

Critical Analysis of the First Concepts of Social Economy (1857)*

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Preface

The proposition we have in our hands was taken up by us, the reader will certainly recall, not primarily with the intent of conducting a course on social economy but merely to indicate some fundamental points to those who take pleasure in such studies, points either not perceived or distorted by many economists due to lack of faith, or at least to lack of Catholic sentiment.¹ Under that aspect, we hoped to spare our readers the annoyance of certain rudimentary elements, which if required absolutely for a complete course, could well be taken for granted or overlooked when writing for the use of amateurs.

However, coming to the execution, the work seemed to take on another aspect to us. On the one hand, we saw that without straightening out or clarifying the first concepts, economic theories would come out incomplete and equivocal. On the other hand, this study of the first rudiments—conducted not with the pedantry of a professor but with the curiosity of the critic—seemed to us potentially no less pleasurable than any other treatment for those who delight in such subjects. Therefore, before proceeding further, it ought not to displease the reader that with

* [Ed. note] The original essay appeared in two parts: “Analisi critica dei primi concetti dell’Economia sociale,” *Civiltà Cattolica*, 3rd ser., 8 ([18 September 1857] 1857): 546–59; and 9 ([16 December 1857] 1858): 17–34.

¹ [Ed. note] “Le Due Economie” (1856) appeared in a multipart series spanning volumes 2 and 3 of the 3rd series of *Civiltà Cattolica*.

a nod to analysis around the elementary ideas of economic science we pave the road for understanding that which must successively be treated. Furthermore, it might as well be said the love of Italians for economic studies gained fervor precisely in that period during which our literature was becoming “Frenchified,” as philosophy was turning Voltairean. Thus, it naturally had to happen, being natural enough that affection for the worldly interests contemplated by economics should increase in proportion to the obscuring of faith in heavenly hopes. Italy had therefore, after the mid-eighteenth century, its Genovesi and Filangeri and Galiani and Beccaria and Verri and so many others of similar temper, in whom the study of the economists vied with the disbelief of the encyclopedists.² From the ferment of this putridness swarmed a language altogether Frenchified as well, that made speaking of the economy with a sincerely Italian tongue nearly impossible. Not ringing true either to us or to our readers, longing to be Italians in language, as in affection, thought, and blood, we have believed it is now opportune to explain terms, even to recall here and there certain more straightforward categories, such that Italians can well dispense with the tower of barbarisms on loan from the foreigner.

Here, moreover, we feel the duty to make a warning, or protest, if you prefer. You already know, dear reader, by whom the *Civiltà Cattolica* is written and with which intentions. Consecrated as we are singly to the cause of God and of the Church, we would believe it would profane our pen if we were to write a syllable that would directly or indirectly not tend to the advancement of the interests of God and of the Church, which is to say the propagation of moral truth and of justice. However, in this noble and arduous undertaking we are guided, as every Catholic, by two reverberations of the infinite light: one shining in our intellect, naturally made a mirror of that light by work of the creative power; the other resounding for all the faithful from the infallible authority of the Church, depository of the Word of eternal life. When in this second reverberation we read clearly determined social doctrines that we will be discussing, we would injure the truth if we hesitated to pronounce these oracles. Yet, nonetheless, we speak as that divine Maestro, from whom these come *tanquam potestatem habentes*; neither does it matter at all to us that the firmness of our faith, in a century that has lost all conviction in doctrine along with the faith, be condemned as proud and arrogant. So much the worse for you, misguided skeptics, if rebelling against

² [Ed. note] Taparelli refers here to representatives from the previous century of what has been called the “Italian School” of economics. See R. H. Inglis Palgrave, ed., *Dictionary of Political Economy*, 3 vols. (London: Macmillan and Company, 1894–1901), 2:460–70, s.v. “Italian School of Economists.”

the light from heaven, you grope like blind men even in the sciences of the visible and worldly, the first roots of which remain always hidden in heaven in the fecund breast of the Creator.

Yet in political economy clear and short declarations from the Church are scarce, as are the immediate connections between material facts and moral truth. Therefore, guided many times solely by the light of reason, we owe to the opinion of the learned that reverence of the sort that these themselves dispense with when they rebel against the infallible Maestra. As much, therefore, as we can speak loudly and frankly to those who have embraced impudently the absolute independence of law, Epicureanism in morality, usury in loaning, arbitrary despotism in taxation, and so forth, so much must we proceed reflectively and modestly on purely scientific questions, to which in large part the first concepts of economy belong; although we see (and who does not see it?) that from the correct constitution of these first truths, the correctness in large part depends, even morally, on the solutions that we must thereafter propose to social problems. If this connection were less necessary, we could entirely omit the examination of principles. If, necessary as it is, we present an outline marked by infallible authority, we would proceed with customary, Catholic confidence.

Constrained on one side to the examination of concepts, and on the other deprived of that star that otherwise assures the way, we see ourselves reduced to occasionally hazarding here our own private opinions with the frankness of a loyal writer, but together with the modesty of one who knows, unfortunately, his own mediocrity. All that which in these conditions we will come to say ought not have with you, kind reader, other value than that of reason, where we will see its comforts. Furthermore, those to whose opinions we must oppose ourselves may enjoy here anticipatively the insistence of respect, which we feel obliged for thousands of motives toward them, but most especially due to the condition within which we proceed, so much is the less expert in the practice of economics, all the more speculating on its principles, free from the interferences or passions that frequently upset intellects. If this attestation might give us some authority and assurance in the discernment of its theoretical formulas, it obliges us moreover to revere in others that greater expertise over the facts, which must administer confirmation in practice to every good theory. Given such an insistence and entrusted to the kind discretion of those who read us, we now enter into the diatribe and examine philosophically the first concepts on which the whole of economic science poses itself, beginning with recalling, with the necessary care, the idea of economy given at other times besides truly philosophical and Catholic economy.

Section 1—First Idea of Economic Science

Discussion of the Parisian Academics

What is economic science? May it not seem strange to you that one is still searching in Italy for what that might be? Even in France, where, since the time of Louis XV, Quesnay began the first attempts at giving economics a scientific character and establishing a school of economists, they are still debating. In the meeting of the Academy of Moral Sciences held on September 26, this year, Joseph Garnier gave a paper discussing the scope and limits of political economy.³ In that report, after having referred by way of example to eight definitions,⁴ all from French or English authors, and after having analyzed many others that more or less enlarge the boundaries of the science, he concludes by saying that these differences are of little import, because even theorists such as Smith and Storch, who give a limitless breadth to the definition of economy end by constraining it in their treatment to more reasonable proportions.

It might seem to you a bit curious that one considers of little import his knowing exactly what might be the material and the field of the science that one wants to treat, and that one is to reason about a thing without knowing precisely about what one is to reason. However, curious or not, the fact is this: We have sought to point it out to you, hoping that, seeing such uncertainty in determining the object and boundaries of the science you will be more disposed to free us from the shushing of the stale or arrogant if we say a few words about a subject that some will consider already defined, even antiquated, and if we present a conciliatory definition rather than follow blindly one among the many definitions in circulation. Seeing such incoherence among the heads of schools, if in opposing themselves one against another and if in their treatment they step back from their

³ [Ed. note] Joseph Garnier (1813–1881) was a leading figure among the mid-nineteenth century French group of political economists. He was a founding member of the *Société d'économie politique* (1842), professor at *École des ponts et chaussées* (1846–1881), and editor of several publications, including *Journal des économistes*. See Palgrave, *Dictionary of Political Economy*, 2:184–85, s.v. “Garnier, Joseph (1813–1881).”

⁴ See Joseph Garnier, “Du But et des Limites de l'Économie Politique,” *Journal des Économistes* 16 (October 1857): 13. The first is *Science of Wealth*. The others are *Science of Material Interests* (J.-B. Say); *Value* (various); *Exchange* (Watheley); *Services Exchanged* (Bastiat); *Work and of Its Remuneration* (Fonteyrand); *Laws of the Industrial World* (Coquelin); and *Laws of Work or of Human Industry* (Joseph Garnier).

definition, who must not infer that the object under the same name with various conclusions is truly different and requires being contemplated?

Disagreements of the Scientists

In truth, Garnier himself, who attempts to conciliate opinions, shows in substance their most serious disagreements, even in reducing them to two classes: the first, according to him, contemplate under the name of *wealth* all the products and actions that in order to satisfy the material, intellectual, and moral needs operate thus on men as well as on things; the second, excluding entirely the arts that affect men, reduce wealth to pure matter.⁵ Now who does not see the immense gap that must result from the contemplation of objects so diverse? Who does not see that a science that contemplates the works employed among men and around their moral needs must transform itself into a political science, while the one that contemplates pure material products in relation to material needs seems to pass over little more than physical or physiological characteristics?

Born of the Mixed Character of the Science

Reflecting on this disparity of opinions and investigating what might be the cause of it, we propose to trace it to the mixed disposition of economic science, which precisely is to the social order that which physiology is to anthropological sciences. Physiology studies the relationships that pass between physical man and moral man, set in contact through the imagination, the appetites, and the passions. Economics studies the relationships that pass between governmental authority (that might well call itself the reason, or intellectual power of the State) and the material part of the goods that it must regulate by means of the needs, the interests, and the reason of citizens. We have explained this other times, wherefore we may hope that our concept is not new to the reader. It will be seen—being the intent (either deliberate or not) of the economists since the first apparition of this science to administer to those who govern the knowledge necessary in order to regulate common interests well—that they must necessarily study in depth not only the mechanism, so to speak, of social wealth but also to study it in relation to the authority that must govern it. What a surprise that, in such a composite study, certain economists more intensely preoccupied with political reasons were dragged to spreading themselves out too much in these, while others more preoccupied with material interests had nearly forgotten the higher reasons to which such a study must be ordered. The first mistake was,

⁵ Garnier, “Du But et des Limites de l’Économie Politique,” 12.

according to Rossi, in Quesnay and his economic disciples, emerging in an era of the political fever agitating France that made use of economy as of a lever to stir up the people to rebellion. The opposite mistake is the much-accredited accusation against the economists, such that Garnier thought necessary to write about it in his cited *apologia*.

It is an *apologia*—the first part of which he borrows from Dunoyer—that we do not know, to tell the truth, if it will have much value to judicious reviewers; because it comes down to telling us that economy, by increasing opulence, provides for the means of power, of independence, of dignity, and even up to rendering to God a more magnificent religious observance.⁶ If, truly, political economy were nothing other than the science of material wealth, we do not believe that much would be gained from knowing that whoever acquires such wealth may make good use of it. Even the usurer, even the thief, may spend the fruit of their *industry* philanthropically, without acquiring any acclaim in the opinion of scholars. That which ennobles an art, or any science, is not the accidental possibility of turning it to the good but the natural and essential tendency of that art or science toward the good.

The second argument adopted by Garnier appears better to us, which attributes to economics the function of equitably distributing wealth for the good, even moral good, of the population, in which words he foreshadows vaguely that aspect that we have called *political* of economic science, even as he does not put it in that light and in those precise terms that to us seem to determine exactly, following his confusedly informed concept of the universal, the scope and limits of social economy.

Its True Character and Definition

From the discourse to this point, we hope that the reader has conceived with some clarity the approach of both the one and the others. Social economy is not political science or the science of the government of peoples, even though it is a branch of this. It is not the science of how wealth is produced, even though without knowing this material production it could not dictate its theorems. The natural production and distribution of wealth is, so to speak, its material part—the function of ordering the work of citizens with respect to this natural production and distribution toward public good forms its essential character or, as logicians would say, its specific difference. If material interests were ignored, it would not be *economy*; if one does not consider them in relation to the public order it would not be *political* or *social*. Production is, more properly and strictly speaking, a

⁶ Garnier, “Du But et des Limites de l’Économie Politique,” 23–24.

function of individuals, every able-bodied man being obliged to support himself from work, and thus the science of producing is principally *individual economics*. Wealth of the individual is consolidated and made perennial in the family, and thus the science of such durable wealth is properly *domestic economics*. In the accomplishment of these functions, individuals and families may be useful to or damaging either to other individuals and families or to the public good of civil society, and coordinating them according to such intent is the duty of those who govern. The science that directs them in the fulfillment of this office is *public economics*, that is, *social* or *political economics*, which can now define itself in this way: *a science that investigates the laws according to which wealth is produced and diffused naturally in the social body and teaches those who govern the way to act in order that wealth distributes itself according to equity and sufficient to every need.*

First, to better understand this definition as noted elsewhere, those who govern are not the administrators of the goods of citizens (who *by nature* have the right to use them as they judge, apart from moral duties, for their personal good) but are regulators of these same citizens in the use of their goods insofar as such use may contribute or harm the common good.

Second, in every society there is a common good that is absolute and primary, to which every other good must subordinate itself, and which has been in every time and whatever stage of civilization always formally the same, the absolute being unchangeable. It may be achieved in various degrees in various societies, but the ideal type is always the same. This absolute good is the conformity of social behavior to the laws of justice and honesty or the cooperation of social behavior toward the ultimate end of man. However, material means are needed for man to attain this ultimate end, for his subsistence and as objects of his productive action. This matter may be more or less copious, these actions more or less effective at producing their desired effect, according to the varied actions of all those who live together in civil association. To regulate them externally ordered to the absolute good is the work of civil laws subordinate to religious doctrines. To regulate them ordered to the secondary good belongs to the civil laws under two aspects, following the two obstacles that citizens may pose to each other in the pursuit of this common good.

Third, from that it follows that citizens may harm each other reciprocally either by deliberate initiative, patently violating the definite and recognized rights of others, or unintentionally and without knowing it in the legitimate exercise of their own rights. In the first case, the offended party makes a claim; the evidence defends him; justice restores him in his rights; and in this, the legislator is guided by jurisprudence. However, in the second case, the common good is difficult to

recognize; actually, the damaged party frequently is not even aware of his damage. He may even imagine himself benefitted by that which damages him, especially when the harm affects the community as opposed to individual persons, while individuals personally benefit from that disorder. Thus, by way of example, a seller of foodstuffs will believe certain prohibitions advantageous, by which he can sell his goods at a higher price, without paying attention to the increased prices of other goods that will eat up the profit obtained from selling his. Another will expect great benefits from a monopoly that makes his price higher, without keeping in mind the contraband that will lessen his sales. Knowing clearly what would benefit or what would harm civil society, being of such difficulty in these matters, great care is required for those who govern to discern well the effects of those laws with which they seek to address inconveniences.

Now the scientific data for properly understanding the causes of these are to be provided from social economics, investigating the *intrinsic* and *spontaneous* causes by which wealth is produced and distributed. Knowing in what circumstances and with what proportions interest stimulates production, domestic affections save the products; fear of penalties restrains the black marketer; relationships with foreign trade affect the ebb and flow of currency, and so forth, depending on the strength of natural inclinations and of natural apprehensions. The legislator, commanding or prohibiting certain actions, introduces duties into law, conforming in a generic way to the natural law (although not dictated explicitly or positively by it), through the implementation of which all the members of society contribute (for the most part without recognizing it) to the common benefit of interests.

You see, reader, economy considered under such an aspect is truly on one side a science of property or, as they say, of wealth; but it merits at times the name of politics, because it concerns belongings not under the wretched aspect of sordid gain but in the relationships that they have with public order and the common good.

Coherent with the Decrees of the Universal

Our definition seems to us, therefore, the true conciliation of all the other conclusions and the valid expression of almost all of those who undertook the treatment of this doctrine, albeit confusedly, since the time of Adam Smith, from which time it regarded itself, in the words of Garnier, “as a branch of the understandings of the legislator and statesman.”⁷ That is precisely what one expects from real definitions: that they must not arbitrarily attribute significances to words

⁷ Garnier, “Du But et des Limites de l’Économie Politique,” 7.

that suit this or that system but explain with clarity the concept confusedly felt by those who use that word.

Analogous to Garnier's Definition

To this definition the one proposed by the Parisian academic approaches somewhat, according to which *political economy determines in what way wealth is and must be according to nature (and equity) produced and spread in the social body to the good of individuals and of the whole of society*.⁸ Speaking of naturally produced wealth, he points to the matter: prescribing that equity of the good of individuals and of the public shows that this science forms a branch of politics, depending on philosophy along with it, which is (he says) the *trunk of the encyclopedic tree*.⁹ We will not say that the author is always fully coherent with these ideas in all of the points of that dissertation of his. When, for example, he tells us that according to political economy individual interest must consider itself as the universal and principal motor of society (p. 29), it is clear that he takes political economy in the most material sense. When oppositely to justify it against the silence of materialism, he attributes to it the satisfaction of religious and moral needs (p. 24), he assigns nearly to its direct scope that which it does not aim at except indirectly. However, that amounts to little: for neither of these inexactitudes must we ignore the merit of the definition, which very much seems to us to approximate the truth.

Economy Subordinate to Politics and to Physics

From the indicated combination of the two material and political elements, the reader will understand for what reason we have said that economics in the social order is roughly what physiology is in the science of man, namely the science that combines the material part with the moral, and deliberates on the relationships of them. On the one hand, this must know the needs of social man and the aptitude of things for satisfying them because without such knowledge the legislator would miss the subject matter around which to regulate men. On the other hand, this must know by its own evidence or accept from other higher science the principles of justice or of equity, according to which men must be governed. Thus, this is a doubly subordinate science: subordinate to the physical sciences, from which it receives scientific knowledge of material needs and of

⁸ Garnier, "Du But et des Limites de l'Économie Politique," 7.

⁹ Garnier, "Du But et des Limites de l'Économie Politique," 32: "Tronc auquel se rattachent toutes les branches de l'arbre encyclopédique."

the means of satisfying them; subordinate to moral and political sciences, from which it receives demonstrations of the tendencies of the human heart and of the laws according to which these must order themselves to private and public good.

Could not this science content itself with considering the natural tendency of interests and the natural effect that these produce in the formation and distribution of material goods without rising to higher principles for regulating them?

Inconvenience of Sequestering It by the Former

Certainly, nothing prohibits that an economist studies this sole part, as nothing prohibits that there be surveyors, master builders, or architects who know the application of mathematical theorems without going back to their demonstrations. However, economy reduced to this lowest level will not correspond to the concept with which it was primitively instituted and with which it is generally cultivated. Furthermore, finding itself at every step pushed into problems unsolvable with those sole principles of interest, it will at best abandon its own followers who will only with difficulty have the modesty of recognizing themselves incapable and will continue—as up until now they unfortunately have done—to search in economic harmonies for that which cannot be found there except in superior principles, rendering to it that damage that all can foresee when one pretends to lead all society by means of those instincts that guide only the more animalistic part of man.

Sequestered, It Is Foreign to Our Program

In any case, if someone thus defines the limits of economic science, he will clearly see that his doctrines have nothing to do with either the program of the *Civiltà Cattolica* (since the purely instinctive and material fact is an indifferent thing to the eyes of civil man and of the Catholic) or with the assumptions of the present treatises in which we have undertaken to investigate the relevant points between Catholicism and social economy in order to disentangle those errors that heterodoxy has abundantly scattered there.

Difference of Heterodox Economy

Those then who follow up most authors, those who have written up until now and recognize as well as we a branch of politics in economy, these will understand that from the variety of religious and political doctrines must be born in immense divergence between heterodox and Catholic economics. The first, having established utilitarianism with the principle of independence, will no longer be able to find another motor of human action than the craving for feel-

ing pleurably (whether this sentient being is corporeal, intellectual, or moral man). Therefore, production, distribution, and consumption of wealth will have to depend on this need and, according to this need, will have to be regulated by the politician, that is, by the governor.¹⁰ Thus can it find in private and public interests the reasons for establishing some kind of justice as the Epicurean found in pleasure the reasons for practicing some kind of virtue (e.g., temperance to enjoy health, honesty to enjoy reputation, and so forth). However, the supreme motive will be, as we heard Garnier attest, interest, which will give the norms of the natural organism and of social justice.¹¹ Thus it will be just that which is in the interest of the plurality, being impossible to satisfy at one time *all* the interests, among which there cannot be that unity essentially found among all those of right reason, and the economist paying attention only to interests will be free from all scruples to fall into injustice.

From the Catholic

Catholic economy will proceed altogether differently. Knowing that interest like every other passion tends constantly toward excess; that excess (be it even of the plurality) is always unjust; and that these excesses must not be restrained among men by the use of force against the interests of others but by way of conscience guided by reason and by authority—to these it will turn for ordering interests. “Man,” it will say,

part of this universe created and ordered by God, depends logically on the same order and must depend morally on its Orderer. Man does not operate here, therefore, to *feel pleasantly* (even though in operating according to nature some immediate or mediated satisfaction is found) but operates, with respect

¹⁰ [Trans. from Fr.] Science ... *How does it proceed?* “Human work applied to things makes them undergo modifications.... *Man stimulated by the love of pleasure, desirous of multiplying his enjoyments*, is not long in recognizing that in making savings and in applying to production that which he has saved he augments his wealth. It is thus that wealth grows through work and through capital” (Rossi, *Cours d’Economie politique, deuxième leçon*, 32).

¹¹ [Trans. from Fr.] “It believes in the harmonious and social tendency of individual interests, even while they are antagonistic. It only counts in a weak degree on the force of social interest produced by the spirit of devotion and the sentiment of fraternity.... Certain of these laws (of interest) are in conformity with justice, and from their free action results the natural organization of societies and all the advantages that is given to them as able to receive” (Loc. cit., 29).




Status Quaestionis


to material things, with the intent of following that vast design in which all of the works of the visible world are joined by the Creator and which forms the true norm of absolute justice.

Now reason, no less than revelation, shows us that material things are destined either to the sustenance of the body or as the material of other human operations. Eternal order desires, therefore, that in a well-ordered society the freedom of each man's actions be assured to him regarding these material creations and the fruit of that action and that the action of all, to the extent possible, be made to harmoniously accord with the common good. To save the right of each one in this matter and to seek the harmony of actions with the common good according to justice is the duty of the governor; scientifically indicating the way by which wealth naturally is formed and distributed and the way with which the governor, by consequence of the public good, can harmonize this act of production and distribution is the intent of social economy.

Motive Powers to Consider



For that purpose it would be necessary if our opinion does not err to investigate seriously what the human powers are that work themselves around wealth and in what way these may put themselves in movement in order to obtain in material assets the order that was intended by the Creator, namely liberty of each one in the use of forces, utility of forces to one's own subsistence, and contribution of all to the common good. Unfortunately, this subject matter is generally overlooked, presuming that man does not work except for interest and that every interest has the right to all that it can obtain. Before advancing in the analysis of other first concepts, it will be permitted to us to take a look at the motive powers of man, at their influence in economic movement, and at the use that the public administrator may make of them.



Section 2—The Motive Powers of Man Concerning Economics

Three Forces

There is no one who does not know that the motive forces of man (appetites and passions) will have need of a prior apprehension, which from the purely potential state leads to the act. From apprehension, from the senses, and from the imagination the appetites and passions awake. Reason arouses the will but with two diverse principles: (1) either with the evidence of true good to which



the will becomes attached on the strength of its nature, or (2) with the evidence of the authority that inclines it to tend toward some good even if not evidently recognized as necessary. The first tendency is natural and spontaneous; the second includes for the most part a germ of religious idea, and only religion obtains accomplished efficacy, there not being, outside of God, authority on earth that can on its own impose on the will legitimate and constantly efficacious constraints to induce it to adopt such good to which naturally it does not tend. Appetite, therefore, of satisfaction, rational tendency toward the evident good, and religious impulse to supernatural perfection are the three principal motors of the will endowed respectively with fairly diverse characters between them.

Tendencies of Egoism in the Sense

The appetite for satisfaction arises in the sentient man and is consequently essentially individual and subjective. It is *subjective* because feeling is entirely an act belonging to the subject that feels and *individual* as a result, there not being reason by which the sentient being can share with others his own sensations. If I like sweets, you might like bitter things; if I need clothing for cold temperatures, you might need bread to stave off hunger. The feeling of need and the desire to satisfy it (which as an economic motor has been called, and we will call it that again, *interest*) essentially includes an egoistic tendency.

Justice in Reason

If getting outside of the sentient *me*, I consider rationally in others a natural identity and universal dependence on the Creator and Orderer of all this, I find myself transported suddenly into the regions of the objective where recognizing some necessary and absolute proportions, as a result independent of my personal tastes or sensations, I feel bound by the evidence of truth to assent with the intellect, which gently draws the will along and inclines it to order, presenting to it in this the good of justice. This is justice that generically considered in the identity of human nature establishes among all persons a principle of natural equality guaranteed by the will of the Creator. Following this principle, I compare myself with every other man, and as I want what is mine for me, I want for the other what is his.

Generosity in Religion

Up to this point, my reason had kept its view fixed on its surroundings on the earth, and, on the equality of the inhabitants of this, it found the reason for equality in their attributes, to each the fruit of his labors, following the axiom from

Saint-Simon: *To each capacity according to its works*. Might not man raise his view higher and admire in the sublimity of the heavens the Father of all mortals and in his heart equal love toward all his children? If he gazes upon this, when dealing with economics, he would feel in his own heart, equal with the laws of strict justice, impulses of fraternal benevolence entering in. Instead of comparing recompense in parity with work, he would be stimulated to proportion the magnitude of the subsidies to the seriousness of needs. Then, without overly calculating the work wherein wealth germinates, he would calculate instead the suffering that it must alleviate. Unfortunately, this raising of the eyes to the Father who is in heaven is not an act that is formed by nature on its own, yet reason can recognize and admire the sublimity of the concept when the merciful condescension of God is pleased to make it manifest to it. Outside of Christianity, this motor, barely remembered from a languishing echo of tradition or by the suggestions from a vacillating conscience, is little better than unknown to minds and ineffective on wills. Because by his grace we are among the number of those to whose ear the announcement of salvation rang opportune, transfusing a new life into the heart, and because we are investigating the operative elements of production and distribution of wealth in a Christian society—a society that is where this new life, thanks to faith and grace, is generally diffused—who does not see that, in making sense of the economic state of a society and of the means with which a governor may correctly order it, we must also take this into account, in addition to the other two motive forces?

How They Enter into Economic Science

We have, therefore, three forces that we can call productive and regulative of wealth: *interest* that thinks about *me*, *justice* that equalizes it with regard to others, and *piety* that gives to others a certain preference. Researching in this way, a governor may obtain, with the use in various proportions of these three motor forces, the ordered advancement of public goods; this is, in our opinion, the main assumption of social economy.

Opposed in Vain by the Economists

Such is not, we know, the opinion of many economists, as we heard in the preceding article by Garnier. Persuaded as these are that individual interests have a harmonious and social tendency, little do they assign to fraternity and to voluntary sacrifice, and we do not know how to blame them for it so long as it is a matter of *socialist* fraternity and sacrifice. The proofs given by these of the one and the other are such that they fully justify the slight confidence of the

economists. Neither could it be otherwise, given that modern socialism includes an express negation of true Christianity that is only found in Catholicism.

Because socialism, hypocritically plagiarizing Catholic language, pronounces words that in its mouth become sterile and derisory, must we perhaps infer by consequence that the economy must recuse itself from the serious employment of real and fecund forces? It would be a strange economy that refused currency and *banknotes* because they come to be altered and counterfeited by crooks. If the French economist does not know or does not have faith in Catholicism, it is most natural that he does not give any credit to fraternity or to spontaneous sacrifice, notwithstanding the numerous and weighty examples that his country gives him of it. However, we who in Italian society see the whole *mole* agitated by that most noble spirit¹² would think ourselves failing as good philosophers if we pretended to explain economic phenomenon by first strangling in society our most principal of its motors—that which forms the completion of society in its worldly order and that which alone renders possible the effectuation of its accomplishment in the grand design.

By Vice of Naturalism

If, dear reader, it goes just like this in a time of such prevalent rationalistic naturalism, you will not be displeased that we invoke your attention to this object. Civil men, European Christians, and many even of those who say of themselves and believe themselves to be Catholic have left themselves so influenced by naturalism, so inebriated by the power of civilization, that hoping to receive from it everything, they would like to banish from it all supernatural considerations and find a perfect society in the pure elements of nature. They reiterate with Garnier that interest leads to justice and that the tendency of individual interests is harmonious and produces on its own a correct arrangement of society.

If Not Admitted, the Premise of the Science Is Impossible

Now, after the little that we have said concerning the scope of public economy, it does not take much logical skill to demonstrate the absurdity of their theorem. What is, according to what has been said, the scope of this science? To establish the laws through which the operation of a society produces and rightly distributes wealth in a way—protecting for each one the free employment of their energies and the fruit of their employed energies—that there is no one who lacks the appropriate sustenance. This scope includes (there is no one who does not

¹² Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.727: ... *mens agitat molem et magno se corpore miscet*.

see this) two terms that in the system of interest are essentially opposed: that is to say, to work for interest is to work for another. Interest being essentially personal and subjective, it tends necessarily to work for oneself alone. On the other hand, society being an immense aggregate of personal inequalities, this administers in every order of power the counter-positions of strength and of weakness: counter-positions in which the weaker is unable to subsist and to use his forces freely except to the extent that he receives some help from the strong in various proportions. Whatever might be the branch in which he exercises this force, the opposed need extends itself in a wide range, from mediocrity to extreme privation. When it arrives at the latter point, one can achieve nothing or nearly nothing with his own forces. Everything or nearly everything he must wait for from others: the agonizing infirm needs the help of the healthy and robust; the beggar needs the help of the wealthy; the stupid cretin the help of the wise; and so forth. Pose this extremity of weakness in a society where interest is the universal motor, and tell us if a just proportion among employed forces, collected fruits, and felt needs is more possible.

Contradictory

Interest, as that which arises from the longing for *feeling pleasurable*, necessarily excludes any burdensome labor, suggesting consequently to whomever might be able to obtain it that he adopt for his own the fatigues of others, for the opposite includes the indefinite longing for enjoyment, making it impossible that a rich man might ever have a superfluity. The tendency, therefore, of interests inevitably leads the rich in society to wish for their own the work of the poor with the minimum expenditure. Such an intent being universally established among the powerful of a society, it is easy to see whether that equitable repartition by which the free use of forces produces for each the appropriate sustenance might ever be hoped for. Effect without a cause is repellent. Now where will you find a cause such that a rich man might give from his own to others when you have established that *interest* that tends to draw the wealth of others to oneself as universal motor?¹³ You will tell me that man can feel pleasantly even without interest

¹³ We find in the *Armonia* of November 5, 1857, an odd catechism attributed to the Anglo-Americans but that we believe most appropriate for that ignoble part of any society that takes utilitarianism for its guide. Here is the context:

What is life? A time to earn money.

What is money? The goal of life.

What is man? A machine for earning money.

What is woman? A machine for spending money, and so forth.

in money when he is compensated by praises, by gratitude, by love, and by the conscience of having done the good, all of which are stimulations to sacrifice in favor of others some part of one's own (which, in substance, is telling us that the universal motor is not interest). You will add to me that if the rich do not sacrifice a part, they run the danger of seeing themselves robbed of everything. Thus, by consequence, even under the universal influence of interest, wealth can come to be distributed equitably either by love or by fear.

It Is a Utopia Denied by Fact

This is one of these responses with which the imagination uses ingenuity to quiet the reason—fluttering around the feeble glimmer of possibilities rather than planting the steps solidly on the ways of the real world. It remembers the philanthropic commotions of some romantic hearts, the momentary fears of some demagogic tumult. Seeing in these moments of trepidation the rich Epicurean awaken from sleep, open the purse, and throw some coin enthralled in theatrical compassion or a howling Cerberus, it believes that society can live continuously either between philanthropic mushiness or the terrors of seditions. However, there should be more than these sudden fears or shows of tenderness for establishing a social order! This must result from that firm and constant resolution of the legislating reason that, freed from fear or from affection, aims at accomplishing the effectuation of order in the whole social machine. If this same reason, instead of moving itself for love of order, is led along by *interest as the universal motor*, do you know what the government will be? It will be a shrewd, aristocratic combination, a studied calculation for determining with which arts and up to what point the conspiracy of the rich, of the strong, and of the astute can compress the rioting of the poor, of the weak, and of the stupid, an unconscious mob guided by some Masaniello.¹⁴ The value of the embankments that one wishes to oppose to this multitude being shrewdly calculated, they will cajole a part of this group to administer the necessary materials to construct that embankment, and the remainder will be destined to the proletariat, to prison, to slavery, to the slaughterhouse, and to be, in other words, either a helot in Sparta or a pariah among the Bramins or a Negro in the United States or an Indian in Calcutta or Irish in London. The facts are notorious and demonstrate more than our thesis requires because interest practices all these extreme and shameful oppressions in society where the principles of humanity still ring as an echo of ancient tradition or as a rumble of Catholic harmony, at the sound of which the

¹⁴ [Ed. note] Tommaso Aniello (1622–1647), or Masaniello, was killed while leading a mob revolt against the Spanish Habsburg regime in Naples in the summer of 1647.

filthy Epicurean still feels some shame and runs, if he manages, with his hands covering his face. Yet, what would a society be where conscience, honorableness, piety, religion, and, to say it all in a phrase, Catholic sentiment no longer preserved some influence, either as ancient legislator or as present rival?

Both historical fact and philosophical reason are in agreement in demonstrating to us that a society governed by the *universal motor of interest* cannot without contradiction hope for an equitable repartition of goods such that each one be free in their work, secure in the gathering of its fruits, and satisfied in every urgent need.

Justice Does Not Suffice

This equity of repartition must be the premise of social economy; this is that which the economists more or less explicitly propose. Therefore, an economics that presents the phenomena of production and repartition of wealth only under the impulses of interest is a science that proposes a problem to itself that it cannot resolve. It will never find the strength necessary for achieving the result to which it pretends if it does not admit beyond interest the other two motive powers: justice and piety. *Both*, we say, since the same rigorous and exact justice would suffice well enough to introduce in society reverence for right; but would this arrive at obtaining relief for need? In other terms, he who says, "I do not rob things of others," is he disposed by that to give of his own? There is no one who does not see the great divide that still passes between justice and benevolence. Yet, if society does not manage to give to this its just influence, if it does not manage to say, "We give to those who give us nothing in return," then the economic problem will never find a solution.

As Practice Teaches

You can see it practically in all of the special applications of this problem, which form the nagging issue for the economists, such as salaries, pauperism, luxury, machinery, and so forth. In each of these even the element of justice, if it be introduced there only and in its inflexible rigidity, will hardly be able to mitigate the cruelty of interest and assure the satisfaction of the demands of nature. In fact, does the entrepreneur lack rigorous justice who accepts the manual, daily labor at the lowest price? Furthermore, is the rich man strictly obliged by justice for the support of this or that destitute? If luxury takes bread from the poor, would justice know how to set limits beyond which luxury is culpable? If a newly invented machine throws a population into unemployment, will justice run to set fire to that factory to assure sustenance to the craftsman? In all these

collisions the economist acknowledges a class of harmed people, feels sorry for it, but cannot do any better, and the only hope with which he consoles us is that “this is a necessary evil; it will pass with damage for those of the present and will leave abundance for those of the future.” Now do you believe that *those of the present*, those poor of the present that are dying of hunger are not comprised even then in the law of equitable repartition according to which material wealth must advance for every member of society, through corresponding labor, a proportional sustenance? To us it seems that a correct public economy must before all else assure life to those already living and not already sacrifice the living to the ease of those yet to be born. If in the sole impulses of interest it does not find the means to resolve its own problem, it must recognize that an essential part of the science must include even the impulses superior to interest: justice and religion.

Blanqui himself, hardly a suspect authority, recognizes it while vituperating the Catholic clergy as ignorant, obscurantist, and sluggardly. “Religion,” he says, “is the only thing that can resolve the economic questions proposed by it: There are questions of political economy that will remain insoluble so long as it (religion) does not put its hand to it, e.g., public instruction, *the equitable repartition of the profits of work*, prison reform, agricultural progress, and plenty of other problems as well, etc.”¹⁵ See the power of truth! An unbelieving and socialist economist recognizes that there is not, outside of religion, a just solution of many and grave economic problems, and yet a Catholic economist would pretend to write on social economics without reliance on religion, to write on economics, excluding that element that is *necessary*, in the opinion of Blanqui, for resolving the gravest questions to it?

On the power of which element, oh how many admirable examples we would be able to bring up if the brevity of an article only allowed it to us! However, at the risk of making the typographer scream, we want to give at least the most recent that we find in the *Regeneracion* of Madrid (29 October 1857), not only because the current facts entice more but even because both the subject and the actors make it little less than miraculous.

Of the four points that we have just indicated we do not believe that there is one either more harmful to equitable distribution or more resistant to every medicine of the political economists than luxury, that desolate wound of modern society. How much the economists have studied it for healing it! However, the ultimate conclusion is always this: Sumptuary laws are worthless and useless.

Now do you know the news? In Baiona a select number of illustrious ladies formed an association with the intent (my dear reader, open your eyes wide and

¹⁵ [Trans. from Fr.] Blanqui, *Histoire de l'Economie politique* (Paris, 1852), t. 1, p. 152.

make signs of the cross) of combating luxury in dress! Now say, reader, is not this properly a miracle compared with which all the power of Rome does not compare? We do not know if the society will fully obtain its objective, as was obtained in other categories of vice, in other groups of persons, in other peoples by the *temperance societies*, which would be able to confirm this to our assertion. Succeed or not, the sole demonstration to us in the gentle sex, in a subject so jealous to it, that is, the resolution to combat luxury, does this not prove how great is the force of religious sentiment over economic interests? If (as these undertakings have the habit in France) the society takes root and propagates; if (as the distinguished and Catholic newspaper hopes) it crosses the Pyrenees and transplants itself in Castile; if among the Italians, imitators unfortunately, and so crazy for French designs and fashions, they found themselves imitators of the ladies of Baiona; if little by little collapsed this idol of Fashion that swallows like a Moloch so many families among its adorers—who does not see the immense economic revolution that would quietly take hold in all of the civilized world? It is a cause capable of producing effects so extensive, so marvelous, so advantageous—in the objection of economic science will one come to tell us it is not a part of this science? It would be exactly as telling us that the handling of artillery or of mines must not be part of a course on military arts.

You see it, reader: Either economics is a science incapable of resolving the fundamental problem that it itself has proposed, or it is a full treatise of social economy that puts into the hands of the public other powers beyond the strength of interest capable of introducing into society that order that interest alone would render impossible. Now this order cannot be obtained without the sentiment of justice and of love, which in Christian society is charity. Therefore, a good treatise of economics must have recourse to these three motive powers and indicate to the governor in what way he must use them in order to arrive at the objective of seeing every need reasonably satisfied, every arm free, every work fruitful. That is not to say that it must make the public administrator the arbiter of justice or chief of religion, as neither does it make it storekeeper nor craftsman when it teaches him that part he has to generalize concerning the tendencies of commerce and of industry. It is only to say that, assuming the legal sentiment and the religious as a useful theorem or as a fact, the science must consider and measure the economic influences of them.

The Economists Confess It

From having excluded these necessary elements is born the impotence of the economists in attaining their promises and satisfying our hopes, and (be it said in praise of their sincerity) these themselves many times acknowledge it, con-

fessing that economy alone cannot solve the great social problem. Many cases will occur to us in which we must hear of these confessions from the economists themselves. For now, we content ourselves with bringing only two such men to your attention that have among the economists merited authority of maestros and honorable positions.

The first is Rossi¹⁶ in the second lesson of the first volume, where with admirable candor and clarity he begins with confessing that political economy is a science *sui generis*,¹⁷ that occupies itself only with enrichment and, considered according to its object, must distinguish itself from the science of happiness and from that of moral improvement. You want enjoyment? You want to perfect yourselves? In such case you must adopt means much superior to those that political economy—which is none other than the science of acquiring wealth—teaches you, even you *who wishes solely to acquire*.¹⁸ You see here then a frank confession, that with the means suggested by public economy neither happiness nor more perfection is obtained, that rather (the author confesses it elsewhere) the moral good, the political good, many times require exceptions to those laws that he teaches of political economy. If it does not procure the good of society, why call it *political*? If you want to call it *political*, that is, leading to the social good, why not administer to it those means that for such a scope you yourselves confess necessary? You number among the fundamental facts of this science the instinct of property, the inclination to association, the foresight of saving,¹⁹ and similar things. Why not number as well both the sentiment of justice, without which association would be impossible, and the sentiment of piety and of religion that so influence social operation in everything? Someone would perhaps reply that these facts belong to other sciences, but certainly Rossi—who recognizes

¹⁶ [Ed. note] Pellegrino Rossi was “one of the most distinguished economists of the century,” who when he is not focusing on politics could be considered “the absolute and unshackled advocate of liberty.” See Palgrave, *Dictionary of Political Economy*, 3:327–29, s.v. “Rossi, Pellegrino Luigi Edoardo (1787–1848).”

¹⁷ Pellegrino Rossi, *Cours d'Économie Politique*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Paris: Jourbert and Thorel, 1840), 31.

¹⁸ [Trans. from Fr.] *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁹ [Trans. from Fr.] “Political economy starts essentially with these givens: our power over things through work, our tendency to save if a sufficient interest pushes us towards it; our tendency to put our activity and strengths in common; our instincts of property and of exchange.” (Loc. cit. p. 31).

that even earlier economics accepts them together with other sciences²⁰ without also belonging to it—would not respond like that. Truly, if a fact is necessary for explaining the object of the science, it is clear that it must form a part of it. To that, Rossi replies that the moment has not yet arrived for gathering all the moral and political sciences into one with the power of the synthesis.²¹ However, it is not this that we are asking ourselves; we do not ask at the moment for the unity of all the moral sciences but, indeed, for the completion of political economy. If this investigates the nature, the causes, and the transformations of wealth, basing itself on the general and constant facts of human nature;²² if the general and constant facts of this nature are the love of justice, piety, and religion, no less than savings or sociality; if the first facts as much as the second influence production and the circulation of wealth; why admit the latter and omit the former, while you yourselves recognize that without these political happinesses, the essential scope of the social sciences, cannot be obtained? Furthermore, why do so in that very moment in which you say all of society is affected by the influences and increases from economic science?²³

Thus it is! Political economy has to be the science solely of acquiring wealth, at the price of not being able either to explain the transferring of wealth from one to another, or to suggest the means of an equitable repartition. The same confession you can hear from another luminary, author of many articles in the *Dictionnaire de l'Économie politique*, Cherbuliez; who in the article “Paupérisme” frankly recognizes that in the tremendous question of pauperism, economics has no suggestions, if not negative ones.²⁴ It omits intervention of the state and does

²⁰ [Trans. from Fr.] “Even though ... these facts be ... common with other sciences” (ibid.).

²¹ [Trans. from Fr.] “[Has] the moment arrive[d] to gather, by a powerful synthesis, all of the moral and political sciences in[to] one alone? ... We doubt it.” (Loc. cit. p. 36).

²² [Trans. from Fr.] “Rational political economy is the science which investigates the nature, causes and movement of wealth basing itself on the general and constant facts of human nature and of the exterior world.” (Loc. cit. p. 38).

²³ [Trans. from Fr.] “Everything testifies today of the high rank that economic science must occupy in the order of the social sciences.... The new paths that it leads societies ... the sufferings that it occasions.” (Loc. cit. ‘Introduction’)

²⁴ [Ed. note] A. E. Cherbuliez “replaced Rossi, 1833, at the academy of Geneva as professor of law (*droit*), and, 1835, as professor of political economy. His first works wore political, ... [b]ut it was especially as an economist that he made his mark, and his works on this branch of study are much valued.” See Palgrave, *Dictionary of Political Economy*, 1:274, s.v. “Cherbuliez, Antoine Élysée.” See A. E. Cherbuliez,

not want to hear talk of labor organizations and other similar utopias, but these negations do not solve the problem; they only teach us that it is not yet solved.²⁵

What, therefore? Therefore, the remedy for pauperism must perhaps be looked for in the moral influences and in a special way of exercising charity toward the poor. Moreover, this way does not belong to economic science (according to them); they say that “it is not up to us,” then, “to indicate it.”

Is it not up to you to indicate it? Do you not teach *political* economy? Does not this science have for its scope studying the transformation of wealth and the laws for distributing it equitably? Now what thing is more contrary to equity than condemning entire classes of populations to the torment of oppression, of hunger, and of degradation? To this you notice a remedy in morality and in Catholic charity, but in order to not introduce these elements into the science, you condemn to it the opprobrium of incapacity. You yourselves confess its impotence!

We will return perhaps another time to this most serious topic. For now these two confessions suffice to confirm our assertion that economic science is maimed and impotent to solve these problems if it presumes to mutilate man, subjecting everything to *the supreme motor of interest*.

If it sees itself impotent at solving those problems, why propose them? Why assume as its task the equitable repartition of wealth?

God should wish that there were only impotence! However, the worst is that the economists of this falsity were dragged from the inception little by little to not only obscure the most alive and vital forces of justice and Christian charity but also to positively consider them enemies to the growth of wealth and of the public good. Even yet we do not want to say, on the other hand, that being the first cultivators of this science preoccupied with the aversion to religion and to the Church, when it came to receiving subsidies from Catholicism, their theophobia led them to mutilate their favored science early on rather than to accept and introduce there that which they even saw as necessary to the accomplishment of the design. Whatever might be the cause of such mutilation, the fact is that free production and equitable repartition of wealth requires the combination of these three forces. The evidence of this truth is such that we hear repeatedly the same economists halt themselves in the middle of their theories, recognizing themselves incapable of pursuing the development with only the principles embraced by them, similar to those materialists, of whom De Maistre spoke,

Dictionnaire de l'Économie politique, vol. 2 (Paris: Guillaumin and Hachette, 1854), s.v. “Paupérisme,” 333–38. [Trans. from Fr.] “Political economy hardly furnishes, on the question of pauperism, but negative teachings.” (“Paupérisme,” 338).

²⁵ [Trans. from Fr.] “It teaches us only that it is not resolved” (ibid.).

that running into a problem that matter alone cannot resolve bow down with hypocritical modesty confessing ignorance in order not to become spiritualists. What breed of philosophy is this that feigns not to see causes in order to avoid being constrained to admit them?

The same we will say again of economy. If the free use of forces and the equitable repartition of wealth is your fundamental problem, if for resolving them it is necessary, beyond interest, to employ the sentiment of justice and the sacrifice of religious heroism, why not investigate even the force of these sentiments with respect to production and distribution instead of arresting yourself in the impotence of interest? Why cancel by half the divine design and split in half human nature by reducing it to pure animal?

The Fundamental Reason for This Insufficiency

Every human science will always be reduced to this miserable mutilation and impotence when it assumes the impious and stupid proposition of explaining the machine without admitting the design of the artisan, assenting to the rationality of the universe while negating the supreme end for which it was produced by the Creator. This supreme Artisan did not give to human nature that final perfection that would have made its rest absolute on earth because he devised to subject it to new supernatural forces with which it would achieve perfecting itself in an existence beyond this world. If such was the design of the Creator, it is clear that purely natural forces (much less, then, the purely animal appetites) will never form from men a completely ordered society. Every science, therefore, that does not tie itself with some of its links to the religious principle will be necessarily imperfect; every science that positively denies it or impugns it will be false in theory and disastrous in practice.

The Economist Is Not a Theologian but Accepts Religion

What will be, therefore, the duty of a Catholic economist? Must he become a theologian and direct society with asceticism? There will certainly not lack those who would like to impute this opinion to us, but you, lovely reader whom theophobia does not belabor, you will understand perfectly well that an economics that does not deny religion can be written and accept its foundations even by one who is not a theologian, as one can teach an architecture that does not deny geometry even from one who is not a geometer, as a mathematics that does not deny metaphysics can be written even by one who is not a metaphysician. You will understand thus that if an architect teaches the *true* laws of architecture, it is impossible that he deny mathematics; if a mathematician writes a *true* course

of geometry, it is impossible that he deny metaphysics. By consequence it is impossible that a *true* economics be in discord with religion and morality. You will understand that as the supreme principles of architecture receive proof from mathematics and physics and as the laws and supreme principles of mathematics receive it, to the degree that it needs from metaphysics, so also from morality and religion must economics receive its proofs and accept from them its demonstration and laws.

Proposal of a Tri-Partition of the Science

What would, therefore, practically speaking, a full course on public economics consist of if the propositions explained to this point were to receive the suffrage of the learned? The idea of wealth being clarified and confirmed, it would have to first be considered how this may be produced and spontaneously distributed under the influence of interest, and this is the task in which generally the masters of this science have so far confined themselves. This first part will necessarily present those inconveniences and those gaps that we have displayed from the start, and to these the remedy will have to be sought in natural impulse either of justice or of benevolence, this latter more appropriate to the family and the former to public society. To investigate then what influence should be exercised on production and distribution of goods by the public order of property, of the tribunals, and of the administration; what by the domestic spirit in the various family conditions; what social institutions might these influences develop themselves to the advantage of free production, of tranquil possession, and of equitable repartition of wealth—here is a second part where the interest of *I* needs correction from natural reason.

Nonetheless, even in this second stage the voices of interest, yes, tempered but at the same time sustained by natural justice, will still leave much to be desired for the equitable repartition of goods in public society. Thus economic wisdom must research in the third place that which might be the religious sentiments and institutions that would be able to correct the imperfection of justice and the poverty of natural affections, and in what way a Catholic administrator might be able to give to these sentiments and institutions full development in the civil order, and the effective practice with which they might perfect both the liberty of production and equity in distribution of wealth. Therefore, everyone sees the vast field that opens itself in front of the authority on economy and the inestimable economic advantages that public society draws from the free, spontaneous, and devout operation of the religious sentiment in all times, but today especially. Everyone sees it, except that no one has thought so far, to my

knowledge, to methodically introduce these advantages in the practical course of economics, and many, on the other hand, force themselves to be rid of them and to discredit them as parasitical plants in that which precisely the Christian spirit made, in favor of society and of economics, marvelous proofs. To reduce these proofs to factual and statistical evidence would be, as everyone sees, a labor equally new to the science, useful for economics, honorable for religions, and logical for scientific coherence.

Light That It Would Shed on It

Thus, perhaps, the disgrace might be avoided, of which certain writers complain, so long as they undertake to treat this science under the three usual respects of *production*, *distribution*, and *consumption*, which, being a purely logical distinction, leave continual uncertainties and intertwine themselves, perpetually passing from one respect to the other. The reason is clear: Consumption of a product is, for the most part, production of another and, at one time, distribution of a gain. Thus, by way of example, the farmer who eats his bread, *consumes* the work of the baker, *produces* an augment in the capital of his forces, and *shares* according to his quota in the fruit of that field that he fertilized with his sweat. To what category, therefore, must the bread of the farmer attach itself? In production, in distribution, or in consumption? Are these three parts truly the object of economics? Furthermore, shall we contradict Rossi who suppresses the third or one that reduces the second to the first? As you see, there is great oscillation in such a theoretical partition. If, on the other hand, economics considers itself in the light of the operative powers of man, then it will have the very clear distinctions of that which can be obtained from personal interest, from public justice and domestic affections, and from religious sentiment and supernatural heroism. All three of these motors will receive citizenship in the regions of the economists and will be recommended to the growing generation of students, and the noble influences of justice and religion will not appear here to be (as is usual even at times among Catholic treatise writers) quasi a foreign money or quasi a troublesome corrective of the tendencies of economic growth of society but, rather, that indispensable means to support the philanthropic intention to universalize, as much as is possible in the reality of this world, a tranquil ease, even in the lowest classes. Thus if economics that until now, while mutilating its proposition and denying the facts, seems to oppose order and religious sentiments restored to man his nature and to the facts their fullness, it would find itself and its pupils understanding the great truth asserted by Montesquieu, that Catholicism, primarily destined to the supreme good of eternity, forms the base of happiness and of order even in the present time, even with respect to material goods.