

The Catholic Church And Economics



By L. H. Lehmann

This article is from the 1944 edition of the *Converted Catholic Magazine* of which former Roman Catholic priest, Leo Herbert Lehmann (also known as L.H. Lehmann) is the editor. It was first put online in PDF format by the LutheranLibrary.org.

Leo Lehmann gave us many interesting insights about the Catholic Church, information I think most Catholics don't know. Insiders of any organization are bound to know things the public doesn't know about it. In my opinion, former priests who received the light of the Gospel of Christ are the best kind of insiders. You can trust them because of their honesty. They have nothing to gain by telling the truth and may even be endangering themselves in their obedience to God by exposing evil.

[This is the third of a series of articles on "The True Nature and Structure of Roman Catholicism."]

THE GREATEST ENIGMA among all of the Catholic church's aims and activities in its attitude toward economics. The confusion thus created tends, on the one hand, to make American businessmen regard the Catholic church as a "conservative" force; on the other, to foster the widespread notion in Labor circles that the Catholic church is a staunch – almost radical – friend of the working man.

Naturally, the Catholic church is not anxious to resolve this confusion, since it serves its interests by preventing its opponents on both sides in the economic struggle today from forming a united front against it. Most of its literature on economic matters, while giving definite indications of its real objectives, is written with an eye to the particular group to which it is directed. Papal encyclicals, for instance, on economics are so cleverly worded that they excel all others in the use of what is traditionally known

as 'pontifical circumlocutions.' Like the ancient Oracles of Delphi, they have a satisfactory answer for every side, and leave the desired impression that the Catholic church is all things to all men.

In order to discover what the real aims of the Roman Catholic church are in the field of economics, it is first necessary to examine its historical background and compare it with its present teachings; then fit them in with its concept of a "perfect order" of government.

Historical Background

Early Christian doctrine did not encourage the amassing of wealth by individuals. However, the manner in which the Roman Catholic church later incorporated this doctrine into its thinking is a sample of one of the weirdest twists of its moral and social outlook. By a convenient and subtly self-justifying distinction, the Catholic church turned thumbs down in horror against the accumulation of wealth in the form of money and goods, but approved and supported wealth in the form of land and slaves. To the Protestant mind it is impossible to conceive how Jesus Christ could ever have approved of such a distinction. Yet this outlandish distinction continues to dominate the economic thinking of the Catholic church today.

In Jesus' day there was no such cleavage between land and other forms of wealth such as was evident in the later Middle Ages. The Roman Empire was highly commercialized. Land was bought and sold perhaps as freely as at present in capitalist countries. H. G. Wells (Outline of History, vol. 2, pp. 45960) tells us:

"In the third and second century B.C., this release, this untethering of wealth, began to tell upon the general economic life of the Roman and Hellenized world. People began to buy land and the like not for use, but to sell again at a profit; people borrowed to buy, speculation developed... Everyone was developing property. Farmers were giving up corn and cattle, borrowing money, buying slaves, and starting the more intensive cultivation of oil and wine."

The Catholic church's principle that conceived of a feudal baron as being moral and a businessman immoral could not, therefore, have come from either the teachings of Jesus or the early Christians. But it is easy enough to see how the Catholic church acquired this 'split personality' on the question of wealth. It came about by the pressure of two influences cutting toward the center of the church's moral tenets. The first was the gradual increase of the properties of the church itself. The second, the erosion of the old Roman Empire, with its decline of commerce and the closing in of the feudal period, during which the properties of the church acquired the character of feudal fiefs. It is a fact of history that the beginnings of serfdom and the power of the Catholic church both occurred under the Emperor Constantine, who according to H. G. Wells (op. cit., p. 551):

"tried to make a caste of the peasants and small cultivators, and to restrict them from moving from their holdings. In fact, he sought to make them serfs. The supply of slave labor had fallen off because the empire was no longer an

invading but an invaded power; he turned to serfdom as the remedy.”

In another century the Dark Ages descended on Europe. The passing of the Roman military power made all life and property insecure, and accelerated the formation of the feudal system under which each person became the serf or vassal of a powerful “protector.” Bishops became feudal lords; the church became indissolubly wedded to the status quo, and thus the dichotomy was complete. It was an easy matter for the theologians to conceive of landed wealth and serfdom as something moral, good and noble, but commercial and other forms of wealth – which had virtually disappeared from the European scene – as immoral, ignoble and destructive of the social order. The early Christian prejudice against wealth in any form was thus conveniently watered down to a condemnation only of the commercial and outward manifestations of wealth. The substance of wealth – the possession of land and the labor of serfs – was given the approval of the church. It was easy to find metaphysical proof that such an economic system was in keeping with what Papal encyclicals today constantly refer to as the “order of nature.”

If anyone thinks that the Catholic church today has abandoned its aim to bring the world back to the feudal conditions of the Middle Ages, he either has been deceived by the oracular nature of pontifical pronouncements on economics, or has failed to read correctly the writings of the Catholic church’s outstanding economists in America. The late Msgr. John A. Ryan, for instance, whom some of the severest critics of the Catholic church regard as one of the greatest champions of Catholic liberalism, has the following to say in his official textbook, *Catholic Principles of Politics* (p. 167):

“After all, the liberal economic views of Pope Leo’s Encyclical on Labor, the Bishops’ Program of Social Reconstruction, and the statement of the Archbishops and Bishops of the Administrative Board of the N.C. W.C. are more conservative than the views and politics to which they are opposed, for they go back in spirit and essence to the Middle Ages.”

Furthermore, no matter how much it may be disliked or denied, the collaboration of the Vatican with the Axis dictators, Catholic spokesmen’s open condemnation of modern capitalism that went with it, the approval of the Corporative State in Pope Pius XI’s well-known Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, the advocacy of the Corporative State by the Catholic hierarchy of America in their pronouncement on “*The Church and the Social Order*” in 1940, when the Axis dictators were having everything their own way, were all a part of the aim of the Catholic church to help restore the economic “order of nature” that existed in the Middle Ages. It was at that time also, in April, 1940, that the influential Jesuit magazine *America* sounded the call for “a return to an integral social order, the principles of which are still preserved in our languid memory of the great medieval experiment Hitler’s whole idea, according to the Father Edmund A. Walsh, the Jesuit geopolitician of Georgetown University, was also to restore the Holy Roman Empire of medieval times.

The virtue which the Catholic church saw in the program of Fascism was its determination to overthrow the capitalistic system of the “plutocratic democracies” which Catholic spokesmen have always condemned as the child of

Calvin and the Protestant Reformation.

The influential Jesuit magazine, *America*, of May 17, 1941, (six months before Pearl Harbor) put it this way:

“How we Catholics have loathed and despised this Lucifer civilization, this nationalist creation of those little men who refused to bend the knee or bow the head in submission to a higher authority... Today, American Catholics are being asked to shed their blood for that particular kind of secularist civilization which they have been heroically repudiating for four centuries. This civilization is now called democracy, and the suggestion is being made that we send the Yanks to Europe again to defend it... All the Yanks in America will not save it from disintegration. Unless a miracle occurs, it is doomed... finally and irrevocably doomed.”

The Catholic view of the superiority of the thirteenth century over our twentieth is pungently expressed by the Jesuit Father Robert Gannon, President of Fordham University, when he was asked his opinion on the atom bomb:

“Our savage generation cannot be trusted with it. Such power of destruction would have been a social hazard even in the civilized thirteenth century.”

Thomas Aquinas

The feudal system of economics was in keeping with the Catholic church's hierarchical concept of authority. The king was on the top rung of the earthly ladder and was absolute ruler of all material things. All land belonged to him; others held land merely in fief to the king. In fact, none but the king could own land outright.¹

In spiritual matters the Pope was the undisputed head, but since the spiritual order is regarded as superior to anything in the material order, the Pope included the king and all material things also under his dominion.

The thirteenth century found the Catholic church in full dominance of the Western world, controlling one-third of all the land in Europe.² Up till then, in spite of endless struggles between the Papacy and the temporal rulers, Europe was completely frozen economically into the feudal mold. Everything was static. There was little trade or commerce as we know it today; no progress of any kind in material things. This “static” state of society well suited the Catholic church's ideology, since revolutionary change of any kind brings new ideas in religion and government and is therefore always feared by the church's rulers.

But in the thirteenth century began an expansion of trade and increased use of money, the first stirrings of what later became known as the industrial revolution. The church was then faced with the necessity of reconciling itself in some way to the change and at the same time of controlling this new force. The man that effected this reconciliation and temporarily saved the structure of the church was Thomas Aquinas, the Catholic church's greatest theologian. What Aquinas did was, on the one hand, to adjust Catholic moral

and ethical principles under which buying and selling would be justified; on the other, to control the revolutionary possibilities of the new commercial idea so that it would not change substantially anything in the religious dogmas of the church or in its hierarchical system of authority. In fact, he fixed in even more rigid molds than before both the dogmas of the church and the principles of civil government. These ethical-economic concepts of Aquinas, enforced by the church and by the kings acting under its dominion, controlled the economic and social life of Europe till the Reformation in the sixteenth century swept away most of them as obstructions to real spiritual and industrial progress.

The need for this change of the Church's economic outlook in the thirteenth century is clearly explained by John W. McConnell, in his work, *The Basic Teachings of the Great Economists* (p. 176) as follows: "But in the very century in which Aquinas lived, the Thirteenth, commerce and trade with their demands for money and credit were swinging into a rapid tempo. In spite of the toll houses, the laws against trade, the opposition of the church and the arbitrary restrictions of feudal lords, the small band of traders which moved across Europe during the Middle Ages now swelled into a mighty throng of merchants."

To meet this demand, Aquinas admitted the need of accepting the idea of wealth and private property, with the provision that they must be used for "social good." He put forward the idea of a "just price," as against competitive market prices arrived at independently of moral pressure or based as before upon the privileges that gave kings and their favorites monopolies in the distribution of goods. He also admitted some exceptions to the church's previous outright condemnation of interest for money loaned.

Although Aquinas' reformulation of Catholic economic doctrine could not stem the tide of technological and social progress and the revolt of the masses, his ideas are still used by the Catholic church to this day. They have been made into a philosophical foundation on which the Catholic church hopes to reconstruct the social order after the expected collapse of democracy and capitalism. It is Aquinas who speaks today through every Catholic book or pamphlet which touches on economic questions.

The Catholic Church And Capitalism

Catholic literature is replete with defenses of private property and attacks on Socialism and Communism. But it also contains such violent denunciations of capitalism that are equaled only by those of the wildest radicals. Following are a few examples:³

"Behold a leper has come in the midst of us and has touched us and our children with its rotting hand... our Holy Mother the Church, who from the beginning, until now, tried to shield her children from the grasp of this hand, is now being accused of being the mistress of this same evil - Capitalism."

Columbia, official organ of the Knights of Columbus, in its issue for June, 1945, says:

"Capitalism, which Dean Inge and all other competent analysts cannot help deriving from Calvinism, has wrought such havoc, has evoked such storms and protests, has engendered such tensions that the final results of the drama cannot be foreseen."

This opposition of the Catholic church to capitalism has its roots in the Catholic consciousness of the fact that the feudal hegemony of the Catholic church was broken up by the combined power of capitalism and the Protestant Reformation. There is a further recognition of the fact that Catholic socioeconomic ideas are incompatible with a progressive, competitive mobile society. Father Benjamin L. Masse, S.J., outstanding Jesuit exponent of Catholic economic ideology, openly recognizes this incompatibility. Identifying Roman Catholic hegemony with the "natural law" and the "law of Christ," he stresses the contradiction between the two systems as follows:

"But Pope Leo was not content with edifying generalities. With scant regard for the Captains of industry and the Lords of Finance... he struck down, in the name of natural law and the law of Christ, three basic heresies of the Liberal credo – free competition, freedom of contract and the stultification of the State.⁴

Is the Catholic church, then, the uncompromising friend of the working man?

The Catholic Church And Labor

The strategy of the Catholic church in wooing the laboring classes to its side is in keeping with that of all "conservative" and Fascist movements, clearly exemplified right now in the successful plan of Argentina's dictator Peron to win the working-class people to his side. The skillful manner in which it is carried out gives the impression of a reformist rather than a revolutionary movement. The Catholic church today is trying to repeat what Thomas Aquinas did for it in the thirteenth century – to reconcile itself as much as it dares to change within the framework of its hierarchical and authoritarian principles for the government of the world. Its strategical and tactical position is best summed up by Harold E. Fey. in a recent series of eight articles in *The Christian Century*, entitled "Can Catholicism Win America?" It deserves to be quoted in full:

"The Catholic plan for changing the industrial order has three objectives; security, ownership and partnership. It is no accident that stability is its first requisite. Ownership for workers gives them a stake in society and partnership a share in the control of the industrial process. This plan is a composite created from the encyclicals of Leo XIII, Pius XI and Pius XII, supported by the American bishops'"Program for Social Reconstruction" of 1919. Its nearest parallel in modern economic organization is that provided by the plan adopted but never put fully into effect by Benito Mussolini in Italy as the 'Corporative State.' Catholics deny that this plan as conceived by the Popes and the American hierarchy is Fascism. Rather, they maintain that it will set up beside the mechanism of political democracy a method of achieving economic democracy. The Catholic plan for a modern industrial society is not often stated simply. The most succinct description this writer has heard was given at a 'Catholic Conference on Industrial Problems' held

recently in Chicago. There the Most Rev. Francis J. Haas, former head of the Fair Employment Practices Committee and more recently Bishop of Grand Rapids, outlined it in these words:

'Under this system all employers, workers, professional persons – all would be organized. They would elect representatives from their respective industry or profession to deal for them, and these representatives with government representatives guiding them but not dictating to them would in actual practice operate the industry or profession. Thus the direction of the system would be tripartite. The representatives would be chosen from each of three categories – management, workers, and government. '

"The defects of this proposal should not obscure its points of strength, not the least of which is its recognition of the necessity of organization and its consequent strength as a propaganda device for use among the American working people."

It must be remembered that the Catholic church's attitude in America on many issues is often different from, sometimes seemingly opposed to, its attitude and teaching on the same issues in Europe. That it seems to take the side of the working man in the United States should not be surprising. Most of the Catholic population arrived here as penniless immigrants when Protestant settlers were already prosperous and well-established. Most of the church's wealth in the United States has come from the contributions of successful working-class people. They say that St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York was built by the contributions of Irish servant girls. In the poverty stricken countries of Europe, on the other hand, the church owes all it has to vast landed properties and its alliance with and support of rich landowners and aristocratic families. There it has not shown the least desire to ameliorate the conditions of abysmal poverty, squalor and ignorance that are the lot of the masses of the common people.

That the Catholic church's attitude toward the working population in Europe is in keeping with its real teachings can be judged from its official pronouncements as follows:

On Wages: Pope Pius XI, in his much vaunted encyclical *Quadragesima Anno*, in support of Mussolini's Corporative State, puts the working man in his place as follows:

"Let the working man and employer make free agreements, and in particular let them agree freely as to wages; nevertheless, there underlies a dictate of natural justice more imperious and ancient than any bargain between man and man, namely, that wages ought not be insufficient to support a frugal and well-behaved wage-earner."

Without belittling the sincerity of the Pope's intentions, it is evident that his ambitions for the working man are not too high.

On Living Conditions: Pope Leo XIII, in his encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, publicized the world over as "Labor's Charter of Liberty," emphasizes the natural inequality that must always exist between the classes, as follows:

“Let it be laid down, in the first place, that humanity must remain as it is... Unequal fortune is a necessary result of inequality of condition... To suffer and endure is therefore the lot of humanity; let men try as they may, no strength and no artifice will ever succeed in banishing from human life the troubles that beset it.”

On Popular Sovereignty: Pope Leo XIII condemns representative governments of the people in his encyclical *Immortale Dei*, and makes it clear that the masses of the common people cannot be conceived as self-governing, law-abiding citizens, but only as dangerous disturbers of the peace.

The Real Economic Aims Of The Catholic Church

Despite what appears to be a barrage of double-talk in official Catholic pronouncements, for property, against capital, for labor, against liberty, and so forth, it would be strategically dangerous and unjust to impute a lack of sincerity on the part of the Catholic church in its effort to change the world to suit its plans. It cannot be too often repeated that an organization of the size and power of the Roman Catholic church cannot be held together by a conscious tissue of lies. Such power and grandeur grow only out of dogmatic conviction of absolute right and justice. To understand how this conviction is formed, it is necessary to piece together the seemingly contradictory aspects of Catholic philosophy until the true pattern and its ultimate goal appear.

In the two preceding articles of this series, the medieval political and social structure of Roman Catholicism has been outlined. If this is kept clearly in mind, it is easy to see that there is really no contradiction between the Catholic church's defense of private property and its antagonism to capitalism.

The policy-makers of the Catholic church realize that an exact duplication of medieval economic relations is not possible under present technological conditions. They know, for instance, that in medieval times, although the king held title to all land, the Catholic church's control of things was not thereby impaired – was, in fact, more firmly entrenched. They also know that today, when socialist governments take “title” to land and industry, as in Russia, they also take over complete political control and reject all juridical dominance of the Catholic church. Furthermore, they observe the tendency of all-powerful collectivist movements – communist, socialist and others to the left of center – to become secular and anticlerical. This happens even in the most Catholic of countries. In Poland, for instance, the present Provisional Government, almost immediately after it took over from the Catholic-supported Polish Government in Exile, renounced Pilsudski's Polish Vatican Concordat, and decreed that all marriages be performed by civil registrars (though not prohibiting church ceremonies). These decrees favored nationalizing all basic industries employing more than 50 persons per shift. In Catholic Spain the same thing would have happened if Franco had not crushed the Republic of 1931.

Therefore, although government ownership would not be theoretically incompatible with Catholic ideology – provided that an hierarchal social

structure could be maintained within such a system – Catholic spokesmen realize that the modern trend to economic collectivism threatens the entire structure of their church's organization. It is for this reason that the Catholic church insists on the defense of private property.

Capitalism, on the other hand, is as much a danger to the church's structure as economic collectivism. The American proverb, "From shirt sleeves to shirt sleeves in three generations," contradicts the kind of social caste system that the Catholic church requires to maintain dominance. The history of Protestant countries since the Reformation proves that the Catholic church loses control over the working class when its intelligent members rise in the economic and social scale to become doctors, lawyers, scientists and successful business men. Nor can it, on the other hand, retain the former support of the upper classes, many of whose members, as a consequence of equality of opportunity, sink to the lower levels of society. The entire body politic is thus changed around and becomes uncontrollable in the Catholic hierarchical scheme. This is the main reason why Catholic spokesmen condemn our present civilization in America as chaotic, splintered, Godless and unwilling to lend the knee to constituted authority.

The Formula

However, Catholic policy-makers are not without a formula to meet the dangerously-tangled situation they see in the world today. Since Communism or Socialism would entirely exclude the Catholic hegemony, they fall back on a simple modernization of the plan of Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century, when the church was faced with a like difficulty. This formula to save Catholic interests in this changing technological age is simply: defense of private property under regulation of governments pledged to protect the Catholic religion. The late Msgr. John A. Ryan puts it concisely as follows in his book, *Catholic Principles of Politics* (p. 157):

"Between these two extremes there is a 'via media' completely consistent with Christian morality and with sound economic principles. It is manifestly impossible to expect good economic order if wages, prices, working conditions and the public good are left to chance or to the haphazard methods of so called free enterprise."

This is a powerful formula, because it coincides with natural economic tendencies. It is also a dangerous formula, because it coincides, to a great degree, with the economic thinking of many liberals, and for which reason it gives the Catholic church a standing in some liberal circles where it has no place whatever. It is this formula that has brought about an unholy alliance between two natural enemies – the Catholic church and democratic liberalism, with near-disaster to the latter. It is also a formula that must inevitably lead to the Corporative State of Fascism.

A disastrous example of this unholy alliance was the support given to Franco during the Spanish civil war by the New Deal's foreign policy, in order to obtain the Catholic church's support for Roosevelt's domestic policy at that time in the United States. The direct results of this shameful compromise were the overthrow of the Spanish Republic, the Axis encirclement of France,

the increase of Nazi-Fascist prestige throughout the world and the necessity, in the end, of the greatest war in history to repair the initial error.

It is clear that there was neither contradiction nor hypocrisy in the Catholic church's support of the New Deal's domestic economic policies, and its opposition to Roosevelt's foreign policies, with the sole exception of the Spanish Civil War, in which our policy was dictated by Catholic pressure.

The New Deal not only conformed theoretically with objective Catholic interests. The Catholic population of the United States is largely concentrated in the cities, where the effects of unemployment were most deeply felt, and relief and work projects were of immense practical benefit to the church. In foreign policy, except for the Spanish incident, the situation was the exact reverse. Here the Roosevelt administration was supporting Protestant England against a Europe which was not only Catholic-dominated, but which had gone far toward implementing, under Fascism, the socio-economic ideals of the church, and approaching its "ultimate vision."

The ultimate ends of this formula that is more or less common to Roman Catholicism and democratic liberalism are, of course, diametrically opposed. What the democratic liberals want is simply government intervention for the purpose of guaranteeing employment and social security for all. What the Catholic church wants is the Corporative State, of which the Axis dictatorships have been experimental examples. In such a State, monopoly is solidified and cartelized, workers are regimented, economic opportunity becomes limited and eventually non-existent, freedom for all religions is denied and the Catholic church is made the religion of the State and is alone protected by the State. Worse than all, there is no social mobility, no rising and falling of individuals from one class to another, as became evident early in Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany and later became permanent by decrees against the alienation of farms and decrees curbing the right of workers to change jobs.

Such a state conforms to the integralist, organic State, where everyone, like a cell in a body, is fixed in his "natural place," as explained in the previous article of this series.

Neither is there any essential contradiction between the Catholic church's declarations that the worker must remain poor and in subjection, and its declarations that the worker must not be oppressed and should receive a living wage. The Catholic church does not want the poor oppressed; it simply I wants the poor to remain poor; that is, to remain in their own class. The Catholic church has elevated, almost to an article of faith, a perverted meaning of the saying of Jesus "The poor ye have always with you." No Protestant takes those words as anything but a literal statement of fact concerning time and place: never as a mandate from Jesus Christ that a class of poor must always be maintained. Yet, Pope Leo XIII, in his so-called "Labor's Charter of Liberty," starts out by laying this down as a basic principle for all time, "that humanity must remain as it is."

Thus, the Catholic church's magic formula boils down to advocating not the kind of economic security that would abolish poverty, but rather a kind of

“security in poverty,” somewhat similar to the condition of a serf in a wellmanaged estate. The working man must be taken care of and, above all, given every encouragement, even money bonuses, to raise a large family. No matter how highly industrialized the ideal Catholic State would be, the benefits as far as the working man is concerned, would eventually be nullified by overpopulation fostered as a matter of doctrinal principle by the Catholic church.

The Ultimate Vision

The contrast between the ultimate aim of democratic liberalism and the Roman Catholic plan for the governing of the world is brought out in the writings of Msgr. Robert Hugh Benson. His novel, *The Lord of the World*, has been republished in this country last year and the publishers state that “its timeliness makes the novel of immediate concern to Christians and particularly to Catholics whose spiritual leadership in the world has become the chief antagonism of this new way of living.” The story projects itself into the future and depicts a world in which enlightenment and social, scientific progress, under democratic governments, have eliminated most human ills and established a high standard of living – except in Rome, which is given over to the full sovereignty of the Pope. Life under Papal sovereignty is described on page 127 as follows:

“Then he had set about ruling his city: he had said that on the whole the latter day discoveries of man tended to distract immortal souls from a contemplation of eternal verities... So he had removed the trams, the volors, the laboratories, the manufactories. Then he had divided the city into national quarters... Rents had instantly begun to rise, so he had legislated against that by reserving in each quarter a number of streets at fixed prices... The rest were abandoned to the millionaires. Then he had restored Capital Punishment; and he had added to the crime of murder, the crimes of adultery, idolatry, and apostasy.”

On page 139, the contrast between the aristocracy and the lower classes, which seems to be necessary wherever the church rules, is described as follows:

“The true Romans possessed a multitude of their own churches, they were allowed to revel in narrow, dark streets and hold their markets... The Easterners resembled the Latins; their streets were as narrow and dark, their smells as overwhelming, their churches as dirty and as homely.”

Then, on page 143, is the following apotheosis of the Pope as the Lord of the “World:

“Far ahead... moved the canopy beneath which sat the Lord of the World, and between him and the priest... swayed the gorgeous procession – Protonotaries Apostolic, Generals of Religious Orders and the rest – making its way along with white, gold, scarlet and silver foam between the living banks on either side...”

Here is brought out the Catholic vision of economic society which, like its

view of society as a whole, is one of visible contrasts: bishops in scarlet silk, workers in homespun; proud lady and humble servant girl; kings on high, obedient subjects beneath; lords in castles, peasants in huts. It is in effect a romanticized conception of medieval life – which was anything but romantic to the common people. To this vision, social equality is anathema, a well-dressed working man or woman unethical; social and political equality of all classes and creeds anarchy.

Benson's description of ideal world conditions under universal Papal sovereignty has been brought up to date by a recent imaginative Catholic novel entitled, *John Smith Emperor*. It describes how the world is brought under the control of the Pope by means of a secret weapon which is kept in the Vatican. The Pope comes to New York to crown the Emperor in the presence of the kings of the seven "confederations" into which the world is divided – after all the nations have submitted to the Roman Catholic church:

"The press and radio announced that the coronation of the Premier as Emperor would take place in New York, the future capital of the world. The monarchs of the seven confederations and the governors and representatives of all the nationalities were officially invited.

"The program would consist of a Pontifical Mass which would be celebrated by the Cardinal-Archbishop of New York. The Pope would assist from his throne, and he would solemnly anoint the new Emperor and place the crown on his head."

1. From this we get our word "real" estate, from *reale* or "kingly;" that is, in democratic countries the ordinary citizen can own land outright, which formerly was not possible since all lands were owned by the king.↵

2. *Cambridge Modern History*, I, 662.↵

3. From *The Torch*, official publication of the Dominican Fathers, May, 1944.↵

4. *Economic Liberalism and Free Enterprise*, by Benjamin L. Masse, S. J., America↵

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