

## REVIEWS

### SOCIAL STUDIES

FIRE ON THE EARTH. By Paul Hanly Furfey. (Macmillan; 8/6.)

Here at last is the introductory textbook of specifically Catholic and supernatural sociology—the primer of the Christian Revolution—for which we have been looking. It has all the requirements: it is readable, straightforward, simple (on the whole), fearless, uncompromizing, practical, evangelical, theological. It presents a sociology which is based on no worldly wisdom or opportunism, but is firmly rooted in Faith, Hope and Charity. Its sources and inspiration are the Scriptures, the teachings of Popes and Fathers, and the practical example of Jesus Christ and His saints.

We can do no more than summarize the contents to indicate the value and importance of the book. Chapter I, *Supernatural Sociology*, shows Faith to be the indispensable foundation of distinctively Christian social thought and action; it contrasts what is tolerated by the Church in this sphere with what she requires of the thoroughgoing Christian, the practice of the saints with that of the average modern “good Catholic.” Chapter II, *Divine Grace and the Social Problem* (in places perhaps rather unnecessarily technical and “scholastic” in its treatment), contrasts authentic supernatural sociology with merely human philanthropy, and shows the vitalizing function of grace and the virtues, particularly of charity, in social life. Chapter III shows the fundamental importance of the idea of the Kingdom of God and of the mystical Body in Christian sociology, the role of the Mass and the several Sacraments in the scheme, and concludes by showing how these basic conceptions demolish the false distinction between obligation to individuals and obligation to groups which is at the root of much contemporary injustice and misery. Chapter IV deals with the Kingdom of Satan—the “world” and the “rich” (as a class)—and assures us that

A thoroughgoing social Christianity must be an opposition movement. It must expect the antagonism of the most respected classes. Sometimes this antagonism may relax for a time into indifference, but the war goes on. There can be no peace. . . Christ predicted it: “You shall be hated by all men for my name’s sake.” *ALL men*, that is to say, society as swayed by worldly leaders are our permanent enemy. “The disciple is not above his Master . . .”

Chapter V is on *Political Action*, shows how the State *should* co-operate harmoniously with the Church in the Kingdom of God, but tends in fact to serve the Kingdom of Satan, the “world,” and the “rich”; discusses the consequent moral obligation of

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Catholics to join in political action and the legitimacy of various ways and means. Chapter VI, *Bearing Witness*, treats of the necessity for developing Catholic social teaching and bringing it down to brass tacks:

Some there are who believe in easy truths and easy methods. They would confine our social teaching to vague generalities about charity and justice and the brotherhood of man. There are those who, of set purpose, avoid the discussion of social and economic questions. It is easy to preach harmless generalities and there are easy ways of preaching them. It is easy to talk to a well-fed audience after a comfortable banquet in a good hotel. It is easy to pass resolutions and form vague committees. These things are easy. But suppose we had the courage to try the hard way! Suppose we were not afraid of being called unpatriotic and therefore dared to preach the Church's full doctrine on war. . . . Suppose we were not too much afraid of being called *Red* to preach the full economic doctrine of the *Quadragesimo Anno*. Suppose we also dared to use hard methods, methods which involved real suffering. Suppose we made it a point to talk to those who do not agree with us. This is harder than talking to our friends. Suppose we were willing to use such extreme methods as picketing, heckling speakers, distributing literature to our enemies in the streets. . . . If our witness-bearing is to be not merely coldly intellectual but persuasive as well, we must follow the bloody footsteps of the saints. There is no other way.

Chapter VII, *The Technique of Non-Participation*, shows the social importance of asceticism and ways of "mucking-in" by "mucking-out." The last chapter, *The Pragmatic Test*, is perhaps the best of all and deals effectively with the difficulty which has been haunting the reader's mind—the *workableness* of so uncompromizingly supernatural a sociology.

Dr. Furfey, Associate Professor of Sociology at the Catholic University of America, is not, as has been seen, content to enunciate principles, he constantly shows their very concrete applications. British readers may regret that these applications are often to conditions peculiar to the United States (the book was written at the suggestion of the Archbishop of Baltimore, whose *imprimatur* it carries). But little ingenuity will be required to make the necessary adaptations to our own local conditions. It is a book which should be read and pondered upon by every faithful Catholic; C.S.G. study-circles, in particular, should on no account neglect it. A pity it could not have been issued at a rather lower price.

VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

LE ROLE SOCIAL DES IDEES. By Max Lamberty. (Editions de la Cité Chrétienne, Bruxelles; 22.50 B.frs.)

The Civil War in Spain may well serve as a text for a review of this vivid, illuminating and seasonable book. What is the impel-