstitious, resolves itself into a code of ethics and morals which, insofar as it is true and responsive to the spiritual and ethical needs of modern man, is compatible with any social order, however secular and mundane, which is based on social and economic justice.

The Marxian Socialist, ever sane and realistic, does not waste his time and effort firing “bullets” into heavenly mansions! He saves his metaphorical powder and lead for assaults on the very earthy capitalist robber-burg, and has little concern about the particular garment worn by the defenders on the capitalist ramparts—cares little whether these defenders are garbed in bourgeois mufti or in the black uniforms of churchianity!

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Evidence accumulates that there is on foot a well planned and cleverly directed scheme for instituting a theocratic regime in the postwar world, if that postwar world becomes “frozen” in a feudo-industrialist mold—as will *not* happen if the workers respond to the Marxian organizing call of the Socialist Labor Party. It seems proper to take note here of some of these plans and schemes, especially those embraced in the developments since this essay first appeared (1941) in the Socialist Labor Party publication, *Fifty Years of American Marxism*. Since the active universal element in these theocratic plottings is the Ultramontane machine (the international Roman Catholic “Party”), our chief concern here will be with the doings of that clerico-political organization.

Numerous manifestoes and pronouncements have been issued by the Vatican and the hierarchy since the outbreak of the war. Most of these reveal the essential oneness of Ultramontanism and fascism, despite mutual hostility between the hierarchy and Fascist and Nazi governmental gangsters. The truth of the matter is that there is no real or basic conflict between the authoritarian Vatican and the

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authoritarian and totalitarian Nazi-Fascist State. Though the Vatican may decry collectivism, its social polity is framed for, and can only fit into, a feudo-collectivist mold which is nothing else than the Nazi-Fascist mold. The Vatican despises the Hitlers and the Mussolinis and their crude and barbarous methods, but admires their basic social and economic program. It was none other than Hitler's trusted errand-boy, Franz von Papen (an avowed Catholic) who, according to the magazine, *The Protestant*, June-July 1942 issue, declared: "The Third [Nazi] Reich is the first power in the world not only to recognize but to translate into practice the high principles of the Papacy." Von Papen should know!

On the other hand, the Nazis generally hold in contempt the Popes and the priests, though they tolerate them so long as they can use them. They recognize in Catholic social organization the identical pattern of the Nazi-Fascist "new order"—the corporate state, the "divinely inspired" fuehrer principle, and the belief that the few are born to govern and command the supposedly inarticulate and dumb masses. And each vies with the other in hatred of Marxian Socialism.

There is, then, no essential difference in principles, but it is thoroughly understandable that the Vatican should regard the Nazis and Fascists as upstarts and interlopers, as crude and vulgar brutes and guttersnipes!

The Pope has repeatedly insisted that the postwar world must be based on the acceptance of the Church's "Christian" social principle which (when details are called for) is identified as the principle laid down in Leo XIII's famous encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891), which, in turn, constitutes in effect the constitution of an industrial slave state, a stratified class society wherein the rulers are implored to be kind to their slaves, and these latter directed to be obedient to their masters. These injunctions were repeated by Pope Pius XII in his address delivered May 13, 1942, in which the masses were enjoined to be "obedient to those who command them and to God. *That is the will of the Creator.*" (Italics mine.) Last August the *New York Times* (August 26, 1942) reported that Msgr. John A. Ryan, of the "National Catholic Welfare Conference," suggested to "legislators and rulers" "to follow Catholic social teaching in setting up a new social order. . . ." And in an obviously Vatican-inspired article, Camille M. Cianfarra, for seven years Vatican correspondent to the *New York Times*, wrote:

"The Vatican, being a conservative force, feels that its help will be invaluable to the Anglo-American powers in the period of postwar reconstruction." (*New York Times*, October 4, 1942.)

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Invaluable, indeed!

And does the Pope think there will be any conflict between his social and political ideas and those of the “Anglo-American powers”? Evidently not, for Mr. Cianfarra reports:

“His [the Pope’s] conception of world order is held in Vatican quarters to be similar to that of the democratic powers.”

We know what the Pope’s “conception of world order” is. And if this is “similar” to those of Roosevelt and Churchill (not to mention Stalin!), then by the same token we also know what “new” world order is being planned for us by Messrs. Roosevelt, Churchill & Co. It is an “order” wherein the workers are reduced to the status of absolute economic serfdom, with the masters (through the collective agency of the authoritarian theocratic State) in complete control exercising power over the lives and fortunes of the masses to a greater extent than at any time in history. And in this connection it is well to remember the several missions to the Vatican by Mr. Roosevelt’s personal representative, Mr. Myron C. Taylor. In the New York *Herald Tribune* of September 23, 1942, it is reported that Mr. Taylor “has laid the groundwork for postwar collaboration in the task of world rehabilitation through his talks with Pope Pius XII in the opinion of Vatican observers.” In the same dispatch it is movingly and tenderly reported that—

“The Pope loves all, the happy and those who are suffering, gentlemen and slaves [!!!], the poor and the rich.”

As author Bemelman would say:

“I love you, I love you, I love you.”

The New York *World-Telegram*, commenting editorially (September 24) on Mr. Taylor’s visit to the Pope, made this significant observation:

“There is probably a good deal more to the Roosevelt-Vatican negotiations than meets the eye. *The President would hardly have sent Myron Taylor to talk at such length with the Pope on routine matters.*” (Italics mine.)

Hardly!

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A Vichy despatch, dated July 15, 1942 (published in the New York *Herald Tribune*), announced that the Pope was then preparing “a peace encyclical.” The Vichy despatch goes on to say that, “It was said that the encyclical, which will be sent to bishops all over the world, *also will contain provisions seeking to maintain the present Catholic authoritarian regimes in Italy, Spain, Portugal and France.*” (Italics mine.)

With the implication, one may suppose, that similar “regimes” will be planted elsewhere in the postwar “democratic” world. For that postwar world, even if it is under the benevolent aegis of the Vatican, will, of course, be a “democratic” world! At least, so said the recent statement issued by the Catholic “Inter-American Seminar on Social Studies” (New York *Times*, September 15, 1942). Here we are told that—

“Democracy, whatever its deficiencies may have been in the past [!] . . . *when it is directed by Christian principles* constitutes a system under which Christian [Ultramontane] living can be best achieved.” (Italics mine.)

The statement also insists that “The Christian concept of labor must be reestablished.” That is fair warning. What is that “Christian concept of labor”? It is the concept expressed in Leo XIII’s encyclical already referred to under which, as stated, the working class is reduced to a permanent slave class in whom is to be inculcated respect for the “God-ordained” authorities, and a proper respect for the theocratic partners of the feudal industrial lords. A concept, in other words, which guarantees as never before to the masters of industry the overwhelming bulk of the product of labor, with but a slave’s pittance for the workers. The rulers are, however, warned that their slaves must be well fed: “The poor must live well,” is the alluring way the theocratic gentlemen put it. And the expected dependence of the feudo-industrialist masters on the Church is underscored and emphasized again and again, as for instance:

“It is a fatal error to regard economic life as independent of the moral teachings of the Church.”

And this spiritual and political guidance is promised by the Church which for a thousand years maintained all but supreme rule in a world based on its (then) socio-political principles—a church, indeed, which less than one hundred years ago (through its head the Pope) condemned progress and science unqualifiedly! Indeed,

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the aforementioned “Inter-American Seminary’s” statement unwittingly calls attention to this fact when it avers that “The crisis [global war, etc.] has its ultimate origin in the disruption of Christian unity and the pagan Renaissance.” By this the theocratic state planners mean the Reformation and the birth of modern civilization! In other words, that which civilized and cultured men hail as the world’s liberation from the physical and intellectual thralldom of the dark, medieval period, and as the “rebirth” (“renaissance” = rebirth) of society and civilized living, the theocratic propagandists condemn! What does this mean if it does not mean that the principles and practices of the pre-renaissance age are recommended as the pattern for the “new” theocratic world order?

The agile Msgr. Fulton J. Sheen recently spoke in West Haven, Connecticut, on the subject of “going back to God.” The New Haven *Evening Register* of November 17 reports him in part as follows:

“Monsignor Sheen traced the beginning of the present conflict back to the 18th century WHEN THE POWER OF REASON RATHER THAN TRUTH BECAME WIDELY PRACTICED.”

(Incidentally, one could wish that the brethren would get together and agree on what should be designated as the origin of “the present conflict.” John A. Ryan and associates insist that its origin is to be found “in the disruption of Christian unity . . . ,” etc., which dates it as of the sixteenth century. Sheen “traced the present conflict back to the eighteenth century.” It is only a matter of 200 years, but, after all, that is still several lifetimes! Could it be that the reverend gentlemen do not know, and do not understand?)

Observe the cunning and crafty injection of a surreptitious premise in this brief sentence. “Reason” and “Truth” are placed in juxtaposition as if they precluded each other. The theocratic gentleman does not explain how one can arrive at the truth in mundane matters (he was discussing “the present conflict”) except through reasoning and a consideration of the facts. Nor does he attempt to make clear how one can follow the dictates of *reason* and not eventually arrive at the truth, other things being equal. But let that pass. Of particular interest here is the condemnation of reason. Reason, the capacity for reasoning things out, is the mark of spiritual and intellectual manhood. Deprived of that, man sinks to the level of the brute, that which separates man from the beast being precisely the capacity of the former to reason, to appraise facts and to reach conclusions and decisions. Reason,

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indeed, is the condition indispensable for exercising that “free will” about which the priesthood prates so much, but for which in reality it has so little respect.

To condemn reason, as Msgr. Sheen & Co. do, is to urge gouging out the brains of modern man. It is to condemn the great minds of all ages, but (in the case of Sheen) it is specifically to condemn the great thinkers and intellects of the 18th century, and their immortal achievements. It is to condemn, for instance, the great and wise Benjamin Franklin who was the very embodiment of reason; it is to condemn the fathers and founders of this country, who were guided by reason; it is to condemn Goethe, Voltaire, Rousseau, mountain peaks in the realm of reason who constitute the nobility of mankind, and the host of others who represent the cream of the intellects and the genius of the 18th century, and after. It is to condemn light and to commend darkness. It is to condemn “heaven” and to urge “hell” upon us. It is the plea of Ultramontane theocracy—and Sheen calls it to “go back to God!”

The modern Pope who formally condemned modern science and progress was Plus IX who ruled the Church (and as much of the world as would let him do so) from 1846 to 1878. In 1864 Plus IX issued the encyclical *Quanta cura*, which (with other utterances) was given the title *Syllabus complectens praecipuos nostrae aetatis errores* (Syllabus of errors of our age). In this document (to quote the German professor Carl Mirbt) there is “claimed for the Church the control of all culture and all science, and of the whole educational system. He [Plus IX] rejected the liberty of faith, conscience and worship enjoyed by other creeds. . . . He claimed the complete independence of the Church from state control . . . and finally, in the last clause, declared that ‘the pontiff neither can be nor ought to be reconciled with progress, liberalism and modern civilization.’”

The year was 1864—more than 300 years after the great Reformation, and only yesterday as the Church itself reckons time! For Plus IX was succeeded immediately by Leo XIII—a contemporary of many now living who were grown men when Leo XIII died!

This pontifical pronouncement has, of course, never been withdrawn or repudiated. It is, therefore, binding on loyal Catholics today. Will Dr. John A. Ryan, will the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Fulton J. Sheen, or any of their fellow-workers and collaborators in “fundamental theology,” affirm it or disown it? Come, gentlemen, speak up! Is it fantastic to expect of the present or a future Pope to reiterate and reaffirm this medieval doctrine? Of course not! And if the reactionary postwar planners have it their way, the condition will be present for translating the dark

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creed of Plus IX into practice, something it was impossible for Plus IX to do since he thundered and fulminated at a time when the papacy was in decline, and social progress irresistibly on the speedy upward climb.

Let not the theocratic propagandists and their allies decry this citation as unfair, for it is out of their own book, and by one whom they hail as one of the great formulators of Catholic dogma. It was none other than Pope Plus IX who proclaimed the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary (*Ineffabilis Deus*, December 8, 1854) and the infallibility of the Pope (July 18, 1870), dogmas dear to the hearts of Catholics everywhere!

Plus IX's famous (or infamous) syllabus, condemning all that men have fought and bled for during long centuries, still stands unchallenged by any authoritative Catholic spokesman. Indeed, it was no less a Catholic Church dignitary than Cardinal Manning who, according to Professor Mirbt, "described the syllabus as an emanation from the highest doctrinal authority in the Church."

The world is facing a period of travail and convulsions when the present monstrous world-encircling struggle ends. Though perhaps less sanguinary, that struggle will likely be as world-shaking as, if not more so than, the present gigantic struggle. And the stakes are tremendous, the issues titanic. In its ultimate determination there will be tested whether generations of noble men and women marched to their martyrs' Golgothas in vain—whether they suffered and died needlessly. Or whether they did so to the end of this generation achieving the crowning glory of civilization—Socialism—the free society of emancipated labor and liberated humanity, of free men and women fraternizing in universal peace, boundless affluence and civilized enlightenment.

Arnold Petersen.

November 19, 1942.

Post-Preface.

“Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them. . . . Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine.”

—TIMOTHY II.

Since the foregoing was written, Pope Plus XII has presented to the world another lengthy politico-economic treatise in the guise of a Christmas message which the bachelor-bishop of Rome addressed to “My dear Children of the Whole World.” Though abounding in the customary medieval and theological phrases, it is essentially a current political document, a theocratic pronouncement, and as such merits brief notice here. Like Hitler’s bombastic speeches, it contains nothing really new, but in point of clerico-political presumptuousness, and as a sample of theocratic doubletalk, it excels those others recently emanating from the same source. Its flummery and double-talk are, of course, designed to conceal its essentially political nature, although the exact opposite is accomplished, since, through the flummery and double-talk, the reactionary politico-economic program of the Pope is thereby emphasized.

However, we are not interested in the theology of the Pope; we remain unimpressed by the Pope’s citation of the 13th century scholastic disputant, Thomas Aquinas, having no illusions about the 13th century being able to teach 20th century man anything concerning political and economic science. (It is interesting to recall, however, that Pope Leo XIII, according to one authority, “directed the clergy to take the teachings of Aquinas as the basis of their theological position”; and the same authority informs us that in 1880 Aquinas “was declared patron of all Roman Catholic educational establishments.” And why? Because Aquinas had laid down the proposition that “Revelation is a source of knowledge [!!!] . . . and its chief characteristic is that it [revelation] presents men with mysteries, *which are to be believed even when they cannot be understood.*” That sufficiently explains the enthusiasm of Leo XIII and Plus XII for this medieval obscurant!)

But, as said, we are not impressed by the Pope’s theology, nor are we greatly impressed by the Pope’s tautologies, nor by his repeated, labored expositions of the obvious, as, for instance, when ponderously he tells his “dear Children” that “the progress and the extent of urgent social reforms depend on the economic

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possibilities of single nations.” What interests us particularly is his reiteration of the theocratic political program of the church, and his political harangue, denouncing Marxism, even as he is protesting his purely *religious* motives! Take this morsel as an example of the Pope’s double-talk, obscurantism and theocratic presumptuousness. Speaking of “that social life, as God willed it,” and of authority as “ordained of God,” the Pope obfuscates:

“Such an order [the Pope’s theocratic society] . . . has also the power of coercion against those who only by this means can be held within the noble discipline of social life [which, in the time of Aquinas, for instance, meant the rack and the fagot]. But in the just fulfillment of this right, an authority which is truly worthy of the name will always be painfully conscious of its responsibility in sight of the Eternal Judge, before whose tribunal [i.e., the tribunal of his vicar, the Pope] every wrong judgment, *and especially every revolt against the order established by God* [Mussolini’s gangster government, perchance?], will receive without fail its sanction [?] and its condemnation. THE PRECISE, BED-ROCK, BASIC RULES THAT GOVERN SOCIETY [as enunciated by the political unit, the Vatican] CANNOT BE PREJUDICED BY THE INTERVENTION OF HUMAN AGENCY. They can be denied, overlooked, despised, transgressed, but they can never be overthrown with legal [sic!] validity.” (Emphasis mine.)

This mixture of the religious, the political, the revolutionary, the legal and the purely obscure and nonsensical, is listened to with bated breath as the latest utterance of an infallible oracle! Or is it?

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But it is the Pope’s denunciation of Marxism which interests us particularly here. Obviously conscious of his own presumptuousness and hypocrisy (or suspecting that they will be so regarded), the Pope prefaces his impudent denunciation with an apology:

“Always moved by religious motives [said he], the church has condemned the various forms of Marxist Socialism [!!]; and she condemns them today, because it is her permanent right and duty to safeguard men from currents of thought [the Japanese crudely call it prohibition of dangerous thoughts!] and influences that jeopardize their external [sic] salvation.”

Earlier in his political manifesto the Pope had declared that he would consider “very carefully *and with equal impartiality* the fundamental laws of the internal

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order of states and people”—thus, as pointed out, acknowledging the political character of his “Christmas message.” The Pope, for instance, wants the world to know that he is impartial toward the Nazi-Fascist gangsters and the allied powers—they are all his “dear Children”! But the bonds of impartiality snap miraculously when he turns to that question of universal importance, Marxism! The ruling class parasites who support a social order which rests on wage slavery, and which breeds war, poverty and disease as inescapably as swamps breed malarial fever, these parasites (whether they be fascist or bourgeois democratic), he says in effect, receive his impartial consideration. But curses upon the Marxists who would establish a social system that would forever banish all forms of slavery and superstition, banish war, poverty and preventable diseases! The Marxist accepts the compliment, and considers it well earned.

No one is surprised at the Pope’s little act—it is expected of him, and the reiteration is merely noted for the record. But what shall we say of an important and influential newspaper, posing as a champion of American democracy, and, therefore, inferentially an opponent of the Pope’s theocratic pretensions—what shall we say when such a newspaper echoes the hypocritical claims and pretenses of the Pope? The New York *Times*, commenting on the Pope’s political manifesto in its issue of December 25, makes this observation:

“ . . . No one would expect the Pope to speak as a political leader, or a war leader, or in any other role than that of a preacher ordained to stand above the battle, *tied impartially, as he says, to all people and willing to collaborate in any new order which will bring a just peace.*”

The *Times* knows that it is handling the truth carelessly when it makes these claims for the reactionary Roman theocracy. It knows that the Pope had spoken as a biased, bitter and violent political partisan; it knows that the Pope did not declare his willingness to collaborate for the establishment of a “new order,” and, least of all, of one in which the causes of war and poverty will have been forever removed. The *Times* was toadying, and this shameless toadying to dark medievalism, this belly-crawling before the Ultramontane machine, on the part of the would-be pro-democratic New York *Times*, is merely the example of the general catering and kowtowing to the Vatican State by the reactionary, labor-fleecing elements the world over. And this fact, too, we note for the record.

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There have been other recent utterances on the proposed “new” order which might profitably have been discussed here if space and other considerations permitted it. In passing, however, mention should be made of Vice President Wallace’s recent address in which a social and economic postwar program is presented which the Pope undoubtedly would endorse if proper tribute and recognition would be given him and his vested political and economic interests. And there are many others, differing in details and externals only, all dedicated to the proposition that the “rights” and privileges of the capitalist class must be safeguarded even as the wage slave must be assured his slave’s pittance and his slave status. Wendell Willkie seems to agree with Mr. Wallace, except that he wants to start planning at once—he does not want to wait until the war is over.

Since we have given some consideration to the program and plans of the Bishop of Rome, it may not be amiss to consider briefly what that high-priest of the plutocracy, Walter Lippmann, offered as *his* holiday message which, significantly, he gave the title, “Work and Peace.” Noting the alleged differences between the various capitalist proponents of the “new” postwar order, Mr. Lippmann shows that these differences are “small, often merely verbal.” Hoover, Welles, Wallace, Hull, Willkie, et al., said Mr. Lippmann, have the same common purpose—they are, he insists, “talking about essentially the same thing and seeking the same end.” Mr. Lippmann is right—and he would still be right if he had included the Pope, and the rest of the feudo-plutocratic postwar planners. There *is* no essential difference between the postwar programs of Roosevelt and the Pope, to take these two as the outstanding spokesmen for that “new” world order which (according to their claims) must be dedicated to the Christian God and private property!

But, in making his point (and, incidentally, expressing his concern about the 15,000,000 allied soldiers who will return from the war demanding work), Mr. Lippmann seeks to establish a comparison between the current debate and the debate that took place after the American Revolutionary War was won. “What differences are there today,” he writes, “. . . which are as radical as those which separated the men of 1787 . . . ?” If Mr. Lippmann limits the current debaters to those who are in fundamental agreement that capitalism must be preserved, and chooses to ignore the Marxists as if they did not exist, then the differences are certainly no greater; indeed, they are less than those which divided the men of 1787. But, if Mr. Lippmann excludes the Marxist debaters from consideration, he is blind and fatuous.

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In 1787 a revolution had been won—a fundamental revolution had taken place in that a semi-feudal, monarchical regime had been overthrown and a bourgeois republic established. In other words, there was then established a new, untried social order—the social order which now has reached the climax of its development. The men of 1787 were trying to make the new order work—a new, living principle was to be put to the practical test. The capitalists and their spokesmen of 1943 are trying to rejuvenate a worn-out principle—they are trying to kindle a fire out of dead ashes. They seek to imitate the Lord God Jehovah when, according to the Bible, he set the Prophet Ezekiel down in the midst of the valley “which was full of bones, “ which, Ezekiel observes, “were very dry.” As the story goes (Ezekiel, 37:1–8), Jehovah asked Ezekiel: “Can these bones live,” to which Ezekiel gave the trusting reply: “O Lord God, thou knowest!” And to prove that he was the Lord Jehovah indeed, Jehovah caused the bones to “get together,” the flesh to reappear, and the skin to cover flesh and bones. “But,” Ezekiel ruefully announced, “THERE WAS NO BREATH IN THEM!” (The rest is another story!)

The age of miracles having passed forever, one doubts that, despite the efforts of Pope and capitalists and all their high priests, it will be possible for them to put new flesh and skin on the dead bones—the, oh, *so very dry bones!*—of capitalism. But even if they succeed in rigging up the dry skeleton to a semblance of a living thing they will make a discovery similar to the one Ezekiel made; *they will find that there is no breath in the ghostly contraption*, and no Lord Jehovah on hand to pass the miracle! It will remain the ghost of capitalism, sans life, sans spirit, sans everything!

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For the reasons indicated, the architects of the new (industrial) feudalism can find neither guidance nor inspiration from the magnificent revolutionary principles and high aims of the Founding Fathers of the American Republic. The differences between the social and economic conditions of 1787 and of the present period are basic and vital. The Revolutionary Fathers were moving *with* the onward-rushing stream of history and social evolution. The social and economic forces with which the Fathers were dealing surged upward and onward, toward the fulfillment of the supreme goal of the ages: Freedom *and* Plenty. And the Fathers followed gladly whither the stream took them, their backs definitely turned on the dead past. But the present-day planners, the postwar “reconstructionists” (outside the Marxists) are working dead against the stream of history and social evolution, seeking to dam

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up, or force backward, the mighty stream.

The Fathers, following the onward-rushing stream, were, in the main, ready and eager to abandon old forms and outworn institutions, seeking to adjust themselves, their society and form of government, in conformity with the progressive social and economic forces. The present-day “planners” are racking their brains, they are working ceaselessly to provide a procrustean bed into which to confine capitalist society, or what is left of it—they are attempting to re-vitalize the dead capitalist principle and to preserve the outworn capitalist institutions, obviously not in the interests of society as a whole but in the social and material interests of the useless and parasitical capitalist class—a class which long ago ceased to have any evolutionary mission to perform, and still less a revolutionary purpose to fulfill—and now totally useless in the productive process and, in fact, constituting an obstacle to social progress.

Those subscribing to capitalist principles are inevitably forced to go backward. The ultra-reactionaries are deliberately seeking the backward trail to medievalism. The so-called liberal or self-styled progressive elements (committed, of course, to capitalist principles, regardless of the fancy names they may give their programs) are compelled, willy-nilly, to follow on that same road to the dead past. They are fated to do this on the principle that he who stands still is really moving backward. Moreover, they must do this because they agree *fundamentally* with the ultra-reactionaries, however they may disagree with them as to details or methods, and that fact compels them to compromise. And to compromise in matters that are fundamental in a revolutionary period is, in fact, to make a compact with the dead past.

Finally, in any case there is no way of choking off permanently the stream of progress now followed solely by the Marxists. Hence, clashes with the latter, and with the revolutionary working class, are inevitable, and the greater and more frequent the clashes, the more solidly the so-called liberals and “progressives” will consolidate their forces and aims with those of the out-and-out reaction. The logic of events will compel them to do so. All history, and particularly the history of the 19th and 20th centuries, attests the fact that middle-of-the-roaders and compromisers fatedly gravitate toward the side of the reaction, and at the last are counted as part of it. And that, in the final analysis, is why the Roosevelts, the Wallaces, the Willkies, etc., will find themselves cheek by jowl with the Ultramontane-theocratic forces—with the forces that consciously strain to establish

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industrial feudalism with its corresponding economic serfdom for the working class.

The die is cast: It is onward to Socialism—to peace, plenty and freedom; or it is backward to a second black night of feudalism—to unending poverty, or at best to a bare animal subsistence, and to slavery.

Lovers of freedom, of intellectual and individual liberty, workers of all lands—which shall it be?

A.P.

January 2, 1943

CHAPTER ONE.

Man Creates God in His Own Image.

STATIUS, a Roman poet who lived during the second half of the first century after Christ, enunciated in stately Latin the truth that “Fear was the first creator of gods in the world.” (“*Primus in orbe deos fecit imor.*”) We are told that God created man in his own image. Considering the multiplicity of multi-varying gods since man first trembled at the specter of lightning and thunder, and considering the great variety in human beings—their different appearances, shapes and tongues—the acceptance of this theory has ever placed a heavy strain upon the credulity of those otherwise intelligent persons who seek desperately to cling to the faith of their fathers. It is much easier to accept the theory that man created his gods in *his* own image. “The god of the cannibals,” said Emerson, “will be a cannibal, of the crusader a crusader, and of the merchant a merchant.” The wise Goethe, with his usual perspicacity, said:

“Wie einer ist, so ist sein Gott,
Darum ward Gott so oft zu Spott.”
 (“As a man is, so is his god;
Therefore was god so often mocked.”)

And as long ago as the sixth century before Christ, the ancient Greek-Italian philosopher, Xenophanes, ridiculed his contemporaries, and criticized Homer, for making their gods in their own image. In one of the fragments surviving of his writings, Xenophanes said:

“Yet men imagine gods to be born, and to have raiment and voice and body, like themselves. . . . Even so the gods of the Ethiopians are swarthy and flat-nosed, the gods of the Thracians are fair-haired and blue-eyed. . . . Even so Homer and Hesiod attributed to the gods all that is a shame and a reproach among men—theft, adultery, deceit and other lawless acts. . . . Even so oxen, lions and horses, if they had hands wherewith to grave images, would fashion gods after their own shapes and make them bodies like to their own.”

For a philosopher to have been able to see and express in simple words all this at so early a period indicates a mind of superior order, and it helps us today to perceive even more clearly the truth that man does, indeed, make his gods, now as

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in the past, in his own image, and obviously not the other way around.

Fear is the result of ignorance. Man cowers in the presence of the unknown, especially the unknown which threatens his life or security. Man's gods, then, are created in his frightened mental, or, if you like, spiritual image, as well as in his own physical likeness. And once fashioned, man's god, like a Frankenstein creation, possesses and dominates man, and while the form and character of his deity (or deities) may change in the measure that man grows in knowledge and understanding of natural forces (and, in our days, of social and economic forces as well), this god has remained, on the whole, a subject of his creator's fears.

However, in the degree that man has conquered and therefore understood nature, in that degree he has ceased to become the terror-stricken prey of nature and of nature's violence. Knowing now that thunder and lightning are but the uncontrolled manifestations of the controlled force which now supplies him with light, heat and motive power, he no longer seeks to propitiate the gods of thunder and lightning. Rather does he seek to trap that which to him was once the expression of his deity's wrath—to trap it and to run it into the ground, spent and impotent. Jove's thunderbolt and Thor's mighty hammer, before which man once crouched in abject terror, become the subjects of charming legends for use in the nursery room. But if man has greatly mastered and understood nature, he (in the mass) still stands uncomprehending before the manifestations of social forces. These social forces inspire modern man with varying degrees of wonder alternating with apprehension and often with terror. And just as his primitive ancestor eons ago cowered before the elements, and later prostrated himself before the graven images of the gods born of his fear (or salaamed before the priesthood of his self-created gods), so now he cowers, trembles and prostrates himself when great social catastrophes shake him out of the dull complacency too frequently attending the dreary routine of his everyday tasks.

Hence, in times of such great social catastrophes (and usually in times of war) man turns to mysticism. Speaking of the earlier social cataclysmic changes, Dr. Gustav Bang says¹:

“He [the oppressed] felt himself abandoned to social forces which he could not combat. He saw no way out of misery, neither through individual efforts nor through a united class struggle. . . . His thoughts struck the road to mysticism. . . . A Savior was dreamt of, one who should come and

¹ *Crises in European History.*

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redeem humanity through supernatural means. . . .”

And so now. Mankind today faces the greatest social catastrophe in all history. Tremendous forces have been released which (mainly uncontrolled) are bringing death, destruction and disaster to the world, and terror to the mass of humanity. In vain does the average man and woman seek to understand, to explain this terrible holocaust, more dreadful in its form and substance, and in its foreshadowed awful consequences, than anything experienced by man in earlier crises. The explanation is to be had—the remedy is at hand—but the mass of humanity knows nothing of either, and for all practical purposes what is not known has no present reality or existence. And so man again—urged by the priesthood—implores his gods for mercy and succor, for peace and salvation. The modern priesthood, and the ruling class generally, know that a remedy is offered. If they reject it, it is primarily because that remedy is recognized as a menace to their private vested interests and class privileges. And the greater the social upheaval, the more intense their efforts to turn the mass mind from the practical ways and means presented to solve the great problem, the more feverishly they labor to turn that mass mind toward everlasting “salvation” and peace—beyond the grave! The priests and the politicians invoke the aid of God, pray to God, urge ways and means of appeasing, of propitiating God. And they do this, not as helpless primitive creatures in the realm of nature, but as supposedly intelligent, creative beings in a man-made world! And they do this, some in their blindness and naiveté, but most of them in order to protect, and (if possible) to preserve and prolong the social system by which they benefit at the expense of the mass of humanity—the working class of the world; they do this in order to preserve their class privileges and the ease, leisure and superfluities that go with these. “He was a wise man,” said Euripides of old, “who originated the idea of God.” Wise, indeed, old son of Athens! And wise also was he who conceived the idea of a priesthood to act as the mouthpiece of the invented deity! On the occasion of the birthday of our greatest President, the creed-less and noble Abraham Lincoln, a prominent ecclesiastic, William T. Manning, Protestant Episcopal Bishop of New York, addressed this supplication to the Christian God:

“Help us all to realize the great dangers which now threaten us. Overrule by thy Almighty Power the forces of tyranny, cruelty and aggression and grant that the nations now enslaved may be liberated and restored to their freedom and their rights.

“In this hour of world crisis, grant that our whole nation may stand

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united, that we may give our utmost aid to Great Britain and all who stand with her for justice and human liberty, and that we may do this without delay for the defense of our own land, for the preservation of Christian civilization and for the sake of all mankind.”

There is no doubt in Bishop Manning’s mind that the deity is on the side of the British, despite Napoleon’s insistence that “God is on the side of the strongest battalions”! Nor has he any doubt about the British Empire’s salvation being also the salvation of civilization—our “Christian civilization,” the Bishop calls it. “Christian civilization”—let us ponder that a little. Let us see if we can define the phrase and discover its inner meaning, its real connotation and full implication.

CHAPTER TWO.

‘The Defense of Religion, of Democracy and of Good Faith Among Nations Is All the Same Fight.’

In his annual message to Congress delivered January 4, 1939, President Roosevelt made a departure from the subject of his message (which was supposed to be “on the state of the union”) and entered upon a brief discourse on matters ultra-terrestrial. For a few moments he discarded the robe of king (“rex”), and donned that of priest (“pontifex”). In one of the opening paragraphs of his message he said:

“Storms from abroad directly challenge three institutions indispensable to Americans, *now as always*. The first is religion. It is the source of the other two—democracy and international good faith.

“Religion, by teaching man his relationship to God, gives the individual a sense of his own dignity and teaches him to respect himself by respecting his neighbors.” (Italics mine.)

A little later the President said:

“An ordering of society which relegates *religion*, democracy and good faith to the background can find no place within it for the ideals of the Prince of Peace. The United States rejects such an ordering, and retains its ancient faith. . . . The defense of *religion*, of democracy and of good faith among nations is all the same fight. *To save one we must now make up our minds to save all.*” (Italics mine.)

Mr. Roosevelt’s repeated enumerations of religion as being among America’s “indispensable institutions” (note the significant phrase “institution”), and that it is the source of democracy and world peace, constituted not merely a departure from his very secular subject, but it constituted an attempt—a surreptitious, but nonetheless bold, attempt—to effect a departure from one of the most settled American traditions since the founding of the republic, the tradition of a strictly secular government, unrelated to, and completely divorced from church, creed or general religion. So strongly did the Fathers feel on this subject that the very first of the ten Amendments added to the Constitution shortly after its adoption expressly forbids Congress to make any law which would provide for the establishment of religion—mark this: “religion” in general, not merely a particular creed, but *religion*. The part of the Amendment referring to religion reads:

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“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion,
OR prohibiting the free exercise thereof. . . .”

This is crystal-clear: It means that the Constitutional Fathers relegated religion to the status of a strictly private matter. No American was to be denied the right to worship as he pleased and what he pleased, OR NOT TO WORSHIP AT ALL IF IT SO PLEASED HIM! The right to practise a particular religion was to be held no more sacred than the right to refuse to practise any religion. It meant, and has always meant, that among the inviolable rights of Americans is the right to believe in a God, and to deny the existence of a God; the right to accept as holy and revealed, or to reject as nursery tales and myths, the Bible, the Koran, the Hindu scriptures, the Buddhist scriptures, the Confucianist scriptures, the Taoist scriptures, the Zoroastrian scriptures, etc., or any of the claims made by the followers of the various deities and their prophets, from the oldest down to Brigham Young and Mother Eddy! When President Roosevelt (in expounding the nature and form of our government, and the rights the people enjoy, and the responsibilities they owe under that form of government and the Constitution) insists that there can be no democracy without religion, or, conversely, that there can be no religion without democracy, he is guilty of perverting and misrepresenting the principles upon which this republic was founded. Whether he did so deliberately, or whether he was merely expressing himself carelessly, is of no great moment.

The assumption is justified that he knowingly attacked the first Amendment to the Constitution for reasons that are not as yet clear. In part, at least, it seems to have been done to placate the ecclesiastic powers generally, but chiefly, no doubt, the Roman Catholic Church. If Mr. Roosevelt's amazing recognition of religion as an American institution, and as indispensable as American democracy, was intended merely as a passing and polite reference to a powerful pressure group, and not as an attempt to subvert the traditional American political principle of secularism, he would undoubtedly have rebuked or refuted those who saw in his utterances the proclamation of a new policy which would commit this country to a revival of the ancient theocratic conception of government. For, though the President did not openly avow theocracy, that is what his claim amounts to, and that is what it inevitably would lead to if he were to follow consistently the logic of the position he laid down.

Whether or not, then, the President's remarks were made with sinister intent, with the intent to initiate a new social polity, his statement was seized upon with

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glee by ecclesiastics of different denominations and faiths, and by those omniscient and ubiquitous oracles, the capitalist press columnists—and not necessarily fifth-columnists! The mouthpiece of the plutocracy *par excellence*, Mr. Walter Lippmann, expertly caught the ball thrown by the President, and the lesser practitioners of Mr. Lippmann's calling quickly followed suit. On January 7, 1939, Mr. Lippmann hailed Mr. Roosevelt's declaration as "a landmark in the history of Western thought." A *landmark*, no less! Mr. Lippmann has no hesitancy in recording his acceptance of the President's "new" policy in the most emphatic and unqualified terms. The declaration, Mr. Lippmann says, "registers a change of ideas which is absolutely fundamental. . . ." It marks, he says, "the reconciliation . . . between patriotism, freedom, democracy and religion."

Mr. Lippmann wants to assure us that he does not regard the President's remarks as "a conventional tribute to religion." He goes on: "But that the President, who is the most influential democratic leader in the world, should recognize religion as the *source* of democracy and of international good faith is not a mere matter of words; it is a fundamental re-orientation in the liberal democratic outlook upon life."

Mr. Lippmann is no naive simpleton, nor is he a professional Sunday school teacher. When he implies that he believes with the President that religion is the source of democracy, he really means that it would be splendid if the idea would be generally accepted. He recognizes the fact (though he may not understand what caused the fact) that a cohesive force is needed in a political society to keep the masses in control, to keep them in *disciplined obedience*. He sees that the era of competition has come to an end. During the period when capitalism was growing and expanding, ever seeking new outlets, new opportunities to thrive, competition furnished the checks and balances which somehow kept the capitalist system functioning, both with respect to the production and exchange of commodities generally, as well as with respect to the commodity labor power. However wasteful and anarchical, however much labor suffered through the cycles of "prosperity" and crises, through the seemingly never-ending process of expansion and recovery, ever and anon a sort of equilibrium was restored, though each new expansion, each new recovery, led to ever greater crises. But world capitalism can no longer expand; competition has virtually come to an end—where it still survives it has no real effect on capitalism basically.

Thus, since capitalism can no longer be counted upon to regulate the habits and

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conduct of the wage slaves as of old, a super-regulating force is needed if society remains on a class rule and private property basis—that is, if society remains political. Something firmer, more compelling than the *laissez-faire* principle of old is required. If the mass of the people (specifically the working class) can be induced to accept the theory that religion is the source of democracy (i.e., bourgeois democracy), and understanding by that democracy a way of life which promises good wages, “reasonable” hours of labor, kind employers, and all the rest of the social program jointly formulated by the “New Deal” and the papacy, it follows that the workers, in order to preserve and defend this “democracy,” must defend religion, and vice versa. And a basis is thus provided for that Industrial Feudal Order which ruling classes everywhere, instinctively or consciously, blunderingly or with careful design, are seeking to introduce when a semblance of peace and order may have been established.

Mr. Lippmann shows that he is not naive, but that he clearly sees the implication of the President’s proposed “fundamental change,” and keenly perceives the trend toward the establishment of a modern theocracy—a theocracy which (while based on the same principle, and charged with the same spirit as the earlier theocracies) will (if successful) be as different from these latter as Socialism will be different from ancient communism, though the basic principles and spirit of the latter will reappear in the future Socialist Republic. If successful, it will be a theocracy as cruel in spirit, and as destructive of freedom, as was the old theocracy; but its form will, of course, be molded by the machine age, its means of compulsion will be more subtle and refined, but, if anything, it will be even more destructive of the mind and spirit of the economically enslaved masses that are meekly expected to submit to its rule. And it will be more paralyzing in its effect on the *will*, and more deadening on the *aspiration* of these masses so far as an otherwise realizable new and higher society of freedom and genuine culture may again eventually be visualized.

How does Mr. Lippmann translate—and properly translate—the President’s words into ruling class realism? Mr. Lippmann does so in the following:

“And so, whereas formerly *the masses* to whom the President speaks held that social reform could be achieved only by the *class struggle*, in this message he tells them . . . *that the class struggle must stop if the masses are to improve their lot. . . .* Where formerly they believed that religion is either negligible and antiquated, or that it is, as the Communists say, ‘the opiate of the people,’ he tells them that on the religious traditions of the

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West, *and on no other foundation*, can human liberty be maintained.”
(Italics mine.)

We shall give a little thought later to these “religious traditions of the West,” but meanwhile it is interesting to note the admissions, and the implications of the words, of this cold-blooded, calculating and cynical would-be high priest of this nascent plutocratic theocracy: There is the admission of the existence of the class struggle, and that the masses have acted in obedience to its terms—consciously or not is immaterial here. There is the thinly veiled threat that the class struggle must stop: Mr. Lippmann might learn from the example of King Canute who knew that he could not sweep back the waves and merely tried it to shame his fawning and flattering courtiers who insisted that he had the almighty power to do so! The class struggle is as elemental in capitalist society as the waves of the ocean are in nature. And finally there is to be noted Mr. Lippmann’s bold injection of “religion” into the arena of social and political struggles. Not that it is not already there, though it is disguised or thinly veiled. But Mr. Lippmann strips the subject of its pretense.

Finally, Mr. Lippmann assures his readers that Mr. Roosevelt’s declaration “is an event in modern history, comparable, so to speak, with the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848”! This, too, is significant. Mr. Lippmann knows that the *Communist Manifesto* was a challenge hurled at capitalist society, a challenge which shook it to its foundation. Hopefully, he apparently conceives the President’s declaration as a counter-challenge which shall put an end to the movement of revolutionary Socialism, and for all time preserve capitalist society; a challenge which shall terminate the class struggle, crush the spirit of the workers, and mold their minds to suit the needs of the Feudo-Industrial Theocracy toward which he, Mr. Roosevelt, and their clerical and plutocratic allies are straining. But the working class has still to be heard from. And upon that fact Mr. Lippmann and those whom he serves may well ponder!

CHAPTER THREE.

‘God in Government.’

Mr. Lippmann was not the only one who responded so enthusiastically to Mr. Roosevelt’s bid for theocracy. Priests, ministers and rabbis sing the praises of Mr. Roosevelt, though some of them might well weep if they value their particular creed and separate propertied institutions. For in a theocracy there is room for no dissenters. Theocracy knows but one god, one church, one creed. The voluble and effervescent Dorothy Thompson follows hard upon Mr. Lippmann’s heels²—less subtle, more evangelical. She heartily joins Messrs. Roosevelt and Lippmann in their professions of faith—cheerily she agrees that Mr. Roosevelt’s idea of democracy as the child of religion is sound, and that, contrariwise, the “current concept” that “democracy was predominantly secular and materialistic” is unsound and wrong in principle. We are getting somewhere very fast! If democracy, that is, democratic government, is not secular, it surely is not of this earth! It must, then, be classed with things sacred, it must be something religious, something instituted directly by God and entrusted to the safe-keeping of his vicars on earth! Miss Thompson chirps that “The conception of man as a child of God . . . is the basis of democracy”! And triumphantly she finally announces that Judaism and Christianity are to be equated to modern democracy, since they share the same “spiritual” concepts! Jewish theocracy, for instance, equated to Jeffersonian Democracy! Selah!

The “secular” columnists and their “non-secular” fellow-workers all agree that democracy must be of the deity, by the deity, for the deity! But most of them are a little bolder and more specific: They insist (as did Bishop Manning) that ours is a *Christian* civilization, that this is a *Christian* democracy, that *Christ* must be the fountainhead of government, and so forth. It is significant that a month later, from the city of Washington again, there came another announcement, this time proclaiming the initiating of a move for putting God in the government! Joseph Corrigan, rector of the Catholic University of America, announced a “national crusade for God in Government.” Among other things, American Catholics are invited (presumably pending the superimposing of the deity on our form of government, with or without Constitutional amendment) to pledge themselves to a defense of “the republic against atheistic [!] propaganda, to maintain respect for

² New York *Herald Tribune*, January 9, 1939.

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rightly constituted authority and obedience to lawful administrators. . . .”

Apparently the Roman Catholic political machine is going to lose no time or opportunity in following Mr. Roosevelt’s lead. And as the self-proclaimed vicars of God on earth, the papacy, i.e., Ultramontanism, or political Romanism, may be expected to insist on the right to determine what and who are the “rightly constituted authority,” and when “obedience” must be rendered, and to whom. Nor can we doubt the nature of the interpretations which the papacy will render of “God’s will.” Ten centuries of almost unrelieved social darkness, slavery and human misery warn us as to what to expect if once again theocracy returns to afflict us.

There may be some who would argue that these phrases of God or Christ in Government, etc., are mere figures of speech, that they are not to be taken seriously, for how, we are asked, can God be made our earthly ruler? Of course, to those who ask such a question, “God” is either a myth or a pure abstraction, having no reality and therefore no influence on affairs, except as all myths may in some degree influence them. The answer is that these are not mere figures of speech, that these people mean exactly what they say, though they may have differing concepts as to *how* God is to be put in government, or *how* “religion” is to manifest itself as the fountainhead of government. For “God in Government” is no fantastic concept—it had reality once, and repeatedly, and it may conceivably assume reality anew. To be sure, difficulties might be encountered in attempting to confer with God in matters of practical details, for although Moses and other ancient prophets claim to have spoken with God, nowadays such claims would be met with a good deal of scepticism and derision. And even Moses never saw God face to face, as the Bible plainly tells us—he was only allowed to have a peep at God’s back! (“I will take mine hand away [said the Lord Jehovah to Moses], and thou shalt see my back parts, but my face shall not be seen.”—Exodus XXXIII, 23.) Thus, as Lincoln observed, while “there is no contending against the will of God . . . still there is some difficulty in ascertaining and applying it to particular cases.” And so God’s vicars on earth must necessarily speak for God—even for “God in Government”—and these vicars must, of course, consult God, ascertain his will, and apply it or convey it to the governed.

And who are God’s vicars? They are the popes, priests, and all their kind, and what *they* declare is God’s will is, *ipso facto*, the will of God! Which is to say that democratic government, amended as proposed by Messrs. Roosevelt & Co., would become a government of and by the priesthood, and (if they are lucky) for the ruled,

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dumb multitude. Fantastic—an absurd notion? Not at all. This seeming *reductio ad absurdum* is in fact theocracy. It flourished unconditionally among the ancient Hebrews up to the time they took unto themselves kings. Thereafter it was a theocracy tempered by divine kingship. It prevailed in ancient Rome, and for centuries it was exercised by the Roman Catholic Church, again tempered and modified by the monarchy and feudal class privileges generally. It had a belated efflorescence in Calvinism at Geneva, and emerged in modified form in Puritan England; in Scandinavia it had a brief renaissance; from Old England it became transplanted to New England, and the theocracy of New England remains to this day one of the most complete, and at the same time one of the most horrible, examples of theocracy. Given the right setting, and a dull, uninstructed, complacent and compliant working class, it may even now be successfully reintroduced. Certainly, the advocates of theocracy (of course, they have nice euphemisms for the more brazen term “theocracy”) are sparing no effort to establish the theocratic state. Gradually they are advancing toward their goal with no serious obstructions encountered thus far. To paraphrase Thomas Jefferson, those who favor theocracy are “working like gravity by night and by day, gaining a little today and a little tomorrow, and advancing their noiseless step, like a thief, over the field of society and its institutions, until Freedom and democratic government shall have been lost, and power of government is consolidated into a Twentieth Century College of the Priesthood, with a Pontifex Maximus as the supreme arbiter and ruler.”

CHAPTER FOUR.

Theocracy Defined.

“The investigation of terms,” said Epictetus, “is the beginning of education.” Let us, then, investigate the term “Theocracy.” The Standard Dictionary defines it as “a form of government in which God is recognized as the supreme civil ruler of the state, and his laws are taken as the statute-book of the kingdom.” William Warburton, famous eighteenth century theologian, in his work *The Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated, Etc.*, wrote:

“Thus, the Almighty becoming their king, *in as real a sense as he was their God*, the republic of the Israelites was properly a Theocracy.”

George Park Fisher, nineteenth century American churchman, wrote in his book, *Beginnings of Christianity*:

“The Kingdom of God existed at the outset in a national form, in the form of a theocratic state.”

The *Encyclopedia Britannica* defines Theocracy as follows:

“The rule of God, from *deos*, god, and *kratos*, to rule, a term applied to a form of government or to a state ruled by such a form of government in which God or the divine power is looked to *as the source* of all civil power, and the divine commandments regarded as the laws of the community. The typical example of such a state is that of the Jews till the establishment of the kingship under Saul.”

These should suffice. We now have a fairly clear picture of what is understood by theocracy. Likewise we know now what they mean who insist that God must be put in government, that we must have a “Christian Democracy,” and that this is a “Christian Civilization.” Compare the phrase in the Britannica definition: “God or the divine power is looked to as the source of all civil power,” with President Roosevelt’s phrase, “. . . religion . . . is the source of . . . democracy. . . .” Unless Mr. Roosevelt was speaking loosely (which the important occasion would seem to preclude), or unless he was merely paying “a conventional tribute to religion” (which Mr. Lippmann vigorously, and rightly we believe, denies), can there be any doubt that the President had in mind a theocratic state when he spoke as he did?

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Considering his definite language, his measured words, and the trend of the times, not to mention the fact of a world in chaos and threatened with complete anarchy from which there can be but two forms of escape, Socialism (the Industrial Union Government) or a “benevolent” Industrial Feudalism—considering all this, we cannot doubt the real and sinister meaning of the Presidential pronouncement.

As we have seen, theocracy naturally, *rationaly*, resolves itself into priest rule. In our modern consolidated and increasingly homogeneous society, this in turn translates itself into rule by the most powerful, most perfectly and universally organized church body. At present, at least, this means the Roman Catholic Hierarchy, or the Papacy, for short. This conclusion is no product of a fevered mind, or of hysteria, nor is it the conclusion of a ranting anti-Catholic crusader. It is a conclusion inescapable from the present premises. But of this more later. Theocracy has undoubtedly performed a needed function in undeveloped societies, or during unsettled and anarchic periods in history. And it cannot be denied that it has even served as seed carrier, of progress. That it has been a heavy and a bloody price for mankind to pay is also true. Whether the service rendered fully justified the heavy and cruel cost is a question that cannot be considered here. We are here primarily concerned with the true nature of theocracy, and its possible application to the development of society in the future—in all probability the near future. And the true nature of theocracy can be best ascertained from a study of its operation in the past, and the evil fruits it bore, even though it may also have carried some seeds of progress. The verdict of enlightened mankind, however, with respect to theocracy or priestly governmental rule has been aptly summed up by Daniel Defoe in his well known lines:

“And of all plagues with which mankind are curst, Ecclesiastic tyranny’s the worst.”

And the echo reverberates through the corridors of time: “The worst!”

CHAPTER FIVE.

Jewish Theocracy.

In this brief sketch neither time nor space permits of an exhaustive treatment of the subject of theocracy around which so vast a body of literature has grown. Among the earliest manifestations of theocracy, however, we note particularly the ancient Jewish theocracy, which has also served as the inspiration for every succeeding theocracy in history. The record of that theocracy may be found largely in the Old Testament. Here we have presented an almost perfect example of that form of absolute rule. To the modern rational mind it seems incredible that for so many centuries a whole people would permit itself to be priest-ridden to such a degree. If we are to believe the Bible account (as at any rate all faithful Christians and Jews do), it was a rule unsurpassed in cruelty, superstition, priestly deceit and trickery. The “supreme ruler” (Jehovah) faithfully reflects the ruling theocrats, the high priests and priesthood generally. Undoubtedly the tribes of ancient Israel were wild and unruly barbarians; undoubtedly they had to be ruled with an iron rod. And the god of such a primitive and savage people necessarily was a cruel and savage god. Most of us are familiar with the slaughter of innocents perpetrated by the bloody and vindictive Jehovah—that is to say, by the Jewish theocracy. Among the numerous accounts of such bloody slaughters of innocents the siege of Jericho is perhaps best remembered, since the fall of Jericho’s walls has become illustrative of the collapse of all fortified towns through the ages. We are told that they (the conquering “children of Israel” under Joshua’s leadership) “utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword.” (Joshua VI, 21.) As complete a slaughter as ever was, one calculated to make our modern Hitlers turn green with envy! Out of all the inhabitants of Jericho only a common prostitute and her family (and friends gathered in her house) were spared! And that was because she (the harlot Rahab) had played the part of “Fifth Columnist” to Joshua’s spies that were sneaked into Jericho! And good care was taken to secure the precious metals of Jericho, and to see to it that they were turned over to the conquering Jehovah—that is, to his agents, of course, the priesthood! As the story goes:

“And they [Joshua and his fellow marauders] burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein; *only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of*

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brass and of iron, they put into the treasure house of the Lord.”! (Joshua VI, 24.)

As reported in the Old Testament, the ancient Jewish theocratic state was formed after Moses had had repeated conferences with Jehovah, from whom the former received the basic laws and commandments graven on tablets, and although even Moses was not permitted to view the face of Jehovah, he apparently managed to secure a pretty good idea of how he looked, which, oddly enough, turned out to be the way human beings looked. At any rate, here was a body of law, a set of commandments, codes of morals and ethics, etc., etc., directly formulated by God for the use of his chosen children—surely awesome enough to insure their constant and universal observance. Alas! Man proved, unwittingly perhaps, but rather conclusively, that in crises or moments of excitement and ecstasy, or when on pillage and murder bent, God’s personally framed laws, and indeed God himself, became what they really were, the creations of man himself—God, fashioned in man’s image; the laws, etc., the products of man’s genius or fancy! For, as Moses scoldingly told them: “Thou art a stiff-necked people.”! (Deuteronomy IX, 6.)

Nevertheless, this theocracy flourished, and somehow (despite all the misery and sufferings of the masses) managed to leave an indelible impress upon the history of our civilization. And, as we have seen, this theocracy persisted until the Jews decided that their priesthood wasn’t doing so well for them, and began to grumble and clamor for kings saying:

“Nay, but we will have a king over us; That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.” (I Samuel, VIII, 19–20.)

And so, like it or not, Jehovah—that is to say, Jehovah’s executive officers—had to share the power with kings who, of course, had to be anointed of the Lord, so that the kingship might stick! And thus theocracy became modified by the divine rule of kings—the rule of king-priest or priest-king. Sometimes more of one or less of the other. As Buckle said of a not greatly dissimilar situation ages later: “In every nation in Europe the power of the clergy at an early period bore an inverse ratio to the power of the sovereign.” (Buckle: *Miscellaneous Works*, I.) Or, to paraphrase the irreverent language of Samuel Butler (*Hudibras*, Butler), the Jewish autocracy presented itself as—

“Cleric before and Lay behind;

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A lawful linsey-woolsey brother,
Half of one order, half another!"

*

Sir James Frazer, in his fascinating study of magic and primitive religion, *The Golden Bough*, observes:

"The union of a royal title with priestly duties was common in ancient Italy and Greece. At Rome and in other cities of Latium there was a priest called the Sacrificial King or King of the Sacred Rites, and his wife bore the title of Queen of the Sacred Rites. . . . At Rome the tradition was that the Sacrificial King had been appointed after the abolition of the monarchy in order to offer the sacrifices which before had been offered by the kings. A similar view as to the origin of the priestly kings appears to have prevailed in Greece. . . . This combination of priestly function with royal authority is familiar to every one. Asia Minor, for example, was the seat of various great religious capitals peopled by thousands of sacred slaves, and ruled by pontiffs who wielded at once temporal and spiritual authority, like the popes of medieval Rome. Such priest-ridden cities were Zela and Pessinus. Teutonic kings, again, in the old heathen days seem to have stood in the position, and to have exercised the powers, of high priests. The Emperors of China offered public sacrifices the details of which were regulated by the ritual books. The King of Madagascar was high priest of the realm. . . . And the dim light of tradition reveals a similar union of temporal and spiritual power, of royal and priestly duties, in the kings of that delightful region of Central America whose ancient capital, now buried under the rank growth of the tropical forest, is marked by the stately and mysterious ruins of Palenque.

"When we have said that the ancient kings were commonly priests also, we are far from having exhausted the religious aspect of their office. In those days the divinity that hedges a king was no empty form of speech, but the expression of a sober belief. Kings were revered, in many cases not merely as priests, that is, as intercessors between man and God, but as themselves Gods, able to bestow upon the subjects and worshippers those blessings which are commonly supposed to be beyond the reach of mortals, and are sought, if at all, only by prayer and sacrifice offered to superhuman and invisible beings." Etc.

CHAPTER SIX.

Ancient Theocracies.

However, the Jewish theocracy at last came to grief. The growth of the Roman Empire eventually brought that about, though, of course, the fall of the one, and the rise of the other, resulted from the action and interplay of economic forces before which even Jehovah, in all his almighty power, withered!

Although, as we have seen, ancient Greece and Rome were afflicted with a ruling priesthood, and the train of evils which goes with it, the idea of democratic rule (despite slavery and other qualifying factors) had progressed too far for the successful maintenance of a typical theocratic rule. Yet, the minds of even the most enlightened of men were ruled to a large extent by supernatural fears and superstitions (freely traded on by the priesthood), and men were frequently put to death for provoking the wrath of the deity, or for failing to manifest the proper respect for the gods. Socrates was accused of such disrespect. In his own words, it was charged “That Socrates is a doer of evil, and corrupter of the youth, *and he does not believe in the gods of the State, and has other new divinities of his own. . . .*” Socrates denied the charge, denied also that he was “an atheist simply, and a teacher of atheism.” And yet, even the wise Socrates was ruled by such superstitions as believing in and permitting himself to be governed, for instance, by the verdicts of the Oracle of Delphi!

Aristotle, in his *Politics*, describes the function and the character of the priests, and their official place in the society of Athens, as he visualized it:

“Of the classes enumerated there remain only the priests, and the manner in which their office is to be regulated is obvious[!]. No husbandman or mechanic should be appointed to it; *for the gods should receive honors from the citizens only. . . .* It is befitting that the worship of the gods should be duly performed, and also a rest provided in their service for those who from age have given up active life—to the old men of those two classes [i.e., “warriors and the councillors”] should be assigned the duties of the priesthood.”

In Rome similarly the priesthood attained high rank and exclusive privileges, exercising a strong influence and wielding great powers. With the genius of the Romans for organization, it is natural that functions of priestcraft should have been highly organized. According to Theodor Mommsen, in his *History of Rome*,

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theoretically “those who had business with a god, resorted to the god, and not to the priest.” But, adds Mommsen, “it was no easy matter withal to hold converse with a god [!]. The god had his own way of speaking, which was intelligible only to one who was acquainted with it. He who did rightly understand it knew not only how to ascertain, but also how to manage, the will of the god, *and even in case of need to overreach or to constrain him!*” And so a special class of “professors,” skilled in the arts of managing and reproofing gods, was organized in special “colleges” which, Mommsen observes, “have been often, but erroneously, confounded with the priesthoods.” The function of the priesthoods was that of conducting the worship before a specific divinity, whereas the colleges “were charged with the preservation of traditional rules regarding those more general religious observances, the proper fulfilment of which implied a certain amount of information, *and rendered it necessary for the state in its own interest to provide for the faithful transmission of that information.*”

In the course of time this college of *pontifices*, exercising supreme authority in religious matters, became extremely powerful. Its head, the *Pontifex Maximus*, was as powerful in his exercise of religious authority as is the Pope in the Catholic Church to this day. But, obedient to its law of being, the college and its head (aside from the priesthood generally) encroached more and more upon the secular power until, finally, on one religious pretext or other, acts of the State were overruled or ignored. “Taking no thought as to the consequences,” says Mommsen,³ “and unmindful of the wise example of their ancestors, it was allowed to become an established rule, that the skilled colleges of priests were entitled to cancel any act of state, whether law or election, on the pretext of religious informality.”

With so much power, and after the fashion of the priesthood of all times and climes, the business of public worship became a veritable racket. Mommsen tells us that the tremendous increase in the tax levied to defray the cost of public worship was a necessary result of the increase in the number of its gods and its temples, which in turn led, says Mommsen, to the priests’ being “permitted to exercise a very injurious influence on public affairs.” And Mommsen’s shrewd observation: “The Roman world of gods, as we have already indicated, *was a higher counterpart, an ideal reflection, of the earthly Rome, in which the little and the great were alike reproduced with painstaking exactness,*” reminds us of Marx’s pithy comment: “The religious world is but the reflex of the real world. . . . The religious reflex of the real

³ *History of Rome*, I.

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world can . . . only then finally vanish, when the practical relations of everyday life offer to man none but perfectly intelligible and reasonable relations with regard to his fellow men and to nature.”⁴

Basic to all the ancient theocracies, or systems of priestly rule, is the fear entertained by the votaries of material damage being done to him by his gods—to his crops, his property, or to his personal physical safety generally, or that of his household. Hence the constant need of propitiating his deity—that is to say, the priests supposedly representing the deity. Hence, further, the never-ending material offerings to the priesthood or the church, a practice which in later times led to the impositions of tithes and in civilized countries to this day in the levying on citizens—believers or not—of church taxes. As a matter of personal experience, it was the occasion for the present writer registering a violent objection when, years ago in Denmark, on a tax bill handed him he discovered that a fraction of the tax demanded was set aside for the support of the Lutheran state church! Protests, however, were in vain—though in one’s youthful ardor the church was condemned and contemned and considered a great menace to progress, the young rebel still had to pay for its upkeep! As an example of primitive levy of tax on votaries for the benefit of the deity (or, to be realistic, for the benefit of his fat-bellied priesthood), Frazer records the following:

“In the West African kingdom of Congo there was a supreme pontiff called Chitome or Chitombe, whom the Negroes regarded as a god on earth and all powerful in heaven. Hence before they would taste the new crops they offered him the first-fruits, fearing that manifold misfortune would befall them if they broke this rule. . . . And if he [Chitome] were to die a natural death, they thought that the world would perish, and the earth, which he alone sustained by his power and merit, would immediately be annihilated.”!

Sir James does *not* record that Chitome was in any way related to the amazing “Father Divine,” though one wonders! Certainly both have had the identical idea, and seemingly with material results equally pleasant and personally beneficial!

⁴ *Capital*, Chapter I.

CHAPTER SEVEN.

Roman Catholic Theocracy.

The outstanding example of a ruthless, though invariably tempered or contested, theocracy is that of the Roman Catholic Church. The vastness of the subject, its many ramifications, permits of scarcely more than passing notice. Moreover, its history is generally known, though its grasping for secular power, and its actual exercise thereof, is either disputed by its upholders, or the facts concerning same have been, and are being, so befogged through casuistry and perversions of the truth that one lifetime would seem too short to clear away the fog and place the facts clearly before us! Yet it is incontestable that during hundreds of years a fierce struggle was waged between the so-called spiritual and temporal powers, and always over questions that were anything but spiritual. The cruelty of those charged with suppressing the slightest sign of heresy or defiance of the papacy, defies description—and the reason for suppression of heresy was, again, the purely material. An institution claiming direct relation with God, whose supreme head is considered the personal representative of God, and who is supposed to be infallible—who, in fact, claims infallibility in all matters of religious dogma, and *in effect* claims it in all other matters affecting its power and material welfare, this institution cannot tolerate dissent or difference of opinion. Blind obedience, in however crafty and circumambient manner exacted, is essential to the continued existence and prosperity of the institution. And the papacy is as fabulously wealthy as it is incredibly powerful, despite reverses during the centuries it has maintained itself, though relatively its power and influence bear no comparison to its power and influence during the thousand years when virtually it held supreme sway.

The arrogance, the insolence, and the corruption of the Catholic Church throughout the ages are understandable. Through a set of historical circumstances which rendered just such an institution indispensable to the ruling classes, the church established itself as the supreme arbiter between man and his deity. Given the prevailing superstition, and once securely ensconced behind a wall of mysticism, ignorance, tradition and precedent, and resting firmly on substantial material possessions, it is natural that those entrusted with its management should have placed, and continue to place, the church above every other human institution and every other earthly consideration. Once accept the pretensions of the church, the

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pretensions of its supreme bishop as being God's vicar on earth, there is no escaping the logic of the situation. Those in charge of the church being human, they are naturally subject to the identical weaknesses and vices besetting all humankind. Power corrupts those wielding it, especially when power is unchecked. Extreme wealth in a class society is corrupting as is idleness even when disguised as the "idleness" of performing useless or foolish tasks. Mummery begets greater mummery until it logically becomes hypocrisy. There is no body of men, however good, no institution, however altruistically founded originally, that in a class society can withstand the corrupting and demoralizing influences of unlimited power, immense wealth, and idleness or obviously useless or foolish labor.

Countless examples of such corruption can be cited, or examples of the bloody cruelty which results from a vested interest being attacked, or placed in danger of attack. The Crusades constitute an example of the inhuman cruelty, the terrible fanaticism and the ruthless slaughter, which may result from the fact of such an institution's existence as the Catholic Church. It would be begging the question to argue that any other body similarly constituted would have acted similarly. Nor will it do to claim extenuating circumstances, since an institution claiming divine origin and universality, which insists that it is unchangeably the same, now as in the past, may not also at the same time invoke the allowances made in the case of human institutions less pretentious. Those who accept the church for what it is, that is, a human agency which, it may be granted, has served the cause of civilization in some respects, but which in most respects has served reaction and promoted the tendencies that make for the stultification of the human intellect, and the degradation of the human spirit—those who so view the church are, of course, less concerned with condemning it for cruelties and errors committed after the manner and in the spirit of the dark centuries which witnessed these, than they are concerned with exposing its reactionary character and influence *now*, at a time when the fate of modern civilization hangs in the balance, and when the power of the church for evil, as a tool of the darkest reaction, needs to be emphasized as never before.

If, therefore, we point to its cruel past, and its essential identity with other similar agencies of a class rule society (capitalism) otherwise condemned before the bar of history, and by the enlightened judgment of civilized man, it is, of course, because such questions concern politics and economics, because they are questions dealing with the realizable happy future of man, and with considerations which

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generally have nothing to do with religion or theological dogmas as such. But, as Daniel De Leon pointed out, the moment a religion becomes organized as a creed, it thereby inescapably becomes a political force, and a political force is simply the reflex of economic power, to be dealt with as the strictly secular matters they are.

The second outstanding Crusade waged by the church, and to be noted here as a sample of the church's true character, was the slaughter perpetrated on the "heretical" sect known as the Albigenses during the 12th and 13th centuries. To a modern mind it seems incredible (or perhaps one should say that it seemed incredible up to the time the Nazi and Fascist bandits began their slaughter of the civilian populations of great European cities)—it seems incredible that any power, any organization, and especially a body claiming to be religious, could have been guilty of such savage cruelties, such nameless atrocities, such insane fury. And yet, the Albigenses (or the Catharist sects) had been guilty merely of differing from the doctrines of the church, and of questioning the authority of the Pope. Being peace-loving, simple people, living in the beautiful Provencal valley of Southeastern France, their only wish was to be left alone. In retaliation for the death of one of the Pope's emissaries who had used the then dreaded and paralyzing power of excommunication to render submissive the "heretics," and to coerce the secular power which in the main supported the heretical Albigenses, Pope Innocent III ordered the preaching of the Crusade against them. Countless thousands were massacred, the brilliant civilization of the province of Provence was destroyed, and those who escaped massacre during the Pope's "holy" crusade were finished off subsequently by the implacable and thorough inquisition. It is said that in one day 200 Catharist heretics were burned by order of the church. The savage fury of the papacy knew no bounds.

The suffering and martyrdom of the Albigenses, on the one hand, and the infamy of the church in this crusade, on the other hand, have been vividly and movingly told by Eugene Sue in his masterpiece *The Iron Pincers, A Tale of the Albigensian Crusades*, beautifully translated by Daniel De Leon. The chief instrument of the Pope, his military arm, was one Simon of Montfort, who in every respect measured up to papal requirements—fanatical believer, extraordinarily able, and incredibly cruel. Of him a song in Sue's story, "Song on the Butchery of Beziers," said (in De Leon's translation):

"Fall to, Montfort! On the march!
His Holiness has issued the order.

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To Carcassonne!
Kill, pillage, burn the heretics, as we have done
At Chasseneuil and Beziers!
To Carcassonne!”

The Crusade against the Albigenses is but one page in the many bloody chapters of the church, a crusade which, as stated, had for its sole avowed purpose suppression of a dissent from the church’s dogma. The papacy, trembling at the thought of losing its secular power and material wealth, did not hesitate to drown in a sea of blood this relatively insignificant defiance of the Pope’s authority.

The interdict and the ban of excommunication were the means and dreaded powers by which the papacy secured submission to its decrees. The instances were countless of the wielding of this terrible power—terrible, that is, in view of the prevailing superstition, and the general dependence upon the church—culturally, spiritually and in all matters relating to such basic factors as marriage, birth and death, etc.

As we have seen, it was wielded with terrible effect by Pope Innocent III in the case of the Albigenses, and the same Pope applied it in England in 1208 during the reign of King John with whom he had quarreled, the Pope having gone so far as to set aside the rights and prerogatives of the king in the matter of appointing the Primate of the Church in England. Disregarding the king’s *legal* act of appointing as Primate one John de Grey, Bishop of Norwich, Pope Innocent III *illegally* appointed one Stephen Langton instead. The king defied the Pope, who retaliated by laying upon England the dreaded interdict. “All worship save that of a few privileged orders, all administration of the Sacraments save that of private baptism, ceased over the length and breadth of the country: the church-bells were silent, the dead lay unburied on the ground.”⁵ Subsequently the ban was extended to include excommunication of the king, who “was now formally cut off from the pale of the church.” A king excommunicated could no longer command obedience from his Christian subjects. Here we have an outstanding example of the exercise of theocratic powers by the papacy, a power exercised again and again. Eventually the Pope prevailed and historian Green records the king’s surrender as follows: “On the 15th of May he [King John] knelt before the legate Pandulf, surrendered his kingdom to the Roman See, took it back again as a tributary vassal, swore fealty and did liege homage to the Pope.” Shakespeare describes the hocus-pocus of King

⁵ *History of the English People*, by J.R. Green.

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John surrendering his kingdom and receiving it back in these words:

King John:

Thus have I yielded up into your hand
The circle of my glory.

Pandulf:

Take again (Giving King John the crown)
From this my hand, as holding of the Pope,
Your sovereign greatness and authority.⁶

Later the struggle was renewed, but then it was between the barons (who meanwhile had wrung “the great charter” from the king) on the one side, and the allies, the Pope and the king, on the other. The Pope hurled his excommunications at the barons and at the London burghers, who defied the ecclesiastic thunder as much as they contested the king’s rule. “The ordering of secular matters appertaineth not to the Pope,” they said. But they reckoned without priestcraft and the casuistry which never fail to find that secular matters become matters of religious concern whenever it suits the purpose of the church.

It is not a question here of whether the king was good or bad, or whether the Pope was bad or good. We know the king was a bad egg, a murderous scoundrel ripe for hanging. We know that Innocent III was an able, though ruthless, prelate who (as we saw in the Albigensian “crusade”) extended no more mercy to his enemies than did King John to his. The point to note is that the Pope exercised temporal, i.e., theocratic, power, using the so-called spiritual power of the church to make the temporal power effective, regardless of the cost in blood and human suffering. And once again theocracy triumphed.

In the year 1266 Pope Clement IV laid the interdict on Denmark because the king had refused to yield to the Danish Primate in matters purely secular. Here, as before and since, we observe the same pattern: An unscrupulous and ruthless papacy plunging a whole people into suffering and misery, many being killed in the contest, because the Pope’s supremacy over the secular power was refused recognition by the king and the ruling class generally, outside the ecclesiastic body. The pretensions of the church were expressed in these words by the Danish Primate, the archbishop Jakob Erlandson:

⁶ *King John*, Act V (1).

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“Just as the spiritual takes precedence over the secular, so the law of the church stands above the secular law, and if disputes arise between the two the lesser must yield to the greater, the secular must yield to the spiritual.”

This constitutes a classic expression of the pretensions of theocracy of all times, and wherever it has reared its head. In the cases cited, we have concrete examples of what “God in Government” really means in practice; we have clear demonstrations of the practical working out of the Rooseveltian dictum that the source of “democratic government” (any government) is to be found in religion.

The pretensions of the papacy have not lessened. Read carefully the words of the 13th Century Danish archbishop and compare them with the current pronouncements of the Pope and all the lesser churchmen, and we shall find that they differ very little in language, and not at all in the authoritarian claims put forth by the church today—put forth, sometimes cautiously and indirectly, sometimes boldly and unreservedly, depending on occasion and circumstance. Of these claims we shall note more later.⁷

⁷ Where the Roman Catholic theocratic machine does not directly control the powers of State, satisfactory results are usually achieved through threats and intimidation of “the flock,” and of the press and politicians. In Massachusetts the hierarchy carried on an utterly unscrupulous campaign against the birth-control measure submitted to the electorate in the November election of 1942. The *Boston Sunday Advertiser* of October 11 reported the following:

“Jesuit priests have been especially insistent that the women of their congregations register. They have told their women parishioners that it is a moral duty for them to go to the polls and cast their votes against the birth-control amendment. Some have gone so far as to tell the women that it will be a mortal sin not to vote against the amendment.”

But the church is *not* in politics!

CHAPTER EIGHT.

Calvinist Theocracy.

The next great theocracy to be reviewed here briefly is that which is, or was, based on the Calvinistic doctrine. Though one of the most ruthless examples of theocratic rule, it was nevertheless the one which more than any other single intellectual factor aided in promoting the democratic spirit. However paradoxical this may sound, it is easy enough to understand. Calvinism, in its essence austere and individualistic, more than any other religious movement reflected the interests of the rising bourgeoisie, and the unfolding tendencies of the developing capitalism. Spiritually, Calvinism was as effective as Lutheranism in its challenge and denunciation of the corruption, pomp and sensuousness of the Catholic Church especially as the latter presented itself at the time of the renaissance, when it sank to the lowest level in its long history. The Catholic Church physically or structurally reflected feudalism—the Pope corresponded to the emperor, the Cardinals to the kings and dukes, the Bishops to the barons and the lower feudal nobility, and so forth. With the decline and collapse of feudalism, the church structure, and all the traditions and practices adhering to it, more and more appeared as the reverse of von Chamisso's hero⁸—the latter found himself a substance without a shadow, whereas the church found itself a shadow without substance. The globe-encircling enterprises of the rising class in society conflicted with the spirit and conceptions of the church. The scientific discoveries stimulated by the opening up of the rest of the world played havoc with the naive church conceptions of the universe; the indolent life led by the clergy and the higher nobility interfered with commerce and manufacture—they were regarded as wasteful and parasitical by the bourgeoisie; the multitudinous holidays of the church during the feudal era were incompatible with the hustle and bustle of the growing commercial and manufacturing interests. The wage slaves had to work hard and continuously, or competition would undo the master who felt he had to observe the ancient customs. Under sheer economic pressure most of these holidays were discarded, although those remaining were observed as rigidly as any of the old ones.

Into this new scheme of things Protestantism generally, but Calvinism particularly, fitted as perfectly as Catholicism formerly had fitted into feudalism.

⁸ *Peter Schlemihl wunderbare Geschichte*, by Adelbert von Chamisso.

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That the Catholic Church resisted and fought these tendencies we know. It was a long time before the church as a body reconciled itself to capitalism—indeed, it can be said that it never really did so fully, though in practice, at least, it necessarily fell in line. Just as the structure of the Catholic Church remained essentially feudalistic, so its spirit has remained essentially medieval. It has always remained anti-capitalist except in so far as its immediate or prevailing property interests dictated a policy of conformity and acquiescence. It is no accident that today, and in increasing measure, the Catholic Church outspokenly condemns capitalism—not class rule, nor the subjection of the wage slaves to exploitation, but capitalism as it has prevailed until comparatively recent times. Nor is it an accident that the church naturally gravitates toward totalitarianism—industrial feudalism—and the economic serfdom which will be the lot of the workers under fascism, or feudo-industrialism, if—the gods forbend!—it wins out in the final contest. For it will readily be able to fit itself into the social structure of that industrial feudal regime so rapidly unfolding before our eyes.

Calvinism, then, was the spiritual translation of the creed of rising capitalism. And to the extent that the so-called religious wars involved contests between Catholicism and Protestantism, to that extent did they simply constitute struggles between feudalism and capitalism with, as we know, the latter eventually triumphant. It was, therefore, as pointed out, natural that Calvinism should have served as promoter of democracy—bourgeois democracy, to be sure. Calvin himself was a ruthless, strong-willed personality. Considering the age in which he lived, and the spirit of the times, he was probably no worse than the majority of his kind, but to us today he appears as utterly brutal and unfeeling, as murderous toward his victims as any of the Catholic theocrats who had preceded him. Though started as a rebellion against a corrupt body (the papacy) with theocratic pretensions (and theocratic rule where circumstances favored it), and although it expressly disavowed theocracy, Calvinism rapidly developed into one of the most cruel and relentless sects with theocratic aspirations. Professor Douglas Nobbs, in an interesting study of Calvinism, discusses at great length this fact so illustrative of De Leon's dictum that a religion becomes a political force when it organizes into a specific creed. "The Calvinists," says Professor Nobbs, "hated the consequences of and not the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* [each man's land is his religion]; for they did believe that the subjects were to accept {the} religion of their ruler, *provided that he was a member of the true church* [i.e., a Calvinist]!" (Italics mine.)

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Again: “Loyalty to the ruler, was loyalty to God so long as the sovereign power followed the divine will.” And who was to determine what was the divine will? Why, the Calvinist ministers! Professor Nobbs quotes a 17th Century Calvinist commentator, Antonius Walaeus, as denying “that there was any appeal from an ecclesiastical sentence to the ruler. . . .” And finally the following characteristic theocratic equivocation:

“Even collegialism . . . taught in effect that the church was free of the ruler but the Christian ruler was bound to serve the church. It set aside political interference as a tyranny but demanded political aid to render its own tyranny more effective.”⁹

⁹ *Theocracy and Toleration*, by Douglas Nobbs (Lecturer in Political Science in the University of Edinburgh, etc.)

CHAPTER NINE.

Calvinist Theocracy in Operation.

John Calvin (who was born in Picardy, France, in 1509, and who died in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1564) established his theocratic institution in Geneva where he lived practically his entire adult life. One commentator writes of his difficulties with the opposition which had arisen against his authority, saying that “he was for many years greatly disquieted, and sometimes even endangered, by the opposition offered by the libertine party in Geneva to the ecclesiastical discipline which he had established there. *His system of church polity was essentially theocratic . . .*” It is said that the city of Geneva profited greatly by his activities, commercially and in civil matters. He founded the university in Geneva which (adds the aforementioned commentator) “added the religious education to the evangelical preaching and the thorough discipline already established, *and so completed the reformer’s ideal of a Christian Commonwealth.*”

“Christian Commonwealth,” indeed! Here we have it, then: An intolerant, overriding theocracy; religious instruction (Calvinist, of course) as part of the curriculum! The very ideal of the Ultramontane Catholic Church, and of those who, wittingly or unwittingly, support the stealthy encroachments of that political body (masked in religious garb) upon secular authority, and, in this country, upon the hitherto strictly secularized field of education.

The cruelty, the relentless, cold fury of Calvin practised against dissenters became epitomized in the treatment accorded Michael Servetus, who was born in Spain, probably in the year 1511. His was a superior intellect, an intellect which refused to recognize the validity of authoritarianism in matters of spirit and conscience. He became acquainted with Calvin with whom he corresponded frequently, taking issue with him after the fashion of the age, disputing and contending at great length. As a reply to Calvin’s *Institutio Christiana* he wrote *Restitutio Christianismi*, a fact which caused Calvin to develop a deadly hatred for Servetus, all the more, perhaps, because he undoubtedly recognized the latter’s intellectual superiority. Being unable to answer Servetus on the grounds of reason and logic, he set about to destroy him physically, in keeping with the practice of secular and theocratic despots of all ages and of all lands. Georg Brandes, in his

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brilliant little monograph on Servetus¹⁰ gives the following vivid description of Calvin, now on heresy-hunting bent:

“The inflexible harshness and rigidity in Calvin’s character made him a man of action. That was his greatness. His cause was in his own eyes the cause of God. He never doubted for a moment. His conscience was good, he cared for neither riches, luxuries nor decorations. But he tolerated no one who was at least his equal and no opinion except his own. Pride, egotism and lust of power possessed and dominated him completely.”

Eventually he caused Servetus to be condemned as a heretic. He was sentenced to be taken to a public place there to be burned, together with his books, *a petit feu*, that is, by a slow-burning fire. The utter devilry, the fiendish wickedness of such a sentence upon any human being—any living creature, indeed—and particularly in the case of a great and noble spirit such as Servetus causes in one a flaming indignation, it outrages one’s humanity, and powerfully nurtures one’s hatred of theocracy, of ecclesiastic tyranny, causing one to exclaim much as Lincoln is said to have exclaimed in burning hatred of slavery when he witnessed a slave auction in New Orleans: “If ever I get a chance to hit that thing, I’ll hit it hard!”

However, Servetus escaped, but after four months he injudiciously returned to Geneva. Under laws and rules promulgated by Calvin, and enforced by methods now made familiar through the Nazi system of registration, espionage and denunciation to authorities, Servetus found himself compelled to attend church services. He did so, was recognized and thereupon immediately arrested. Brandes records the horrible details of the examination, the trial and final execution of Servetus. One’s blood at times runs cold in rereading (400 years after Servetus’s martyrdom) these details. As Brandes tersely observes (in his untranslated monograph on Michael Servetus):

“Renan¹¹ has justly maintained, again and again, that of all governmental forms in the world, theocracy is the worst. Rule of God is priestly rule.”

Here is Brandes’s description of the nature of the treatment accorded Servetus in jail, under instructions issued by his theocratic chief jailer, Calvin:

¹⁰ Georg Brandes: *Michel Servet*. (Copenhagen, 1911.)

¹¹ Ernest Renan, French rationalist writer, celebrated author of *The Life of Jesus*.

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“The [Geneva] prison was worse than the Catholic jail in Vienne [France]. One rotted in the dampness; there was no escape. There was no air; the windows had been nailed fast so that the prisoner might not establish contact with the outer world. Vermin plagued him day and night. He had only one suit of clothes, which was torn and ragged, and again and again he complained: ‘The vermin is eating me up!’”

The various counts in the charges against Michael Servetus were summed up in these accusations:

“He ridicules God and his word. He insults the Christian Church and the great Emperor Constantin [dead these twelve hundred years!]. He does so by arguing that heretics ought not to be killed. He wants to overthrow the order of justice and rob the constituted authority of the sword given it by God.” Etc.

Calvin visited Servetus in prison, in the hope of securing an acknowledgment of error from him. He plagued him with stupid, senseless questions, and even the day before the execution was to take place, Calvin came to argue dogmas with him. But it was in vain. Servetus would rather die than to abjure his faith—rather die than to degrade his manhood.

At last the end. Brandes describes it:

“Servetus was tied to the stake with an iron chain; a heavy rope was wound around his neck several times; his ‘heretical’ writings were fastened to his side, and around his head were placed green leaves dipped in sulphur. He begged the executioner not to let him suffer too long. But it had rained during the morning and the fire-wood was wet. The executioner set fire to his face, and elsewhere on his body. He uttered a scream so terrible that the mob witnessing the execution was terrified.”

Death came slowly, in keeping with the terms of the original sentence—burning *a petit feu*—; slowly burning to death for a full half hour. We listen to Brandes:

“He cried anew: ‘Jesus, son of the eternal God, bestow mercy upon me!’ But Jesus was as hard of hearing as his own father had been when he cried to him from the cross!”

Thus, once again, we witness the spirit and exemplification of theocracy in the suffering and death of one of its noblest victims.

CHAPTER TEN.

Calvinism in Denmark, England and New England.

Calvinism, the creed of the rising capitalist class, spread to the northern countries in somewhat modified forms. In Denmark its spirit invaded the official church, manifesting itself in what was called *pietism* which for twenty years weighed like an alp on the intellectual life of the country. It came to England where, according to Buckle, it dominated the Church of England until 1620. Thomas Cartwright, who had absorbed Calvinism during his stay in Geneva, commenced a vigorous propagation of “the faith.” Historian Green remarks that fanatically he advocated “a scheme of ecclesiastical government which placed the state beneath the church. . . . For the church modelled after the fashion of Geneva he claimed an authority which surpassed the wildest dreams of the Vatican.”

The presbyters claimed supreme authority on the well known principles of theocracy. The function of the secular power, says Green, was to carry out the decrees of the presbyters, “to see their decrees executed and to punish the contemners of them.” Green quotes Cartwright as writing about heresy and heretics: “I deny that upon repentance there ought to follow any pardon of death. . . . Heretics ought to be put to death now. If this be bloody and extreme, I am content to be so counted with the Holy Ghost.” Nice, sweet, Christian, indeed! At the behest of James I, the church denounced as a fatal error the theory that power derives from the people. It declared false the claims that “all civil power, jurisdiction and authority were first derived from the people and disordered multitude [vide modern equivalent term “mob rule” by capitalist apologists!], or either is originally still in them, or else is deduced by their consent naturally from them; *and [that it] is not God’s ordinance originally descending from Him and depending upon Him.*”

The history of Calvinistic Puritanism is well known and need not be recounted here. But a few words need to be said about the branch of Puritanism which became established in New England and which, through “trial and error,” eventually gave impetus to the movement which nailed to its masthead the crowning political creed of popular sovereignty based on the principle that all power derives from the people, and that government is, or by right ought to be, instituted with the consent of the governed.

The history of the New England theocracy is a long and bloody one, and we

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shall here deal with only one or two incidents to illustrate further the fact of the oneness of theocracy wherever and whenever it has presented itself. So regularly does this phenomenon recur, so identical in all essential respects does it appear, and so alike are the acts and claims of the respective priesthoods, as to render it reducible to law—the law formulated by De Leon. The New England theocracy follows the traditional patterns. The early settlers of New England were men who had suffered under ecclesiastic tyranny at home. John Fiske, in his *Beginnings of New England*, observes: “The Puritan fight against the [English] hierarchy was a political necessity of the time, something without which no real and thorough reformation could then be effected. In her antipathy to this democratic movement, [Queen] Elizabeth [who stoutly insisted that she was a true Catholic, but who even more vigorously denounced the Pope and all Papists as demons out of hell!] vexed and tormented the Puritans as far as she deemed it prudent, and in the conservative temper of the people she found enough support to prevent their transforming the church as they would have liked to do. Among the Puritans themselves, indeed, there was no definite agreement on this point. Some would have stopped short with Puritanism, while others held that ‘new presbyter was but old priest writ large,’ and so pressed on to Independency.” And so the dissenters arrived in America determined to establish an order which would guarantee them non-interference in respect of *their* concept of religious and spiritual matters. One would think that because of their experience in the old country their first concern would be to insure tolerance and liberalism in religious beliefs and practices. But that conclusion would be quite wrong. “These men,” wrote Wm. Cullen Bryant in his *History of the United States*, “had come into the wilderness to build up a theocracy, and made no pretensions of securing liberty for anybody but themselves.” It was not merely that they resented and had resisted interference from above, i.e., from the English State church, but also that they resented “interference” from below, that is, they resented, and subsequently denounced and ruthlessly attempted to root out, dissensions and deviations from the faith which they felt sure was the only true one! In short, anything which threatened to upset their particular interpretation of “the word of God” was evil and not to be tolerated on any account. They would, in effect, declare: “We grant you full liberty of thought and action, provided you think and act as we do!” A principle which our present plutocratic ruling class has adopted and is practising with respect to the political and civil liberties of those who challenge the present capitalist system.

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It has been said, in defense of the New England Puritans, that they were primarily concerned with their religion—to preserve it pure, and that no worldly sacrifice was too great for them in order to achieve this. However this may be, the fact remains that they became substantial men of property, and developed a keen sense of material values; and they were not always over-scrupulous about the means employed to secure the “despised” materialistic objects! But usually they managed to garb in religion their cravings for pelf and power. In one of our plutocratic journals a regular contributor to that paper quotes a letter, written by the celebrated Cotton Mather, the original of which letter is alleged to be on file at the Friends’ Meeting House at Greenwich, R.I. It reads:

“To Ye Aged and Beloved:

“Mr. John Higgenson:

“There be now at sea a ship called the *Welcome*, which has on board an hundred or more of the heretics and malignants called Quakers with W. Penn, who is the chief scamp, at the head of them.

“The general court has accordingly given secret orders to Master Malachi Huscott of the brig *Propasso*, to waylay the said *Welcome* slyly as near the Cape of Cod as may be, and make captive the said Penn and his ungodly crew, so that the Lord may be glorified, and not mocked on the soil of this new country with the heathen worship of these people.”

BUT—

“Much spoil can be made by selling the whole lot to Barbadoes, where slaves fetch good prices in rum and sugar, and shall not only do the Lord great service by punishing the wicked, but we shall make great good for his ministers and people.

“Master Huscott feels hopeful, and I will set down the news when the ship comes in.

“Yours in ye bowels of Christ,

“Cotton Mather.”

This pious scoundrel, Cotton Mather, who was born at Boston in 1663 (where he died in 1728), was the author of a curious work entitled *The Wonders of the Invisible World*, with the subtitle, *Being An Account of the Tryals of Several Witches Lately Executed in New England*. This cheering tract relates the circumstances attending the manner in which the New England theocrats carried out the Mosaic injunction, “Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.”¹² Announcing his solemn and

¹² Exodus, XXII, 18.

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sacred purpose to be “to countermine the whole PLOT of the Devil, against *New-England*,” to do the which, he said, an author “had need be *fenced with Iron and the Staff of a Spear*,” he reveals his exact knowledge of what his god had required of him:

“Having performed something of what God required, *in laboring* to suit his Words unto his Works, at this Day among us, and therewithal handled a Theme that has been sometimes counted not unworthy the Pen, not even of a King, it will easily be perceived, that some subordinate Ends have been considered in these Endeavors.”

Closing his recitals of the horrible murders of those charged with witchcraft, the pious pyro-maniacal butcher chants:

“But so much of these things; And, now, *Lord, make these Labours of thy servant, Profitable to thy People.*”

The record does not reveal whether Mather made them profitable by exchanging copies of his book for more Barbadoes rum, but the record does reveal that—

“Nineteen Witches have been Executed at *New-England*, one of them was a Minister [!] and two Ministers more are Accus’d. There is a hundred Witches more in Prison, which broke Prison, and about two Hundred more are Accus’d, some Men of great Estates in *Boston*, have been accus’d for *Witchcraft.*”

*

The monstrous and fiendish slaughter of innocent people as “witches” conveys an idea of the superstition and the spirit which possessed the New England theocracy—a superstition and spirit, however, which flow logically, however grotesquely, from the theocratic principle of God or religion in government. Accept the latter, and anything, from witch-burning and the burning of heretics at the stake, to the suppression of all rights and liberties cherished by enlightened men, is bound to follow. The New England theocracy was perhaps as cruel and vindictive as any that ever cursed the fair earth. The power and authority of this theocratic hierarchy radiated from Boston, where, as Bryant said, “there was a sense of a personal Divine presence” which he summed up by saying: “God himself was always and personally in Boston.”!

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The Code of Laws of the New England Puritans was taken almost literally from the Old Testament.¹³ Indeed, when an attempt was made to draw also “upon the old Roman and Grecian governments,” it was denounced as an error by the sturdy Governor, John Winthrop, who insisted that laws should be taken from the Bible, rather than “on the authority of the wisdom, justice, etc., of those heathen commonwealths.” Nathaniel Ward, a minister who lived in Ipswich, Mass., was the author of a work entitled the *Body of Liberties*, in which, in the final analysis, the word of God was to serve as the basis of judgment rendered. The theocracy would, of course, decide as to what was a just and wise judgment! The same Rev. Ward wrote in obvious indignation:

“It is said, That Men ought to have Liberty of their Conscience, and that it is Persecution to debar them of it; I can rather stand amazed than reply to this: it is an astonishment to think that the braines of men should be parboyl’d in such impious ignorance; Let all the wits under the Heavens lay their heads together and find an Assertion worse than this (one excepted) I will Petition to be chosen the universal Ideot of the world. [Perhaps ye olde theocrat had something there!].”

To this typical outburst of theocratic intolerance, Bryant supplies the following comment:

“Not a Puritan in Massachusetts that Massachusetts could tolerate, but would agree with this. *For so surely as it was divine wisdom that led the Puritan out of the Church of England, so it was not liberty of conscience*

¹³ John Cotton was one of the leading influences in the Boston Church in the years of 1642–1643 when one of the most celebrated heresy trials was conducted, that in which one Samuel Gorton figured as one of the principal “heretics.” Though found guilty, and although the death sentence was urged, it was finally decided that Gorton and his followers were to be banished to separate localities, to be kept at hard labor, with irons around one leg, and they were ordered “not, by word or writing [to] maintain any of their blasphemous or wicked errors upon pain of death.” John Cotton was one of the chief inquisitors, but there is reason to believe that he met his match in the amazing Gorton whose argumentative and garrulous proclivities had been the despair of so many faithful believers. At any rate, it was this worthy (Cotton) who gave expression to the Massachusetts theocratic *credo* in words which, theocratically, must be regarded as a classic. In a letter to Governor Hutchinson he wrote:

“When a commonwealth hath liberty to mould its own frame (*Scripturae plenitudinem adoro*), I conceive the Scripture hath given full direction for the right ordering of the same. It is better that the Commonwealth be fashioned to the setting forth of God’s house, which is His Church, than to accommodate the Church’s frame to the civil State.”

(Compare utterance of 13th Century Jakob Erlandson, previously quoted, with 17th Century New England John Cotton’s utterance. Four hundred years separated them, but the spirit and the language are the same. “De te fabula narratur!” [Change the name and “the story is told of you!”])

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but license of the devil that would lead one inch beyond the Church of Boston.”!

Despite, or rather because of, the intolerance of the Massachusetts theocracy, dissenters arose, many of whom were severely punished, some killed as heretics, while others were sent into exile or as fugitives. Outstanding among those who were banished was Roger Williams, the founder of the colony of Rhode Island. The name of Williams is ever to be revered as one who fought theocracy relentlessly, who set conscience above every written or unwritten law. Bryant beautifully describes the flight of Roger Williams from the Massachusetts vindictive theocracy, into the, by comparison, friendly wilderness. “Roger Williams,” wrote Bryant, “fled out into the night and the winter’s storms, with the order of the General Court behind him, the officers of the law in hot pursuit, and a ship waiting in the offing to bear him into perpetual banishment across the sea. The shelter which Puritan intolerance denied him *he sought and found among savage friends* [the Indians]. As he, the next spring, with only five companions, paddled his canoe along the shore of Providence Bay, their thoughts were less of hierarchies and of commonwealths, than where the sunniest slope could be found for a field of maize, the most sheltered and convenient nook for huts.”

The place where he landed he called Providence because “of God’s merciful providence unto me in my distress.” And nobly he expressed the hope that also it “might be for a shelter for those distressed in conscience.”

Providence, R.I., is today one of the strongholds of Roman Catholic Ultramontaniam, the deadliest foe of liberty, the would-be heir-apparent to theocracy in America.

CHAPTER ELEVEN.

Theocracy in America Outside Massachusetts.

Despite the efforts of the Massachusetts theocracy, the democratic spirit and principle could not be killed. In 1636 a Newtown, Massachusetts, minister, Thomas Hooker, initiated and effected an emigration of some one hundred Newtown residents, and pushing toward the Connecticut colony landed in Hartford where they established themselves. Connecticut is known for its early democratic traditions.¹⁴ Thomas Hooker formulated what appears to be one of the earliest expressions in America of democratic principle, the principle that power and authority derive from the people. He said:

“They who have the power to appoint officers and magistrates, it is in their power also to set the bounds and limitations of the power and place unto which they call them. *And this, in the first place, because the principle of authority resides in the free consent of the people.*”¹⁵

Yet, within a few years the theocratic menace presented itself in Connecticut. The colonists of New Haven, having left Boston to escape the restrictions of the Boston Church, drew up a covenant in which they declared that “The choice of magistrates, legislation, the rights of inheritance, and all matters of that kind, were to be decided according to the rules of Holy Scriptures.”¹⁶ Professor Charles Borgeaud observed that “measures were taken for the organization of a singular form of government, both civil and ecclesiastical, drawn from the text of the Old Testament.” In 1639 the New Haven assembly agreed that the Church should supply, or name, the magistrates, whereat one got up and, while agreeing to the proposal, insisted on retaining control of the civil affairs. To quote from the summary of the report on this adoption of the resolutions:

“They that chuse them [the magistrates] ought to be men fearing God: only at this he struck, That free planters ought not to give their power out of their hands. Another stood up and answered that in this case nothing was done but with their consent.”

¹⁴ *Vide* Mark Twain’s *A Connecticut Yankee at the Court of King Arthur*.

¹⁵ Quoted by Prof. Charles Borgeaud in his splendid work, *The Rise of Modern Democracy in Old and New England*.

¹⁶ Quoted by Borgeaud.

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As if despotism by consent is any the less a despotism!

Although Lincoln had considerable doubt as to the possibility of “ascertaining and applying” the will of God, as he facetiously put it, the New England theocrats had none whatever. For instance, it was apparently not considered difficult to ascertain God’s will with respect to determining the proper remuneration for the magistrates, as the following seemingly naive resolution of May 20, 1644, indicates:

“It is ordered that it shall and may be lawful for the Deputies of the Court to advise with their elders and freemen, and take into serious consideration, whether God do not expect that all the inhabitants of this plantation allowe to their magistrates, and all others that are called to country service, a proportionable allowance, answerable to their places and instruments.”

The fact that a money consideration was involved may help to explain the ease with which “God’s will” was ascertained! One wonders, however, whether what the magistrates and the elders heard was *vox dei*, or *vox pecuniae*—the voice of God, or the voice of money!

As we have seen, the theocracy of New England, and particularly of Massachusetts, was every bit as monstrous in its ruthless persecution of dissenters as all preceding theocracies. And once again let it be noted that the cruel barbarities, the incredible superstitions, cannot simply be blamed on the spirit and customs of the times. At least twenty-five hundred years had passed from the time of the Jewish theocracy at its height to the founding of the Massachusetts theocracy, yet there was no essential difference in the spirit and practices of the respective theocrats. If the ancient Hebrews had spoken the King’s English, their preachments and judgments would have sounded quite familiar to the Biblical literalists of New England, and vice versa! There are differences, but they were to be found in the economic and social potentialities of the New England theocracy, rather than in their religious and moral preachments, or in their legal adaptations of the Scriptures. And the reason is that, once given theocracy, the rest is bound to work itself out accordingly, that is, in accordance with the now familiar pattern. Which is not to say that despite present tendencies theocracy will find it possible to establish itself.

Notwithstanding the tyranny and oppression of theocracy, the democratic undercurrent was very strong. After all, one of the chief tenets of Calvinism had been to emphasize the sacredness and inviolability of the individual’s soul, his right

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(in theory, at least) to settle his accounts with his god without intercessors or mediators. This consciousness, however clouded as a result of the recurring events denying in practice that which was conceded in theory, bred a strong individualistic spirit, which was also continually nurtured by the opportunities for adventure in a new world—a spirit that could not be crushed, nor suppressed for long. Moreover, the organizational form of Calvinism resulted in strengthening local church bodies, and their respective local church governments, at the expense of the tendency toward universal, centralized church-government as exemplified in the Roman Catholic Church. John Fiske, speaking of the effect of the Calvinistic doctrine upon the individual and upon his society, says: “Calvin made them feel, as it had perhaps never been felt before, the dignity and importance of the individual human soul. . . . In a church, moreover, based upon such a theology there is no room for prelacy. Each single church tended to become an independent congregation of worshippers, *constituting one of the most effective schools that has ever existed for training men in local self-government.*”¹⁷

Granting the point of John Fiske, it still remains true that a heavy price was paid for this training and experience. And again we may be permitted to question whether the relative gain was worth the terrible cost. As Professor Borgeaud says:

“Thus was founded the theocratic Commonwealth of Massachusetts, with none like it to be found in history, except the Republic of Calvin; like it, brave, austere, BUT INTOLERANT OF INQUIRY, PERSECUTING HERESY WITHOUT PITY, AND WITHOUT MERCY.”¹⁸

*

The theocratic spirit flared up again in our Civil War, though predominantly in the South. Elsewhere the writer has recorded the ravings of one of slavocracy’s most vociferous theocratic defenders,¹⁹ Dr. Ross of Huntsville, Ala. His insistence that slavery was “ordained of God”; that since God provided for slaves in the Bible it would be blasphemous to abolish slavery in the United States; his almost hysterical contention that the WORD (“God’s word”) must be obeyed literally—all these are the characteristic utterances of theocracy wherever and whenever made. The proof of the pudding, so to speak, is to be found in the mess of pottage with which Jacob swindled his brother Esau. If that is a bit mixed, it is no more so than Dr. Ross’s

¹⁷ John Fiske: *Beginnings of New England*.

¹⁸ Borgeaud: *Rise of Modern Democracy*, etc.

¹⁹ See *Superstition, Father of Slavery*.

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rantings! Listen to him:

“That WORD [i.e., the Bible] moreover He proves by highest evidence—namely, supernatural evidence—to be *absolute, perfect* TRUTH as to all FACT *affirmed of him and what he does*. REVELATION, as claimed in the Bible, was and is THAT THING. Man, then, having this revelation, is under obligation ever to believe every jot and tittle of that WORD.”²⁰ (Emphases as in the original.)

Surely, this is the Q.E.D. of theocracy, even if it does constitute a *reductio ad absurdum!*

²⁰ *Slavery Ordained of God*, by Rev. Fred. A. Ross, D.D., published by J.B. Lippincott & Co., Philadelphia, 1857.

CHAPTER TWELVE.

Theocratic Spirit Abroad in World Today.

Among those who do not closely follow the trend of the times, and who, in the glittering generalities and pious phrases of budding theocrats of today, fail to recognize the signs and threats of nascent theocracy, there will be some who will say: “All this is very interesting, but why all this bother? All these things happened a long time ago—the world is too wise, too educated, too civilized to stand for a return of theocracy.” The answer to such sceptics is: Look at the record! The theocratic spirit is abroad in these latter days as it has not been for centuries. And those who think the Marxian De Leonist is “seeing things,” that he is unduly alarmed, had best look to Europe. For more than a generation the De Leonist has warned that if Socialism were not instituted among civilized men, INDUSTRIAL FEUDALISM (Fascism) would present itself as the inescapable alternative. Until about ten years ago practically everybody laughed at De Leonists when they uttered this warning. Today the specter of Industrial Feudalism haunts this land of ours, and at present the greater part of Europe lies under the Iron Heel of this bloody despotism. Those who may feel disposed to laugh at us now, those who may scoff at our warnings against the possibility of a return of theocracy, should reflect on the fact of secular despotism today, however unlikely its return seemed a few years ago. It is not half so fantastic to suppose the possibility of the latter, as it not so long ago may have seemed to be to suppose the recurrence of the former.

The American social scientist, Daniel De Leon, was the first in modern times to utter a warning against the reappearance of theocracy. De Leon called it Ultramontaniam, but the meaning is the same—certainly in its modern setting. In a brilliant essay (Chapter XIII, ***Abolition of Poverty***, written in 1911) he points out that “the social system aimed at by the founders of the Roman Catholic polity was the paternal system, with the masses of the population held in the status of wards to a select few.” De Leon continues: “The title ‘father,’ given by the Roman Catholic polity to its officers, and reappearing in the title ‘Pope’ [from “papa,” father] accurately reflects the paternal spirit of that governmental system.”

Concluding, De Leon points out that the “Roman Catholic political system” has fatedly become an institution constituting “the scourge of man while it held power; and that today, crippled though it is by advanced enlightenment [alas! now in

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retreat, temporarily at least.—A.P.], continues a hindrance, if not a menace to progress.”

While it is true that every organized creed which remains consistent, and which claims for its god super-sovereignty in mundane affairs, may have an equal chance with every other such creed to become *the* theocratic body, the fact is that the Ultramontane machine, or the Roman Catholic Church, is the only one which (given the required, but not necessarily inescapable conditions) can function universally, and which, moreover, possesses that oneness in aim, methods and spirit—that perfection in organization—which makes possible cohesion in operation and swiftness in action. And the church is not asleep. It is wide-awake and responsive to every opportunity offered to strengthen its position. It is head over heels in politics, acting sometimes cautiously, at other times boldly, as for instance when a few years ago it openly lobbied at Albany to prevent the ratification, by the state of New York, of the Child Labor Amendment. And it succeeded. Ever resentful of interference by political government, it rarely falls to insist on receiving that protection from political government which will enable it to improve its chances to undermine and destroy, or capture for its own purposes, that government. It attacks Socialism savagely, lies about it, and threatens death and destruction to individual Socialists (as, for instance, when the Brooklyn priest, John L. Belford, in his parish paper said that “the Socialist is the mad dog of Society, who should be silenced if need be with a bullet”)²¹; yet, when Socialists strike back, the budding Catholic theocrats and their blind followers whimper and whine that they are the victims of bigotry! When some time ago Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt ventured to remark that divorce is a recognized factor in American life, and that a moving picture entitled *The Birth of a*

²¹ This murder-inciting priest, while speaking in Toronto about ten years ago, was challenged about his earlier suggestion that Socialists should be shot like mad dogs. The priest squirmed and dodged, trying desperately to establish a distinction between “the right kind of Socialists” (Ramsay MacDonald, for instance) and “the wrong kind.” “The wrong kind of Socialists” the priest exemplified in the person of Francisco Ferrer who at one and the same time was accused of being a “Socialist” and an Anarchist. The fact that Ferrer was neither disturbed the lying priest not at all. The priest also lied when he charged Ferrer with advocating violence. The fact is that Ferrer denounced anarchy and violence in specific terms. He said: “Time only conserves that which has been slowly built up in time. What may be gained by a violent deed today, is lost through another violent deed tomorrow.”

According to the *Toronto Globe* of February 5, 1930, the priest Belford, on this occasion, improved on his earlier incitement to violence against his fellow citizens. Referring to what he called “the wrong kind of Socialists,” he said: “Those are the mad dogs of society and ought to be put out, *not necessarily by wasting bullets, but by a rope that can be used over and over again.*”

This is the very flower of theocracy—it is the theocratic spirit translated into action, in all its medieval horror and brutality. (See also “Medievalism Rampant,” by Arnold Petersen, *Weekly People*, March 1, 1930.)

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Baby was not obscene because it was honest, the president of the League of Catholic Women, one Mrs. Charles Feehan, brazenly assailed the President's wife for stating a fact and an honest opinion. Her remarks are so thoroughly typical of the attitude and language of those who operate the Ultramontane propaganda machine, that they are quoted here as printed in the New York *Herald Tribune* of April 27, 1939:

“I believe that it is most unfortunate, unfair and dangerous for the wife of the President of the United States to make apodictical [i.e., “clearly demonstrable,” “indisputable”] pronouncements that give offense to a large part of our citizens.”)

Why Mrs. Roosevelt should under any condition be forbidden to make “indisputable” pronouncements on any subject is not clear. (Perhaps the presumptuous Catholic lady swallowed the wrong word!) But in any case, the ravings of this Catholic female are thoroughly imbued with the theocratic spirit, and reflect the attitude of the Church politicians toward those who dare to disagree with them on matters that involve no religious principle, but concern entirely the functions and prerogatives of civil society.

Another indication of the slow and stealthy march toward theocracy is the increasing demand for religious education in the public schools. Such a practice would completely subvert the intentions of the founders of the republic who made special constitutional provision inhibiting Congress from making any law “respecting an establishment of religion.” But what Congress *must* not do, state legislatures apparently *may* do, for this vicious practice has, as stated, been enacted into law in New York state! Despite vigorous protests from many quarters, Church and State, *in happy unity on that point*, have started the splitting up of our children in so many creed-conscious groups, each creed vying with the other in harassing these children with questions which belong (if they belong anywhere) in the church or in the home.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN.

Shadow of Theocracy in the United States; Substance Is Ultramontanism.

When Pope Plus XI died about two years ago the event was treated as if a universal monarch, to whom all owed fealty, had died. Condolences—or so they were called—poured into the Vatican from governments of almost every land, and practically all creeds. Many public institutions, and many public men—writers, politicians and non-Catholic clerics—united in singing the praises of the late Pope. One heading in the *New York Times* of February 12, 1939, read: “All Faiths Unite in Praising Pope.” The fawning sycophants included the Rev. John Haynes Holmes who, the headline said, “Likens Pope’s Career to Lincoln’s Life,” a remark which should have earned for its author a first prize in dodoism! A cartoonist portrayed the late Pope as “Pope Pius, A Friend of Peace.” “A Friend of Peace,” indeed! It was this Pope who (according to the respectable, conservative and church-toadying *New York Sun*) told 1,200 Catholic nurses that Bandito Benito’s murderous war against the Ethiopians was not a war of conquest; if it were a war of conquest, said the Pope, it would be an unjust war, and could not be sanctioned by the Pope. The *Sun* quoted the late Pope as having said:

“In Italy there is no question of a just war, because a war of defense to assure frontiers [thousands of miles away!] against continual and insistent danger [!], *a war made necessary by a population which increases day by day* [an increase constantly urged by the Pope as a religious duty, and by Benito Mussolini as a civic duty!], *a war undertaken to defend or assure moral security of a country—such a war is justifiable.*”!!²²

“Friend of Peace,” indeed!

Even the ridiculous Communists (then allies of the Ultramontanes) hastened to extend condolences on the death of the Pope. At its second annual convention held February 12, 1939, the New York State Young Communist League adopted a resolution of sympathy, extending their “hand of brotherly cooperation to the Catholic Youth,” etc.²³

And when the new Pope was elected, messages again poured into the Vatican,

²² *New York Sun*, August 31, 1935.

²³ *New York Times*, February 13, 1939.

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this time congratulations. Jews vied with Protestants in hailing with joy the election of Pius XII! Incredible, but true. Yet only seven months later, the new Pope, in an encyclical addressed to the United States hierarchy, presumptuously and arrogantly attacked the schools of the United States! The New York *Times* headline of November 12, 1939, read: “Plus XII Criticizes Schools of U.S.” In that same encyclical the Pope assures his representatives in America that “God . . . has ordained that for the exercise of virtues and for the testing of one’s worth there be in the world rich and poor.” It was slavocracy’s high priest, Dr. Ross, who assured his contemporaries that slavery was ordained of God! The sinister voice of theocracy spoke in both cases, and both to essentially the same purpose. For the Pope in reality uttered the antisocial, the jungle creed pronouncement that wage slavery is ordained of God!

But are there more definite indications than all these that the church is straining with all its might toward theocracy? There are. In his “Easter Homily,” preached in St. Peter’s Church on April 9, 1939, the newly elected Pope said menacingly:

“Justice requires that the salutary action of the church of Christ, *infallible teacher of truth*, inexhaustible fount of life for the soul, *the benefactor of civil society* [!], BE NOT OPPOSED AND HINDERED.”²⁴

No one can mistake the meaning of that bold and arrogantly presumptuous utterance.

The New York *Herald Tribune* of February 3, 1941, carried a despatch from its Vichy (France) correspondent in which mention was made of the Pope’s plans for calling an Ecumenical Council of the Roman Catholic Church immediately after the war. Among the main problems to be submitted to the Council, according to the *Herald Tribune* writer, are “education of youth, restoration of the family [?] AND THE CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ORDER.” We know now what “Christian social order,”

²⁴ In 1891 Daniel De Leon wrote: “Recognizing the irresistible tendency of the workingmen to combine for mutual protection, he [Pope Leo XIII] does not attempt to dissuade them from adopting this course; on the contrary, he praises their efforts in this direction, but advises them to place their organizations under the guidance of the church. For aught we know, the Pope may be dreaming of a new Roman Catholic Empire, in which the trades would be organized—as they were by Constantine and his successors, but with due regard for the changed conditions of production—under the direction of the Supreme Pontiff. Such was, indeed, the proposition made in 1848 by a highly religious economist; and not only the Vatican received it with favor, but the priests blessed the ‘trees of liberty’ planted in Paris by the ‘Social Republic’! The Pope evidently believes that if the institution of private property should come to grief in spite of the efforts of the church to save it, all property should be vested in the church itself.”

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and “Christian civilization,” and “Christian democracy,” etc., mean in the mouths of plutocratic rulers and Ultramontane politicians: They mean THEOCRACY !

The American people, and particularly the American working class, would do well to take full cognizance of the sinister shadow of Ultramontanism which looms up ever more clearly from the back of the social stage. For Ultramontanism (nascent theocracy) is indeed the chief defender of reaction, the source of its inspiration, and its guide to action. It may only seem a shadow now, but let us not forget that behind such a shadow there is a formidable substance. As we have seen, it is reaching its long hands into all avenues of social and political life. It is adaptable. It is cruel, bloody and monstrous in Spain, conciliating in Italy, lying low in the Nazi realm, and suave, insinuating, crafty and designing, and active as hell’s angels, in the United States! When the time, to it, seems ripe and propitious, it will not hesitate to show its hand. In keeping with its policy of deception and its practice of stealthy encroachments upon secular and civic matters, it will conceal its purpose as long as it can, and will even deny its own basic claims to supreme authority in society when it serves its current purpose to do so.

We know from history what the aims and claims of the papacy are. The record is clear and indisputable. We know that these aims and claims are the same today. Does the papacy—the Church—claim superiority over the State; does it contend that the State must be subordinate to the Church? It does. But does it do so in America? The proof is overwhelming, conclusive, that it does so. In a book entitled *Manual of Christian Doctrine*, published as a “Course of Religious Instruction,” by the “Brothers of the Christian Schools,” and bearing the *imprimatur* of Cardinal Dougherty of Philadelphia and the *Nihil Obstat* of N.F. Fisher, S.T.L. (*Censor Librorum*) and Arthur J. Scanlan, S.T.D. (*Censor Deputatus*)—in this catechism which has gone through fifty-eight editions, we find a series of questions and answers that are most illuminating. Just a few can be cited here. To the question: “Why is the church superior to the state?” the answer is given: “Because the end to which the Church tends is the noblest of all ends.” That settles that, like it or not! To the question: “What right has the Pope in virtue of his supremacy?” this answer is given: “The right to annul those laws or acts of government that would injure the salvation of souls or *attack the natural rights of citizens.*” (Among the “natural rights of citizens” the catechism later lists private property rights!)

In all cases of disputes the Church, of course, decides the issue, on the basis of the WORD, as interpreted by the infallible Pope!

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Defining “Liberalism,” the manual says: “It [Liberalism] is founded principally on the fact that modern society rests on liberty of conscience and of worship, on liberty of speech and of the press.” And to the question: “Why is Liberalism to be condemned?” we are given these illuminating replies: “1. Because it denies all subordination of the State to the Church; 2. Because it confounds liberty with right; 3. Because it despises the *social dominion* of Christ [theocracy] and rejects the benefits derived therefrom.”

These, then, are authoritative statements by an important branch of the Church, and must necessarily represent the general views and policies of the Church. The record is clear and establishes that the Church acclaims and condemns the following things:

1. The Church is superior to the State.

2. The Pope has the right, in his wisdom or judgment, or the lack of these, to annul laws which citizens are required to obey.

3. Liberalism is condemned, hence that which “Liberalism” represents. Therefore—

4. Liberty of conscience and worship are condemned.

5. Liberty of speech and of the press, likewise, are condemned.

6. The subordination of the State to the Church is reaffirmed.

7. “Liberty” and “right” apparently are incompatible.

8. Christ has a “social dominion,” the meaning of which is not clear, unless it is an affirmation of the necessity or desirability of a theocratic form of government.

There is no escape from these conclusions. The apologists of would-be Roman Catholic theocracy may marshal all their Jesuitical craftiness and casuistry. What has been cited in the foregoing constitutes the position of the Catholic Church in America today; it is thoroughly in line with the traditional policy of the Church; and these doctrines, so definitely subversive of American democratic principles, are being taught openly to millions of future American citizens who some day will be called upon to decide the vital question as to whether the United States shall maintain and expand the democratic rights and liberties, or whether these shall be surrendered and the road cleared for the establishment of a feudo-theocratic industrial rule! We dare the hierarchy to deny that these are wholly proper and logical conclusions drawn from the facts and premises supplied by the Church itself.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN.

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While in the main the presumptuous claims and theocratic pretensions of the papacy are being passed over in silence by a press which is either intimidated or bribed into silence, or which (in its social-reactionary character) finds itself in accord with these theocratic pretensions, occasionally references to these creep into the more important among the daily (capitalist) papers. In the *New York Times* of May 26, 1940, one Gilbert O. Nations, who appeared to write with authority and considerable understanding of the theocratic ambitions of the papacy, took sharp issue with one of the outstanding American Catholics, James H. Ryan, Bishop of Omaha, who is reported to be an authority on international questions with particular reference to the relation of the papacy to these questions. Bishop Ryan had urged that the United States should set up and maintain diplomatic relations with the See of Rome, rumors being rife at the time that President Roosevelt had sent as his personal representative feudo-industrial baron Myron C. Taylor to Rome to discuss the matter. Pointing out the subversive character of such a move, Mr. Nations said:

“It is the international sovereignty of the Pope that gives him vast political and diplomatic power. The sovereignty of other governments stops at their territorial boundaries. But that of the Pope does not stop. It encircles the earth.

“The papacy often makes treaties or concordats with the civil powers as an incident of diplomatic relations. Such pacts make clear the purpose of diplomatic relations. They also make clear the general policies of the Popes in their relations with civil governments. They define the status and rights of papal subjects in the respective countries as against their own government wherein they enjoy citizenship and the ballot. Good examples are the 1929 treaty with Italy, the treaties with Spain, Colombia and other Latin countries.

“They stipulate that the Roman Catholic religion shall be the religion of the State, that it shall be taught in all public schools to the exclusion of all other faiths, that the local hierarchy shall be empowered to pass on the books and teachers used in such schools and that civil authority will enforce payment of tithes assessed by the hierarchy.

“Such provisions and such policies do violence to the whole background and fundamentals of American constitutional law. For about seventy years the Popes have expressly condemned American public schools and

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prohibited Roman Catholic children from attending them without special permission from the local Bishop. That prohibition now appears in canon 1374 of the Code of Canon Law enacted by the papacy years ago. It was amplified in December, 1929, by Pope Plus XI in his Encyclical *Divini Illius Magistri*.

“America has little interest in the thousand or so people and slightly over a hundred acres which compose Vatican City. *No such interest would justify diplomatic relations with the Pope. But the 20,000,000 of Roman Catholics in the United States are of vast importance. It is to exercise greater influence over them under his paramount international sovereignty that the Pope urges diplomatic relations.* No foreign sovereign has just right to attempt to exert influence over our citizens against their own government. Their rights and status should be settled in this country and under American law.” (Italics mine.)

No more need be said to prove the point: The polity of the papacy runs directly counter to the American civil polity and constitutes a definite plan for restoring the subserviency of the secular authority to the authority of the Church.

*

Catholic orators, lay and clerical, fill the air with their exhortations for a “return to Christ,” for “God in Government,” etc. One of the most eloquent, if also one of the most blatant, is the Rt. Rev. Msr. Fulton J. Sheen who delivers talks on the *Catholic Hour* heard every Sunday over a nation-wide hookup. We are told that “Radio facilities are provided GRATUITOUSLY by N.B.C. and the stations associated with it.” On February 23, 1941, the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Sheen spoke on “Papacy and International Order.” The address was one of the most significant in recent times. It constitutes as bold a bid for control of secular government as any that has been made in recent times by an organized creed. The argument is that after the war there is only one body capable, and qualified, to run the world, viz., the Roman Catholic political machine. The plea is put more subtly than that, but that is the plain meaning of it. Contemptuously this would-be theocrat sneers at “universal education, progress, science, liberalism”—and for good measure, but no doubt with tongue in cheek, he includes “Totalitarianism”!! He declares that there is “only one moral authority left in the world, *the Chief Shepherd and Vicar of Jesus Christ*,” i.e., the keen and crafty politician placed on the theocratic throne in Rome! In cheap banality and mock humility he speaks of the papacy as “the smallest of all sovereignties—108 acres on which its Shepherd may feed and pasture his three

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hundred and eighty million sheep”! (“*Sheep*” is what he said!²⁵ And sheep are expected to do naught else than to bleat, and to submit to fleecing!) And at the conclusion of his address he uttered these significant words:

“I can see no hope unless we reverse the present order and admit that instead of politics setting limits to religion and the morality of Jesus Christ, religion and the morality of Jesus Christ must begin to set limits to politics.”

There we have it: The Church must rule the civil power. Secular government must be made subordinate to the Church! The voice that spoke was the voice of the high priest of the ancient Jewish theocracy; it was the voice of Caiaphas, the voice of imperialist Innocent III, the voice of ruthless Calvin, and of every actual and aspiring theocratic ruler since organized society began! It was the voice of medievalism, the voice of the rack and the stake, the voice of bigotry and intolerance, the voice of darkness, ignorance and of human slavery! It was a voice demanding the stultification of the human spirit, a voice out of the dark tomb of time. It was the voice of hopeless despair for humanity, a voice asserting the sovereignty of unreason over reason.

How shall we answer that voice—and by “we” is meant primarily the working class and all those who take their stand on working class interests? We shall answer, in notes of ringing accents:

We will have none of your mind-destroying theocracy! We reject your plea for sovereignty over men born to be free! We hurl back at you your insult that we are so many sheep! We declare to you, to your superior officer in Rome, and to your lay and clerical allies of all creeds everywhere that we mean to be free men and women, to be true Children of Light! We declare to you that we shall lay the ghost of class rule, theocratic or strictly secular, so that never again shall it walk the bloody highways of oppression and slavery! And to that end we, the workers of America, with our brothers, the workers of the world, will organize—organize more compactly, more scientifically, with greater purposefulness than was ever dreamt of in any of your theocratic handbooks! We accept the gage of battle, and gird our loins! Do you organize in your theocratic conclaves—we shall organize in our Socialist Industrial Unions for the control and operation of a civilized society which shall know neither poverty nor superstition, neither wars nor any other kind of social strife! We shall

²⁵ It is no accident that the word “ovation” is used when great or popular leaders (English for “Fuehrer”) are noisily acclaimed, usually by an unthinking multitude. As Plutarch observed: “Ovation is derived from the Latin word ‘ovis,’ meaning ‘sheep.’”!

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organize for Peace and Happiness, for Light and Freedom!

The issue is:

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We take our stand on Democracy—Industrial and Economic Democracy. And in thus taking our stand we join the noble host which in the long and dreary past has held aloft the banner of freedom—the many martyrs broken or murdered by *your* forerunners. We take our stand on the principle laid down by the noble Abraham Lincoln, a principle which shall eventually free the world:

“As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs from this, to the extent of the difference, is no democracy.”

IN DEFENSE OF SLAVERY.

Disguise thyself as thou wilt, still,
Slavery, thou art a bitter draught.
—*Laurence Sterne.*

I. 'Slavery Ordained of God.'

A society, being an organism, responds to attacks upon it as do all other organisms. If the human body sustains an injury, all the recuperative and restorative elements rush to the rescue, and if the injury in itself is not beyond repair, they bring healing to the afflicted part, and recovery to the human body. It is an “instinctive” act. There are agencies of recovery, conscious and unconscious, which respond it “instinctively” to the call for help when the social organism is attacked. And as with the human body, so with the “body politic,” or the particular social system. Among the ever responsive agencies of a decaying social system, including modern capitalism, we find the church—official or propertied, organized theology—among the most outstanding.

No social system based on slavery (no matter what form) can long survive without adornment of the halo of sanctity. To keep the slaves contented—or at least docile—they must be taught that their lot is ordained by the deity—or by “nature”—and that it would be impious as well as futile to struggle against it. With a sameness that is almost monotonous we find the priesthood in every social crisis using the identical arguments, the same admonitions, and the same threats, toward those who dare question the immutability of the prevailing order of things, or who scoff at the sophistry that the deity, in his own good time, will declare his will, and bring light on the problem. And if it be the will of the deity that there must be a change, why, then, God’s will be done, Amen! But there is a startling similarity in the procrastination of the revelation and fulfillment of God’s will in all such matters, in all crises, and in all ages!

Capitalism has reached its supreme crisis. Having outlived its usefulness, and having become an obstacle instead of an aid to human progress, all sorts of disorders and complications attend its continued existence. Its beneficiaries admit that it was recently a bit under the weather, but—thank God!—it is now doing much better. Its apologists spin fine webs of sophistries in an attempt to explain that that which obviously is the hectic flush of burning fever is in reality the

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indication of rosy health! And its sanctifiers (the priesthood and modern medicine men) are on the job, counselling submission to God's will, patience and respect for ordained authority, while thundering anathema at those who dare question or deny the contention that capitalism is the external manifestation of the divine spirit; that to tamper with it is to obstruct the will of God, is to defy all that is sacred and hallowed.

We need go no further back than to slavery days in this country to find proof of the contentions here advanced. Yet, if one were to show the present-day apologists and sanctifiers specimens of the arguments and efforts at sanctification in behalf of chattel slavery, they would smile indulgently, much as we all smile when we are shown examples of ancient witchcraft, etc. Our present-day defender of capitalism, particularly if he wears "the cloth," can no more appreciate his own ridiculous language and conduct than the pro-slavery theologian could perceive the folly of his, nor the aborigine the comicality of his contortions.

Incredible as it may seem to the present generation, the pro-slavery theologian, eighty years ago and more, had developed a highly intricate system of divine justification and sanctification of Negro slavery. Reading the pleas of any one of them, one almost imagines that the voice is that of a Coughlin, a Sheen, or of any of the rest of the present-day ranting and howling high priests of capitalism. And even the particular style of their anathema differs but little from the fulminations of the priesthood of today against Socialists, and those others who may be merely causing uneasiness and doubts to the black-robed watchdogs of capitalist property interests.

II. Spokesmen for Preservation of Slavery.

One of the most vociferous of the theological servants of the southern slavocracy was one Fred A. Ross, "Pastor of the Presbyterian Church, Huntsville, Alabama." He put his various speeches and letters in a book which he called *Slavery Ordained of God*. And on the title page he placed this authoritative text taken from Romans XIII, 1, "*The powers that be are ordained of God.*" Here, indeed, was a premise as solid as any advanced by the property clergy of today as "irrefutable" as any advanced by pope, priest, minister or rabbi today against Socialism. As solid and irrefutable, that is, but no more so!

The Rev. Ross, as a fulminator against the iniquity of Northern anti-slavery,

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was every whit as efficient as the ranting Detroit priest Coughlin; every whit as subtle as the Jesuits, Sheen of the Catholic University in Washington, and Cox of Fordham, against Marxian Socialism. It is difficult to quote from his book, for almost every paragraph is so grotesque, so utterly unbelievable, that one finds it impossible to select one that is better (or worse) than any other. However, take this from page 101: “The Southern slaveholder is now satisfied, as never before, that the relation of master and slave is sanctioned by the Bible; and he feels, as never before, the obligations of the word of God.” And the hope he entertains with respect to the permanency of slavery, as the manifest will of the deity, causes him to rhapsodize:

“I thank God that the great deep of the American mind has been blown upon by the wind of abolitionism [read Marxism]. . . . I rejoice that the infidelity and semi-infidelity [i.e., anti-slavery] so long latent has been set free. . . . I rejoice that all the South [read plutocrats] now know that God gives the right to hold slaves [read wage slaves], and, with that right, obligations they must fulfill.”

And in keeping with the rantings of the modern upholders of wage slavery, Ross identifies anti-slavery with all that is wicked—“these two theories of right [slavery] and wrong [anti-slavery] . . . of *Atheism*, Red Republicanism, of the devil. . . .” And he was sure that the god of slavery would win, and the devil of anti-slavery bite the dust: “This anti-slavery battle is only part of the great struggle: God will be victorious—and we [the slavocracy], in his might.”

Compare this with any of the recent utterances of the Ultramontane upholders of wage slavery, and the parallel is striking. The Rev. Ross was certain that he and his slave-holding masters represented God’s will, and that the slavocracy was the center of resistance against the iniquities of Atheists, the destroyers of the family, and of the demolishers of the Constitution and the Supreme Court! Rev. Walsh of Georgetown University was recently quoted²⁶ as saying that “the Roman Catholic Church is the greatest *international* obstacle to Communism today.” A whole battalion of speakers on the same occasion followed Walsh, each insisting that the Catholic Church constituted *the* bulwark of the present order against Socialism or labor emancipation—for that, of course, is what they mean when they say “Communism.” And just as the Rev. Ross urged the noble slave-holders to be good to the slaves, and treat them kindly, so these Ultramontane upholders of wage slavery plead with the plutocrats to be kind to *their* slaves, the wage workers. Making such

²⁶ This was written in 1937.

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a plea, the Right Rev. Fulton J. Sheen, professor of fundamental theology at the Catholic University in Washington, said recently that the church (like Rev. Ross) has insisted that the plutocrats must treat the wage slaves with kind consideration, and he offers this choice bit of impudent asininity:

“As a matter of fact, there has never been written such a strong protest against economic injustices as in the papal letters of Leo XIII and Plus XI. Compared with them, the protests of Marx and Lenin are but the cheap ramblings of a tyro-rhetorician.” (!!)

Note the stupidly false designation of Marx and Lenin as “tyro-rhetoricians.” The fact that neither was a “rhetorician” (“tyro” or otherwise) is known to any person at all informed on the subject of Socialism, especially to the smooth and tricky rhetoricians of the Sheen type. Indeed, both Marx and Lenin have been recorded by capitalist apologists as being the direct opposite.

This sort of fustian causes one to wonder whether these Jesuits are quite as subtle as one had been led to believe them to be. The shallow, though crafty, and intellectually dishonest writings of Leo XIII and his successors are bad enough when presented without special comment. Referred to in the manner of Rev. Sheen, one is painfully reminded of their essential idiocy, and the occasional imbecility of the otherwise crafty and astute Sheens.

However, the language of the Sheens is almost, word for word, that of the Rosses—and from the same motivation, and to the same purpose. Each pleads for the preservation of the slavery of his age; each sanctimoniously concedes that the masters must be kind to their slaves; and each fulminates against those who would end the curse of slavery. To the chattel slavery advocate the liberators were “Red Republicans,” “Atheists,” “devils,” etc. To the wage slavery advocate of today the modern “liberators” (Marxian Socialists) are “red Communists,” or “red Socialists,” “Atheists,” “devils,” etc.

III. Dr. Ross Exemplar of Would-be Philanthropic Priesthood.

We are quite familiar with those members of the priesthood who boast of all that they do for the poor—how they ease their lot, give them this or that, to the point of depriving themselves, in sharp contrast to the “wicked agitator” who “exploits” the poor wage workers, etc., etc. With slight variations the following from

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Dr. Ross might have been written by any of these modern hypocrites who are willing to do anything for the workers except to get off their backs: “I am not a slaveholder. Nay, I have shown some self-denial in that matter. I emancipated slaves whose money value would now be \$10,000.” And, while one ponders this, wondering why the reverend gentleman defied the will of God by denying slavery to those foreordained to bondage, one almost sees the unction oozing out of him when he delivered this: “In the providence of God, my riches have entirely passed from me. I do not mean that, like the widow, I gave all the living I had. *My estate was then greater than that slave-property.*” He continued irrelevantly, in a style reminiscent of the immortal Artemus Ward: “I speak from Huntsville, Alabama, my present home. That gem of the South, that beautiful city where the mountain softens into the vale—where the water gushes, a great fountain, from the rock—where around that living stream there are streets of roses, and houses of intelligence and gracefulness and gentlest hospitality—and, withal, where so high honor is ever given to the ministers of God.”!

As a specimen of irrelevant ranting, this one by Dr. Ross compares favorably with some of those sent out over the air by the Detroit priest and the Jesuit Sheen.

IV. Sophists, Sycophants and ‘Plain Scoundrels.’

Not all the upholders of slavery who invoke the deity in behalf of their anti-social, anti-human creed, are ordained priests and ministers. There are scoundrels who make a fat living, in the Catholic Church, for example, capitalizing their erstwhile radicalism, or alleged one-time profession of Socialism. They include some of the lowest specimens of humanity—the very scum of the earth, willing to prostitute themselves in behalf of wage slavery, working through the reactionary Ultramontane machine. Such creatures also flourished during the struggle against chattel slavery in America. Among them were some who could rave and fulminate as efficiently as the Rev. Ross, and to whom the word “principles” meant no more than a fancy and superfluous word in the dictionary. One such worthy, by the name of O’Conor, delivered an “oration” in New York City in 1859 on the subject, “Negro Slavery Not Unjust.” It reeks with the sort of crooked reasoning, sophistry and subtle deviltry which we today associate with the Ultramontane politicians. This is a sample of the speech, and it will be noted that it bears a striking resemblance to

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the reactionary and vicious rantings of the Ultramontane politicians:

“We must turn away from the teachings of [anti-slavery] fanaticism. We must look at Negro slavery as it is, remembering that the voice of inspiration, as found in the sacred volume [he means the Bible!] nowhere condemns the bondage of those who are fit only for bondage. [The Rosses and O’Conors and their masters will, of course, decide who are, and who are not, “fit only for bondage.”] Yielding to the clear decree of nature, and the dictates of sound philosophy, we must pronounce that institution just, benign, lawful and proper. *The Constitution established by the fathers of our Republic, which recognized it [slavery], must be maintained.*”!

Poor old Constitution, what crimes are not committed in thy name! One is reminded of Artemus Ward’s observation: “Theres a artikil in the Constitooshun of the United States sez in effeck that everybody may think just as he darn pleazes, and them is my sentiments to a hare.” Unless the modern capitalist slavocracy is sent to join the Southern slavocracy, to *think* is about all that most of us will be allowed to do—and then we shall probably have to swear that our thoughts are proper ones, and not in conflict with other “constitooshunal” clauses!!

However, is it not possible, in O’Conor’s ravings, to hear the identical cry, to note the same reasoning, the same reactionary plea, that we hear in the falsehoods, slanders, malicious misrepresentations that emanate particularly from the Ultramontane camp—not only against the liberating program of Socialism, but even against such mild reforms as the proposed anti-child labor amendment, which is fought so bitterly by the Ultramontane politicians, cleric and lay? Read any of the speeches on this subject by the Sheens, Coughlins, et al., or by such lay Ultramontanes as Al. Smith, and lesser lights such as the apostate Jew, David Goldstein, now laboring in the lord’s vineyard—that is, the Catholic lord’s vineyard—and the similarity will be at once apparent.

Incidentally, Goldstein, also known as St. David, is not only an apostate Jew—he is a renegade Socialist who, to use his own unctuous language, was given “the light and urge that sent me [St. Davery] to the baptismal font of the Catholic Church.” There is an interesting story to be told about St. David, but that will have to wait. He never misses an opportunity, however, to slander the Socialist movement, or to falsify and misrepresent its principles, in behalf of wage slavery, exactly as his prototypes, O’Conor, Ross, and thousands of others slandered the Abolitionists and the anti-slavery advocates generally during the period of anti-chattel-slavery agitation.

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The working class must be on guard against the sophists, sycophants and plain scoundrels who play on their present ignorance of history, upon their prejudices and lack of understanding of their class interests and wage slave status. These servitors of stark reaction must be exposed as Lincoln exposed the sycophants and servitors of the Southern slavocracy. Lincoln, for example, exposed the dishonesty and hypocrisy of the Rev. Ross in a brief comment which is a masterpiece of its kind. In it Lincoln pricks the bubble of Ross's pretended superior knowledge of what were the designs of the deity, while at the same time underscoring the fact that those who live on slavery, or otherwise benefit from it as an institution, are not to be trusted as impartial judges. Said Lincoln:

“Certainly there is no contending against the will of God; but still there is some difficulty in ascertaining and applying it to particular cases. For instance, we will suppose the Rev. Dr. Ross has a slave named Sambo, and the question is, ‘Is it the will of God that Sambo shall remain a slave, or be set free?’ The Almighty gives no audible answer to the question, and his revelation, the Bible, gives none—or at most none but such as admits of a squabble as to its meaning; no one thinks of asking Sambo's opinion on it. So at last it comes to this, that Dr. Ross is to decide the question; and while he considers it, he sits in the shade, with gloves on his hands, and subsists on the bread that Sambo is earning in the burning sun. If he decides that God wills Sambo to continue a slave, he thereby retains his own comfortable position; but if he decides that God wills Sambo to be free, he thereby has to walk out of the shade, throw off his gloves, and delve for his own bread. Will Dr. Ross be actuated by the perfect impartiality which has ever been considered most favorable to correct decisions?”

Will the du Ponts, the Lippmans, the Roosevelts, the Coughlins, the Sheens—the popes and allied rulers, and their retainers everywhere—subsisting as they do, on the product, the unpaid labor, of the wage slaves, will these exploiters “be actuated by the perfect impartiality which has ever been considered most favorable to correct decisions”? They will not. They will no more give up their “comfortable positions” than the Rosses, and their slave-holding masters, would do so. They will have to be dislodged, and the workers, organized in Socialist Industrial Unions, will do the dislodging.

Let this be the answer to the slanders and stupidities of the reaction. And let them also take note of Lincoln's declaration which, in its beautiful and succinct phrasing, parallels the Marxian battle-cry, “Workers of the world, unite!”:

“The strongest bond of human sympathy, outside the family relation,

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should be one uniting all working people, of all nations, and tongues, and kindreds.”

Slavery must be, and *will* be, banished from earth. And it is the historic mission of the modern slave class, the wage workers, to destroy the latest and last, the most hideous and degrading of all, WAGE SLAVERY.

(Weekly People, March 6, 1937)

SUPERSTITION: FATHER OF SLAVERY.

Superstition, which is widespread among the nations, has taken advantage of human weakness to cast its spell over the mind of almost every man.—*Cicero*.

I. Capitalists Rule Because of Ignorance and Superstitious Fear of Workers.

Superstition is born of fear, and fear is the result of ignorance. On the whole, only the unknown holds terror for man. Courage resides not in the heart, but in the head. Belief, pure and simple, is but an acknowledgment of ignorance, general or specific, even as bravery and power are merely a reflection of knowledge. Superstitious or supernatural faith, or beliefs, ends where knowledge begins.

The power of a ruling class depends largely upon the ability of that class to keep the slave class in ignorance. To achieve this end all sorts of devices are employed by the ruling class. Formerly kingship was claimed to rest on divine sanction—indeed the king himself often claimed divine origin. The most conspicuous example of that claim survives today in the person of the Emperor of Japan. When that claim was finally exploded in the modern capitalist world generally, the new ruler (the capitalist) based his right to rule (that is, to exploit the wage slaves and to hold them in economic subjection) on the claim that he (the capitalist) was not only a superior factor in the production of wealth, but that he was absolutely indispensable. He claims, for instance, that he is a capitalist because he is a great and useful captain of industry, whereas the truth is that he is a wholly useless or superfluous “captain of industry” simply because of the accidental fact that he is a capitalist! And he is a capitalist simply because the workers, in their ignorance and superstitious fear, hand over to him the total produce of their labor in return for a slave’s pittance barely sufficient to insure to the workers a mere slave subsistence.

II. Moral of Legend of Svantevit.

In the chronicles of Saxo Grammaticus (a learned cleric who lived and wrote in Denmark in the twelfth century) the story is told of the marauding expeditions of a

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certain Danish king to the land of the Wends, a Slavic tribe living in what is now mainly northern Germany, and on islands in the Baltic Sea. The Wends worshipped a deity named Svantevit, represented by a wooden figure of monstrous dimensions, erected in the center of one of their towns. Svantevit (through his priests) was forever receiving many and costly gifts from his worshipers, and was in turn expected to give these his powerful protection. And never had the people doubted his power to protect them and to defeat—and crush their enemies. The Danish invaders were, therefore, treated with scorn by the Wends, who felt sure that Svantevit would confound, scatter and crush the enemy. But it turned out otherwise, and at length the land of the Wends was subdued and pillaged, and the mighty god Svantevit, to the great consternation of the conquered people, was soon laid by the heel and (Saxo tells us) “the Danes now began to chop the god to pieces, cutting off his legs first, causing him to fall to the ground with a loud crash. When the Wends saw this, they shouted words of scorn at the impotence of their god, and their superstitious fear of, and reverence for, Svantevit quickly changed to contempt.” The conquerors then ordered the Wends to drag the wooden remains of their once all-powerful deity out of the town and to burn the pieces. With a remnant of their superstition surviving, they begged to be relieved of this task, saying that “they feared the god would punish them by paralyzing their limbs if they used them to execute such an order.” The conquerors then reminded them “that they had no need to fear the power of a god who could not even help himself.” And thus ended the rule of Svantevit, whose place subsequently was taken by the “pale god” of the Christians.

III. Ruled Are Source of Power of Rulers.

The lessons we draw from this ancient chronicle are that man creates his own gods and rulers, and that the power of these gods and rulers represents precisely the power which man himself surrenders to them, or with which he himself endows them—no more, no less. Also, that once men discover that their gods and rulers are mere crude kindling wood, their fear of them turns to infinite scorn, and they do not hesitate to drag through the dust their erstwhile supposedly almighty one! And so, when the worker today permits himself to be ruled, enslaved and fleeced by priest, king, dictator or capitalist, he is but allowing his own fears and superstitions to govern him.

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The working class today produces all social wealth. Except for a tiny portion, this wealth is expropriated (which is a polite word for “stolen”!) by the capitalist class. As we have said, by keeping the workers in ignorance and fear, the capitalist class has been able to maintain possession of the wealth stolen from the workers, and has even been successful in investing it with a halo of sanctity designed to keep the workers at a respectful distance. “Capital,” they say, is superior to Labor, and must be safeguarded no matter what happens to Labor, for without “Capital,” they tell us, civilization must perish! They are playing a rather crude shell-game when they speak of “Capital” instead of “capitalist.” “Capital,” in its simplest terms, is the wealth produced by wage labor, which is used to produce more wealth by re-employing wage labor. The capitalist, as we have seen, performs no function in production proper—indeed, he is a hindrance and an obstruction in the productive process. And so, Abraham Lincoln was quite correct when he said (in his Message to Congress, December 3, 1861):

“Labor is prior to and independent of capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital. . . .”

If Lincoln had been living today he would have been denounced as a dangerous radical for giving utterance to such impious sentiments. For in these words Lincoln smashes the superstition which the capitalists seek to hallow, and before which the workers generally bow down in fear, just as the Wends bowed down in superstitious fear before Svantevit, Not being able to refute Lincoln (or not daring to do so, seeing that in other respects the name of Lincoln is invoked by capitalist spokesmen in order to confuse labor), the capitalists, or their literary lackeys, never quote this significant and true statement by Lincoln. They keep silent about it, or, if they *must* refer to it, they utter meaningless platitudes about it, or seek to drown its very plain and simple meaning in a deluge of irrelevancies. For, to continue their rule and to preserve their power, they *must* maintain the superstition that it is *they* who provide Labor with a living—that it is *they* who hold a protecting, life-giving, hand over Labor, even as Svantevit was supposed to protect the Wends. The fact is that it is Labor which (foolishly) provides the parasitical capitalists with a sumptuous living in idleness, besides supporting likewise their hordes of retainers and political puppets. The fact further is that it is Labor that holds in its mighty hand the puny figure of the capitalist. Close that fist, and the capitalist parasite is crushed, and so

far as production of wealth is concerned, “he never would be missed”!

IV. ‘In the Hollow of His Hand.’

Behold that mighty figure of Labor, and observe that puny figure of the parasitical capitalist exploiter. There this creature, which is assumed to be so powerful, so beneficent, and so indispensable, struts like a voracious insect in the hollow of Labor’s potent hand. Like Svantevit of old, he promises Labor to protect him, to take care of him, and to see to it that Labor’s “enemies” are crushed. Like Svantevit, he threatens all sorts of dire things to Labor if the giant dares to disregard him, his “sacred rule and rights,” and his wishes. And like the superstitious Wends of a thousand years ago, Labor has so far believed in the potency of “Capital,” i.e., of the capitalist parasite. But now the giant is pondering and as he looks at the midget in his fist, he seems to be asking himself: Who, and what, are you? Why do I allow myself to be ruled, to be cowed, by you? You are not taking care of me, you are not protecting me against misery, want and fearful disaster. Is it because you do not want to, or—is it because you *cannot* do so? And we seem to hear the giant exclaim: Yes, that’s it! You cannot! You are a fraud, a bloody imposition! You are no more needed by me in producing wealth than is a potato bug needed to raise potatoes! You are as useful to me as is a fifth wheel to a wagon! I need you as much as I need a rash or a flea! And now, watch, I am going to close my hand on you, and rid myself of your pestiferous, parasitical presence! I shall flip you off me, into the dust of the highway of progress, as I would flip a vermin off my body into the dirt!

Some such thought processes are taking place beneath the brow of Giant Labor. For the giant has brains as well as brawn—he can think as well as toil. And we *know* that some mighty thinking is being done by the workers—slowly, confusedly at present, but with ever greater intenseness, with ever increasing clarity. And when the thinking is completed, there will be an end to the superstitious fear of, and reverence for, the supposed attributes of “Capital.” The workers will then organize to lay their erstwhile “deity” by the heel! They will treat that “deity” with the contempt his impudent claims and obvious impotence deserve. They will say, as was said to the wooden deity long ago: We no longer fear you—you who were to help us have not even the power to help yourself! We shall dispose of you on history’s

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chopping block and use what is left of your wooden parts to kindle a new flame of liberty—the liberty to manage our affairs for ourselves, the liberty to appropriate for our own uses the fruits of our labor entire, the liberty of action and freedom of spirit which will form the cornerstone of the new government and social system which we shall erect: The Industrial Union Government of Emancipated and Affluent Labor!

V. Only Labor United Can Achieve Liberty.

There is no one so blind but that he can perceive that as things are they cannot continue. Everything has been tried but one thing, and all have failed. The one thing that has not been tried is Socialism, and in Socialism, and that alone, lies the world's hope, the possibility of a nobler and higher civilization, and the certain prospect of working class emancipation from slavery and misery, from want and the harrowing fear of want. To achieve their great and noble aim, the workers must organize *as a class*, on the basis of *their* class interests, and not on the basis of the interests of the class, or groups, that exploit them, and hold them in economic thralldom. They must *unite*, and act as one. The workers are now divided in a thousand and one ways, these divisions reflecting false claims or deliberate schemes to keep them from throwing the parasites from off their backs. False racial claims, conflicting creeds, craft divisions, competitive labor fakers whose alleged “labor unions” are but so many vested interests maintained as much to feather the nests of the fakers as to protect the class interests of the capitalist exploiters—these, and many others, are the things that keep the workers from achieving that unity so indispensable to them if they are ever to be free. Singly the workers can be broken and kept in subjection; united, joined together in one mighty body of their own creation, and controlled by themselves alone, they are invincible! Remember the fable of Aesop:

A father had a most quarrelsome family. His sons were forever contending against each other, none getting anywhere. At last he called them before him, and having tied a bundle of sticks together, he bade them to break the sticks. They tried vainly to do so, and finally gave up in despair. The father then untied the bundle, and handed them each stick separately, and without trouble the sticks were then broken. Whereupon he said to them: “My sons, as long as you remain united, you

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are an unbreakable and unbeatable power; but if you contend against each other, and separate, you are undone, and your enemies triumph!”

And so with labor: Do not hearken to the advice of your class enemy, nor heed the false pleas of the servants of your class enemy. Just as it lies within your power to crush the class which exploits you, so it lies within your power to establish freedom, peace and plenty for yourselves. Beware of those who tell you that they, too, believe in liberty but who counsel you against mistaking “license” for “liberty.” They are the “yes-butters” whose sole concern it is to keep the chains of wage slavery upon your weary limbs! Dismiss with scorn the claim that you can have too much freedom, that liberty can ever constitute a menace to the liberated class. It is a lie hoary with age, and used by all previous exploiting classes when the slave class stirred in attempts to achieve liberty. Remind these false prophets of the inspired words of our revolutionary hero, Thomas Jefferson:

“I prefer dangerous liberty rather than quiet servitude.”

But they who would be free, must themselves strike the blow for freedom. Freedom, so-called, handed down from above, invariably becomes the basis for new, intensified slavery.

Unite for Freedom! Unite to establish the free Republic of Labor! Unite, industrially and politically, for Socialism, the dream of the ages, the realizable hope of the future! End the superstition fostered by the ruling classes of all times—the superstition that slavery is eternal, that it is “ordained of God,” and that it must persist in the future as it has prevailed in the past! Heed the call and battle-cry of the Socialist Labor Party:

All power to the Socialist Industrial Union!
The land and the workshops to the workers!
CAPITALISM MUST BE DESTROYED!

(Weekly People, September 2, 1939)

Appendix.

THOMAS JEFFERSON
On Priestcraft and Creeds, Church and State,
And Theocratic Pretensions

His Rejection of the Idea of “God in Government,” of the
Claim That Religion, and Specifically Christianity,
Is the Foundation of Government

History, I believe, furnishes no example of a priest-ridden people maintaining a free civil government.—*Letter to Alexander von Humboldt* (1813).

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It excites the gratifying reflection that my own country has been the first to prove to the world two truths, that man can govern himself, and that religious freedom is the most effectual mode against religious dissension. I am happy in the restoration of the Jews particularly to their social rights.

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The metaphysical insanities of Athanasius, of Loyola, and of Calvin, are, to my understanding, mere relapses into polytheism differing from paganism only by being more unintelligible.— *To Jared Sparks* (1820).

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You judge truly that I am not afraid of the priests. They have tried upon me all their various batteries, of pious whining, hypocritical canting, lying & slandering, without being able to give me one moment of pain. I have contemplated their order from the Magi of the East to the Saints of the West, and I have found no difference of character.—*Letter to Judge Thatcher of Mass.* (1824).

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The common law is that system of law which was introduced by the Saxons on their settlement in England, and altered, from time to time, by proper legislative authority, from that time to the date of the Magna Charta, which terminates the period of the common law, or *lex non scripta*, and commences that of the statute

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law, or *lex scripta*. This settlement took place about the middle of the Fifth Century, but Christianity was not introduced until the Seventh Century; the conversion of the first Christian king of the Heptarchy having taken place about the year 598, and that of the last about 686. Here, then, was a space of about 200 years, during which the common law was in existence, and Christianity no part of it. If it ever, therefore, was adopted into the common law, It must have been between the introduction of Christianity and the date of the Magna Charta. But of the laws of that period we have a tolerable collection by Lambard and Wilkins, probably not perfect; but neither very defective, and if any one chooses to build a doctrine of that period, supposed to have been lost, it is incumbent on him to prove it to have existed, and what were its contents. These were so far alternations of the common law, and became themselves a part of it, but none of these adopt Christianity as a part of the common law. If, therefore, from the settlement of the Saxons to the introduction of Christianity among them, that system of religion could not be a part of the common law, because they were not yet Christians, and if, having their laws from that period to the close of the common law, we are able to find among them no such act of adoption, we may safely affirm (though contradicted by all the judges and writers on earth) *that Christianity neither is, nor ever was, a part of the common law.*

*

I was glad to find in your book a formal contradiction . . . of the judiciary usurpation of legislative powers; for such the judges have usurped in their repeated decisions, that Christianity is a part of the common law. The proof of the contrary, which you have adduced, is incontrovertible; to wit, that the common law existed while Anglo-Saxons were yet Pagans, at a time when they had never heard the name of Christ pronounced or knew that such a character had ever existed. But it may amuse you, to show when, and by what means, they stole this law in upon us [Here follow long and learned citations to disprove the false theocratic claims that “Christianity is part of the laws of England,” etc.] . . . Here I might defy the best-read lawyer to produce another script of authority for this judiciary forgery. . . Thus ingulphing Bible, Testament and all into the common law. . . But this would lead my pen and your patience too far. What a conspiracy this between Church and State!—*Letter to John Cartwright* (1824).

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It is too late in the day for men of sincerity to pretend they believe in the Platonic mysticisms that three are one, and one is three; and yet that one is not three, and the three are not one. . . . But this constitutes the craft, the power and the profit of the priests. Sweep away their gossamer fabrics of factitious religion, and they would catch no more flies. We should all then . . . live without an order of priests, moralize for ourselves, follow the oracle of conscience, and say nothing about what no man can understand, nor therefore believe.—*Letter to John Adams*.

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The day will come, when the mystical generation of Jesus, by the Supreme Being as his Father, in the womb of a virgin, will be classed with the fable of the generation of Minerva in the brain of Jupiter. But we may hope that the dawn of reason, and freedom of thought in these United States, will do away all this artificial scaffolding. . . . —*Letter to John Adams* (1823).

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An opposition [to the building of the University of Virginia] has been got up. . . . The serious enemies are the priests of the different religious sects, to whose spells on the human mind its improvement is ominous. Their pulpits are now resounding with denunciations against the appointment of Doctor Cooper, whom they charge as a monotheist in opposition to their tritheism. . . . The Presbyterian clergy are loudest; the most intolerant of all sects, the most tyrannical and ambitious; ready at the word of the lawgiver, if such word could be now obtained, to put the torch to the pile, and rekindle in this virgin hemisphere, the flames in which their oracle Calvin consumed the poor Servetus because he could not find in his Euclid the proposition which has demonstrated that three are one and one is three, nor subscribe to that of Calvin, that magistrates have a right to exterminate all heretics to Calvinistic Creed. They pant to re-establish, *by law*, that holy inquisition, which they can now only infuse into *public opinion*. We have most unwisely committed to the hierophants of our particular superstition [i.e., the priesthood], the direction of public opinion, that lord of the universe. We have given them stated and privileged days to collect and catechise us, opportunities of delivering their oracles to the people in mass, and of moulding their minds as wax in the hollow of their hands.—*Letter to William Short* (1820).

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In some of the delightful conversations with you, in the evenings of 1798–99 . . . the Christian religion was sometimes our topic; and I then promised you, that one day or other, I would give you my views of it. They are the result of a life of inquiry and reflection, and very different from that anti-Christian system imputed to me by those who know nothing of my opinions. To the corruption of Christianity I am, indeed, opposed; but not to the genuine precepts of Jesus himself. I am a Christian in the only sense in which he wishes any one to be; sincerely attracted to his doctrines, in preference to all others; ascribing to himself every *human* excellence; and believing he never claimed any other. . . . It behooves every man who values liberty of conscience for himself, to resist invasions of it in the case of others; or their case may be, by change of circumstances, become his own.—*Letter to Benjamin Rush* (1803).

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You say you are a Calvinist. I am not. I am a sect by myself, as far as I know. I am not a Jew, and therefore do not accept their theology which supposes the God of infinite justice to punish the sins of the fathers upon their children, unto the third and fourth generation. . . . It is the speculations of crazy theologians which have made a Babel of a religion [i.e., that of Jesus] the most moral and sublime ever preached to man, and calculated to heal, and not to create differences. These religious animosities I impute to those who call themselves his ministers, and who engraft their casuistries on the stock of his simple precepts. . . .—*Letter to Ezra Stiles* (1819).

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Question with boldness even the existence of a God; because, if there be one, he must more approve of the homage of reason, than that of blindfolded fear. . . . Do not be frightened from this inquiry [into religion] by any fear of its consequences. If it ends in a belief that there is no God, you will find incitements to virtue in the comfort and pleasantness you feel in its exercise, and the love of others it will procure you. . . . In fine, I repeat, you must lay aside all prejudice on both sides, and neither believe nor reject anything, because any other persons, or description of persons, have rejected or believed it. Your own reason is the only oracle given you by heaven, and you are answerable, not for the rightness, but uprightness of the decision.—*Letter to Peter Carr* (1787).

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By our own act of assembly of 1705, c. 30., if a person brought up in the Christian religion denies the being of a God, or the Trinity, or asserts there are more gods than one, or denies the Christian religion to be true, or the scriptures to be of divine authority, he is punishable on the first offense by incapacity to hold any office or employment ecclesiastical, civil, or military; on the second by disability to sue, to take any gift or legacy, to be guardian, executor or administrator, and by three years' imprisonment without bail. A father's right to the custody of his own children being founded in law on his right of guardianship, this being taken away, they may of course be severed from him, and put by the authority of a court into more orthodox hands. This is a summary view of that religious slavery under which a people have been willing to remain, who have lavished their lives and fortunes for the establishment of their civil freedom. . . . Millions of innocent men, women and children, since the introduction of Christianity, have been burnt, tortured, fined, imprisoned; yet we have not advanced one inch toward uniformity. What has been the effect of coercion? To make one half the world fools, and the other half hypocrites. To support roguery and error all over the earth.—*Notes on the State of Virginia*, 1781–1785.

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The bill for establishing religious freedom, the principles of which had, to a certain degree, been enacted before, I had drawn in all the latitude of reason and right. It still met with opposition; but, with some mutilations in the preamble, it was finally passed; and a singular proposition proved that its protection was meant to be universal. Where the preamble declares, that coercion is a departure from the plan of the holy author of our religion, an amendment was proposed, by inserting the word “Jesus Christ,” so that it should read, “a departure from the plan of Jesus Christ, the holy author of our religion”; the insertion was rejected by a great majority, in proof that they meant to comprehend, within the mantle of its protection, the Jew and the Gentile, the Christian and Mahometan, the Hindoo, and Infidel of every denomination.—*Autobiography*.

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In the middle ages of Christianity opposition to the State opinions was hushed. The consequence was, Christianity became loaded with all the Romish follies.—*Notes on Religion* 1776 (?).

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I know nothing of the history of the Jesuits you mention in four volumes. Is it a good one? I dislike, with you, their restoration, because it makes a retrograde step from light towards darkness. We shall have our follies without doubt. Some one or more of them will always be afloat. But ours will be the follies of enthusiasm, not of bigotry, not of Jesuitism. Bigotry is the disease of ignorance, of morbid minds; enthusiasm of the free and buoyant. . . . Old Europe will have to lean on our shoulders, and to hobble along by our side, under the monkish trammels of priests and kings as [best] she can.—*Letter to John Adams* (1816).

Ultramontanism.

(From the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.)

“The first and fundamental characteristic of Ultramontanism is its championship of a logical carrying out of the so-called ‘papalistic system,’ the concentration, that is, of all ecclesiastical power in the person of the Roman bishop. . . .

“In 1865 Doellinger wrote: ‘The Ultramontane view can be summarized in a single, concise, and luminous proposition; but out of this proposition are evolved a doctrine and a view that embrace not merely religion and the church, but science and the state, politics, morals and the social order—in a word, the whole intellectual life of men and nations. The proposition runs: The pope is the supreme, the infallible, and consequently the sole authority in all that concerns religion, the church, and morality, and each of his utterances on these topics demands unconditional submission—internal no less than external.’ History, since the Vatican Council, has shown this judgment to have been correct. . . .

“A second peculiarity of Ultramontanism is its confusion of religion with politics; it claims for the Roman Catholic Church the functions of a political power, and asserts that it is the duty of the secular state to carry out its instructions and wishes. Ultramontanism regards the state, not as a divinely established order but, like its ancient prototype, as a profane institution and, for that reason, not coordinate with, but subordinate to, the church.

“Since the conditions of the age no longer allow the pope to depose a temporal sovereign, the practical application of this conception of the relationship between the spiritual and temporal powers has taken other forms, all of which, however, clearly show that the superiority of the church over the state is assumed. This may be seen in the attitude of Ultramontanism toward secular law. It assumes that God has conferred on the individual and on society certain rights and competences as inalienable possessions. This ‘natural law’ ranks above all secular law, and all state legislation is binding only in so far as it is in harmony with that law. As to the provisions of this natural law, and the consequences they entail in individual cases, these can be decided only by the church, i.e., the last resort, by the pope. This is to assert the principle of the invalidity of all legislation conflicting with ecclesiastical interests and rules. This was the attitude of Innocent III, when he annulled the

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English Magna Carta; of Innocent X when he pronounced the treaty of Westphalia null and void; of Pius IX when he condemned the Austrian constitution (1868) and the ecclesiastical laws of Prussia so far as they affected the circumstances of the Roman Catholic Church (1875). Thus too, even at the present time, the opinion is very clearly expressed in Ultramontane quarters that, in the event of the state issuing laws contravening those of nature or of the church, obedience must be refused. . . . Thus Ultramontanism disclaims any moral subjection to secular authority or law, and will recognize the state only in so far as it conforms its rules to those of the church. An instance of this interference with the duties of the individual citizen toward the state may be found in the fact that, till the year 1904, the Catholics of Italy were prohibited by the pope from taking part in any parliamentary election.

“Since Ultramontanism cannot hope to realize its political ambitions unless it succeeds in controlling the intellectual and religious life of Catholic Christendom, it attempts to extend its sphere of influence in all directions over culture, science, education, literature and the forms taken by devotion. This endeavor is the third great characteristic of Ultramontanism. . . . In logical sequence to these tenets it seeks to divorce the school from the state—a proceeding which it terms educational freedom, though the underlying motive is to subordinate the school to the church. In the domain of religion, Ultramontanism tends to foster popular superstitions and to emphasize outward forms as the essence of religious life, for it can only maintain its dominion so long as the common people remain at a low spiritual level. . . .”

“Ultramontanism, again, though essentially averse from all forms of progress, had displayed great dexterity in utilizing the opportunities presented to it by modern life. Where it appeared advisable, it has formed itself into a political party, as for instance, the Center party in Germany. It has shown extreme activity in the creation of a press devoted to its interests, and has consolidated its influence by the formation of an extensive league-system. . . .”