

# **CATHOLICISM AND SOCIALISM**

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Catholicism and socialism by Various

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**VARIOUS**

**CATHOLICISM  
AND SOCIALISM**



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## PREFACE

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SOCIALISM is rapidly becoming the accepted creed of the masses. A century of commercialist economics and materialist propaganda is producing the inevitable result. A people dechristianized, neglected, and oppressed by governing classes that will not govern, by selfish and irresponsible "captains of industry," has naturally turned to the only doctrine that seems to promise hope, Revolutionary Socialism. Yet the Catholic Church, the divinely-appointed guardian of Truth and Justice, while sternly rebuking the neglect of duty that has created this social unrest, must also oppose Revolutionary Socialism; for the reaction has over-passed justice, and the proposed remedy is almost worse than the disease.

In the pamphlets collected in this volume some of the points of opposition between Christianity and Socialism are indicated. The arguments put forward by no means exhaust the case against Socialism, but they will be found of service in opposing that specious doctrine, which is seducing many of the noblest among the working-classes of England.

THE INSTITUTE OF MEDIAEVAL STUDIES  
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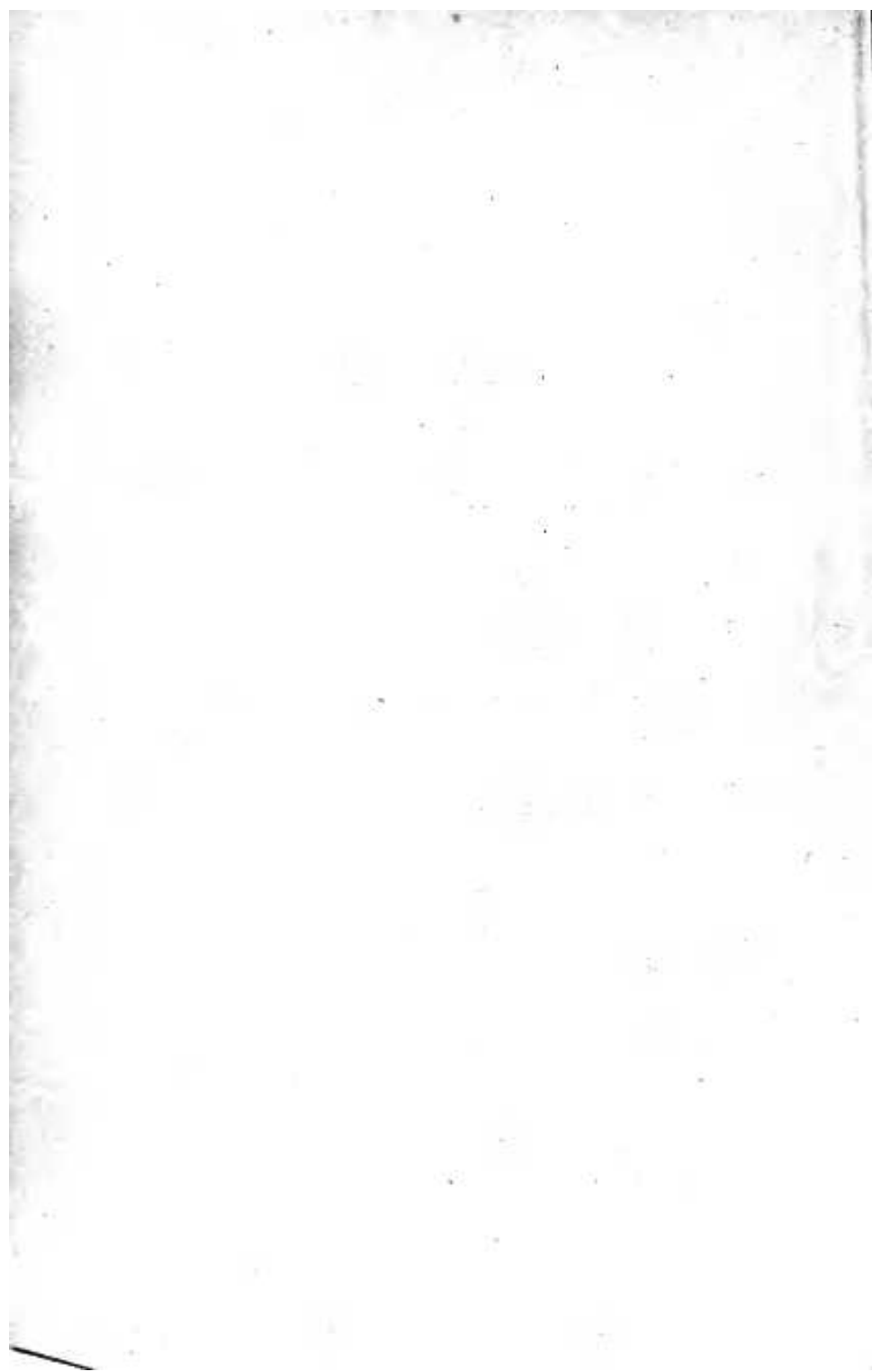
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## CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION

AND

## THE PERILS THAT NOW THREATEN IT

A LECTURE BY THE MOST REV. P. J. RYAN, ARCHBISHOP  
OF PHILADELPHIA<sup>1</sup>

I PROPOSE to speak to you on the subject of "Christian Civilization and the Perils that now Threaten it." I have selected the subject because I deem it a very important one at the present time. My object is to show that our civilization is the result of the triumph of Christianity over Paganism, and is now imperilled by the neo-paganism and infidelity of this age, and that it is the sacred duty of every man to see to its preservation.

The term civilization is a very general and somewhat vague one, and various definitions and descriptions of it have been given. I think, with Edmund Burke, that the essence of civilization consists in the spirit of a gentleman and in the spirit of religion, that is, the union of all that is noble and sacred in religion with all that is gentle and strong in our humanity. Emerson says: "The truest test of civilization is not the census, nor the size of cities, nor the crops, but the kind of a man a country turns out." Our highest conception of a perfect man is the union of religion and gentle manhood, realized in the person of Christ, the Founder of Christian civilization. Christianity is Christ continued, and its civilization is His continued influence on the outside world. I think the best test of the civilization

<sup>1</sup> Originally issued by the C.T.S. of San Francisco and reprinted with their permission.

of an individual, or of a nation, is unselfishness, and the best test of unselfishness is care for the poor and oppressed of our race. Mr. Lecky complains of this age as defective in the spirit of self-sacrifice. Its defect is in proportion to its forgetfulness of the teachings and spirit of Christianity, which is pre-eminently the religion of self-sacrifice.

This spirit of self-sacrifice is essential to the continued existence of civilized society. Each man must pay a little of personal comfort to the general fund of society. Selfishness led to the fall of pagan civilization and threatens our own. Carlyle says "that men of learning and profound reflection begin to doubt whether it is possible for the existing framework of civil society to hold together without the principle of cohesion, supplied by the truths which it has cast away."

Fortunately, only a portion of society has been rash enough to reject them; and, as Christianity is immortal, like its Founder, that rejection can never become universal. It is, however, the duty of Christians to keep it within as narrow limits as possible.

To do this intelligently and effectually, we have to fully appreciate the connection between Christianity and the civilization to which it has given name. To see that this civilization is based on, and motivated by, great Christian doctrines, which, if weakened or denied, will weaken or ruin the great superstructure itself, and send us back not merely to pagan civilization, but much farther. For you will observe, even Paganism taught great conservative truths, such as the existence of the Supreme Being and His Providence over men, and the doctrine of future rewards and punishments, which modern unbelief affects to deny. It may be some time before the dangers which we apprehend will fully develop themselves. The flower that is plucked from its stem retains its fragrance for a time afterwards. The morality and public conscience which Christianity has produced will influence men for a time also, after they shall have ceased to believe, but this influence must be necessarily temporary. The restraint which Paganism placed on human passion being removed, and God ignored, self-will becomes the worshipped Deity. To avert this, let

us first examine the connection between Christianity and its civilization.

Christianity is a fact in the history of the human race, the most mysterious in its nature, the most stupendous and universal in its effects; a fact which philosophy cannot ignore, nor infidelity deny, nor scepticism doubt; which has influenced religion, arts, arms, sciences, literature, social life, politics, human happiness, human suffering, human progress, more than any other fact in the history of our race. The unbeliever who regards it lightly, as one of the many false religions embraced by man at various periods of his history, who thinks that its influences were simply and exclusively confined to the secret intercourse between the Creator and the creature, such a one can never adequately understand the philosophy of human history. Christianity re-fashioned the whole being of man, politically and socially, as well as religiously. It formed not only the Christian saint, but the Christian statesman, the Christian warrior, the Christian citizen, the Christian artist, the Christian soldier, and the Christian philanthropist.

"Christianity," says Mr. Gladstone in his *Studies of Homer*, speaking of it from the third century upwards, "has marched for fifteen hundred years at the head of human civilization, and has driven, harnessed to its chariot as the horses of a triumphal car, the chief intellectual and material forces of the world. Its learning has been the learning of the world, its art the art of the world, its genius the genius of the world, its greatness, glory, grandeur, and majesty have been almost, though not absolutely, all that in these respects the world has had to boast of." But in no sphere did it effect so signal a revolution as in the formation of Christian philanthropy. To understand this fully we have but to view the poor, helpless, and suffering under pagan and Christian civilization, to behold the spirit of Christ passing along the wayside of human history, bending, good Samaritan-like, over the wounded and robbed sufferers of our race under Paganism, and not only pouring into their wounds the strengthening oil and wine, but also bearing the sufferers to the inn—that is, founding institutions for their permanent cure and comfort, and promising that