

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

The Church and the Poor.

A SERIES OF HISTORICAL SKETCHES.

By W. EDWARD CHADWICK, D.D., B.Sc.

V.

THE MIDDLE AGES.

1. *Institutional Relief: The Hospitals and Monasteries.*

THE greatest of all influences upon Christian doctrine throughout the Middle Ages was undoubtedly that of St. Augustine. His teaching had also an immense effect upon the ideas of charity. Harnack shows quite clearly that it was as a "reformer of piety" that Augustine's really greatest work was done.¹ To understand the influence of Augustine upon the medieval theory of charity it is necessary to notice the following sequence of ideas²: Augustine starts from the thesis that love or desire (*amor* or *cupido*) is the strongest of all powers which man can use in his efforts to assert or express himself—an effort which is implied in the very consciousness of life or possession of vital energy. Next Augustine taught that the highest and sweetest enjoyment (the object of love) was to be found in the sense of the love of God (the Well of Life and the Fountain of all Good), and therefore from the certainty of "grace." Now, love, like faith, springs from God, for both are the means whereby we enter into communion with God, and are enabled to appropriate Him. Man's redemption through Christ Jesus "takes place through grace and love, and in turn through faith and love." In this process the part or action of love is *humbly* to renounce all that is its own, and to long for God and His law.

¹ "Augustine is in the first place to be estimated . . . as a reformer of Christian piety" (Harnack, "Hist. of Dogma," Eng. trans., vol. v., p. 67).

² For a brief summary of Augustine's line of thought, see Loch, "Charity and Social Life," p. 252 *et seq.* See also Harnack, "Das Mönchthum, seine Ideale und seine Geschichte," p. 36 *et seq.*

Moreover, the peace of God is shed upon the soul which has the living God for its Friend. That which mars this Divine peace is sin. And the misery of sin overcome by faith, humility, and love, is Christian piety. In this temper the Christian must live.¹

It will at once be seen that this doctrine was capable of wide application. The direction of thought was introspective, and turned the mind "towards hope, asceticism, and the contemplation of God in worship."² Thus, by Augustine's doctrine a high value was given to a life in which these three elements were paramount. The first—hope—could not be connected with any one form or expression of Christianity more than another; but for asceticism and the contemplation of God in worship it was felt that the monastic life offered the fullest opportunity.³

Hence in the early Middle Ages we witness an immense growth in monasticism, and an attempt, generally successful, to teach that the religious life and the monastic life were identical, so much so that those living the monastic life were ultimately regarded as "the religious"—that is, those who attempted and achieved a higher and more perfect form of Christianity than those living in "the world."⁴ Gradually all that was connected with Christianity became more or less connected with monasticism, and, among other Christian works or duties, that of charity or the relief of the poor. Western monasticism did not in any way owe its origin to Augustine, but undoubtedly in its rapid growth it received an immense impetus from his teaching, and especially from his conception of Christian piety.

I now propose to give a brief account of the work done by

¹ See Harnack, *ibid.*, vol. v., p. 71.

² Loch, *ibid.*, p. 253.

³ Upon the influence of Augustine upon Bernard, whom he terms *Augustinus redivivus*, see Harnack, vol. vi., p. 10. How Bernard, and after him Francis of Assisi, revived belief in the historical Christ must not be forgotten.

⁴ On monasticism as a return to the aristocratic tendencies of the old world, see Uhlhorn, "Charity in the Ancient Church," p. 340 *et seq.*; also Harnack, "Das Mönchthum," p. 49: "Das abendländische Mönchthum war bis zum Schlusse des zwölften Jahrhunderts auch noch ganz wesentlich eine aristokratische Institution gewesen."

the Church for the poor through *institutions* (whether monastic or otherwise) during the early Middle Ages. The subject is an immense one, and all I can hope to do is to indicate the points of chief importance. I may at once state that, certainly from the fourth century, we see the system which to-day is termed "institutional relief" carried on side by side with that which is now known as "home aliment," and, at any rate so far as the Church was concerned, gradually superseding it.

The earliest institutions for the relief of the poor were the *xenodochia*—literally, houses for strangers, but in which there were frequently lodged all who needed an asylum: viz., travellers, sick, widows, orphans; indeed, practically all who suffered from poverty or inability to maintain themselves. I cannot here deal with the subject of pre-Christian hospices—such, for instance, as those connected with temples of Æsculapius,¹ or Jewish inns at which no money was taken.² I must confine myself strictly to Christian institutions.

Some have considered that the *xenodochia*, or hospitals (in the true, but not present, sense of the word), mark a downward step in Christian charity. Much more probably they were an attempt to cope with altered conditions and with new needs. When Christians were few, so would be the number of these requiring shelter and care. It would then be possible to provide for such persons in the houses of bishops or private members of the Church.³ But when, after the conversion of the Empire, the number of Christians enormously increased, it became necessary to establish special institutions for them. Originally, as I have already implied, the *xenodochion* sheltered people needing help from various causes; but later we find a variety of institutions each devoted to a special class of sufferers.⁴

It is impossible to say when the first *xenodochia* were founded. There seems to be no trustworthy evidence of their

¹ Uhlhorn, p. 323.

² Loch, p. 196.

³ 1 Tim. iii. 2.

⁴ In the *Cod. Just.*, lib. i., tit. ii., l., 22, we have, e.g., *ptochotrophia*, *orphanotrophia*, *gerontocomia*, *noscomia*, *brephotrophia*, etc. Institutions for the blind, the dumb, and for lunatics, also existed (Ratzinger, pp. 143, 144).

existence during the reign of Constantine. The first indubitable proof that they did exist comes from the letter of Julian to Arascius, in which Julian orders that a xenodochion shall be established in every city, and for which he makes legal provision.¹ From the letter it appears to be clear that Julian was led to do this by the examples of Christian xenodochia and ptochotrophia, which then evidently existed widely. About A.D. 370 Basil founded his famous hospital at Cæsarea in Cappadocia, though before that ptochotrophia existed there. Epiphanius tells of them in Pontus, and when Chrysostom preached in Antioch there was one there; he himself founded two in Constantinople.²

From the East the xenodochion passed over into the West, and at first, even in Italy, the hospital was known by this name rather than by the Latin terms *hospitale* or *hospitium*. The first hospitals in the West are supposed to have been the house for the sick founded by Fabiola in Rome, and the house for strangers established by Pammachius at Portus (Oporto). But they did not multiply in the West as they did in the East. There were no xenodochia in Milan during the bishopric of Ambrose, and Augustine mentions them as a novelty; Pope Symmachus founded three, and Belisarius founded and endowed one in Rome. In Gaul they existed by the middle of the sixth century, and a little later "a home for strangers and the poor was reckoned among necessary ecclesiastical arrangements."³ It is interesting to notice that according to the plan of Basil the xenodochion was not to be merely a refuge for the wayfarer and the sick; it was also to be an asylum for the workless. It was actually to combine the idea of the hospital and the work-house in the fullest sense of the latter word.⁴

At first, whether founded by the bishop himself or by lay-people, the xenodochion was strictly under the personal control of the bishop of the diocese.⁵ He chose the superintendent,

¹ Uhlhorn, p. 326.

² *Ibid.*, p. 327.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 329.

⁴ Ratzinger, "Armenpflege," p. 142: "Er wollte . . . die Idee eines Hospitals mit der eines Arbeitshauses combiniren."

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 145, who quotes Häfer: "Auch in diesem Zeitraume gab es unter den Presbytern viele tüchtige Aerzte."

who was a priest, and laid down stringent rules with regard to both the receipts and the expenditure. Upon the bishop also lay the responsibility of protecting the property of the institution. The care of the sick was entrusted to deaconesses and widows, who were maintained by the Church. There were also frequently lay-brothers who gave assistance, and physicians were not wanting.¹ In the East one class of helpers in connection with the xenodochia were the *Parabolani*, whose duty was to seek out the sick and suffering and to bring them in; then there were the *Copiates*, who buried the dead.² There were also some who sought to atone for former sins by gratuitously serving in these hospitals.

Before proceeding to consider the monastery, as the other great institution for the relief of the poor, I may notice that between the xenodochion, or hospital, and the monastery there were many connections and similarities; indeed, the two institutions were frequently found in combination. Each revealed features of the other.³ Those who ministered in the xenodochia generally lived a monastic life, and Gregory the Great goes so far as to require that only the *religiosi* (*i.e.*, monks) should be chosen as presidents of the hospitals.⁴ Another point of connection lies here: both classes of institutions gradually escaped from episcopal control. They became more and more independent, and only subject to the Pope or the King or to the heads and members of their Order. Further, both hospitals and monasteries began to place themselves under some common rule and to become members of some common Order. From these various reasons they were able to become more independent channels of relief, and frequently the means at their command for dispensing this were far greater than either those of the bishop or of the parochial clergy.⁵

I have no intention of dealing with the subject of monasticism generally⁶; I am only concerned with it as an instrument

¹ Ratzinger, p. 145.

² Uhlhorn, p. 335.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 336.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 337.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 338.

⁶ One of the ablest and most judicious examinations of the whole subject will be found in Professor Harnack's lecture, "Das Mönchthum, seine Ideale und seine Geschichte."

for the relief of the poor. Two points I have already made clear : First, that the changes in doctrine due to Augustine and others ministered to its growth, because they put a high value on those virtues which were specially the product of the monastic life, or could be best cultivated by that life ; secondly, because, in the rough times which followed the break-up of the old Empire, undoubtedly the monasteries did a work which no other institution, so far as we can see, could have done ; they met an urgent need.

One most valuable service which the monasteries rendered should never be forgotten. They emphasized the obligation of work.¹ In this they were entirely true to the teaching of the New Testament.² The old world, with its aristocratic tendencies, had despised manual labour of almost every kind. It regarded it as a painful necessity, which whenever possible should be delegated to others who could support themselves in no other way. To work was the avocation of the slave, not of the free man—indeed, not of anyone who could in any way escape doing it.

The monasteries were the birthplaces of free labour.³ In them was first asserted that the practice of work was an evidence of Christian life. In Holy Scripture, as is well known, work and benevolence are connected ; the one found the means for the other.⁴ So it was in the monasteries. We must not imagine that their endowments, furnished by others, were the sole source of the wealth of the monasteries. These certainly were often great ; but where, as in the monasteries, we find diligent work combined with considerable skill, there wealth generally increases. Then, in the monasteries there was work in combination ; we may say that they were the earliest co-operative associations. Basil in his rules for monks clearly states that it

¹ Ratzinger, p. 146 *et seq.* ² 1 Thess. iv. 11 ; 2 Thess. iii. 8, 11.

³ "Entstanden in der absterbenden römischen Welt die Klostergemeinden, in welchen die beiden grossen Principien der freien Arbeit und der Verwerthung des Besitzes im Dienste Aller ihre Verwirklichung fanden" (Ratzinger, *ibid.*).

⁴ Eph. iv. 28.

is among the duties of a monk to work¹; he further states that the chief object of his work must be to support the needy.² His directions as to the kind of work to be chosen are eminently practical. The monks must think what kind of raw material can be most easily procured in the neighbourhood, and they must try to make what will command a ready sale.³ Augustine wrote a book on "The Work of Monks." According to the Rule of St. Benedict, the day began with four hours of work; after dinner there was a time of rest, then work until supper, and after supper more work. The diet of the monks was to be regulated according to the amount of hard work to be done. The monks, of course, were great cultivators; they were excellent agriculturists, and in those days, besides there being immense tracts of land which needed to be brought into cultivation, there was also, especially in France, much land which during troublous times had become almost a desert and required to be recultivated.⁴ From the monks the new nations learnt both agriculture and handicraft. Lastly, according to the Rule of St. Benedict, among other works to which a monk was particularly to devote himself was that of philanthropy⁵; having provided the means for this, he must expend those means upon it. Work in the monasteries was also sometimes regarded as a moral restorative, as not merely a sign of penitence, but as a means of expiation and forgiveness.⁶ It was even regarded as more important than fasting. If fasting hindered work, then fasting must give way.⁷ We must also remember that the monastery was the home of "common possession."⁸ Thus, at least ideally, the monastic life was a safeguard against covetousness. A well-regulated monastery was

¹ "In der Regel des hl. Basilius bildet die Arbeit den Angelpunkt des ganzen Mönchlebens" (Ratzinger, p. 148).

² Uhlhorn, "Christian Charity in the Ancient Church," p. 353.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ "Sie roden Wälder aus, sie schaffen Wüsteneien zu Ackerland" (Harnack, "Das Mönchthum," p. 41).

⁵ Uhlhorn, p. 359.

⁶ "Als sittlicher Beruf und als Mittel der Busse, Sühne, und Erlösung" (Ratzinger, p. 147).

⁷ Basil, Regul. 38.

⁸ Ratzinger, p. 148.

an enormous boon to the district surrounding it—sometimes, indeed, to those living far away, for cases are on record where not only money, but even supplies of such necessaries as corn, were sent long distances to those in need.¹ One of the most effectual ways of helping the poor is by providing education for their children. The monasteries did a great work in this way.² Connected with, or rather as part of, them there was generally a school in which many a poor boy obtained the learning which afterwards enabled him to live a life of usefulness, and not infrequently to rise to a position of eminence. In the nunneries girls were also taught much that was useful to them in later years.³ Then, there can be no doubt that the best monks and the best-organized monasteries (as communities) exercised an immense influence through the examples of “spiritual heroism” which they exhibited, and the power of a community which has risen to this level is always greater than the power exercised by even a number of independent individuals.⁴

One cause of the enlarged power of the monasteries to help the poor must not be forgotten. During the rough ages of feudalism undoubtedly much robbery of the funds of parish churches took place.⁵ Feudal barons, and even feudal bishops, were guilty of this crime. When strong ecclesiastical rulers arose, they compelled these to disgorge at least a portion of their ill-gotten gains. But very frequently what they gave up was bestowed upon the monasteries rather than upon the parishes.⁶ For this course the following reason was given: By “the poor”—for whose support, according to the ancient custom of the Church, a portion of the Church’s wealth should be devoted—was meant, not the poor people in the parishes, but the monks and nuns, who for the Gospel’s sake had renounced all, and had “for Christ’s sake become poor.” They are the true *pauperes Christi*.⁷ This was the theory maintained in the

¹ Uhlhorn, p. 359.

² Both Basil and Chrysostom lay stress on this.

³ Ratzinger, p. 150 (who quotes Augustine for this).

⁴ Ratzinger, p. 151.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 282.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.* (Ratzinger gives the authorities for this).

False Decretals, which, in spite of their origin, exercised an immense influence over the customs of the Church.¹ Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Clugny, appealed to the practical advantages of the change: "Who is best entitled to the gifts of the faithful, the monks who constantly pray to God on behalf of sinners, or the worldly clergy, who, as one sees, expend all their energies on the increase of their possessions and entirely neglect the care of souls?"² It must not be inferred that the poor always ultimately suffered. It was not that the final disposition or object of the Church's wealth was altogether changed; what was altered was the channel through which it was dispensed. For a considerable period (except perhaps in England)³ relief of the poor through the parochial clergy practically ceased; it became the work of the monasteries. Ratzinger states that in the Decretal of Gratian, "which from the middle of the twelfth century was regarded as a standard handbook in the Church," there is no mention of any recognized system of relief (other than monastic).⁴ One result of this neglect was an enormous increase of mendicancy, to check which many attempts were made, but without much result.⁵ This is an instance of an experience of which the history of poor relief furnishes only too many examples—namely, that every change of system falls heavily for a time upon some particular class. Undoubtedly, the dissolution of the monasteries at the time of the Reformation increased, at least temporarily, the amount of extreme poverty. This was again the case, at least for a few years, after the enactment of the "New" Poor Law in 1834.

¹ Upon "The False Decretals," see Milman, "Latin Christianity," vol. iii, p. 190 *et seq.*

² Ratzinger, p. 282.

³ Upon this Ratzinger is very positive: "In England erhielt sich das ganze Mittelalter hindurch die kirchliche Gemeinde-Armenpflege, wie sie im karolingische Zeitalter geordnet worden war" (p. 421; see also authorities quoted).

⁴ "In dem *Decretum Gratiani* . . . findet sich keine Spur mehr von einer geordneten kirchlichen Armenpflege" (Ratzinger, p. 305 *et seq.*).

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 307.

2. St. Francis of Assisi: The Mendicants.

There was one movement in the later Middle Ages which had far-reaching consequences, and to which more than a passing reference must be made, though actually this movement had, on the whole, far less direct connection with our present subject than is generally supposed.¹ I refer to the work of the mendicant Orders, and especially to that of St. Francis of Assisi. In his work some of the most dominating ideas of the Middle Ages, both theological and social, find their clearest expression. Francis, like Augustine, was a "reformer of piety." It is his conception of the Christian life, founded upon certain doctrines—in which the true and the false were strangely blended—that is the key to his work and that of his followers.² Actually to understand this conception, we ought to go behind Francis to St. Bernard and his teaching of "humility before God and love to the sorely suffering Redeemer." But it was in Francis, as it has been well said, that "the chord—humility, love, and obedience—was struck with the greatest purity, while the tone which he lent to it was the most melting." We have already seen the high estimate attached (at least in theory) to poverty throughout the Middle Ages. In fact, there is almost an assumption that poverty and righteousness are necessarily allied. A natural consequence of this was the extreme sanctity attributed to voluntary poverty. But the doctrine had another and very evil issue. As poverty was a state to be admired, it was not a condition to be abolished. Endless efforts were made to relieve it, to mitigate its sufferings, but none to remove its causes. It is upon the philanthropy of St. Francis that stress is usually laid; but it is to his theology that we should

¹ The Friars were primarily preachers; they produced the great thinkers and theologians of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; they gave a new impetus to science and art, also to politics. In this connection, Dr. Workman points out that "In the coming of the friars, to a lesser extent also in the earlier monastic movement, we note the most successful effort ever made towards constructive socialism" ("Christ and Civilization," p. 296).

² Harnack, "History of Dogma," vol. vi., p. 85 *et seq.* (Harnack points out how Sabatier's charming "Life of St. Francis" needs to be read with discriminating criticism.)

rather pay attention, for this is the true key to his conduct. The central ideal of St. Francis was "imitation of the poor life of Jesus," but poverty meant more than this ; it meant imitation of the apostolic life, "the life of the pilgrim preacher." It meant the life of service, issuing in warm compassion and in self-abasement, expressed in preaching repentance, but also in deeds of mercy of very various kinds.¹

Both to the student of history and to the student of social science, the life and method of St. Francis are full of interest. From him we learn both what to cultivate and of what to beware. His teaching is full of paradoxes, which are ever the danger of extremists. While he revived the truth of the value of the individual, he (as Bishop Westcott points out) destroyed individuality.² He ignored the truth which every scientifically-minded philanthropist realizes, that it is not in the destruction of individuality, but in its purification and transformation, in awakening it to a nobler energy and a keener sense of responsibility, that hope lies. The imperfect, or perhaps rather disproportionate, creed of St. Francis had one fatal result: "The tender devotion of Francis to the Lord's manhood became the occasion of grievous error. Everything that is compassionate in the character of the Lord was separated from His sovereign righteousness."³ If in our dealings with the poor we forget that these two cannot be separated, our work is doomed to failure. I have seen case after case ruined because together with sympathy for suffering and help in distress there did not go a demand for the fulfilment of the law of righteousness. In spite of his wonderful powers of humility, sympathy, self-sacrifice, and faith, the work of Francis, if measured by the test of permanently benefiting the condition of the poor, cannot be pronounced a success.

¹ Harnack, vol. vi., p. 85.

² "Social Aspects of Christianity," p. 109 *et seq.* Bishop Westcott also points out how Francis "disregarded also the Divine office of nations for the race. He strove . . . to seize the conception of humanity without recognizing the form of life through which God is pleased to reveal to us the rich fulness of the whole" (p. 110).

³ Westcott, *ibid.*, p. 111.

If Francis of Assisi represents the highest point reached in the Middle Ages in charity on its active and practical, we might also add on its emotional, side, it is Thomas Aquinas, the great Dominican, who has bequeathed to us the completest exposition of the theory of medieval charity.¹ To him alms are the instrument of pity, and their effects are tested by the recipient being moved to pray for the benefactor. The gift should simply meet the actual necessities of the recipient. He seems to hold it is better to give a little to many rather than much to one. Thomas (though an Aristotelian) does not press the importance of purpose in the giver, and he forgets "that gifts without purpose and reciprocity foster the dependence they are designed to meet."² To Thomas there are seven spiritual acts—to counsel, sustain, teach, console, save, pardon, and pray; there are also seven corporal acts—to clothe, to give drink to, to feed, to free from prison, to shelter, to assist in sickness, and to bury. These of course became "good works"; they availed, as boons after this life, and later became connected with indulgences.³ With him, as with other medieval teachers, the benefit of almsgiving is primarily to the donor; the deed itself, and not its usefulness or results, is the first consideration. "An extreme inducement is placed on giving . . . but none on the personal or social utility of the gift." In all this we can see that the social aims and social purposes of charity were ignored, and thus its power for good was neutralized.

Before closing this article I will attempt to gather up the lessons to be learnt from a study of the spirit and methods of charity during the Middle Ages. First, the Church's methods were governed by the theology then dominant—in other words, by the religious views then current. Here, as always, doctrine is the motive power of conduct. Throughout we find the con-

¹ On the doctrinal position of Thomas, see Harnack, "History of Dogma," vol. vi., p. 149 *et seq.* Many quotations from Thomas upon Charity will be found in Ratzinger's footnotes, p. 381 *et seq.* Also see Loch, "Charity and Social Life," p. 257 *et seq.*

² Loch, p. 261.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

viction that poverty in itself is a state to be honoured¹; it is not a condition to be abolished, but to be relieved. There is never any effort to remove its causes. If pauperism means dependence, there is no organized attack upon pauperism. Then, we have the gradual transference of poor relief from the parochial clergy to the monastic institutions. From the tenth century onwards—except in England and in the case of the poor on the great estates, for whom the owners of these were responsible—the relief of distress was almost entirely the work of the monasteries and the hospitals. It has been charged against the Church that she did little to abolish slavery and serfdom. But we must remember the conditions of the age, and that so long as serfdom existed there was secured to the serf at least the means of subsistence. The Church, with her immense estates, was probably the largest serf-holder, and there is evidence to show that her serfs were generally far better treated than those of lay proprietors.² Great as some of the evils connected with the system undoubtedly were, we may question whether in its practical working medieval serfdom was quite so evil as it seems to us to-day. “We may well doubt whether the landless peasantry of modern England, though nominally free, is in reality much better off than the medieval villain whose land was secured to him by custom.”³

The doctrine of almsgiving in the Middle Ages was weakest from its strongly self-regarding aspect. But we must remember that this evil is far from having wholly passed away. To-day there

¹ “The Middle Ages—unlike the twentieth century—was not afraid of poverty; poverty was not the one evil of life which more than any other must be shunned. So far from looking upon poverty as a crime or stigma, the medieval Church erred rather in the opposite direction in elevating poverty, provided it was voluntary, into the mark of saintliness. . . . The Church of the Middle Ages was at least true to its Founder in refusing to recognize the ideal of life in the successful millionaire” (Dr. Workman in “Christ and Civilization,” p. 301).

² “The abolition of serfdom was hindered by the great number of serfs attached to the estates of the Church. Many of these were originally free peasants who had bartered their liberty for the greater security and protection which the spiritual overlord could give them” (Dr. Workman in “Christ and Civilization,” p. 298).

³ *Ibid.*

are thousands of people who give rather to salve their own consciences than because (after having taken all possible trouble to find out the real needs of those who ask assistance, and how best to supply this) they are anxious to give the best help they can.

Undoubtedly, medieval philanthropy came to its fairest flower in the work of St. Francis of Assisi, and I may be charged with having done far less than justice to the work which he and his followers accomplished. But we must remember that the movement very rapidly changed its character. At first, both in spirit and method, it was intensely democratic. It took religion and charity outside the monastery into the common life of the people. The needs of the people were studied and supplied where they existed, especially in the poorer quarters of the towns. This was well. But, on the other hand, the glorification of dependence preached by Francis and his followers produced a rich crop of permanent evil. It made begging more than ever a profession, and one to which there should be no shame attached. Archbishop Trench, in his "Lectures upon Medieval Church History," goes so far as to assert that the want of self-respect still evinced in this matter in certain parts of Europe is an inheritance from the followers of St. Francis, and that, "little as he foresaw or intended this, he did much to bequeath to those lands the eating sore of an almost universal mendicancy."¹ Thus, the purest intentions coupled with enthusiasm will not avail to promote the welfare of the people where we find either ignorance or neglect of those laws upon obedience to which social welfare permanently depends.

¹ P. 246 *et seq.*

