

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

The Social Doctrine of Bishop Charles Freppel and the School of Angers

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of the
School of Theology and Religious Studies
Of The Catholic University of America
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

©

Copyright

All Rights Reserved

By

Daniel Vincent Frascella

Washington, D.C.

2012

The Social Doctrine of Bishop Charles Freppel and the School of Angers

Daniel Vincent Frascella, Ph.D.

Director: Jacques M. Gres-Gayer, S.T.D., Ph.D.

The encyclical *Rerum novarum*, published in 1891 by Pope Leo XIII, is considered the cornerstone of modern Catholic social thought. In the years prior to its release a lively debate occurred throughout the Catholic world about the appropriate response of the Church to the realities of modern industrialized economies.

This study examines one perspective in this discussion, largely represented by the thought of Bishop Charles Freppel of Angers (1827 – 1891). Freppel was the leader of the School of Angers, a group whose distinctive feature was its general distrust of state intervention as a resolution to the social question. In addition to his two decades as bishop of Angers, Freppel was also a deputy in the Chamber of Deputies from 1880 until his death in 1891. He thus serves as an interesting figure of study, offering insights into both the internal debates within the Catholic Church regarding the social question and the delicate question of the relationship between Church and State in the French Third Republic. Two collections of Freppel's works form the basis for the majority of this study: the first contains his homilies and pastoral letters as bishop, the second his speeches as deputy.

In addition to Freppel, the broader social doctrine of the School of Angers will be considered by examining the thought of proponents such as Charles Perin and Claudio Jannet, and the primary periodical that presented this view. The proceedings of social congresses, especially those held in Liege and Angers in 1890, will also be examined as representative of diverging models of social Catholicism. Some important issues of disagreement included the relationship between justice and charity, and the role of state intervention in resolving the social question.

A central theme that emerges is the manner in which the political context of the French Third Republic played a pivotal role in shaping the thought of Freppel and the School of Angers throughout the study. Finally, the minor but discernible influence of the School of Angers on *Rerum novarum* will be considered.

This dissertation by Daniel Vincent Frascella fulfills the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in Church History approved by Rev. Jacques M. Gres-Gayer, S.T.D., Ph.D., as Director, and by Rev. Brian V. Johnstone, C.Ss.R., S.T.D., Joseph Capizzi, Ph.D., and Msgr. Robert Trisco, Hist. Eccl. D. as Readers.

Dean of STRS on Behalf of
Jacques M. Gres-Gayer, S.T.D., Ph.D., Director

Brian V. Johnstone, C.Ss.R., S.T.D., Reader

Joseph Capizzi, Ph.D., Reader

Robert Trisco, Hist. Eccl. D., Reader

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1. Introduction: The Early Career of Charles Freppel and the Origins of the School of Angers.....	1
Chapter 2. Bishop Freppel as Social Critic: The Legacy of the French Revolution.....	28
Chapter 3. Religion and the Foundations of Society: Family, Education, Church, and State.....	90
Chapter 4. Principles of a Social Doctrine: Bishop Freppel and the Social Question....	130
Chapter 5. Deputy Freppel and the Fight Against State Overreach in the Chamber of Deputies.....	174
Chapter 6. Social Catholics Divided: The School of Angers and the Congresses of 1890.....	218
Chapter 7. Assessing <i>Rerum novarum</i> and the School of Angers.....	265
Epilogue. The Fading of the School of Angers.....	328

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this dissertation project would not have been possible without the generous support of many people. I would like to thank in a special way my Director, Rev. Prof. Jacques M. Grès-Gayer, whose steady encouragement and guidance have supported me from my first days of study at The Catholic University of America through the writing of this dissertation. He is a model mentor who has demonstrated for me standards of scholarship that I can only hope to one day emulate. I would also like to thank my readers, Rev. Brian Johnstone, C.Ss.R., and Dr. Joseph Capizzi, whose interest in and support of my work has been invaluable. Special thanks are also due to Rev. Msgr. Robert Trisco, who graciously stepped in to serve as a reader in difficult circumstances. I am also indebted to Msgr. Trisco and Dr. Nelson Minnich, under whom I have had the pleasure of working at the Catholic Historical Review during my time at The Catholic University of America. I have learned a great deal from them about the academic world, but they have also been exemplars of kindness and congeniality among scholars.

On a personal level, I would like to thank my friends and colleagues in the School of Theology and Religious Studies at The Catholic University of America. Bonnie Brunelle kindly obtained some of Freppel's volumes that were difficult to access. Miriam Perkins has provided steadfast support, advice, and above all, friendship. Lucas Kriner has also been immensely helpful, discussing my work throughout the course of its

completion. The staff at the Center for Educational Design and Communication, especially the late Sister Kit Collins, RSCJ, were also instrumental in supporting my graduate studies. Final thanks are due to my family. My siblings, Dawn, Larry, Marianne, and David have taught me many lessons, not the least of which is the value of hard work and perseverance. Lastly, three people deserve special thanks. My parents, Lawrence and Mary Ann, have been the unfailing foundation of all my academic endeavors. They have offered unconditional support, encouragement and confidence in my efforts. A mere mention in this space is hardly sufficient to express my gratitude. In addition to my parents, the love and support of my wife Margareta have been most responsible for the completion of this dissertation. I am similarly ill-equipped to express to her how thankful I am for all that she has done to allow me to reach this point.

Chapter 1

Introduction: The Early Career of Charles Freppel and the Origins of the School of Angers

On Christmas Day of 1891, thousands of Catholics in the French city of Angers paused from their holiday observances to visit the cathedral and pay their respects to their recently-deceased bishop. At the funeral of Charles-Emile Freppel in early February of 1892, his eulogist recalled Freppel's often-repeated line that "God does not direct us to be victorious, but simply to fight." Throughout his life Freppel engaged in battles on several fronts, and he often did not emerge in victory. However, the battles that he waged and the positions that he represented provide important insight into the complex portrait of late-nineteenth century French Catholicism.

Charles-Emile Freppel (1827 – 1891) was born in the small town of Obernai in the Alsace region of France. During the course of his life he would be witness to several significant political, religious, and social events. The "Age of Revolutions" was gaining momentum as the aftershocks of the French Revolution were spreading across Europe. Both new and old political regimes governed France, as the monarchical remnants of the *ancien régime* struggled against a growing republican majority. The Catholic Church was forced to confront a new political paradigm which instead of providing the Church a place of privilege sought rather to diminish its influence if not cast it off entirely.¹ The

¹ There are several general works which provide an overview to the changes of nineteenth-century Europe and their impact on the Church. For broad surveys, see Jacques Gadille and Jean-Marie Mayeur, eds. *Libéralisme, industrialisation, expansion, européenne (1830 – 1914)*, Vol. 11 of *Histoire du christianisme*,

Church was also dealing internally with the question of how best to understand and respond to the political and social changes brought on by modernity.² In the midst of this tension the Industrial Revolution added yet another layer of uncertainty, as the location and condition of a growing mass of workers would have direct implications for both Church and state alike.

The influence of these various factors can be found in the responses offered by Catholics to the new problems which faced the working class as a consequence of industrialization, urbanization, democratization, and secularization. Many solutions were proposed to the broad social question which resulted, and within the Catholic Church the debate deepened as economic progress, often accompanied by the misery of the workers who propelled it, sharpened the challenges that faced the Church and society.³ The current study seeks to identify the social doctrine of Charles Freppel and the group he later came to lead, the School of Angers. There were several elements to this social

(Paris: Desclée, 1995); Roger Aubert, et al., *The Church in the Industrial Age*, translated by Margit Resch, Volume IX of *History of the Church*, (New York: Crossroad, 1989). For the French Church, see Jérôme Grévy, *Le cléricisme? Voilà l'ennemi!: Un siècle de guerre de religion en France*, (Paris: Armand Colin, 2005); John McManners, *Church and State in France, 1870 – 1914*, (London: SPCK, 1972); Adrien Dansette, *Histoire religieuse de la France contemporaine. L'Église catholique dans la mêlée politique et sociale*, 2 vols, (Paris: Flammarion, 1965); C.S. Phillips, *The Church in France, 1789 – 1848: A Study in Revival*, (New York: Russel & Russel, 1966); Jacques Gadille, *La Pensée et l'Action politiques des évêques français au début de la III^e République (1870 – 1883)*, 2 vols, (Paris: Hachette, 1967).

² Some useful works on developments in the Catholic Church in the nineteenth century including the important pontificate of Pope Pius IX and the First Vatican Council are Roger Aubert, *Le pontificat de Pie IX (1846 – 1878)*, Vol. 21 of *Histoire de l'Église depuis les origines jusqu'à nos jours*, (Bloud & Gay, 1963); Roger Aubert, *Vatican I*, (Paris: Éditions de l'Orante, 1964); *Les catholiques libéraux au XIX^e siècle. Actes du Colloque international d'histoire religieuse de Grenoble des 30 septembre – 3 octobre 1971*, (Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1974).

³ There are numerous works dealing with the onset of the social question and the Church's response, including Paul Misner, *Social Catholicism in Europe: From the Onset of Industrialization to the First World War*, (New York: Crossroad, 1991); Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, *Les Débuts du catholicisme social en France (1822 – 1870)*, (Paris: PUF, 1951); Robert Kothén, *La Pensée et l'Action sociales des catholiques, 1789 – 1844*, (Louvain: Warmy, 1945); Jean-Marie Mayeur, *Catholicisme sociale et démocratie chrétienne. Principes romains, expériences françaises*, (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1986). See the references for additional works.

doctrine which will be described, but special attention will be given to the role of the state, as it was the most distinctive mark of the social thought of Freppel and the School of Angers. Before proceeding to Freppel's understanding and response to the social question, it is necessary to give a brief overview of his life and identify some of the key contributors to the School of Angers.

Biographical Sketch of Charles Freppel⁴

Freppel was born to parents who could be considered among the “petite bourgeoisie”, providing him with a comfortable living though not one of wealth. His father, François-Xavier, had served in the army under Napoleon, finishing at the rank of captain. He was a court clerk before eventually serving as a justice of the peace in Masevaux. His mother, Elisabeth Schlosser, came from a family of notaries that lived comfortably, as evidenced by the additional property they held in Blienschwiller, where Charles Freppel would vacation as an adult.⁵ Thus he was not destined for a public or ecclesiastical career by virtue of his birth. His older brother Jules was his only sibling,

⁴ The principal biography of Freppel is Eugene Terrien, *Monseigneur Freppel. Sa Vie, Ses Ouvrages, Ses Oeuvres, Son Influence et son Temps d'après documents inconnus et inédits, 1827 – 1891*. 2 vols. (Angers, 1931 – 1932). Terrien's work is not balanced in its portrayal of Freppel's life, presenting him mostly as the valiant protagonist in various struggles. However, it is very useful for its inclusion of numerous excerpts of letters and other writings from throughout Freppel's life. Another favorable biography that is also useful in the latter regard is Étienne Cornut, *Monseigneur Freppel d'après des documents authentiques et inédits* (Paris: Victor Retaux, 1893). Two reference articles on Freppel provide a useful biographical overview: the first, by Charles Ledré, in *Catholicisme: Hier – Aujourd'hui – Demain*, 4, col. 1583 – 1585; the second, by Jacques Gadille, in *Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie ecclésiastiques*, 18, col. 1257 – 1261. A helpful overview of Freppel's life and career before he was named bishop is Jacques-Olivier Boudon, “Le parcours de Mgr Freppel avant son election au siège d'Angers,” in *Catholiques entre monarchie et république. Monseigneur Freppel et son temps, 1792 – 1892 – 1992. Actes du colloque national de l'Université catholique de l'Ouest, Angers 23 – 25 septembre 1992*. Edited by Bernard Plongeron, with Isabelle Émeriau and Jean Riaud (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1995), pp. 81 – 94.

⁵ Boudon, p. 81.

and he embarked on a military career before dying at the age of twenty-four. Charles, on the other hand, was interested in education and began considering a religious vocation from an early age.

Freppel's educational path was the confirmation of this vocation. He began his studies at Obernai before attending the minor seminary in Strasbourg at the age of fifteen. He earned his bachelor's degree in 1844, then entered the major seminary in Strasbourg to continue his preparations for the priesthood. During this time he received an education that was mostly ultramontane in its perspective, which was characteristic of the general outlook of Catholics in Alsace at the time.⁶ He was a voracious student, filling notebooks with commentaries on the Old and New Testament, Church Fathers, and the *Summa* of Thomas Aquinas. He was also interested in the great preachers of the Church, especially Bossuet, whom he read extensively. It was also during this time that Freppel soured on the regime of King Louis-Philippe and gravitated toward the promises of freedom and reform offered by advocates of democracy. In 1848 he was appointed professor of history at the Saint Louis minor seminary of Strasbourg, an assignment that was not unusual for an aspiring priest in the time leading to his ordination.⁷ This was Freppel's first experience as an educator, a vocation he continued at various places until his ordination as bishop.

Freppel was ordained a priest on December 22, 1849. Shortly after this occasion he became involved in the first of several public debates that were carried out via print. In a debate over the nature and relationship of faith and reason between the Abbé Henry

⁶ See, R. Epp, *Le mouvement ultramontain dans l'Église catholique en Alsace au XIX^e siècle, 1802 – 1870*. 2 vols., (Lille: University of Lille, 1975), cited in Boudon, p. 82.

⁷ Boudon, p. 82.

Maret and Augustin Bonnetty, editor of the *Annales de philosophie chrétienne*, Freppel wrote the *Annales* to support Maret's defense of reason against what he considered the "supernaturalism" of Bonnetty. The specific terms of the debate are less important here than the support and appreciation Freppel received from Maret and others for his intervention.⁸ Freppel's budding intellectual reputation in part earned him the invitation to the recently-established *École des Carmes* in Paris, where he would have the opportunity to lecture and pursue his own studies. He arrived in Paris in 1850 and immersed himself in the intellectual activities of the capital. It was at this time that he met Henri Lacordaire, whom he admired, and Charles Lavigerie, his fellow student at the school and future episcopal colleague. Freppel developed a plan to found a journal, the *Revue de l'Enseignement théologique, philosophique, historique et littéraire*, whose title indicated his broad interests for the publication. Though his idea never came to fruition, it demonstrates Freppel's intellectual ambition from a young age.⁹ Paris was also the focal point for a key struggle within French Catholicism between Archbishop Sibour of Paris and the ultramontane publication of Louis Veuillot, *l'Univers*.¹⁰ Freppel's involvement on behalf of Maret had naturally allied him with other liberal supporters of Maret, and he "found himself among the center of the highest ranks of liberal Catholicism."¹¹

⁸ For more on this debate, see Terrien, t.I, pp. 86 – 92, and Claude Bresollette, *L'Abbé Maret. Le combat d'un théologien pour une démocratie chrétienne, 1830 – 1851*, (Paris: Beauchesne, 1977), pp. 317 – 390.

⁹ Terrien, t.I, pp. 111 – 113. Freppel had even lined up articles from friends and colleagues, including Lavigerie, for the potential first issue.

¹⁰ For more on this, see Austin Gough, *Paris and Rome: The Gallican Church and the Ultramontane Campaign, 1848 – 1853*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986).

¹¹ Boudon, p. 85.

Discomfort with Freppel's alliances was likely a central factor in the decision of his bishop to call Freppel back to Strasbourg to assist in the establishment of a new secondary school. Though Freppel was disappointed to leave Paris, he complied and returned to his diocese. His stay there was short, however, as he was granted permission to return to Paris to assume a new position at the church of Sainte Geneviève. The archbishop of Paris established a new community to administer the church, comprised of six clerics under the supervision of a dean. It was intended to be a center of preaching as well as an opportunity to allow the six chaplains to pursue higher studies in Paris. Thus the chaplains were required to already hold a bachelor's degree and were expected to serve for three years, during which time they would earn their doctorate.¹² Freppel was focused on this undertaking from 1852 to 1855, earning at the Sorbonne a bachelor's degree in theology in 1853, followed by a licentiate and doctorate in successive years. In addition to his studies, he honed his skills as a preacher and orator, giving an especially memorable discourse on the "Religious Glories of France" in which he praised the Second Empire of Napoleon III as being a guarantor of democratic rights.¹³ His links to liberal Catholicism were strengthened during this time: Maret was named dean of the chaplains at Sainte Geneviève and while at the Sorbonne Freppel studied alongside the likes of Lavigerie, Bourret, Langénieux, and Lagrange, all of whom eventually ascended into the hierarchy.¹⁴

¹² Boudon, p. 85.

¹³ Freppel, *Oeuvres Oratoires et Pastorales*, t.II, 5th ed. (Paris: Roger et Chernoviz, 1896) pp. 79 – 114. Hereafter abbreviated *O.O.P.* Note that the pagination varies slightly across editions of these works.

¹⁴ Boudon, p. 86. Boudon makes an important point about Freppel's relationship to this group that warrants mention. Unlike most of his colleagues, Freppel was not a student of Dupanloup and he did not study at Saint Sulpice.

Freppel's next appointment was in 1855 as professor of Sacred Eloquence at the Sorbonne. He was once again aided by the support of Maret, who had also recommended him for a position in canon law in 1853. Freppel's initial focus was on Bossuet, though after a few years he turned to the preaching of the Fathers of the early Church as a subject of study.¹⁵ In 1862 he was asked to give a series of Lenten sermons for the emperor's court at Tuileries and developed cordial relationships with statesmen such as the president of the senate. Thus Freppel was establishing himself as a well-regarded ecclesiastic who was supportive of the current political regime. As Boudon aptly notes regarding this period of Freppel's career, despite whatever revisionism was attempted by Terrien and other biographers, there can be little doubt that Freppel was "a thousand miles away from the ultramontane party."¹⁶

In 1863, Ernest Renan's *Vie de Jésus* attracted a great deal of attention for its critical examination of traditional beliefs about Christ. Renan's historicist examination of the original texts gave his work added weight. Shortly after the book's publication, Freppel wrote a series of articles for *Le Monde* in response to Renan.¹⁷ Freppel's harsh and at times sarcastic rebuttal to Renan was very well-received within Catholic circles. Pope Pius IX's Secretary of Latin Letters, Monsignor Mercurelli, wrote Freppel to congratulate him on his work and express the pope's pleasure with his arguments.¹⁸ For a few years Freppel continued to give new courses on various figures in the early Church and involve himself in scholarly debates, including a second refutation of Renan's work

¹⁵ These courses were later published in several volumes as *Cours d'Éloquence sacrée*.

¹⁶ Boudon, p. 88.

¹⁷ These would be collected as *Examen critique de la Vie de Jésus de M. Renan* (1863).

¹⁸ Terrien, t.I, p. 392.

on the apostles. In 1868 he was named Dean of Sainte Geneviève, the position held by Maret during Freppel's time there over a decade before. He initially retained his position at the Sorbonne in addition to his new duties, but by the end of 1868 he left his teaching responsibilities to focus on his duties at Sainte Geneviève. The following year he was asked to serve on a preparatory commission for the First Vatican Council in what proved to be a transformative period in his career.

Freppel's development and experiences up to this point in his life were fairly clear. He was heavily involved in education, having earned a doctorate and taught at both the secondary and university levels. He was also not afraid to engage in polemical exchanges on the compelling issues of the day, including matters of theology. It would be difficult to identify him with any group other than the liberal Catholics in France. In politics he was solidly supportive of the existing regime and broadly speaking a proponent of modern political forms. This early phase of his life undoubtedly shaped his interests after he became a bishop.

Overview of the School of Angers

The social doctrine of the School of Angers cannot be directly traced to the thought of any one individual. While Charles Freppel was the most visible proponent and an important contributor, he relied on and was supported by the intellectual contributions of several other Catholic thinkers. Furthermore, Freppel was not educated in nor particularly concerned by the technicalities of modern economies that were

essential for any comprehensive explanation of the ideal social arrangement. In other words, it would be difficult to outline a complete account of political economy in the works of Freppel, though he certainly described several elements and applications of principles therein. Further clarity can be added to the social doctrine of the School of Angers by identifying important theorists and organizations.

Two particularly influential individuals in this respect were Charles Périn and Claudio Jannet. Both men were professors of political economy and prolific writers whose ideas significantly impacted the School of Angers. The primary expression of the views of the School of Angers through the press was in the *Revue catholique des institutions et du droit*, a journal founded in late 1872 by a group of Catholic lawyers that was known as the *Société des jurisconsultes catholiques*. Beginning in 1876 the group held annual congresses to examine a particular topic or theme from various perspectives with contributions from theologians, economists, and lawyers. By 1890 these congresses, whose proceedings were published in the *Revue catholique des institutions et du droit*, along with the journal itself were clearly the focal points for presenting the social doctrine of the School of Angers. This is not to suggest that the *Revue catholique des institutions et du droit* was the exclusive expression of their social thought, just that it was the primary one. Similarly, Périn and Jannet were but two among many who made considerable intellectual contributions to the School of Angers.¹⁹ Membership in the various “schools” of social Catholicism was not rigidly defined, especially during the course of the 1880’s as ideas were debated and positions solidified, so it was not unusual

¹⁹Although highlighting these two men as representatives of the school is not unusual; Jean-Marie Mayeur names Freppel, Périn, and Jannet as the leaders of the School of Angers in his *Catholicisme social démocratie chrétienne: Principes romains, expériences françaises* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1986), p. 52.

to find contributors to the School of Angers also writing for other journals or participating in other congresses. However, as a basic framework for identifying the School of Angers, this focus is useful.

Charles Périn (1815 – 1905)

Charles de Coux (1787 – 1864) is often credited with offering, in the words of Paul Misner, “the first clear manifestation of social Catholicism in France.”²⁰ He was a contributor to *L’Avenir*, the publication of Lamennais that lasted barely over one year but which was an important vehicle for the emerging strain of liberal Catholicism in France. De Coux was greatly concerned by the impact of capitalism on workers and favored the spread of democracy as a means of giving the workers leverage, through their ability to vote, against the wealthy.²¹ While politically liberal in his preference for democracy, he was not enamored with the still-emerging effects of economic liberalism. In 1834 he became professor of political economy at Louvain, but left in 1845 to join Louis Veuillot as editor of *L’Univers*, where he promoted the development of French ultramontanist. De Coux’s successor at Louvain and close personal friend was Charles Périn. Périn was influenced by de Coux but also deviated from his predecessor on several key issues. His connection to de Coux and long publishing career, which spanned nearly fifty years, demonstrates his involvement among the first generation of social Catholics in the middle of the nineteenth century as well as subsequent thinkers of the end of the century.

²⁰ Misner, *Social Catholicism in Europe*, p.44.

²¹ Misner, p.45.

Périn's most important work was the two-volume *De la richesse dans les sociétés chrétiennes* in 1861, which presented the most comprehensive explanation of his thought. Other works include *Les économistes, les socialistes, et le Christianisme* (1849); *Les libertés populaires* (1871); *Les lois de la société chrétienne* (1875); *Le socialisme chrétien* (1879); *Les doctrines économiques depuis un siècle* (1880); *Le patron: Sa fonction, ses devoirs, ses responsabilités* (1886); *L'Ordre international* (1888); and his final work, *Premiers principes d'économie politique* (1895). Périn's academic career ended in 1887 when he resigned after some disparaging remarks made in private correspondences were made public in the midst of a volatile battle in Belgium between the new liberal government and conservative Catholic forces.²² Throughout his career he was attentive to and interested in the social developments in neighboring France, and he served as a *Correspondant de l'Institut de France* into his retirement.

Périn's thought influenced the School of Angers in several ways. Foremost was the general notion of articulating a "Christian economics" that was comprehensive in scope and applicable to the realities of modern society. Périn, like Freppel, viewed economics and the social question as not merely concerning man's material well-being, but also his moral welfare. He focused on the virtue of sacrifice or self-denial as a key to economic prosperity and, as with others of his time, emphasized the role of Christian charity.²³ Périn is often considered a liberal in economics, as he favored many aspects of the classical formulation of Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill. However, his conception of economics as having a moral element allowed him to offer a critique of economic

²² Justin Fèvre, *Charles Périn. Créateur de l'Économie politique chrétienne* (Paris: Savaète, 1903), *passim*. The work is not an unbiased account, but provides a helpful presentation of the incident.

²³ Misner, pp. 103 – 104.

liberalism that differentiated his approach even while agreeing with several conclusions. This critique was also generally adopted by others in the School of Angers, despite the overall perception that the school was liberal in economics. Périn's connection to the School of Angers was not just through the influence of his ideas, as he occasionally contributed to the *Revue catholique des institutions et du droit* and he served as the vice-president of the 1884 *Congrès de jurisconsultes catholiques* in Dijon.

Claudio Jannet (1844 – 1894)

Just as Charles de Caux was a mentor to Périn, the influential social thinker Frédéric LePlay taught and worked with Claudio Jannet.²⁴ Jannet was one of LePlay's most accomplished disciples, contributing to a work of LePlay's in 1866, at a mere twenty-two years of age. He studied law at Aix and political science at Louvain, practicing law and serving as a city councilor in Aix-en-Provence.²⁵ He was eventually appointed professor of Political Economy at the *Institut catholique* of Paris in 1877, where he resided until his death. He was a most prolific author; in addition to further collaboration with LePlay on his noted *Les ouvriers européens* and *Les ouvriers des deux mondes*, Jannet published several of his own studies spanning a variety of subjects,

²⁴ LePlay was an important figure in French social Catholicism. His work influenced, among others, the project of Léon Harmel. See Joan Coffey, *Léon Harmel: Entrepreneur as Catholic Social Reformer* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), pp. 110 – 112. He also founded the journal *La Réforme sociale*, as a means of furthering his extensive work on the social question. Jannet and others in the School of Angers were frequent contributors to this publication. Paul Misner groups *La Réforme sociale* and the LePlay school as a component of the School of Angers, pp. 208 – 209.

²⁵ There is relatively little secondary material on Jannet. A helpful introduction by Roger Aubert can be found in *DHGE* 26: 904 – 905. Shortly after his untimely death, a work by his friend Charles de Ribbe was published, *Mes souvenirs sur Claudio Jannet* (Paris: 1895), that provides further personal information.

including: *L'Internationale et la Question sociale* (1871); *Les États-Unis contemporains* (1875); *Le Code civil et les réformes indispensables à la liberté des familles* (1884); *Les faits économiques et le mouvement social en Italie* (1889); *Les grandes époques de l'histoire économique jusqu'à la fin du XVI^e siècle* (1895, published posthumously by his son). Two of his most important works on the social question were *Le Socialisme d'État et la Réforme sociale* (1889), and *Le capital, la spéculation et la Finance* (1892). He also contributed to works on Freemasonry and other secret societies.

As the listing of works demonstrates, Jannet had a broad range of interests related to the social question. His connection to LePlay and ideas about the ideal arrangement of labor were especially important for the School of Angers. In addition, his interests in historical studies and empirical observations were a key element of the work done at the various social congresses. He also served for a time on the editorial board of the *Revue catholique des institutions et du droit* and his articles and reviews were published there in great number. By sheer volume of contributions he is linked more closely to *La Réforme sociale*, but there can be little doubt that his view of the social question was representative of the School of Angers.

Revue catholique des institutions et du droit

The journal that eventually became the primary vehicle for the ideas of the School of Angers was founded in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. The concept of the journal was developed at the end of 1872 among a group comprised

primarily of Catholic lawyers. The first issue was published in December of 1872 and began by describing the goals of the review. The impetus for the new publication was, as with so many conservative undertakings of the nineteenth century, ultimately a response to the French Revolution. The dominant characteristic of the Revolution was the “hatred of religion” and the “desire to build a society without God.”²⁶ While the most radical elements of the Revolution had been mitigated for the most part, the underlying project of secularization was gradually chipping away at the role of religion in social institutions. In response, Catholics must work to undo these efforts and reestablish religion in all areas of society. This explains the journal’s focus primarily on “institutions and law” as the areas in need of religious rehabilitation. In France the related ideas of secularization and laicization were the dominant tendencies against which the journal sought to react, a course that was leading, in their words, to a “national suicide.”²⁷

In light of this situation, the project of the journal was one of rebuilding. The topics for examination were broadly construed as anything related to the “transition from the atheist State to the Christian State,” and more specifically, it set out to focus on “all questions of public and private law, jurisprudence, and legislation.”²⁸ The family and education, having been modified by laws intending to diminish religious influence, needed to be remade according to traditional and historical understandings. The principles of the Revolution needed refashioning so that Christian notions of liberty, equality, and fraternity replaced the existing distortions. Authority and sovereignty,

²⁶ *Revue catholique des institutions et du droit*, (December 1872), p. 1. The opening explanation was written by Victor Nicolet, an attorney who served as the first Secretary of the editorial committee, which was based in Grenoble. The journal will hereafter be abbreviated *Rev. cath.*

²⁷ *Rev. cath.*, (December 1872), p. 4.

²⁸ *Rev. cath.*, (December 1872), p. 4.

similarly misunderstood by those wishing to undermine the Church and promote popular will as a guiding principle, must also be strongly defended from a Christian perspective. Finally, calling it a “vast and important field of study too often neglected,” the social question required consideration in light of religion, which provides the indispensable virtues needed for its resolution.²⁹ In summary, the description of the journal’s focus was rather ambitious:

This Revue proposes to study in the light of religion and common sense...our diverse institutions: constitutional, representative, parliamentary, administrative, judicial, economic, industrial, agricultural, military, electoral; our civil and criminal law...the relationship between Church and State, Sunday rest, decentralization, local and provincial enterprises, the prison system, legal and public assistance (for all that deals with the poor goes directly to the heart of religion), rural depopulation, the work of children in factories, civil burials, military chaplains, the recruitment of the army and so many other issues. In a word, everywhere aspects of the moral order present themselves, religious considerations must also find a place.³⁰

The study of history, essential to understanding the development of the above issues, was also emphasized. In all, the *Revue* hoped to provide a wide-ranging forum for the promotion of religion in society.

From the beginning its status as a conservative and ultramontane publication was evident. The first pages of the journal contain a letter from Pope Pius IX congratulating and blessing their new undertaking. The pontiff praised their effort to “affirm and defend the true and fruitful foundations of law, legislation and the social order, which rest on Catholic principles.”³¹ This was especially necessary in France, he said, where “atheism of the State” had been established on the basis of perverse doctrines and after violent

²⁹ *Rev. cath.*, (December 1872), pp. 5 – 8.

³⁰ *Rev. cath.*, (December 1872), p. 8.

³¹ *Rev. cath.*, (December 1872), p. iii.

conflicts, all of which led to the existence of a “deadly plague” that demanded resistance. Subsequent letters from Pope Leo XIII were also published with great pride.

Despite the breadth of its goals, the early years of the *Revue* largely reflected its status as a legal journal. The majority of articles over the first four years were related to some aspect of law, with much less space devoted to politics, education, and “social economy,” which included aspects of the social question.³² The special attention to legal questions was always maintained, but over time some of the other elements of the program of social restoration became more prominent. In 1883, after ten years and twenty-one volumes, the editorial committee explicitly signaled this shift in a note to subscribers. A change in approach was required by the growing confusion between truth and error on several issues. As the anticlerical program of the Third Republic was accelerating, a number of people were promoting pragmatic approaches to accommodation, which the editorial described as a “fusion of truth and error.”³³ The alternative approach for Catholics, advocated by the *Revue*, was to hold firmly to principle and continue battling for the ideal. They rejected the notion that the only practical solutions required the compromise of principle and outlined their objective:

There is a new task, a new battle that is underway. It is the task of presenting true social doctrine and showing that it is workable. It is the task of removing the obstacles from difficult solutions. It is the battle of showing the emptiness and danger of opposing doctrines and examining confused positions to expose their errors.³⁴

³² See the General Table at the end of Volume 7 (November 1876), pp. 1 – 16. The table categorizes the articles by their most relevant theme: History (2); Social Economy (40); Education (25); Politics and Diplomacy (8); Law (92). The “Law” category figure represents the combination of various types of law-related articles including legal theory, natural law, canon law, criminal law and constitutional law.

³³ *Rev. cath.*, (December 1883), p. 394.

³⁴ *Rev. cath.*, (December 1883), pp. 394 – 395.

To achieve this goal the *Revue* wanted to move past the notion that it was only for lawyers or legal scholars. Rather, “it is addressed to all who are interested in following the doctrinal battles that must occur in order for our hopes to be realized,” whether a priest, landowner, or any other background.³⁵ For the rest of the 1880’s and into the 1890’s it therefore became a venue for serious and spirited debates of issues related to the social question.

Congrès des jurisconsultes catholiques

After launching the *Revue catholique des institutions et du droit*, the *Société des jurisconsultes catholiques* decided soon after to organize annual meetings as a way to continue exploring issues of interest. Their first gathering took place in Lyon in 1876, followed by congresses in Grenoble and Bourges.³⁶ These first three congresses were attended mostly by lawyers and the topics of discussion varied according to the events of the day. The fourth congress, held in Angers in 1879, was important for several reasons. It was the first of their congresses to have a specific theme, which was the rights of the state. Henceforth each congress had a dedicated topic that was explored from several aspects.³⁷ It was also the first congress whose proceedings were published in the *Revue*

³⁵ *Rev. cath.*, (December 1883), p. 396.

³⁶ The congresses were typically held in the early portion of October, with only a few exceptions.

³⁷ The topics for the congresses from 1879 to 1893 are as follows: Rights of the State (1879); Association (1880); The Relationship between Church and State (1881); Liberty and the State (1882); Property (1883); “Caesarism” and State Socialism (1884); Education (1885); Decentralization (1886); Principles of 1789 (1887); “On the Social Necessity of the Agreement between the Legislation of the State and Church Law” (1888); Christian Legislation on Work (1889); The Social Role of Property and the Dangers of Revolutionary Principles (1890); Association (1891); Reforms to the Penal Code (1893). There was no congress in 1892 as the death of one of the primary organizers caused its postponement.

catholique des institutions et du droit, which was important for promoting the spread of their ideas by allowing them to reach beyond only those who attended. Finally, though the significance was perhaps less evident at the time, it was the first direct collaboration between the *Société des jurisconsultes catholiques* and Bishop Freppel. Between 1879 and 1893 the topics of the congresses were often directly related to the social question, with the role of the state as a frequent area of discussion.

The proceedings for the congresses were fairly standard for such a gathering. They opened with the celebration of Mass, often by the bishop of the diocese in which the congress was held, if he was available and willing. There were usually one or two keynote addresses on the topic and a presidential address. For many years the president of the congress was Lucien Brun, a senator, lawyer, and professor of Law at the Catholic University of Lyon, who was heavily involved with the overall project of the congresses and the *Revue catholique des institutions et du droit*.³⁸ After these preliminary addresses a number of commissions met to study individual aspects of the issue. In many cases one commission was dedicated to general principles about the subject, another to historical analysis, and another to practical or empirical aspects. This grouping was not always the case, but in general reflected the approach of the congresses to a question. Sets of principles or propositions were then adopted as a way to solidify the sentiment of the

³⁸ Brun served first in the National Assembly from 1871 to 1876, then as a senator from 1877 until his death in 1898. He was primarily interested in legal questions by background, having written *Introduction à l'étude du droit*, which were a series of conferences he gave at Lyon on various aspects of the law. However his participation in the Senate naturally involved him in the other political debates of the day. For more on his legislative career, see Robert and Cougny, *Dictionnaire des Parlementaires français*, t.1, (Paris: Presses Universitaires, 1889) pp. 515 – 516.

congress on a particular issue. The reports of the congresses and principles they favored are therefore a very useful way of identifying the perspective of the School of Angers.

This combination of the congresses, *Revue catholique des institutions et du droit*, and the works of Périn and Jannet is a helpful framework for establishing the School of Angers beyond Freppel. The majority of this study will focus on Freppel's views, but will be supplemented by others in the School of Angers when appropriate. This will be especially true in the latter portions of this work, when the School of Angers was more definitively formed, on the eve of *Rerum novarum*.

Dissertation Overview

This examination of the social doctrine of Freppel and the School of Angers will highlight a few primary themes. The first is that their view of the state was in many ways the driving force of their social vision. This view went well beyond whether the state should intervene in economic issues. The most defining element of nineteenth-century society was the rise of the “modern state,” which they viewed as extremely hostile to foundational social institutions like the Church and the family. This position was based in response to the actions of the Third Republic as well as their analysis of social change in the aftermath of the French Revolution. In this way the context of nineteenth-century France played a major role in shaping the social doctrine of the School of Angers. This doctrine was also influenced by opposition to the rise of liberal Catholicism in France. Freppel and nearly all of those involved in the School of Angers favored the monarchy

and they found the liberal-Catholic “baptism” of the French Revolution to be dangerous. As the social question became more pressing these contrasting conceptions of the modern state impacted the response proposed by the School of Angers with respect to other schools of social Catholicism. Thus the issue of state involvement was closely related to the question of Church and state, with the School of Angers favoring a much more prominent social role for the Church than that which the Third Republic offered. Furthermore, opposition to the specific actions of the French government caused them to be much more wary of intervention than other social Catholics.

After this initial chapter, which introduces the central figures and basic context of the School of Angers, the dissertation will examine the social doctrine of Freppel and the School of Angers in six additional chapters. Chapters two through five will focus almost exclusively on the writings and addresses of Freppel himself. The second chapter complements this introduction by discussing Freppel’s elevation to bishop and his concurrent and controversial “conversion” toward a conservative and ultramontane political and ecclesiological outlook. It also establishes additional context by outlining Freppel’s worldview as bishop. The defining event of the time was the French Revolution, and his work marking the centenary anniversary of the revolution provides insight into his view of its harmful legacy. The French Revolution also impacted Freppel’s critique of contemporary society, as he consistently identified various “enemies of the Church” which he linked in various ways to the ideology of the Revolution. The result of this outlook was an increasingly pessimistic view of French society which can

be seen in the latter years of Freppel's life and which likely affected his approach to the social question as it related to the influence of the state.

Having established Freppel's view of modern society, the third chapter addresses the foundational elements of his social doctrine. The family, Church, and state were the basic institutions of society and Freppel presented a traditional conception of the structure and function of each. He especially emphasized the importance of authority and hierarchy as central to well-ordered institutions. In this regard Freppel offered a rather conventional Catholic view of how society should operate. He also placed significant attention on education as a tool for social improvement. At all levels it must be grounded in religious truths and not just the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. Freppel's involvement with education in his diocese, most notably his reestablishment of the University of Angers, will be surveyed to demonstrate his view that education is an important and necessary piece to any social doctrine. The issue of education is also central to understanding Freppel's social thought because it was an important example of the divisions that existed between Church and state in the Third Republic, as battles over educational control were the focal point of the early stages of an anticlerical agenda. This persistent Church-state tension continuously shaped Freppel's social vision.

The fourth chapter builds upon these foundational issues, turning to the social question as it is typically understood in relation to conflicts between capital and labor. As bishop, Freppel outlined several principles to address the problems faced by workers. His addresses and writings on the social question presented broad notions of how to help workers rather than specific solutions. However, when taken as a whole, the principles

favored by Freppel form a coherent response to the social question. His social doctrine begins with theological considerations predominated by a proper understanding of charity and the Christian meaning of labor. Freppel's emphasis on education is also evident in his social thought, as he encouraged local *cercles* of workers and other groups to thoroughly study the issue before engaging in action. For Freppel, this meant recognizing the role of the French Revolution in creating the social question and the continuing influence of its doctrines in exacerbating it. It also meant learning from past examples of effective organizations of labor and adapting them to modern circumstances. Thus he promoted the systems of *patronage* and corporations, both of which were based on the principle of association. Associations, rooted firmly in religion, were a central component to resolving the social question because they offered moral and material protection for the worker in difficult circumstances. They were also preferred by Freppel because they were an intermediate body that could support the worker and thereby reduce the need for state involvement on the worker's behalf. Thus the issue of the role of the state pervaded Freppel's social doctrine. His notion of the state performing the role of "social protection" will be examined and some ambiguities within it highlighted. Also related to this question are the respective roles of justice and charity in analyzing the social question and the manner in which Freppel's greater emphasis on charity impacted his social thought.

While the preceding three chapters focus on Freppel's work as bishop, the fifth chapter turns to his career in the Chamber of Deputies and examines the application of his social principles in the act of voting on legislative proposals. An important theme in

this chapter is that his actions in the Chamber further clarify Freppel's social doctrine and demonstrate a connection between his addresses and writings as bishop and his votes as deputy. Another element that will be highlighted is the different way in which he articulated his positions while in the Chamber. Although he was given to rhetorical excess both as bishop and deputy, many of his arguments in the Chamber were based on practical or political considerations. While it would be inaccurate to say religion played no part in these arguments, he generally avoided appealing to religious authority as evidence for his position. An examination of the letters of appeal he sent to his electors before each election is also instructive in outlining how Freppel saw his own role in public life acting on behalf of his constituents. Though he participated in debates over a wide range of issues, most of his efforts were concentrated against various anticlerical proposals of the Third Republic. His arguments over these issues help to further define his view of the appropriate spheres for Church and state. The primary issues that will be discussed include laws pertaining to the expulsion of religious congregations, education, divorce, and the state funding of the Church through the *budget des cultes*. Freppel's speech on the "Doctrine of the French Budget" provides very useful insight into his assessment of the inefficiencies and problems within the French government. Finally his votes on proposals related to the regulation of economic activity will be studied. Laws concerning a minimum wage, workday regulation, and accident insurance were all issues that were important within social Catholicism and which Freppel opposed in most instances. Special attention will be given to his arguments against these laws, which were often of a practical nature or based on the idea that the state was claiming

competence where it had none, thus increasing the likelihood of injustice. However, some of Freppel's speeches reveal an ongoing inconsistency in his view of state intervention, suggesting greater openness to such involvement than what was ultimately promoted by the School of Angers in 1890.

The opposing social congresses of 1890, held at Liège and Angers, crystallized the division within social Catholicism and are the focus of the sixth chapter. Up to this point much of the social doctrine of the School of Angers was formulated in response to the actions of the Third Republic. However, the increasing acceptance of state intervention by important figures like Albert de Mun and several influential prelates created a contrast over the issue that was evident in the proceedings and positions of the congresses. The Congress of Liège adopted positions that, while certainly not relying exclusively on state intervention, indicated a willingness to use government action as a means of ameliorating the condition of workers. The Congress of Angers responded by offering a different approach. While the Congress of Angers in 1890 is often described as the foundation of the School of Angers, it was actually just the annual conference of the *Jurisconsultes catholiques* and had been previously arranged to occur in Angers. However, there is no doubt that the congress took particular notice of what had happened at Liège, as was evident in Freppel's memorable "Bombe d'Angers" in which he condemned his opponents as favoring state socialism and issued a call for other like-minded Catholics to unite against these efforts. This led to the creation of the Catholic Society of Political and Social Economy, whose first meeting occurred three months later with the goal of combining experts from different fields to propose solutions to the social

question based on religion, individual liberty, and the limitation of state intervention. The differences between the schools of Liège and Angers on the issues of workday-length regulation, the minimum wage, and mandatory worker insurance will also be highlighted. By 1891 the School of Angers was an easily identifiable group with an extensive and coherent set of social principles that were being discussed and advocated by both the *Jurisconsultes catholiques* and the new Catholic Society of Political and Social Economy under the leadership of Freppel.

The concluding chapter addresses the preparation and release of the encyclical *Rerum novarum* and the reception of its teachings among social Catholics, primarily focusing on the School of Angers. Before examining the encyclical itself, a discussion of the political situation of French Catholics provides additional context. The encyclical *Immortale Dei* from Leo XIII in 1885 demonstrated the pope's preference for a conciliatory rather than adversarial approach to modern governments. Reactions to this encyclical and the overall policy of the pope were mixed throughout the French Church. Conservatives like Freppel feared that some interpretations were stretching *Immortale Dei* into an approbation of liberal Catholicism. When Freppel interdicted the publication of the bishop of Rouen's commentary in the diocese of Angers the "Affaire de Rouen" illustrated the tension within the French Church as well as the disagreements that can arise after the release of an encyclical. Further conservative resistance to the Toast of Algiers and the call of Catholics to support the Third Republic created a volatile atmosphere for the release of *Rerum novarum*. The process of drafting the encyclical and a general survey of its reception will be presented before turning to the respective

interpretations offered by the schools of Liège and Angers. Both sides received the encyclical as an affirmation of their existing positions, though the text itself suggests a greater openness to state intervention than what the School of Angers favored. An important debate over the encyclical's teaching on the just wage also highlights the challenge of interpretation that occurred in the aftermath of *Rerum novarum*. Though the position of the School of Angers on the just wage was generally vindicated, the broader reception indicated that the program of the School of Liège was more closely aligned with the intentions of Leo XIII. A brief epilogue documents the diminishment of the School of Angers.

The importance of *Rerum novarum* as the foundation of official Catholic social teaching is well known: it is still a major reference point within the tradition, as evidenced by the choice of successors of Leo XIII to issue social encyclicals on its anniversary, such as *Quadragesimo anno* and *Centesimus annus*.³⁹ The encyclical itself was a product of its time, therefore to properly understand it one must grasp the fullness of its historical context and the intellectual currents surrounding it. The influence of groups like the Fribourg Union and figures like Ketteler and de Mun are better known in part because of their more direct influence, but also because the reception and implementation of *Rerum novarum* tended to follow their views. However, the voices of social Catholics prior to the encyclical's release were not unanimous. The formation and development of the Catholic social tradition should therefore also account for people and groups who may have shaped *Rerum novarum* in lesser-known ways. This is especially true for a document like *Rerum novarum*, which was necessarily limited in the amount of

³⁹ In 1931 (Pius XI) and 1991 (John Paul II), respectively.

specificity it could contain. The diversity of economic circumstances throughout the world required that it be less prescriptive than some would have liked, yet it was undoubtedly influential across nations and conditions.

The ambiguities of the encyclical contributed to its usefulness, but also to continued disagreement. For example, on the issue of state intervention, Paul Misner characterizes the teaching as “highly nuanced and hedged about with many conditions.”⁴⁰ Later, following the work of Jean-Marie Mayeur, Misner concludes that *Rerum novarum* was “firm in its principles and orientations...both prudent and open as to the applications and the solutions, none of which are imposed.”⁴¹ Given such conclusions, it is important to recognize the full fabric of social Catholicism before *Rerum novarum*. The social doctrine of Charles Freppel and the School of Angers represents a particular strand that was shaped by its political and religious context, pushing back against the state and offering a vision that relied more on the practice of religious virtues and intermediate associations than government intervention. Though this vision was less dominant it exerted a noticeable, if more subtle, influence on *Rerum novarum*.⁴² This story of the formation and development of the social doctrine of Charles Freppel and the School of Angers must begin with Freppel’s rise into the ranks of the episcopacy, which set in motion a trajectory that would lead to him becoming a Deputy and influential social Catholic.

⁴⁰ *Social Catholicism in Europe: From the Onset of Industrialization to the First World War*, (New York: Crossroad, 1991), p. 215.

⁴¹ Misner, p. 222.

⁴² Misner points to the encyclical’s teaching that the state should intervene only as a last resort and its preference for “indirect encouragement to direct regulation” as being aligned with the “mitigated liberalism” of the School of Angers. He later speaks of *Rerum novarum* finding a “balance” and “common ground” between the schools of Liège and Angers on certain issues, suggesting that views of Angers were indeed influential. Pp. 216 – 217.

Chapter 2

Bishop Freppel as Social Critic: The Legacy of the French Revolution

In order to present the social doctrine of Charles Freppel the first thing that must be pointed out is that his approach to the “social question” was broad and comprehensive. While those of his time, including Freppel himself, often used the phrases “social question” and “worker question” interchangeably, in both cases something more than merely the activity of a person in the economic sphere was intended. The *social* question encompassed all elements of society and included concerns relating to domestic, religious and civil affairs. The economic aspect, that is, the relationship between capital and labor or the worker and owner, was the primary focus of those examining the social question but it is important to note that the considerations of social thinkers were more wide-ranging than factory activity.

Therefore an examination of Freppel’s social doctrine needs to include the ways in which his views of, for example, family life, education, and politics impacted his analysis of the best means to help improve the overall condition of the workers. Before addressing these issues however, it is useful to begin by understanding Freppel’s view of the society in which he lived. He had several strong opinions about the features, both positive and negative, of French society in the late-nineteenth century. During his time as bishop many of his public addresses, letters, and homilies served as social critiques, whether of current developments or of the influence of past events and ideas. By considering Freppel as a social critic one can better understand the lens through which

Freppel viewed the world around himself. This context will ultimately serve to illuminate and explain much of his social vision.

A Period of Transition (1869 – 1871)

It will become evident that Freppel's social views, while developing slightly in some areas, remained largely consistent and unchanged during his time as bishop. However, his approach to and understanding of modern society underwent a significant shift during a time that saw other momentous developments in both the Catholic Church and the political situation in France. These events, between the years 1869 and 1871, undoubtedly shaped Freppel's view of society in critical ways. While this study will not proceed in a strict chronological fashion, it is useful to examine the unfolding of events during these years in order to see the impact they had on Freppel as both a Catholic and a Frenchman.

Freppel's Early View of Modern Society

As mentioned above, Freppel's early career was connected entirely to education. His teaching and engagement in various scholarly debates were his primary areas of focus and as a result he was not particularly outspoken on political issues or concerned with broad social analysis. However, some insight into his view of modern society can be gained by an address given in 1868 on "The Advantages and Dangers of Modern

Civilization.”¹ His goal was to give a balanced account of the current age, avoiding overly positive views which can lead to an illusion of security, as well as exceedingly negative views which cause discouragement.² Rather, every age is a mixture of good and bad elements and the best approach is to learn from the best elements of the past by adapting them to present circumstances.

The first section of the address focused on the advantages of the age. He was especially interested in pointing out that several scientific advancements had occurred. In fields such as chemistry, physics, and mechanics, “more progress has been made in the last fifty years than in the previous thousand years,” and these developments sought to improve people’s lives.³ However, scientific achievement is not sufficient to determine the greatness of an age, especially if it is accompanied by moral weakness, but in that respect, “we have the right to reject this charge of inferiority for our time.”⁴ On this point, he continued:

No, regardless of our faults or vices, I cannot bring myself to attach the stigma of moral decline to a century where work is honored and idleness condemned; where misery finds relief and misfortune brings about sacrifice; where those in the lower class seek to improve themselves through hard work and intelligence; where mutual respect covers society with an extensive network of services and benefits. It is impossible not to see the principles of the Gospel in a society where the law grants an equal protection of all rights and legitimate interests; where those born into privilege honor a good name by even greater merits; where all jobs are available to anyone; where the public duty is shared by all.⁵

In addition, the age of cruel punishments and religious wars has passed and public sentiment is more respectful of life and less bloodthirsty. While he admits that abuses

¹ *O.O.P.*, t.I, pp. 233 – 258.

² *O.O.P.*, t.I, p. 236.

³ *O.O.P.*, t.I, p.243.

⁴ *O.O.P.*, t.I, p.244.

⁵ *O.O.P.*, t.I, pp. 244-245.

and injustices still occur, “the cries of indignation from honest men extend across the world, causing shame to the oppressors and giving hope to the victims.”⁶ With respect to religion he saw progress as well. He acknowledged that there were challenges facing the Church, but nothing that was particularly new or of grave concern. Rather he viewed the Church as having a great spiritual influence, visible especially in the many acts of charity being performed throughout society.

The second part of his discourse addressed the dangers of the age. He categorized them into two general threats to progress: routine and utopia. By routine he meant a complacency that prevents people from seeking improvement, and by utopia the effort to do away with the past and create a new future from a blank slate.⁷ This utopian danger was troubling because it opposed religion, leading to a world without God. In such a world the “principle of decadence” would affect all areas of society because religion provides the virtues and ideals required for a sound politics, philosophy, art, and so on.⁸ Although he portrayed this outcome as dangerous, he was careful not to be too pessimistic: “I must not and will not exaggerate the gravity of these dangers...It is not possible that a society functioning under the banner of progress will allow itself to return to the discarded doctrines of past centuries.”⁹

He concluded by reflecting on the role of the Church in modern society. Far from being in conflict, the Church has endured and worked with various governments from the Roman Empire to the *ancien régime*. As a result, the Church has learned to adapt to

⁶ *O.O.P.*, t.I, p. 246.

⁷ *O.O.P.*, t.I, pp. 249-250.

⁸ *O.O.P.*, t.I, pp. 253-254.

⁹ *O.O.P.*, t.I, pp. 254-255.

changes in society and Catholics should be confident that this will continue. Rather than tension, Freppel's vision is one of cooperation: "Others like to create a division between Church and State, science and faith, liberty and authority, capital and labor, and all these forces that God has made to move in distinct but not separate spheres. But we will always search for and prefer the points of contact, common interests, mutual needs, agreement of hearts and spirits, and the respect for the rights of each and a just liberty for all."¹⁰ The outlook expressed in this address was optimistic about the possibilities of modernity and demonstrates that at this point, Freppel viewed modern society in a favorable way.¹¹

This assessment can also be linked to Freppel's early political views, which are noteworthy. While a seminary student during the Revolution of 1848 he was drawn to the ideas of Lacordaire and others in support of democracy. Commenting on a recent book in a letter to Pierre Louis Parisis, then the bishop of Langres, Freppel explained his political views, describing himself as a "Catholic republican" and commenting:

It is impossible to identify the Church or the Gospel with this or that form of government, but I also do not accept that all forms of government are equally faithful to the Christian spirit. My reasons are as follows: First, the Christian spirit in social relations is a spirit of liberty, equality and fraternity. Everyone agrees with this...Therefore with respect to liberty, equality, and fraternity, constitutional monarchy and republicanism are more faithful to the Christian spirit than absolutism...Second, democracy is more founded in reason than all other forms of government so it is therefore more Christian, because Christianity is the highest expression of reason.¹²

¹⁰ *O.O.P.*, t.I, pp. 257-258.

¹¹ Jacques Boudon called this address a "veritable defense of modern civilization." See "Le parcours de Mgr Freppel avant son élection au siège d'Angers" in *Catholiques entre monarchie et république: Monseigneur Freppel en son temps* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1995), p.88.

¹² Archives of the Diocese of Angers, 3 Z 1, cited by Boudon, p. 83.

Freppel also supported the regime of Napoleon III, which he viewed as being in the spirit of democratic ideals and in continuity with the positive elements of the Revolution.¹³ In short, Freppel was supportive of the political trajectory away from absolutism and towards democratic forms which was occurring in France during the mid-nineteenth century, albeit unevenly. This view of the political situation placed him firmly in the camp of liberal Catholicism, where he remained on the eve of the First Vatican Council.

Vatican I and Freppel's "Conversion"

The unfolding of events in 1869 is crucial to understanding Freppel's public career. As Jacques Boudon notes, it is "one of the most controversial years of his life, for it clearly presents the problem of his passage from liberal Catholicism to the most intransigent ultramontanist."¹⁴ In his extensive biography of Freppel, Eugene Terrien tried to downplay the significance of this process, presenting Freppel's early career from the perspective of his later career and thereby implying a continuity that seems difficult to justify.¹⁵ However, the effects of this transformation and the personal conflicts that undoubtedly played a role in it would continue to impact Freppel's career as bishop of

¹³ Boudon, p. 86.

¹⁴ Boudon, p. 89.

¹⁵ See, for example, Terrien, t.I pp. 415-416. He recounts Freppel's response to Pius IX's *Quanta Cura* and the Syllabus of Errors. Freppel was hesitant to comment publicly pending further clarification and Terrien suggests he supported the documents, but Freppel appeared much more allied with Dupanloup's response to the Syllabus which sought to clarify the context and meaning of the condemnations so as to make them less sweeping than the ultramontanists were claiming. In other places he makes reference to the perception that Freppel was a liberal Catholic (e.g. t.I pp. 352-354) but concludes that portraying Freppel as a liberal Catholic at any point in his career is "both an historical error and an injustice."

Angers. Therefore it is useful to closely examine the possible reasons that Freppel began 1869 a liberal Catholic scholar and ended it an ultramontanist bishop.

On June 29, 1868, Pius IX issued a papal bull announcing the convocation of a council to open the following year on December 8. Preparations for the council began shortly thereafter, with a number of preparatory commissions established to begin studying the issues for consideration.¹⁶ However, tensions between Rome and certain members of the French episcopate as well as Rome's distrust of some theologians at the Sorbonne caused there to be few French selections at the outset.¹⁷ Freppel wished to distance himself from these tensions and cultivate a better relationship with the nuncio, so he sought leave from the Sorbonne and accepted a position as dean of Sainte Genevieve in Paris.¹⁸ With this measure of independence secured, he was in a better position to be named as a consultor. In January of 1869 he received notice that he would be invited to participate in the preparations for the council and he set out at the end of the month for Rome, stopping along the way to meet with Dupanloup. He was notified in February that he would serve as a consultor to the Commission for the Affairs of Religious Orders, under the direction of Cardinal Giuseppe Andrea Bizarri.¹⁹

As the council drew nearer it became clear that the issue of papal infallibility would be addressed. This led to arguments both for and against the proposition, with another position holding that while papal infallibility is the doctrine of the Church, it

¹⁶ For more on the preparations for the council, see Roger Aubert, *Vatican I* (Paris: Éditions du l'Orante, 1964), pp.39 – 92.

¹⁷ Terrien, t.I, p. 548. Earlier that year three new professors were appointed who were viewed unfavorably in Rome.

¹⁸ Terrien, t.I, p. 548. See also Boudon, p.88.

¹⁹ Terrien, t.I, p. 550.

would be inopportune to define it at the council. In several correspondences during this time, Freppel articulated his concern that the council might go too far. Before his official appointment, he wrote to Lagrange, who was Dupanloup's secretary, about his expectation to participate in the commissions:

In my humble view the efforts of French theologians should focus on two points: to make sure that the declaration of the Council of Florence on papal sovereignty is not exceeded, and that certain condemnations of the *Syllabus*, without being withdrawn entirely, receive a less absolute form that allows for more latitude in practice. One could certainly present these observations during the council itself, but you know what a large gathering of people it will be and how difficult it is to convince so many different views. That is why it would be infinitely better to repress or at least work to prevent such dangerous motions.²⁰

Shortly after arriving he wrote to Maret about what he had already observed: "It is clear that there is a large group here which is pushing for extreme measures. They propose to define the infallibility of the pope and confirm the *Syllabus* in its essential parts."²¹

Freppel also complained about the preparatory process, which emphasized the secrecy of the commissions and did not inform the bishops about the program of the council. While this was intended to shorten the length of the council, Freppel thought it would only draw it out, since bishops would want time to examine the documents and recommend their own amendments. He called it "outrageous" that so few were aware of the content of the preparations.²² After only a few weeks in Rome, on February 27, he wrote to Jean-Marie B  cel, bishop of Vannes, about his concerns:

So far I have seen a third of the members of the Sacred College, many prelates and theologians, and it is clear that the dominant view is that of l'*Univers*. It appears that the definition of papal infallibility is seriously considered, and I am not reassured about the intentions of the majority relative to the conditions of modern society. On these my role is marked: I view the definition of papal

²⁰ Terrien, t.I, p. 549.

²¹ Terrien, t.I, p. 551.

²² Terrien, t.I, p. 551.

infallibility as the most *inopportune* measure that one could propose, and on the other point I will strive to prove that our interest is in the pacification of spirits, not to break openly with modern society and States, but to spread the Gospel by all means at our disposal. The French episcopate has a great role to play in the council and everything will depend on its attitude. I admit that for the first time I regret not having the honor to take part, for the French bishops have a mission as elevated as it is dangerous and they must fight with knowledge and theological learnedness against the extreme party that wishes to push forward.²³

This aligned Freppel with the likes of Dupanloup and other key inopportunists who would oppose the council's definition of infallibility.

Two other examples will suffice to demonstrate Freppel's outlook during the first half of 1869. In another letter to Bécél, on April 12, he reacts to the move by some to use the *Syllabus* as a focal point for the council. He supports Dupanloup's position that the document needs to be carefully interpreted with close attention given to the context and circumstances of each condemnation. If the proper meaning is given to each, Freppel believed there would be nothing of concern to Christian governments. Furthermore, he cautions against giving too much weight to the *Syllabus* as it was intended to be "simply a catalog or collection of propositions that were more or less erroneous or suspect" which were brought to the attention of the bishops in order to help inform seminary instruction.²⁴ It was certainly not as serious as an encyclical, for it lacked a signature and was not published in organs such as the *Journal de Rome*, where pontifical documents typically appeared. Freppel's concern about the *Syllabus* went beyond the force of the document and into the way that many perceived it as a rejection of modern political forms. On this point he makes a claim that, when considered alongside his future analysis of the issue as bishop, seems remarkable: "I am convinced that the modern

²³ Terrien, t.I, pp. 552-553; also in Boudon, p.89.

²⁴ Terrien, t.I, pp. 557-558.

constitutions, understood in the sense of the simple notebooks of the Constituent Assembly of 1789, have absolutely nothing contrary to the doctrines of the Church.”²⁵

In addition to his work on issues relating to religious orders, Freppel was invited to be a member of the commission on Church-State Affairs, led by Cardinal Karl von Reisach.²⁶ Working on this commission brought him in contact with some of the most crucial questions of the day. It also may have further increased his frustration with the direction of the council, for in a letter of June 15 to Lagrange he speaks in surprisingly blunt terms of what he considers the bleak outlook for the future:

I find that the council comes too soon and too late. Too late, because it arrives around the end of the pontificate of a tired and discouraged old man (*un vieillard fatigué et découragé*) who no longer has the strength to take on any great initiative and who sees all things through the misfortunes that he has suffered. For him, everything that happens in the modern world is and must be the abomination of desolation. Too soon, because it is evident that the situation in Europe is not definitive. There is not even one country which has found its true political and social base. Are we moving toward a more complete separation of Church and State, or will the alliance between the two be tightened? Who knows?²⁷

He goes on to call Cardinals Caterini and von Reisach “the two evil geniuses of the papacy” and complains bitterly about the Italian bishops who “will show up at the council only to say yes to everything that is proposed.” His conclusion about the situation is that “there is little to do here as long as Pius IX rules...there is little hope for vigorous and fruitful initiative.” Freppel departed Rome for Paris in July with little hope that the council would do anything except “threaten to become a source of division among Catholics.”

²⁵ Terrien, t.I, p. 558.

²⁶ See New Catholic Encyclopedia, 2nd ed., Volume 12, p.40. In addition to this role he was also named a president of the Council, but he died before it opened.

²⁷ Terrien, t.I, pp. 561 – 564. Terrien includes the entirety of the letter, but prefaces it by presenting it as an example of Freppel’s “irritable temperament” and not as representative of any deeply held convictions.

The next five months in Paris before he returned to Rome for the council contained a number of important developments for Freppel, both personally and for his ecclesiastical career. Shortly after his return Maret sent a copy of his latest work on the council in which he opposed proclaiming infallibility. Freppel returned it to Maret with a number of critical comments, many of which indicated that he had found particular elements of Maret's arguments to be "insufficient" or "inexact." Maret was surprised and dismayed at this feedback and a lively exchange of letters ensued which marked the end of their long-running intellectual collaboration.²⁸ One consequence of this rupture was that Freppel lost the support of one of the most prominent influences in the process of nominating bishops, a loss which would be felt almost immediately by Freppel.

Maret, along with Lavigerie and Darboy, were the core of the "neo-Gallicans," and, given their prominent positions, represented a powerful faction within the French Church.²⁹ This group had been the patrons of several recent nominations for open episcopal sees and were among the most heavy influences on the Emperor's decision. In September the see of Lyon became vacant upon the resignation of the Cardinal-Archbishop de Bonald. Since it was an important position many people realized that choosing his successor would be critical. Freppel received a letter from Lagrange proposing that Dupanloup be moved to Lyon, where such a well-known figure could play a pivotal role at the council and that Freppel be considered as Dupanloup's replacement

²⁸Terrien, t.I, pp. 565 – 569. Terrien includes as much of the exchange as extant, including each author questioning the tone of the other's correspondence, Maret asking Freppel not to comment publicly on the work before it was released, and Freppel doubting Maret's claim that several prominent bishops had read and approved the work. On this last point Freppel's doubts were unfounded, as the work had been read and approved by at least five bishops, including Dupanloup and the archbishop of Paris.

²⁹Boudon, pp. 89-90.

in Orléans.³⁰ Freppel turned to Mgr. Bécél, bishop of Vannes, for whom he had recently agreed to serve as a theologian at the council in order to gain support for this proposal. Freppel spoke highly of the idea to transfer Dupanloup to Lyon and admitted “I must admit that the second part of Lagrange’s plan does not sadden me either.”³¹ Neither aspect came to fruition however, as Dupanloup stayed in Orléans, thereby negating the possibility of Freppel becoming his successor.

Another vacancy in the French episcopate opened when the bishop of Angers, Guillaume-Laurent-Louis Angebault, died on October 2. A quick decision was made to fill the seat by nominating Guillaume Meignan, who was the bishop of Châlons at the time. Meignan refused, however, because Angers had a reputation for being ultramontanist and he did not want to deal with a diocese that he viewed as overly favorable to Rome and infallibility.³² Meignan suggested instead Joseph Bourret, then a professor at the Sorbonne, who also enjoyed the support of Lavigerie. Although it appeared likely that Bourret would be named, a helpful intervention by Bécél raised the possibility that Freppel might also be considered. At a meeting with Napoleon III Bécél suggested Freppel’s name as a possible replacement and praised Freppel’s knowledge and character while reminding him of the Lenten sermons Freppel had preached at the palace in 1862.³³ This development set up a choice between Bourret and Freppel for the

³⁰ Letter of September 26, 1869, cited by Terrien, t.I, p. 580.

³¹ Terrien, t.I, p. 581.

³² Terrien, t.I, p. 584. Meignan had a distinguished ecclesiastical career, including being named bishop of Arras (1882) and then archbishop of Tours (1884). He was made a cardinal in 1893.

³³ According to the Concordat of 1801 and subsequent revisions, the French head of State was responsible for nominating candidates to vacant sees who were then approved and instituted by the pope. For more details on this arrangement, see McManners, pp. 4 – 5.

see of Angers, and the interventions of various figures on behalf of each candidate were both instructive and influential on Freppel's subsequent episcopal career.

Freppel first turned to Lagrange in hopes of securing the support of Dupanloup, whom he figured would be able to influence things successfully in his favor. However, Dupanloup was slow to take action and Freppel relied on the support of other bishops such as Cardinal Donnet, Archbishop of Bordeaux, and Bishop Ravinet of Troyes.³⁴ Freppel himself also met with the emperor during this time and expressed his desire to reestablish the former University of Angers. Freppel received less-than-enthusiastic support from the Archbishop of Paris, who accepted his nomination "weakly."³⁵ At the same time, Lavigerie cited Freppel's course on Irenaeus to suggest that he was too aligned with Rome in his support of infallibility and to push further for Bourret. Freppel's earlier disagreement with Maret meant that his nomination was now opposed by Darboy, Maret and Lavigerie. These three were among the most influential in France, and Dupanloup's continued refusal to support Freppel's nomination meant that he was not the choice of the neo-Gallican, liberal faction of the French episcopate.³⁶

There was no decision by the opening of the council, so Freppel arrived in Rome in December to serve as a theologian for B  cel. During this time he also received the support of Abb   Deguerry, priest at the Church of St. Madeleine in Paris, who was also closely tied to the imperial family, "whose weight was greater than that of some

³⁴ Terrien, t.I, pp. 587 – 589.

³⁵ Terrien, t.I, p.590. Terrien relegates to a footnote the rumor that the Archbishop of Paris had actually advised the government to avoid Freppel, calling him too dangerous.

³⁶ Boudon suggests that Dupanloup's abstention in the matter "certainly caused the decisive blow in Freppel's decision to turn his back on the liberal positions." p. 91.

bishops.”³⁷ Deguerry wrote multiple letters in support of Freppel and even one questioning the qualifications and support of Bourret. Additional letters in support of Freppel came from the ultramontanist bishops of Strasbourg and Amiens. This likely resulted from Freppel’s close daily contact with them, as he was staying in the same place during the council. It also placed Freppel in the company of several ultramontanist bishops, whose support he undoubtedly appreciated. The announcement of Freppel as bishop of Angers was made on December 27, 1869. The final interventions of Deguerry were thought to be decisive.³⁸ The ideological transition of Freppel was well underway and his opinions of the deliberations of the council would further cement his newfound identity.

Despite the announcement, Freppel’s status at the council remained unchanged until his episcopal consecration. He therefore continued to contribute as a consultor. In a letter to his mother in March of 1870 he gave some indication of his role: “The pope has expressed to me his desire that I do not leave Rome before the end of the council. Since I have actively taken part in the editing of decrees I am unable to leave without inconvenience.”³⁹ His precise contributions are unknown, but his comment suggests an ongoing involvement in the work of the council.

In addition to his duties as consultor, he also engaged in the debate over infallibility on behalf of the ultramontanists. When Bishop Raess of Strasbourg wanted to condemn a recent work opposing infallibility he turned to Freppel, who drafted the text

³⁷ Boudon, p. 90.

³⁸ See Terrien, t.I, p.599 and Boudon, p. 91.

³⁹ Terrien, t.I, pp. 603 – 604.

that would be reissued by several other bishops.⁴⁰ After his episcopal consecration in April of 1870, Freppel began to participate in the council as a member himself. His interventions were reliably in favor of the definition of infallibility.⁴¹ He won the praise of many leading ultramontanists, including several Italian prelates and Louis Veuillot; his writings and speeches were printed in *l'Univers* and *La civiltà*, two papers he was harshly critical of during his time on the preparatory commissions. These developments raise the question of the reason for Freppel's change of view concerning the definition of papal infallibility. Opponents of the definition seized on Freppel's words in some of his letters to accuse him of betrayal. He did not deny his prior views, but merely suggested a genuine change of opinion: "Yes, before the council I was certainly of the view that the moment had not come to proclaim papal infallibility, but once I arrived in Rome and saw the arguments of those wishing to prevent the definition and considered the trouble that would result for the Church in the triumph of the opposition, I was among the first to change my view."⁴² The shift on whether it was opportune to define infallibility was connected in some measure to what he viewed as the extreme tactics of the inopportunists. He concluded that they were sowing doubt about the doctrine itself and therefore created the need to define it in order to put to rest any confusion.⁴³ In a broader sense, Jacques Boudon offers this reasonable analysis of the events surrounding Freppel's conversion:

Raised in the cult of the papacy, Freppel rallied to those who defended it and at the same time his liberal friends seemed to favor resurrecting the old Gallican

⁴⁰ Terrien, t.I, pp. 605 – 607.

⁴¹ See Terrien, t.I, pp.626 – 640 for a discussion of specific interventions.

⁴² Boudon, p. 91.

⁴³ Terrien, t.I, p. 637.

doctrines that he had never accepted. Freppel was in fact an ultramontane liberal Catholic until 1869. He converted not as much to ultramontanism, but rather to the ultramontanist party, that is, to anti-liberalism.⁴⁴ What remains is the question of how much the internal politicking that surrounded his nomination to bishop may have impacted this change.

The War of 1870

Freppel was forty-two years old when he became bishop, relatively young at the time.⁴⁵ He had spent his entire career involved in education, a fact which would have a tremendous influence on his episcopate. But his involvement in education also meant that he had little administrative experience, a potential deficiency, to be sure. However, before long events dictated that he would have to learn these skills quickly. Just as the debate surrounding the Vatican Council left a lasting imprint on his perspective of internal ecclesiastical matters, the outbreak and aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War also had a significant impact on the way he came to view political developments in France under what would eventually become the Third Republic.

Freppel's first communication with his diocese as bishop came in the form of a Pastoral Letter issued on the day of his consecration, April 20, 1870.⁴⁶ Since he was in Rome he first relayed the grandeur and importance of the council and the honor he felt to be a participant before addressing the occasion of the day. The two main duties of a bishop were to love and to sacrifice for his flock and he promised to live up to these

⁴⁴ Boudon, p.91.

⁴⁵ Boudon, p. 91. The average age under the Second Empire was fifty-three.

⁴⁶ *O.O.P.*, t.IV, pp. 1 – 30.

obligations. The bishop is the spiritual father of the diocese and therefore has responsibilities to everyone, whether wealthy or poor, strong or weak, to aid them in the process of eternal salvation.⁴⁷ When the council recessed for the summer Freppel traveled to his new diocese and gave his first address from the cathedral of Angers on July 27.⁴⁸ In addition to expressing his pleasure at finally being among his flock, he spoke of the events in Rome and their importance for all Catholics. Detailed commentaries on the proclamations of the council were not appropriate for the occasion, though he indicated that he would speak another time on infallibility, which was “the indestructible cement of the Church’s Divine constitution.”⁴⁹ He then promulgated the decrees of the council in his diocese, saying they demanded the strict adherence of the faithful and that any deviation would lead one down the path of heresy and schism. This action was not unique, although some bishops preferred to wait until the end of the council before promulgating its decrees and they expected that it would continue as planned. However, the outbreak of war between France and Prussia in July, the withdrawal of French troops from Rome, and the eventual capture of Rome by Italian troops in September led to Pius IX suspending the council indefinitely on October 20.⁵⁰

The war was in its earliest stages when Freppel arrived in Angers and he ended his first address by praying for a successful conclusion to a war “in which justice and the

⁴⁷ *O.O.P.*, t.IV, pp. 14 – 15. “To children he owes the milk of doctrine and to adults the substantial bread which affirms and invigorates. He owes warnings to the fortunate so that they do not abuse their wealth and stay within a just moderation. He owes to the poor, along with the resources of his charity, the consolations which support man in the trials of this world... To the just he owes encouragement to help them persevere in doing good, and to sinners reprimand as well as mercy.

⁴⁸ *O.O.P.* t.III, pp. 1 – 17.

⁴⁹ *O.O.P.*, t.III, p.15.

⁵⁰ The Council was never reconvened.

good are on the side of France and the Emperor.”⁵¹ He continued this theme on another occasion at which he offered public prayers for the success of the French army, saying “if ever a senseless provocation has given a nation a legitimate case for self-defense” it is the current effort. He went on to call Prussia “a permanent menace” to Europe, “born from apostasy and enriched by bloody spoils.”⁵² While confident in France’s success at the outset, the progress of the war quickly favored Prussia. Nevertheless, in August Freppel maintained hope, “France can recover from momentary setbacks. The ultimate outcome will never be the defeat of the army.”⁵³ After all, he reasoned, France was a force for good in the world while Prussia was a force of oppression. Divine justice would ensure the final outcome.

The Battle of Sedan in the beginning of September resulted in the capture of Emperor Napoleon III and his entire army. The war continued into the following year but from that point forward the ultimate outcome was no longer in doubt. Freppel reacted strongly to the “humiliation of Sedan,” which also created a greater threat to the pope’s position in Rome. Since the emperor had been captured and the army was besieged, the French government was not in a strong position to come to the pope’s defense as it had before. Italian forces recognized this opportunity and moved into the city. Freppel encouraged prayer and sacrifice during this time of trial for both the Church and France.

He also looked for ways to use the resources at his disposal to help the war effort and the need which resulted from it. He instructed seminarians in his diocese to waive their exemption from military service and join the war effort. Those who were already in

⁵¹ *O.O.P.* t.III, p. 16.

⁵² *O.O.P.* t.IV, pp. 32 – 33.

⁵³ *O.O.P.*, t.IV, p. 35.

the clerical state should work in hospitals, but the rest should join the army or national guard if physically capable, where they would either become martyrs for their country or return to the seminary with a greater development and sense of sacrifice.⁵⁴ He also directed the clergy and religious orders to offer as much financial support as possible for the war, because “serving France and the Church is one and the same.”⁵⁵

In addition to material support, Freppel also established charitable activities to aid those suffering as a result of the war. Chief among these was the founding of *fourneaux économiques*, which cheaply provided food to those in need.

As winter approaches there remains in our midst those who are poor and needy. Difficult at any time, the situation of the poor is even worse this year as a result of the evils of the war and the consequences resulting from it. Setting aside the requirements of military service which removed the regular means of support from so many families, the decrease in work, slowing of commercial affairs and the forced unemployment of several industries has multiplied the suffering in this city. As a result all people of faith have a compelling obligation to provide relief to the needy... Therefore, among all forms of Christian charity that which best safeguards the dignity of the poor and most effectively provides this function deserves our preference. That is why I am immediately calling for the establishment of *fourneaux économiques* to help those needy families obtain a nourishing meal at a very low cost.⁵⁶

In order to do this he relied on the several religious orders of the city to provide their services in this project.⁵⁷ Ten locations throughout the city were established, and he set up a commission of lay people to oversee and direct the work. In addition to the residents of Angers, these operations also served meals to convoys of troops as they passed through the city and remained an important part of the charitable outreach in Angers for

⁵⁴ *O.O.P.*, t.IV, pp. 48 – 49. This is noteworthy in part because in later years the government eliminated the exemption for seminarians and Freppel vigorously opposed this change. However, during a time of war Freppel called on his seminarians to join the army even though the law did not require it.

⁵⁵ *O.O.P.*, t.IV, p. 52.

⁵⁶ *O.O.P.*, t.IV, pp. 53 – 54.

⁵⁷ A partial list of religious communities involved includes the Ursulines, Sisters of Saint Charles, Sisters of Saint Vincent de Paul, Sisters of Mercy, and the Jesuits. See *O.O.P.*, t.IV, p. 55.

years to come.⁵⁸ Further charitable efforts included places where care and rest were given to wounded soldiers, and the opening of a new orphanage in Angers. These various projects were started within six months of Freppel's arrival in Angers and indicated a high level of involvement with the activities of his diocese.⁵⁹

Although very much occupied with local matters, he also paid close attention to the progress of the war and the situation in Rome. The situation in France was worsening. The Prussian army had occupied Paris and the newly-formed Government of National Defense struggled to mount any successful counterattacks. France surrendered at the end of January, 1871 and suffered heavy losses, including a large indemnity and the annexation of portions of the Alsace and Lorraine regions by the consolidated German empire. This latter condition was especially painful to Freppel, who was a native of Alsace. In response he wrote a letter to the king of Prussia suggesting he drop this demand, for it would be unproductive to a lasting peace. Moreover, the people of Alsace were French and had such a deep love for France that they would never accept this change. The fact that some in the region preserved the German language was meaningless, because "for the last two centuries this language has expressed nothing but French sentiments."⁶⁰ If Alsace was annexed Freppel warned that the situation between France and Germany in the future would be one of "perpetual retaliation" and an "irreconcilable hatred" between the two nations that could only result in further

⁵⁸ For more on the *fourneaux économiques* in Angers see Léon Cosnier, *La charité à Angers*, Tome II (Angers: Lachèse et Dolbeau, 1890), pp. 98 -115.

⁵⁹ For example, Freppel instructed his priests to contact him personally if they could not find a place in their parish for an orphan and he would be sure to resolve the issue himself.

⁶⁰ *O.O.P.* t.IV, p. 176.

conflicts.⁶¹ His effort was in vain, however, and his bitterness at the loss of Alsace is evident in his correspondences with colleagues who remained there.⁶²

A final area of frustration that resulted from the War of 1870 was the situation of Pius IX in Rome. Though very little remained of the pope's temporal power by 1870, the capture of Rome by Italian forces marked the end of the era in which the pope was also a political leader.⁶³ In November of 1870 Freppel condemned this development in a pastoral letter that encapsulates the long-running debate over this issue.⁶⁴ He condemned the actions as "sacrilegious theft" and "an insult to France" and stated the standard argument that the pope needed temporal sovereignty in order to freely exercise his spiritual authority.⁶⁵ The result of this could be the undermining of religious freedom across the world. He called for international action by other Christian powers to stop this outrage and especially for French action, although the French government was certainly in no position to offer any military support at the time. He closed with a brief critique of the times in a line of thought that he would continue to expand upon throughout his career: "In what type of age do we live? Should we see these scenes of revolting

⁶¹ *O.O.P.*, t.IV, p. 178.

⁶² For example, he kept in close contact with the bishop of Strasbourg, Andre Raess, as well as several priests. For more on this, see Claude Muller, "Mgr Freppel et 'sa chère Alsace' (1870 – 1891)" in *Catholiques entre monarchie et république: Monseigneur Freppel en son temps* (1995), pp. 95 – 110.

⁶³ Earlier efforts at Italian unification led to the capture of most of the papal states. See Jean-Dominique Durand, "L'Italie entre renouveau et question nationale," in Levillain, *Histoire du Christianisme*, t.11, pp. 263 – 278.

⁶⁴ *O.O.P.* t.IV, pp. 67 – 80.

⁶⁵ "It is fundamental to the constitution of the Catholic Church that its head on earth, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, governs with an unobstructed authority. It is from Rome that we receive the true and authentic interpretation of doctrine, the infallible rule of duty and supreme guidance for our actions. Those who have the power to cut off the source of this spiritual life and separate the head from the body are willfully disturbing the entire economy of religion. There are no verbal promises or written stipulations that can give us a sufficient protection against the remains of pride and passion...That is why we must vigorously protest the Italian invasion, which places our religious interests in danger and threatens the security of the Catholic faith for the entire world." *O.O.P.*, t.IV, pp. 69 – 70.

brutality occurring so often in a century that arrogantly boasts that henceforth reason and the general conscience will govern all things?”⁶⁶

Freppel expanded on these questions and offered an explanation and analysis of the disturbing events that had recently occurred in a pastoral letter issued for Lent on February 10, 1871, “On the Moral Causes of Our Disasters.”⁶⁷ This letter is important because it was the first of his many social critiques as bishop and introduced several themes that he emphasized throughout his episcopate. It is also instructive when viewed along with his discourse “On the Advantages and Dangers of Modern Civilization,” which he had given just over two years prior.⁶⁸ In the time between late 1868 and early 1871 Freppel’s view of modernity underwent a significant transformation.

The letter is primarily a reaction to the events of 1870, which Freppel describes in blunt terms:

What did we see? One defeat after another, one army destroyed after another; the enemy enjoying success after success, more surprised than proud of their triumphs. And after having our hopes continually dashed, the brave who remained became powerless to bring victory to our humiliated flag. What a sad spectacle! How could France arrive at this point of weakness when she was once the object of fear and envy of other nations?⁶⁹

In the aftermath of the war many were offering answers to this question, some claiming Prussia had more resources or better leaders or that the political system was to blame. But Freppel believed that it went beyond those issues to the more fundamental issue of the moral fabric of French society. Some people, he said, have been warning about the

⁶⁶*O.O.P.*, t.IV, p. 76.

⁶⁷*O.O.P.*, t.IV, pp. 81 – 104.

⁶⁸ See above, pp. 29 – 32.

⁶⁹*O.O.P.* t.IV, p. 82.

“seeds of death and destruction” in France amidst a “high tide of vice and impiety” with the following characteristics:

A general lowering of standards; the cult of self-interest replacing respect for principles; a slow but continuous perversion of the moral sense; the fever of unceasing gain aroused by the example and success of scandalous speculation; the disappearance of seeking wealth through hard work and honesty, instead replaced by risk-taking; the lack of resilience in many who are softened by the abuse of pleasures; a weakness of mind and action when faced with the gravity of human life. All of this can be reduced to these two words: accumulation and pleasure.⁷⁰ These are the symptoms of decline which are evident throughout the country.

Other signs of moral decay included the lack of respect for all levels of authority, the migration of people from the country to the city in search of an easier existence, the disregard of the law of Sunday rest, and the decreasing rate of population growth. Freppel had now come to accept the view of moral decline in France that he earlier rejected.

If the events of 1870 were caused by a moral decline, the next step was to identify its source. In Freppel’s view, the culprits were the “grievous doctrines” (*doctrines désolantes*) which had been influential in France for the past century. These ideas influenced people’s actions, which is why “there is nothing worse for a country than the invasion of error.”⁷¹ At the core of these doctrines was the notion that the foundation of the social order needed to be overhauled and the ideas of the past replaced. Especially important in this was religion, which had been a major force throughout society. Whereas Freppel had previously seen the relationship between religion and modernity as one of adaptation and mutual enrichment, he now viewed it quite differently:

Who can deny that in the past century we have encountered a group of so-called writers and philosophers whose primary objective was to undermine the

⁷⁰*O.O.P.*, t.IV, p.85.

⁷¹*O.O.P.*, t.IV, p. 88.

foundations of the religious and moral order? They appreciated neither the highest truths of the faith nor the most elementary principles of reason. Everything was done away with, including the idea of truth as a notion of the good, the sentiment of duty and even the respect for beliefs. They shook the very foundation of conscience with their errors and denials: They blasphemed God, outraged Christ, and cursed the Church. They degraded man and ridiculed virtue to the point of glorifying vice.⁷²

In short, these doctrines sought to banish God from society and as a result, do away with the cohesive force provided by religious authority that had traditionally restrained passions and guided men toward the common good.⁷³ The influence of these ideas was harming both the family and the state, and weighed heavily on recent events. In the difficult times of the war people were too accustomed to pleasure to sacrifice enough and the lack of a moral compass within the country pointed France toward defeat.

Freppel's change in perspective toward modern society is evident. This period of transition was an important time for Freppel, as the major elements of his worldview in 1871 remained more or less unchanged throughout the rest of his career. The political upheaval in France and the ongoing tension between the Church and modernity figured prominently in the context of this shift. But in a broader sense, the issue for Freppel and society at large was how to view the impact of what Freppel called the "grievous doctrines of the past century." Although he did not mention it directly in his pastoral letter, the event which embodied these ideas and was seen by Freppel and others as the root cause of the problems in modern society was the French Revolution.

⁷²*O.O.P.*, t.IV, pp. 88 – 89.

⁷³*O.O.P.*, t.IV, pp. 91 – 92.

The French Revolution

In 1889, preparations were underway across France to mark the one-hundredth anniversary of the beginning of the French Revolution. Early that same year Freppel published a work reflecting on the occasion which was met with interest from those both sympathetic and hostile to its arguments. More than twenty editions of the work, *La Révolution Française à propos du centenaire de 1789*,⁷⁴ were printed in the first year alone. Allies such as economist Charles Périn called it “the final word” on the Revolution while others criticized its tone and contents.⁷⁵ A polemical work, it is not useful as an historical account of the events of the Revolution, but it does provide insight into Freppel’s view of its legacy. Before examining the salient arguments of the book, a few qualifications are necessary. First, as Pierre Pierrard has pointed out, partisans on either side tended to conflate the events of 1789 with those of the subsequent revolutions in 1830 and 1848. The result is a synthesis of these events that is reduced to opposing notions of “Revolution” and “Counter-Revolution.”⁷⁶ Freppel’s work is clearly a promotion of this broader ideology of the Counter-Revolution rather than a strict analysis of the initial French Revolution. Along these lines, the work itself represents a commentary on the events of 1889 as much as those of 1789.⁷⁷ Thus the value of the work is not its historical accuracy, but rather the way Freppel frames the events of the

⁷⁴ Paris, 1889. Hereafter abbreviated *R.F.*

⁷⁵ For additional examples of reaction, see Terrien, t.II pp. 640 – 647.

⁷⁶ See Pierrard, “Les catholiques devant les Révolutions: 1789 – 1830 – 1848,” in *Catholiques entre monarchie et république: Monseigneur Freppel en son temps* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1995), pp. 17 – 24.

⁷⁷ See J.-C. Martin, “Monseigneur Freppel et la Révolution française,” in *Catholiques entre monarchie et république: Monseigneur Freppel en son temps* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1995), pp. 111 – 122. Martin presents an interesting and helpful summary of the context and aims of Freppel’s work as it relates to his battles both with the Republican government as well as with liberal Catholics.

Revolution to show how they have negatively impacted French society through the current day. This serves as a key component of his social critique and also impacts his understanding of and proposed solutions to the social question.

Principles of the Revolution

At the outset Freppel acknowledges that the Revolution continues to influence society and has not yet reached its conclusion. Moreover, the view one takes of the events of 1789 shapes in large measure the way one views the issues of the day.⁷⁸ Freppel introduces his purpose for the work as determining the true outcome of the Revolution and whether it met its stated goals. One of his primary arguments is that on the eve of the Revolution French society was in need of reform, but the Revolution misinterpreted or ignored helpful ideas and instead pushed forward with a radically different vision of society that was fundamentally anti-Christian. He finds in the notebooks of those at the Estates General a general agreement that the monarchy should be preserved and the Catholic faith maintained.⁷⁹ There was no suggestion of the radical overhaul of society that ensued.

He does admit that several areas of the *ancien régime* were in need of reform. A major problem was that the monarchy had become increasingly absolutist, as evidenced by the failure of any king to convene the Estates General between 1614 and 1789. This distanced the monarchy from the needs of the people and reduced the nobility from a

⁷⁸R.F., pp. 1 – 3.

⁷⁹R.F., p.7.

“true political force” to “mere decoration.”⁸⁰ Other reforms that he believed shared widespread support included the regular meeting of the Estates General at an interval of three or five years; the consent of the Estates General (on behalf of the people) to any new taxes; the sharing of legislative power between the king and the people, through the Estates General; a uniform code of law that applied equally to everyone; and a system whereby honors and high positions were based on merit rather than bloodline.⁸¹ In his view, it was an “uncontestable fact” that, “the civil and political reforms, I mean the useful, serious and legitimate reforms accomplished in 1789 and the time since then, have absolutely nothing in common with the French Revolution. The notebooks of the clergy, nobility and Third Estate show that all of these reforms would have taken place without the Revolution, and would have happened more wisely, more certainly, and more effectively.”⁸² Instead of these reforms, the Revolution brought social upheaval under the motto of “Liberty, Equality and Fraternity” and a doctrine that Freppel calls “the absolute antithesis of Christianity.”

A chapter is dedicated to each of these revolutionary principles and Freppel argues that in all three cases the Revolution replaced authentic concepts of liberty, equality and fraternity with false distortions. On liberty, Freppel addresses the impact of the Revolution on both political and individual liberty. The traditional idea of political liberty in France was that lawmaking involved both the consent of the people and the decree of the ruler (*Lex fit consensu populi et constitutione regis*) and was done in the public interest. There was also a tradition of local autonomy, whether in provinces or

⁸⁰*R.F.*, p.9.

⁸¹*R.F.*, pp. 11 – 12.

⁸²*R.F.*, p. 13.

municipalities, where the people could make decisions free from the interference of the king.⁸³ However, increasing absolutism under the *ancien régime* meant that over time these local authorities were superseded by the king and resulted in “an excessive centralization” of political power. Therefore in 1789 the “reform movement”⁸⁴ wanted to restore more political authority to the provincial and municipal levels of government and away from the national level. The Revolution, however, brought about the opposite tendency: “Not only did it not react against the centralization of power, already excessive under the *ancien régime*, it pushed this centralization to its extreme limits. It revived the pagan theory of the omnipotence of the state, embodied in a numeric majority and contemptuous of all provincial or municipal liberties.”⁸⁵ Expanding on this point, he continued the critique of centralization with implications for more than just political authority, saying, “it left no autonomous bodies, intermediate organizations or independent associations between the individual and the state.”⁸⁶ The result of this was that the state increased its overall authority and to Freppel this meant a corresponding decrease in liberty for the French people.

He also saw problems in the notion of liberty as it related to conscience and religious freedom. In this area he referred primarily to the actions of the Revolution against the Church, such as the killing or forced exile of priests, the seizure of ecclesiastical property and the imposition of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy as examples of the infringement of religious liberty. Ironically, he viewed the situation

⁸³ *R.F.*, pp. 33 – 34.

⁸⁴ Throughout the work Freppel contrasts the “reform movement” or “reformers” with the revolutionaries, the former representing the sensible reforms he spoke of in the beginning of the work.

⁸⁵ *R.F.*, p. 36.

⁸⁶ *R.F.*, p. 36.

before the Revolution as being more just, though far from ideal, in that Protestants and Jews enjoyed more religious freedom than Catholics would during and after the Revolution. Furthermore, the toleration of the writings of the philosophes before the Revolution demonstrated the acceptance of a range of expression far greater than what was permitted afterwards. In these cases he was referring to his perception of the actual experiences of people in France as it related to liberty of conscience and not making legal comparisons, which would be difficult to justify.⁸⁷ In practice, however, he found the current situation more intolerant, saying that government officials would not dare be seen going to Mass or send their children to Christian schools instead of state-run schools.⁸⁸

Freppel continued in a similar vein with equality and fraternity. Both concepts had been misunderstood by the Revolution, with unfortunate consequences. For example, he said the traditional notion of fraternity was a Christian concept that taught that all men are brothers as a result of God, their common Father.⁸⁹ The Revolution used this word but the divisions among the people into various factions, and the violence which ensued, suggested the lack of any brotherhood. On the contrary, the Revolution fostered hatred and division which remained a century later. “*Voilà l’ennemi!* This is the cry that we hear everywhere.”⁹⁰ On equality, Freppel criticized the Revolution for presenting a vision of society that was fundamentally opposed to tradition and human nature. His critique of equality and emphasis on the role of hierarchy in society are

⁸⁷ For example, Louis XIV’s Edict of Fontainebleau (1685) revoked the Edict of Nantes (1598) and made it illegal for Protestants to practice their faith, resulting in the exile of thousands. No such analogous law toward Catholics was enacted by the Revolution or in its aftermath.

⁸⁸ *R.F.*, p. 42.

⁸⁹ *R.F.*, p. 61.

⁹⁰ *R.F.*, p. 64.

important elements of his social thought which will be addressed later. While recognizing the need for reform that animated the initial events of 1789, Freppel strongly rejected the direction taken by the Revolution under the guise of these principles.

Social Consequences of the Revolution

Throughout the work Freppel highlighted several examples of how the Revolution and its legacy had adversely impacted society. At the center of these negative effects was the attack on Christianity that was waged by the Revolution. In his view the Revolution tried to create a new society and to cast aside traditional institutions. To do this it attacked the Catholic Church, seizing ecclesiastical property and imposing the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. However, this was not merely a battle against the institution of the Church, but “its goal was to eliminate Christianity entirely, as well as Divine revelation and the supernatural order, and to replace these with nature and reason.”⁹¹ The Revolution’s goal was to create a “dechristianized” or “debaptized” society where religion was banished from government, laws, and schools and replaced by human reason. This effort to replace God with man amounted to a “veritable deicide” that Freppel compared to the actions of the Jews during the time of Christ.⁹²

The effects of the Revolution’s attempt to thwart the role of Christianity in society were felt in several areas of life, including the family, state, and education. However, it is particularly of interest here to focus on Freppel’s treatment of the relationship between

⁹¹R.F., p. 16.

⁹²R.F., p. 22.

the French Revolution and the social question. The two key elements that he focused on, devoting a chapter to each, were property and labor. He rejected the commonly held view that before the Revolution property was held only by the nobility and clergy and that afterwards it was more evenly spread among the members of the Third Estate. On the contrary, the process of “peasants” becoming property owners was well underway before the Revolution.⁹³ While more land became available to the lower classes as a result of the seizure of ecclesiastical property, a development Freppel vehemently protests, the average “small farmer” benefited far less than the “bourgeois Voltairiens” who were responsible for the confiscations.⁹⁴

The injustice and lack of respect for property that were made evident by the actions of the Revolution were actually a symptom of a much larger problem that Freppel highlighted:

The destruction of private property was a result of the exaggeration of the concept of the state held by the Revolution. From the moment that the state involved itself with what had been matters of individual initiative, impeding and even stifling it in so many ways, it was able to do anything, create anything, and organize and govern everything, whether schools, the justice system, administration, or finances. It was absolutely essential, in order to pay for so many things, that the state exploit individual wealth and extract all that it could under all types of taxes and contributions, registration fees, transfer fees, succession duties and fees on any kind of private transaction. Ultimately this included private property and everything it yielded as well, because it is the guarantee of public wealth and therefore bears the entire weight of the system. After several years of such excessive taxes the value of the property was passed into the hands of the state, making it the true and only heir and beneficiary. If this is what one calls the “freeing up of property by the French Revolution” then we wonder if these words have any meaning.⁹⁵

⁹³*R.F.*, p. 66.

⁹⁴*R.F.*, p. 69.

⁹⁵*R.F.*, p. 68.

Thus it was the increase in power assumed by the state that led to the “attacks” on property. In this case Freppel is referring not only to the Revolution itself but also the aftermath, with the high levels of taxation functioning as an additional means of property confiscation besides the initial seizure which occurred in the early days of the Revolution. He also bemoaned the high level of inflation as another consequence of the policies of the Revolution.

Freppel rejected the notion that the Revolution helped the people by taking the property of the Church and nobility, arguing instead that it contributed in large measure to the economic difficulties faced throughout the nineteenth century. As the quote above demonstrates, he believed that a mistaken concept of the role of the state created the need for it to generate more revenue in order to pay for its expanded services. However, these taxes did not affect only the wealthy or those who owned property, but the lower classes as well. Freppel noted that the clergy and the nobility were responsible for providing a number of public services, such as education, poor relief, medical aid, and military services. By seizing their property and forcing many into exile the Revolution therefore created a void which had to be filled by the state. The cost of services that had previously been funded by benefactors or charitable contributions was now borne by all people.⁹⁶ What appeared to be a benefit to the lower class ultimately resulted in an overall increase in taxes across society.

The legacy of the French Revolution as it related to private property was of special concern to Freppel. He holds the Revolution responsible for contemporary views that threaten the right of property. For example, in *Das Kapital*, Karl Marx cited the

⁹⁶R.F. pp. 69 – 70.

events of the Revolution in arguing against individual property. Freppel summarizes Marx's argument, "how can that which was owned by so many and for such a long time be any less inviolable than that which is owned only by one person since yesterday?"⁹⁷ In other words, if the property of even the Church and nobility could be seized by the state, so too could all other individual property. The communist call for the nationalization of land was just a broader application of what the Revolution had achieved. Freppel ends this analysis with an explicit link to what he believed was one of the greatest menaces facing society: "One fact remains certain: the origins of socialism are found in the French Revolution. And if, as we fear, these theories bear their fruits in the next century or later, the Constituent Assembly of 1789 will have been the first mistake."⁹⁸

As Freppel's social doctrine is developed, the importance of associations for workers will be clear. For this reason, Freppel's criticism of the French Revolution's impact on work centers largely around its outlawing of worker's associations in June of 1791. The eighteenth-century economist Turgot had criticized these associations, which Freppel considered "a rigorous principle of natural law."⁹⁹ He continued, "It is in the nature of things that artisans of the same craft or workers of the same profession have the ability to assemble in order to discuss and safeguard their interests. Or else we must give up all notions of human solidarity and sociability."¹⁰⁰ The unity provided by associations

⁹⁷R.F., pp. 70 – 71.

⁹⁸R.F., p. 72.

⁹⁹R.F. p. 73. For more on Turgot, see Joseph Schumpeter, *History of Economic Analysis*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954) pp. 245 - 248. Throughout the work Freppel treats him as the representative of the economic doctrine of the Revolution.

¹⁰⁰R.F. p. 73.

gives workers strength to avoid abuse and is therefore a necessary component of work. These associations had taken the form of “worker corporations” for the past several centuries. Freppel recalled this idyllic time as one where workers were respected and in union with their employers. Over time abuses crept in and, in keeping with one of the themes of the work, some reforms were necessary. However, by making associations illegal the Revolution destroyed what had existed and replaced it with nothing. To Freppel this was one of the clearest examples of the Revolution taking to extremes the reasonable ideas of the reformers.

The outlawing of associations signified one of the key economic doctrines of the Revolution which was also one of its greatest errors, reducing the economic order to only the individual and the state.¹⁰¹ The removal of intermediate organizations deprived the worker of his primary means of security: “They forgot that the principle of liberty of work, when applied in an absolute fashion without the corrective and complement of association (which Turgot called “the source of all evil”) can have no other result than placing the poor and the weak at the mercy of the rich and the strong. The theorists of 1789 were completely arrogant about the conditions of the social problem: Under the appearance of liberty they brought isolation to the worker and with this isolation, weakness.”¹⁰² The worker was left to survive on his own, all the more vulnerable without the support traditionally provided by the worker corporations. Freppel often connected the origins of the social question to this aspect of the Revolution. Although the law was

¹⁰¹*R.F.*, p. 76.

¹⁰²*R.F.*, p. 77.

repealed in March of 1884, he believed that the damage to labor and associations was lasting.

Thus the French Revolution played a role in the onset of the social question by disrupting the rights to property and association and exposing the worker to greater risk of exploitation. This in turn caused many to seek out secret societies or “dark leagues” for support.¹⁰³ Furthermore it was responsible for many of the fiscal problems of the nineteenth century because it assumed a greater role for the state which required increasing the burden of taxation on citizens. Proponents of the Revolution tried to credit it with spurring some of the material advances of the nineteenth century and claimed that the worker was better off in every way, whether measured by wage, lifespan or nourishment, as a result of the Revolution. Freppel rejected this argument as “pure sophistry,” saying instead that any improvements were the result of advances in science, technology, and innovations in industry, none of which directly resulted from the actions of the Revolution.¹⁰⁴ For evidence that the Revolution was not the cause of economic progress one only need turn to the industrial advances made by England, which were at least as significant as those in France and occurred in a country not impacted by the ideology of the Revolution. In short, the French Revolution was not responsible for any economic development that had occurred in the century since its beginning, but it was responsible for exacerbating the social question by destroying the worker corporations that had previously harmonized relations between capital and labor. Now that relationship was marred by antagonism and was “one of the great plagues of modern

¹⁰³*R.F.*, pp. 80 – 81. This was a reference primarily to Freemasons, which will be discussed further below.

¹⁰⁴*R.F.*, p. 79.

times.” After holding the Revolution responsible for so many social ills, it was perhaps only necessary that Freppel conclude his work by suggesting some remedies.

Moving Beyond the Revolution

Although Freppel acknowledged the difficult situation facing France and the need for an effective solution, his proposals were largely unrealistic and unsurprising. This may be expected from a polemical work that was far from a pragmatic political program, but it also serves to highlight the areas he viewed as most in need of reform. His outlook for the future was bleak, focused on the deep and lasting divisions caused by the Revolution. The divisions were more profound than typical political struggles because for the first time the competing parties did not share the same foundation of social principles.¹⁰⁵ The splintering of France was one of the consequences of the Revolution that Freppel found most distressing. Even while recognizing this, he believed it would be too negative to offer such a criticism without presenting a solution.

Freppel offered seven proposals, each of which related to previously discussed problems created by the Revolution. The summary of his solution was the logical conclusion of his primary thesis: “we must break decisively with the Revolution and renew with wisdom and certainty the reform movement of 1789.”¹⁰⁶ He was not proposing a return to the *ancien régime*, but rather the application of traditional principles to the current situation. This meant first of all that the predominant role of religion in

¹⁰⁵R.F., p. 104.

¹⁰⁶R.F., p. 110.

society must be restored in the government and all areas of public life. Furthermore, the political instability that resulted from a century of revolutions and new constitutions must be resolved through the restoration of the national monarchy.¹⁰⁷ The remaining five proposals were likely aimed more at the current political debates, and included reestablishing provincial and municipal authority, scaling back the role of the state in education, changing the laws on inheritance to end the forced division of goods, restoring liberty of work through the promotion of associations and aiming to rebuild the national defense in a way that would protect France's interests without resulting in constant warfare.¹⁰⁸ These ideas represented a reaction against the Revolution and against the utopian, atheist vision it presented.

In addition to this book, Freppel occasionally reflected on the Revolution in various settings as bishop.¹⁰⁹ He also registered his disapproval of national commemorations of July 14, instructing his clergy not to participate in any religious service for a holiday that had a "purely civil character" unless it was to offer a Requiem Mass for those killed during the Revolution.¹¹⁰ He refused to ring church bells for the occasion or to have the French flag lit in a special way in front of the bishop's residence

¹⁰⁷ This point provides further evidence of the polemical (and impractical) nature of the work. By 1889 Freppel spoke very little about the restoration of the monarchy and did not actively pursue it in a tangible way. He was merely stating the political preference of the Counter-Revolution in favor of the monarchy.

¹⁰⁸ *R.F.* pp. 113 – 115. See also J.-C. Martin, "Monseigneur Freppel et la Révolution française," p. 113. Martin suggests that in the work Freppel is responding primarily to the republican aims of his day.

¹⁰⁹ Three examples are his address to the *Cercle catholique d'ouvriers* in 1876, *O.O.P.*, t. V, pp. 113 – 143; his speech at the dedication of the monument honoring General LaMorcière in 1879, *O.O.P.*, t. VII, pp. 184 – 194; and his address at the opening of the Regional Assembly of Anjou, LaTouraine and Maine in 1889, *O.O.P.* t.XI, pp. 151 – 168. Most of these remarks were along the lines of the criticisms of the Revolution outlined in his book and a desire to implement the "reform movement" of 1789.

¹¹⁰ *O.O.P.*, t. VIII, p. 424.

in honor of the holiday as well.¹¹¹ As he wrote to the Minister of Cults in 1884, “As bishop, I cannot seem to be participating in any way in the celebration of an anniversary that recalls bloody riots and the revolt against legitimate authority... When I think of the glory of this country I want to forget all of those things.”¹¹² Commemorations of 1789 were unpleasant enough for Freppel, but the real legacy of the Revolution was found in its influence and inspiration of several groups which posed the greatest threat to the Church in his own time.

Enemies of the Church

A fundamental goal of the French Revolution, in Freppel’s view, was the dechristianization of French society. There were various groups in late-nineteenth century France that he believed also sought this goal. As a result, Catholics must be especially aware and careful to avoid the influence of those who threatened the Church. Freppel issued pastoral letters to highlight and condemn these forces on various occasions. They are useful here because each is linked in some way to the French Revolution, demonstrating the ongoing battle between Freppel and the ideas of the Revolution. Moreover, much of Freppel’s social vision was a reaction to competing views that he deemed mistaken. In this way, understanding his characterization of the ideas against which he was reacting can help illuminate his own social thought. The

¹¹¹ *O.O.P.*, t. VIII, pp. 425 – 428; *O.O.P.*, t. IX, pp. 111 – 112.

¹¹² *O.O.P.* t. IX, p. 112.

common thread highlighted by Freppel, which also demonstrated his primary concern, was the effort to undermine or eliminate the influence of religion in society.

Freemasons

In 1873, Pius IX condemned Freemasonry in *Etsi multa*, calling it the “synagogue of Satan.”¹¹³ In response and in his first comments on the issue, Freppel warned those in his diocese not to join this secret society, echoing the pope and calling it the center of the conspiracy against Christianity which ultimately leads people to atheism and materialism.¹¹⁴ While *Etsi multa* mentioned Freemasonry among several other threats to the Church, in 1884 Leo XIII issued a much more comprehensive condemnation in an encyclical dedicated entirely to the topic, *Humanum genus*.¹¹⁵ In February of 1885 Freppel issued a pastoral instruction for the encyclical in which he followed the pope’s arguments but also responded more specifically to the situation in France and the link between Freemasonry and the Revolution.

After recalling previous papal condemnations, he praised Leo XIII’s encyclical for showing “the wicked influence of this dangerous sect on so many of the evils afflicting modern society.”¹¹⁶ His own objective was to examine the origins and beliefs of Freemasons in order to demonstrate that they represented “the complete negation of

¹¹³ Prior papal condemnations of Freemasonry included: Clement XII, *In Eminentissimi* (1738); Benedict XIV, *Providas* (1751); Pius VII, *Ecclesiam a Jesu Christo* (1821); Leo XII, *Quo graviora* (1825); Pius VIII, *Traditi* (1829); Gregory XVI, *Mirari* (1832); Pius IX, *Qui pluribus* (1846), *Multiplies inter* (1865). For more on papal condemnations as well as the treatment of Freemasonry in Canon law, see Jean Paul Abou Ghazale, *La Franc-Maçonnerie en soi et dans la vision de l’Eglise* (Rome: Università Lateranense, 2004).

¹¹⁴ *O.O.P.*, t.IV, pp. 296 – 297.

¹¹⁵ *Acta Leonis*, 4: 43 – 70.

¹¹⁶ *O.O.P.*, t.IX, p. 174.

Christianity.” He compared Freemasonry to a series of anti-Christian or heretical groups throughout history to show the commonalities they shared with other condemned movements. For example, the secret ceremonies of the Freemasons reminded Freppel of the ancient pagan cults. In an odd juxtaposition, he deemed the Gnostics “the Freemasons of the first three centuries of the Church,” because Freemasons allegedly believed, as the Gnostics, that there was a body of special knowledge only available to select people.¹¹⁷ In various ways they also resembled the Albigensians, Cathars, and ultimately Protestants in their hostile attitude toward the Church, except they lacked standard Christian beliefs. These comparisons, while not of a particularly insightful historical nature, were intended to signal to Catholics that they could join the Freemasons no more licitly than they could these other groups. At the time there was a question whether perhaps one could be both a Catholic and a Freemason. Freppel wanted to make clear that this was just as mutually exclusive as saying one could be both a Catholic and a pagan, or a Catholic and a Protestant.

An ongoing debate in France concerned the role of the Freemasons in the French Revolution. Freppel cited several works which to various degrees implicated them as part of a conspiracy that led to the Revolution, including *La Franc-Maçonnerie et la Révolution*, by Louis d’Estampes and Claudio Jannet, and even the socialist Louis Blanc’s work on the history of the French Revolution.¹¹⁸ Freppel himself was somewhat more cautious, saying it would be an exaggeration to say that the Revolution was the

¹¹⁷ *O.O.P.*, t.IX, p. 177.

¹¹⁸ The work of d’Estampes and Jannet was published in 1884. Jannet was one of Freppel’s primary colleagues in addressing the social question. Jannet also edited the multi-volume work by the Jesuit Nicolas Deschamps, *Les Sociétés secrètes* which was released after Deschamps’ death. Louis Blanc’s *Histoire de la Révolution française* was published in twelve volumes between 1847 and 1862.

“exclusive work” of Freemasons. However he did connect figures such as Robespierre and others to Masonic lodges so as to suggest at least some role in the events. He also attributed to them a level of influence in the subsequent revolutions of the nineteenth century.

The next portion of Freppel’s instruction was dedicated to analyzing their ideas and the influence they were currently exerting on events. He described their objective as, “to unceasingly battle revealed religion, its dogmas, institutions and, it follows, the entire social order founded on the Gospel.”¹¹⁹ Leo XIII had described the doctrine of the Freemasons as a type of naturalism, and Freppel added that it had “vague notions of Deism” by downplaying or dismissing the supernatural order. Freppel rejected the idea that God could not work outside the constraints of nature through miracles as a denial of the omnipotence of God. Bossuet had said that Deism was atheism in disguise, and Freppel did not attempt to distinguish between the beliefs of Deists and Freemasons. He was less interested in dwelling on theological arguments and instead focused on the conflicting ideas of society envisioned by Freemasonry and Christianity.

To establish the gravity of this conflict, Freppel quoted Freemasons issuing a “declaration of war” against the Church in several of their journals.¹²⁰ The problem was that they had given the impression to people that Freemasonry affirmed belief in God and other traditional doctrines. However, Freppel claimed they moved away from these positions as evidenced by the removal of a clause on “the existence of God and

¹¹⁹ *O.O.P.*, t.IX, p. 190.

¹²⁰ *O.O.P.*, t.IX, pp. 194 – 195. For example, “Our adversary is the Catholic Church with its worldwide organization. It is our unrelenting hereditary enemy. Christians or Freemasons: Make your choice!”

immortality of the soul” during an 1887 assembly in Paris.¹²¹ Freemasonry had shifted to the open profession of atheism,¹²² according to Freppel, and as a result they sought to undermine and overthrow the foundations of the Christian social order. To do this they sought changes in areas such as education and marriage. They wanted to remove any religious component from education and favored the legal recognition of a civil marriage apart from any religious ceremony. Freppel believed this promotion of civil marriage, which he also thought would make divorce easier, was the beginning of an effort to secularize all social institutions.¹²³ While these issues were mentioned in *Humanum genus*, Freppel examined them in greater detail, likely because he had been fighting against new laws about public education and divorce in the Chamber of Deputies. Thus his arguments in this letter must also be considered within the context of political battles between the Church and the Third Republic. Freemasons were not the only supporters of civil marriage or public education, but because some who supported these issues were Freemasons, these causes were linked to Freemasonry.

The ultimate goal of a complete separation between Church and state was what Freppel warned against throughout the instruction. If the institutions of society were removed from the principles of the Gospel there would be disastrous results. Catholics had a duty to resist these efforts and under no circumstances could they join this society.

¹²¹ *O.O.P.*, t.IX, p. 198.

¹²² He concedes that their “official” position on the existence of God is one of neutrality, but says that neutrality on such an issue is tantamount to atheism.

¹²³ *O.O.P.*, t.IX, p. 212.

Free Thinkers

Another group which threatened the Church through the consequences of its doctrine was the Free Thinkers. This was not an organized group in the usual sense, but rather a term for those who shared a certain outlook.¹²⁴ The fundamental error they committed was the refusal to believe God's word as truth. This caused them to promote a concept of freedom that Freppel rejected as false. His arguments against this help demonstrate his response to some of the philosophical tendencies of his time. He referred to the nefarious influence of Free Thinkers in different contexts but only once set out to define what he intended by this term.¹²⁵

Since there was no "official" doctrine, Freppel listed several characteristics of their thought in order to construct a set of beliefs. As the name suggests, they were a group that prided themselves on a certain liberty in their intellectual approach, though Freppel considered them the descendants of the libertines and philosophes.¹²⁶ They rejected Divine revelation as impossible and, "they stubbornly persist in their rationale, refusing to believe anything outside the scope of nature. They grant to themselves the right to believe anything they want, arguing that human reason is the sovereign judge and absolute measure of truth."¹²⁷ They also believed that there was no principle of certainty except for human reason. Freppel found it contradictory for them to argue for the

¹²⁴ "Free Thought" in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. The term has meant different things over time, but is intended here to refer to those who hold the doctrines described by Freppel.

¹²⁵ Pastoral Letter on Free Thought, February 6, 1887; *O.O.P.*, t.X, pp. 85 – 112.

¹²⁶ *O.O.P.*, t.X, p. 86. "In the last century, they called themselves 'philosophes,' as if philosophy, which is the love of wisdom, could have anything in common with the contempt and hatred for religion."

¹²⁷ *O.O.P.*, t.X, p. 88.

limitless of human reason while restricting the scope of possible knowledge to the natural world alone and not to include any understanding of the supernatural. Moreover, he thought it was merely common sense that human intelligence was limited. The implication of this worldview for religion was that it represented “the most audacious revolt against God imaginable.”¹²⁸ It was a substitution of the sovereignty of human reason in place of Divine authority.

The most tangible consequence of this view was its influence on people’s actions and their judgment of morality. As Freppel put it succinctly, “Free Thought leads to Free Morality,” and he argued that one could not maintain morality without God.¹²⁹ An appeal to individual conscience only created the problem of determining whose judgment would be decisive when an action involved more than one person. For example, Freppel continued, the anarchist could take someone else’s property after judging it to be inequitably distributed and the Free Thinker would not be able to condemn this as wrong.¹³⁰ Such a system would eventually lead to a breakdown of society, which is why Freppel called Free Thought “a principle of anarchy and social dissolution.” By questioning religious authority and attacking the Church it weakened the things that most typically bonded people together, thereby opening the door for “intellectual anarchy” to overtake the order and unity provided by religion. The result of this was the spread of dangerous ideologies: “look around and see the affects of these anarchic theories operating under the name of socialism, communism and nihilism which are spreading

¹²⁸ *O.O.P.*, t.X, p. 95.

¹²⁹ *O.O.P.*, t.X, pp. 103 – 104.

¹³⁰ One way of resolving this problem in society is the use of force, but Freppel argued that using force to punish undesired actions is itself subject to changing views about what is right and wrong, therefore leading to instability. *O.O.P.*, t.X, pp. 105 – 107.

across Europe.”¹³¹ It is especially important to note the connection made between this ideology and the onset of socialism, which grew increasingly during Freppel’s life and which is most directly related to the social question.

Socialists

Socialism was the subject of another papal encyclical during Freppel’s tenure as bishop, *Quod apostolici muneris*, from Leo XIII in 1878.¹³² Given in the first year of his pontificate, it condemned socialism for denying the right of private property as well as holding a distorted view of the equality of man. Freppel echoed the pontiff in his own pastoral letter the following year in which he detailed the reasons that Catholics should reject socialism. As with the condemnation of Freemasonry, Freppel followed the pope’s arguments closely but expanded upon them in the French context, including a link between socialism and the French Revolution.

The spread of socialist ideas made the threat all the more urgent, Freppel began by warning, “In America as in Europe, there is a vast association whose members are linked by a formal pact which seeks nothing less than the complete subversion of society.”¹³³ It is interesting to note Freppel’s lack of distinction between various movements, which all sought the same ends in his view:

Whatever it is called in different countries, whether ‘socialist,’ ‘communist,’ or ‘nihilist,’ the goal pursued by this international league is everywhere the same. They want to destroy individual private property and replace it with collective

¹³¹ *O.O.P.*, t.X, pp. 107 – 111.

¹³² *Acta Leonis*, 1:170 – 183.

¹³³ *O.O.P.*, t.VI, p. 360.

property. They want the State to own all the land and the instruments of labor, providing everyone with an equal share of goods and benefits, thereby destroying all political or social inequality as well as ending the hierarchy of rights and powers. This would create a blank slate for all existing religious, juridical, and military institutions and society would be rebuilt on materialist foundations which would include the denial of God, the immortal soul and the afterlife. Thousands of men all across the world are involved in this work of social revolution.¹³⁴ Socialist congresses held in such major European cities as London, Geneva and Brussels over the preceding years indicated to Freppel the growing influence of these ideas. An even closer indication of the threat of socialism was the experience of the Paris Commune, which Freppel viewed as the application of these principles. All of these developments were possible largely because of the weakening of Christianity caused by the Revolution and its aftermath. By attacking the Church the Revolution made it easier for socialist aims to take hold.

A shared characteristic of socialism, Freemasonry, and Free Thought was the rejection of Christian doctrine. This was the primary reason that Freppel viewed them as enemies of the Church. In the case of socialism, the denial of the afterlife was the key to stirring people in favor of dramatic social change. Freppel often claimed that if the earthly life was all people believed existed, they would be less likely to accept an inferior social position and more likely to maximize their pleasures in this life. The Church's traditional exhortation that people should accept their social status as providentially determined and that the poor should patiently face the difficulties of this life in anticipation of the glories of heaven seemed less appealing than the promise of equality made by socialists.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ *O.O.P.*, t.VI, pp. 361 – 362.

¹³⁵ *O.O.P.*, t.VI, pp. 366 – 367.

The problem of social inequality was also a concern for Freppel, who emphasized the duties of the wealthy to do more than just engage in the pursuit of pleasure. In fact, he understood the attraction of people to the socialist critique of the wealthy: “By preaching the renouncement of self, the repression of interior desires, and the sovereignty of the mind over the flesh, Christianity stifles the immoderate love of pleasure. But when one turns his back on the Cross and the Gospel and sees the splendor of senseless luxury, the scandal of a fortune unjustly acquired, the spectacle of a life where the only goal is amusement and pleasure, how can we not expect this to inflame the fever of lust in the hearts of many?”¹³⁶ The excesses of greed and materialism were therefore a contributing factor to the spread of socialism and represented in their own way a rejection of Christian doctrine. However, the remedies of socialism were not the solution to this aspect of the problem. Rather, the Church must do a better job of explaining the duties of the wealthy to the poor and the importance of moderation and self-denial.

The threat posed by socialism went beyond issues of private property and economic activity, extending into areas such as education. Freppel highlighted the efforts of various socialist congresses to eliminate religious education and replace it with state-run schools.¹³⁷ This was seen as an infringement on the rights of parents to choose how their children would be educated. Such efforts were also further proof of the socialist desire to attack the influence of religion in society and replace it with the state. It is also an example of the link between the education issue and the social question which Freppel frequently made. The ongoing battles in France over education undoubtedly influenced

¹³⁶ *O.O.P.*, t.VI, p. 368.

¹³⁷ *O.O.P.*, t.VI, p. 372. Examples included the Congresses of Lausanne (1867) and Lyon (1878) and various socialist pamphlets and manifestos which mentioned the issue.

Freppel to connect socialism with the state control of education. As in the case of Freemasonry above, Freppel was often less concerned with making distinctions between various ideologies and causes and more interested in dividing people into two broad categories based on whether they supported or opposed the interests of the Church. A final enemy was not an ideology or organization itself, but rather a means of spreading ideas which threatened the Church.

The Irreligious Press

Throughout his public career Freppel lamented the work being done by the press to weaken the Church. In the aftermath of the French Revolution they misled and confused people about the consequences of the ideology of the revolution, characterizing it positively while attacking the Church. In one address Freppel called the press “emissaries of the Revolution who spread its calumnies.”¹³⁸ He did not include all of the press in this condemnation, but rather what he frequently termed the irreligious press, by which he meant newspapers or journals that attacked the Church. The proliferation of newspapers and journals made the press a more important factor in people’s lives and thus a more harmful influence if the publication promoted ideas that conflicted with the Church. He viewed this as a serious enough threat that he dedicated an entire pastoral letter to the topic in 1874.

The tone of the letter was combative, as he attacked a press that “menaces your Christian beliefs and habits” and seeks to “destroy your faith and respect for the Church

¹³⁸ *O.O.P.*, t. XII, p. 377.

and its ministers.”¹³⁹ The written word itself was a wonderful gift, best exemplified by Scripture, but this gift was often abused. Rather than a source of truth and virtue, the written word was being placed in the service of error and vice. The Council of Trent had realized the dangers associated with the proliferation of printed works following the invention of the printing press, and the Church had been watchful to protect the faithful from books that could lead them astray. However, the problem had grown “more rapid and widespread in our time than in any other,” caused especially by the many pamphlets and newspapers that were published on a regular basis. These publications were accessible to people at all levels of society and no topic was off-limits, “from the high truths of religion to the lowest details of personal lives.”¹⁴⁰ As a result, the press had become as much a source of evil as good.

Freppel was more interested in criticizing the treatment of religion by the press than in calling for any legal action against it.¹⁴¹ While he was confident that attacks on the Church could not thwart the ultimate triumph of Christ, he was concerned that individuals could be led astray and lose their faith. This was because he had little confidence in the press to accurately present religious issues: “Each time they talk about religious dogma their ignorance is extreme. But this ignorance does not prevent them from weighing in on these questions with unlimited confidence. Altering doctrines, twisting facts, slandering people – in religious matters this is all they know.”¹⁴² In short, they were untruthful, unjust, and disrespectful toward religion. Freppel provided a

¹³⁹ *O.O.P.*, t.IV, pp. 166 – 167.

¹⁴⁰ *O.O.P.*, t.IV, pp. 169 – 172.

¹⁴¹ “We will leave it up to the legislators and statesmen to reconcile the advent of this new power with the stability of the social order.” *O.O.P.*, t.IV, p. 173.

¹⁴² *O.O.P.*, t.IV, p. 175.

number of examples to demonstrate these criticisms. He was especially frustrated that a lot of the good done by the Church went unreported while the slightest failing or scandal within the Church was prominently covered. He also complained that words such as “clerical” or “ultramontane” were used only derisively as a means of criticizing the Church. The press was presenting a picture of the Church that was overwhelmingly negative.

The influence of this negative view of the Church had the potential to reach people at all levels of society. Freppel worried that popular sentiment would turn against the Church as a result of the press and that people would forget all the good done by the Church for society. Factories, bars, and other public places became locations where these publications were read and discussed, thereby spreading this view among the workers who were already influenced by the ideals of socialism. Charitable work for the poor and sick and the vast network of religious schools were only some examples of what Freppel thought was an insufficient appreciation for the Church. Priests were often characterized in the press as well-off and enjoying a relatively easy life. This was intended to create animus between the workers and the clergy and turn the workers away from the message of the Church. Freppel responded that the life of a priest was by no means easy:

Which worker spends thirteen years as an apprentice before making any money? No one does. And then, after these thirteen or fourteen years of preparatory studies, this man finally becomes a priest. Is his life one of pleasure, entertainment and material wealth? No, rather it is austere and laborious, full of self-denial and dedicated entirely to the service of God and neighbor.¹⁴³

Freppel’s message was that the life of a priest was one with which the worker could identify, perhaps making the worker more receptive to the Church. This is also but one

¹⁴³ *O.O.P.*, t.XII, p. 283.

example of the manner in which Freppel attempted to respond to misconceptions in the press, which he encouraged all Catholics to do on behalf of the Church.

It is unsurprising that Freppel instructed Catholics not to read these types of publications which attacked the Church. Just as he would not expect someone to read something which slandered the name of his father or mother, so also he did not expect someone to read a newspaper which attacked his heavenly Father or the Church. The consequences of doing so were grave: “Let us not delude ourselves, subscribing to a newspaper known for its hostility to the Catholic faith...is to take an active part in all the evil it does. It is material and moral cooperation in this work of falsehoods and corruption.”¹⁴⁴ Some argued they could read such things without being influenced negatively, but Freppel responded to the effect that one who plays with fire will likely be burned. Finally, it could also cause scandal, whether among family members, friends, or co-workers, for a Catholic to be seen reading these newspapers.

The press was particularly dangerous because of its widespread influence. It was a vehicle for all of the various attacks on the Church, whether by Freemasons, Free-thinkers or socialists. Catholic newspapers such as *l'Univers* provided a helpful counterweight, but were vastly outnumbered. The “revolutionary spirit” about which Freppel often spoke was present in each of these enemies of the Church and represented a grave threat to the traditional social order and the Church’s influence therein.

¹⁴⁴ *O.O.P.*, t. IV, p.186.

France in Decline: Freppel's Increasingly Pessimistic Outlook

Throughout his episcopate Freppel referred many times to the image of the Church militant. The legacy of the French Revolution and the additional attacks on religion presented by the enemies of the Church discussed above had besieged the Church. Freppel recognized the shifting place of the Church in modern society from the beginning of his time in Angers. Despite the difficulties, he often sounded hopeful that a recovery of the Church's past glory was still possible. However, in the second half of his two decades as bishop these signs of optimism grew more infrequent. A brief examination of the transformation of his view of French society will help illustrate this point. Freppel never became completely hopeless about the future of France, but over time his outlook was increasingly pessimistic. This development in Freppel's view of society is an important piece in understanding his social doctrine as many of the most intense exchanges on the social question occurred in the years near the end of Freppel's life and on the eve of *Rerum novarum* in 1891. It is plausible that Freppel's overall view of society at that stage in his life had some impact on his solutions to the social question.

France the "New Judah" and the Hope of Rebirth

The most upbeat assessment of French society came, perhaps expectedly, during the earliest stages of Freppel's public career. While he was continuing his studies in Paris and functioning as a chaplain at Sainte Geneviève he began to develop his skills as

a public speaker by giving addresses to various groups in the church. In 1853 he presented a discourse on “The Religious Glories of France” in which he reflected on France’s past as well as its role in the modern age. In this address he referred to France as “a new tribe of Judah, a divinely chosen people.”¹⁴⁵ Throughout its history France had served as “confessor, apostle, and martyr of the faith” and overcome the challenges of paganism, Protestantism and atheism in defense of the Catholic Church.¹⁴⁶ Just as previous generations had overcome threats to the Church, the French of the nineteenth century must do likewise. Although he did mention some areas of weakness, such as the negative impact of the French Revolution and the failure of some to observe Sunday rest, the overall tone of the address was quite positive about the prospects of France continuing to be an example to the rest of the world in the modern age.

The turbulence of the events of 1870 has already been discussed, but it is worth noting that in his early years as bishop, Freppel still remained upbeat about the ability of France to recover from those setbacks. In 1871 the National Assembly passed a resolution calling for public prayers “to ask God to ease our civil discord and put an end to the evils that afflict us.” Freppel was pleased by this request and encouraged those in his diocese to rededicate themselves to their faith in order to bring about a renewal of the country. “We have the firm hope that this solemn act of faith in Divine Providence called for by the highest assembly in the country will stop the advance of evil, calm the anger of heaven rightly irritated by so many crimes, and restore peace.”¹⁴⁷ Similar messages followed in subsequent years and in each case Freppel acknowledged the difficulties

¹⁴⁵ *O.O.P.*, t.II, p. 82.

¹⁴⁶ *O.O.P.*, t.II, pp. 82 – 114.

¹⁴⁷ *O.O.P.*, t.IV, pp. 366 – 367.

facing the country but also encouraged people to have confidence that France would be renewed through its faith.¹⁴⁸

Freppel reflected on the state of France in many settings, typically outlining the positive and negative features of society and then imploring his audience to commit to their faith and country. A good example of this is an 1877 address at a meeting of the *Comités catholiques* in Paris during which he outlined the way forward for France. Catholics must have courage in the face of their current situation. Vice and immorality were being promoted by the press and there was an ongoing war against Christianity that included “a general assault on all our beliefs.”¹⁴⁹ Despite these problems, Freppel saw reasons for confidence in the future because he believed a great store of “moral wealth” was being built up by acts of charity, self-denial, and sacrifice by the Catholics of France. These “heroes and heroines of charity” were helping the poor and instructing children throughout the country and infusing religion into all their work. A stark contrast was developing between two ideas about the role of religion in society. Those who wanted to reduce religion to at most a private devotion believed that it had no place in public life, schools, or factories. Opposed to this Freppel offered the Catholic vision of the integration of faith into all of these areas, indeed into all areas of life. The struggle between these two visions was to be welcomed:

Some people have a mistaken idea about what is called “the triumph of the Church.” They think this will be a time of perfect tranquility and no difficulties. But such ideas are imaginary. There is a reason that one of the names for the

¹⁴⁸ For example, in 1873 he pointed out the economic hardships throughout the country and the resentment among the working class that resulted, but concluded: “It is with complete confidence in the future of the country that we bring these prayers to God. For a Christian nation a time of great testing is also a time of many blessings and signs of Divine authority.” *O.O.P.*, t.IV, p.382.

¹⁴⁹ *O.O.P.*, t.V, pp. 312 – 314.

Church is the “Church militant.” Its strength and greatness do not depend on the absence of trials and conflicts nor on the false dream of peace by those who dislike battles. No, its triumph is in the awakening of faith and the fulfillment of holiness.¹⁵⁰

In the end, the “patient and difficult march of the truth” would overcome any challenges so long as Catholics persevered in the fight.

Within this setting a foundation for the rebirth of France was being established. It was occurring quietly, but a “new France” and its characteristics embodied Freppel’s hope for the future of his country:

It is a France that prays, that humbles itself at the foot of the altar in recognition of its mistakes and rejection of its errors. It is a France that seeks new energy and life from the Sacred Heart of Jesus. A France that brings Christ back into its factories, schools, and armies; that remembers Charlemagne, Saint Louis, Godfrey of Bouillon, and Joan of Arc; that fights under the symbol of the cross. A France, in short, that rediscovers the sources of faith and renews its strength and vitality to great heights. This is Catholic France, true France, the France of the future.¹⁵¹

This vision was strongly opposed by Freemasons and socialists, groups to which Freppel attributed demonic inspiration. This new France could be brought about as long as Catholics stayed united and acted in all things with courage and charity. Freppel was clearly not unaware of the difficulties faced by the French Church in 1877 and yet he described a future that seemed in conflict with the general downward trajectory of the Church’s influence in society.

¹⁵⁰ *O.O.P.*, t.V, pp. 315 – 316.

¹⁵¹ *O.O.P.*, t.V, p. 323.

A Dimmer Future

There is not a single moment that can be isolated as a turning point in Freppel's perspective on the future of French society. Certainly the continued struggles over education and the general advancement of republican ideas during the Third Republic were the driving force in this development.¹⁵² As it became clearer that Freppel's dreams of a restoration of the monarchy and reestablishment of the Church were not likely to materialize, he further sharpened his critique of modern French society. He continued to emphasize that Catholics should not grow discouraged but rather continue the struggle, for "God commands us not to be victorious, but only to fight."¹⁵³ However between 1880 and 1891, which were also the years he served in the Chamber of Deputies, his pessimism grew more pronounced.

One useful way to monitor Freppel's outlook is by examining the message and tone of letters and addresses he gave on the occasion of a new year. These were often to the clergy of his diocese or to another local charitable group and they contain his reflection on the year that was completed as well as his hopes for the upcoming year. While such messages were not as frequent in the early years of his episcopate, by the second half they were issued on a more regular basis. On the eve of 1880 he noted that some people were beginning to despair over the future of the country. Yet he expressed confidence that the enemies of the Church would not prevail.¹⁵⁴ However by the end of 1881, a year which saw the expulsion of some of the religious communities in Angers, he

¹⁵² See McManners, pp. 45 – 63.

¹⁵³ *O.O.P.*, t.VI, p. 278.

¹⁵⁴ *O.O.P.*, t.VII, p. 371.

warned of the possibility of a full-scale religious persecution against the Church.¹⁵⁵ At the beginning of 1884 he spoke of the “multiplication of attacks against everything we love and venerate” that had occurred the previous year.¹⁵⁶ In subsequent years he lamented attempts at dechristianization and the growth of “radicalism” in the government which fueled uncertainty for the Church.¹⁵⁷ Each year he expressed the hope that things would improve, but ultimately this hope was in vain. By 1890, after the centenary celebrations of the French Revolution had been completed, Freppel painted a bleak picture:

The domestic situation remains full of sadness and anxiety. Are things more secure with regard to foreign affairs? I will leave to others the satisfaction to think and the courage to claim that we have reached the heights of glory. Certainly we would all be very happy with that, but these wicked exaggerations do not prevent us from following the actions which are isolating France from the rest of Europe and causing an ever-increasing ring of hostile alliances against us. And it is precisely in the face of such worrisome events that we cannot understand the blindness of our statesmen who, instead of appealing to the sympathies of Catholics, seem to want to do everything to discredit France in the eyes of those who look at this religious persecution as a grave danger and terrible mistake.¹⁵⁸

Freppel’s main proposal for Catholics was that they remain united to their priests and bishops in order to lessen the effectiveness of the attacks on the Church. Hopeful exhortations about the rebirth of Catholic France were increasingly absent from these messages.

Further evidence of this pessimism can be found in the pastoral letters Freppel issued at the beginning of each Lenten season. While they were often meditations on a

¹⁵⁵ *O.O.P.*, t. VIII, pp. 183 – 184.

¹⁵⁶ *O.O.P.*, t.IX, p. 28.

¹⁵⁷ *O.O.P.*, t.IX, p. 146; *O.O.P.*, t. X, pp. 49 – 50; pp. 293 – 294.

¹⁵⁸ *O.O.P.*, t.XI, p. 275.

theological topic, he would also address issues relevant to the day.¹⁵⁹ In 1888 he focused his Lenten letter on his “hopes and fears” about the current situation of religion in France. Thirty-five years before he had talked about France as the new Judah; now he recalled the prophets of Judah who warned the people about the evils they were committing. These were “patriots in the highest sense of the word...faced with the threats of the future they were not afraid to raise their voice to call attention to the vices and disorders that endangered the public good.”¹⁶⁰ Freppel believed he had a responsibility to act in this tradition as his episcopal predecessors had also done when the situation warranted it.

Seventeen years prior in his pastoral letter “On the Moral Causes of Our Disasters,” Freppel had warned of the dangers facing society. He cited large portions of his earlier letter and sadly observed that things had only grown worse in every respect. “It seems that after these disasters the dominant characteristic of the time became a war against God and religion.”¹⁶¹ The responsibility for this dechristianization, which he also called “official, legal atheism” rested upon the leaders of the country as well as those who placed them in power. After listing several grievances against the Church he concluded, “None of these things could have occurred or lasted if not for the complicity of a weak and indifferent public. I am not afraid to repeat it – a country is always responsible for its public acts against God.”¹⁶² The influence of “materialist education” was also cited as a major factor in the general decline of morality, which was a sign of Freppel’s frustration with the ongoing battles over education. Further examples of the “moral plagues” in

¹⁵⁹ See the above discussions of Freemasonry and Free Thought, for example.

¹⁶⁰ *O.O.P.*, t.X, pp. 296 – 297.

¹⁶¹ *O.O.P.*, t.X, p. 302.

¹⁶² *O.O.P.*, t.X, pp. 304 – 305.

France were higher levels of divorce and suicide along with lower levels of births and Sunday observance. “I hope to be wrong, but it is impossible not to fear that this country is on the downward slope toward the abyss.”¹⁶³

Freppel’s 1890 pastoral letter was dedicated to the virtue of fortitude, which he believed was severely lacking in French society. People had become comfortable and lost a sense of duty which made them weak in the face of the challenges of the time. “Nothing weakens the moral character of an individual or nation like the spirit of doubt and indifference toward the true principles of public and private life.”¹⁶⁴ In both letters Freppel concluded by affirming Christian doctrine as the way to turn around the dire situation, so he did not focus entirely on the negatives. In fact, he praised the charitable and educational work being done by Catholics as a sign of hope. Yet his tendency was to reinforce the image of the Church militant, struggling against persecution. Freppel challenged the Catholics of Angers to live according to the precepts of the Church and thereby make the first step in the renewal of society, for social renewal must begin with individual faith. Freppel was indefatigable in making this point, even if he sensed that fewer people were heeding his message. After the events of 1870 Freppel consecrated the diocese of Angers to the Sacred Heart of Jesus for protection and guidance. Twenty years later at the dedication of a church in honor of this devotion he summarized his thoughts on the events which had transpired during that interval:

Since then have we seen prosperous and peaceful times? Certainly not. Have all the ills of the country been removed? Is the flag of France still covered by a funeral veil? Have union and peace followed from these wicked disagreements? In addition, have we not seen previously unimaginable catastrophes strike

¹⁶³ *O.O.P.*, t.X, pp. 307 – 308.

¹⁶⁴ *O.O.P.*, t.XI, p. 283.

throughout the country, and even worse, the devastation of souls caused by atheism and materialism? Thus it is more true to say that in the last twenty years we have had one disappointment after another, we have suffered many deceptions, and the course of events has gone much differently than we had hoped.¹⁶⁵

Conclusions

The portrait of Freppel as social critic presented here provides necessary context towards a complete understanding of his social doctrine. Freppel's social doctrine was significantly shaped by the times in which he lived and his severe criticism of modern society played a role in his approach to the social question. This is not to suggest that he was unwilling to entertain an openness to modernity; on the contrary, his early career is marked by a sympathetic view of modern political forms. Freppel's transition from liberal Catholicism to conservative ultramontaniam is therefore not without controversy. His vigorous support for the declarations of the First Vatican Council further demonstrated his ideological development. The opposition to Freppel's nomination by Lavigerie and others also signaled the divisions within the French episcopate that would reappear in important ways throughout Freppel's career.

The tumultuous events of 1870 and the Franco-Prussian War created a tense climate at the beginning of Freppel's episcopate. Various charitable efforts were initiated under his supervision to aid the diocese in a difficult time. The collapse of the Empire and the defeat of the French army were the cause of great distress for Freppel. In response he sought an explanation for the difficulties facing the country and identified the pernicious influence of the French Revolution and its doctrines as the primary cause of

¹⁶⁵ *O.O.P.*, t. XI, pp. 256 – 257.

France's decline. He viewed the Revolution as a frontal assault on the ideals that had brought France greatness, including, most importantly, religion itself and the beneficial influence of religion and the Church at all levels of society.

Freppel's view of the French Revolution also had an important relationship to the social question. He traced the origin of the social question to the Revolution's actions against ecclesiastical property and associations. This latter prohibition was symptomatic of a more generalized criticism offered by Freppel against the Revolution, which was its removal of intermediate social bodies. The result was that society was reduced to the individual and the state, a situation with significant consequences. First, it exposed the worker to the potential for isolation and exploitation at the hands of immoral capitalists since the worker no longer had the protective mechanisms traditionally offered by worker corporations. Second, it developed the sense in people that the state was the entity to which they should turn when in need. Concern about this trend explains why Freppel so often sought alternatives to state involvement, preferring instead that the Church or other associations take priority in aiding social needs. Finally, the anti-Christian ideology of the Revolution either created or facilitated the growth of several movements adversarial toward the Church and detrimental to Freppel's ideal vision of society. These "enemies of the Church" were frequently targeted by Freppel as the source of the social ailments that plagued France.

In the face of these forces and the increasingly hostile actions of the Third Republic against the Church, Freppel's outlook for the future turned darker. He became exasperated with the signs of moral decline that he observed in the French people, as well

as the unfavorable political realities of the Third Republic. This perspective is important to recall when one considers that the height of the debate among social Catholics occurred in the last years of Freppel's life. One cannot measure with specificity the impact of lived experiences on the formation of theories or doctrines, but it is not unreasonable to propose that Freppel's social critiques reflected his discomfort with many features of modern society and therefore influenced his approach to the decidedly-modern problem of the social question. In such circumstances his primary response was reactionary: he made recourse to traditional Catholic teachings about social institutions while remaining highly critical of the modern context in which he sought their application.

Chapter 3

Religion and the Foundations of Society: Family, Education, Church, and State

The first step in outlining Freppel's social doctrine was to establish a context for his thought by understanding his view of modern society. His social thought was a product of the time in which he lived and was greatly shaped by his interpretation of the political and social events occurring throughout Europe, and especially France, during the late-nineteenth century. But beyond his critique of society, Freppel's social doctrine was also heavily influenced by a traditional Catholic understanding of the role of religion in society. This conception of the Church and its role in society formed the foundation of Freppel's response to the social question. For example, the link between the issue of education and the social question is quite important for Freppel. The social doctrine of Freppel and the School of Angers, along with other groups of social Catholics, rested upon certain ideas about the arrangement and function of primary social institutions like the family, Church, and state.¹ Therefore, examining his views of these institutions is essential to understanding his social thought. If Freppel's social criticism often indicated his diagnosis of the ills of modern society, he also proposed a remedy. The key for him was a strong presence for the Church in society and the application of its doctrines and traditions in all aspects of life.

¹ Freppel often spoke of the link between these three basic institutions as necessary for human fulfillment. See *O.O.P.*, t.III, pp. 410-411; and J. Cadot, "La doctrine sociale de Mgr Freppel: moyen de lutte contre la République," in *Catholiques entre monarchie et république*, p. 123.

The Family

In 1871 Freppel made his first pastoral visit to the church of St. Joseph in Angers and reflected on the status of the family in society. He emphasized its importance, saying “everything in the religious and moral order rests on the strength of the family.”² Since the family was the most basic unit of society, it followed that the fate of society was directly linked to the family. Freppel identified several problems which threatened the family and by extension, society. Chief among these was the lack of obedience and submission of children to their parents, which also signaled a broader concern about respect for authority in society. Furthermore, children exhibited a “premature desire for independence” and parents did not fulfill their roles in the family strongly enough. Parents must also be sure to demonstrate their faith in external and public acts otherwise children might see their example and think “my father did not go to Confession or Communion, why should I?”³ Concerns about the family were a priority for Freppel from the outset of his time as bishop.

He expanded on these concerns about the family most comprehensively in an 1877 pastoral letter which presented his ideal vision of the structure and function of the family. The family was divinely ordained from the beginning of time and formed according to the precepts of the Ten Commandments, the Gospel, and natural law.⁴ However, modern society presented a number of challenges to these traditional guidelines

² *O.O.P.*, t.XII, p. 243.

³ *O.O.P.*, t.XII, p. 247.

⁴ *O.O.P.*, t.IV, pp. 249 – 250.

which contributed to the weakening of the family. The first was connected to the influence of ideas from the previous century about the notion of equality:

It was a maxim more arrogant than true proclaimed in the last century that all men are born free and equal in rights. It would have been more precise to say that all men are born dependent and unequal. The first of these dependencies and inequalities is found in the divinely ordained structure of the family. When a child comes into the world he enters into a hierarchy of powers and functions; next to his cradle he finds, in the very creators of his life, not his equals, but his superiors who have the right to command him.⁵

This authority of parents over their children extended for the entire lifetime of the child;

there was no age at which children became the equals of their parents. As children mature into adults the nature of the relationship changes to a “combination of respect and love, of deference and honor,” with children seeking the wisdom and advice of their parents. The recognition of a hierarchical structure in the family was fundamental for Freppel.

At the top of this familial hierarchy was the authority of the father. Paternity and authority were virtually synonymous and both originated from the same source of God the Father.⁶ Paternal authority could not be destroyed by the revolutions because it was so deeply ingrained in the nature of the family. Like any form of authority, paternal authority could be abused, as in the example of some pagan cultures where the father controlled the life or death of his children. Christianity clarified the nature of this authority, teaching that while children had obligations to their parents, so also fathers had obligations toward their children, not to provoke them to anger and to raise them in the ways of the Lord.⁷ Freppel encouraged fathers to exercise their authority with strength

⁵ *O.O.P.*, t.IV, pp. 252 – 253.

⁶ *O.O.P.*, t.IV, pp. 254 – 255.

⁷ Ephesians 6:1-4.

and not to abdicate it to any other person or institution. He had in mind especially the claim of some communists that children belong not to their parents but to the state.⁸ Any weakening or abdication of paternal authority would have a widespread effect on the way that a child viewed subsequent authorities. Therefore the attitudes toward paternal authority formed as a child influenced the views of an adult citizen toward civil authority.

Another key to family life was the importance of marriage. In a wedding homily, Freppel remarked that “marriage is the foundation of the family, the state, and all of human society” and that Christian marriage especially “is the foundation of the Church, of the great family of saints, the cornerstone of the city of God.”⁹ Throughout history all cultures attributed a religious character to marriage and in the Christian context it was raised to the honor of a sacrament by Christ.¹⁰ The spirit of sacrifice is the underpinning of marriage and this sacrifice is manifested primarily through the raising of children. Children are a blessing which is far more valuable than any earthly goods. For this reason Freppel lamented the increasing tendency of families to have fewer children. He encouraged large families and rejected the thought of those who warned of overpopulation. He again drew a connection between the fortunes of the family and the state, saying that “the strength of one [the family] brings the prosperity of the other [the state].”¹¹ However, Freppel feared that the state was taking action with the deliberate attempt to undermine the family as new laws concerning divorce were considered.

⁸ *O.O.P.*, t.IV, p. 261.

⁹ *O.O.P.*, t.XII, p.369.

¹⁰ *O.O.P.*, t.IV, p. 264.

¹¹ *O.O.P.*, t.IV, p. 280.

Though not mentioned specifically in his pastoral letter on the family, Freppel spoke often about the role of women in the family. An address he gave at a local meeting of an association of Christian mothers in Angers illustrated his view on this subject. In every age there are dangerous influences on children, and the mother is the primary defense against such evils. She is fundamentally the “guardian of the faith and innocence of her child.”¹² She plays a prominent role in educating her children in the faith, and in the case of girls, teaching the necessary elements of domestic life. Perhaps equally important is the obligation of the mother to pray for her children throughout their lives. Overall the mother is to be both an educator and exemplar of faith, charity and piety.

Any time Freppel spoke about the family he was certain to mention the role of parents in education. Parents must provide the first education to their children and then oversee their continued progress through schooling. This was a most serious duty for all parents that could not be neglected without serious consequences. When talking about education and family life he described an ideal Christian family where the parents educated their children both through words and actions:

The education of your children is the most serious and constant of your preoccupations. We would also like to remind you that the home is the first school where they will learn their duties. Thanks be to God, in our diocese there are still families, though fewer than we would like, that are truly patriarchal and are governed by faith and basic morality; where paternal authority retains its prestige because it has not forgotten its place; where the fear of God upholds in children respect for their parents; where the work of the day ends each night by the solemn and moving act of praying together; where meals are not eaten without the head of the family blessing and giving thanks for the food; where Sunday is reserved as the Lord’s day for rest and adoration; where conversations and reading materials are edifying and maintain piety; where, finally, the walls are decorated with images of Christ and the saints, speaking to the spirit and heart of the children, inspiring in them the desire for higher things, the sentiment of justice

¹² *O.O.P.*, t.IX, p. 366.

and honesty, and the love of duty under all its forms. It is in such environments that healthy and strong generations are formed, capable of sacrifice, valuing highly their moral dignity, and knowing that in the moment of danger they will stand as one people to defend the faith of their fathers or the honor and independence of their country.¹³

This encapsulated Freppel's hopes for Christian families in which authority was respected, devotion and piety were fostered, and ultimately good Christian citizens formed to better the future of France.

This view of the family articulated by Freppel was hardly surprising or unusual. Rather, it reflected a traditional understanding of the structure and roles of the family. As the most basic unit of society, Freppel often referred to the family as a model for other social institutions. The feature most important in this context was the hierarchical structure. Freppel's comment above that it is better to view people as born dependent and unequal rather than independent and equal was repeated almost verbatim in a number of settings, from discussions of the social question to his work on the French Revolution. He used the image of the family as a model for understanding the Church and state as well as in his explanation of the social question and his view of the *patronage* system, which will be discussed later. In all cases a hierarchical and well-defined structure, respect for authority, and understanding of each member's role were critically important elements for a successful institution or organization. The notion of equality promoted by the Revolution therefore represented a grave threat to the traditional ordering of society and its institutions. The link made by Freppel between the family and society meant that any weakening of the authority of parents would have negative consequences for

¹³ *O.O.P.*, t.IV, pp. 119 – 120.

authority in other social institutions.¹⁴ The issue on which Freppel found the authority of parents most threatened, which was also an area of fundamental importance to the role of parents in the family, was education.

Education

Freppel's extensive background in education certainly influenced the significant attention he gave the issue throughout his episcopate. But the issue of education was also becoming a focal point for the tension between the government of the Third Republic and the French Church, making it a primary concern for all bishops.¹⁵ Freppel's role in these battles over education will be considered later as part of his efforts in the Chamber of Deputies, but it is useful to set out his vision for education within his diocese. Freppel's view of education is also necessary for understanding his social doctrine. A sound education would help form good citizens, which also meant it would form good workers or patrons. The virtues and values necessary for flourishing economic life must be instilled by parents but also taught in school. Thus Freppel's social thought relied on schools to perform an essential role in the formation of youth. Freppel maintained that the social question was exacerbated by the failure of schools to give students a "true education." This critique applied at all levels of schooling, whether primary, secondary, or at universities. Freppel spent a great deal of time working on this

¹⁴ *O.O.P.*, t.IV, pp. 110 – 111.

¹⁵ McManners, pp. 45 – 54.

issue while bishop and the central theme of his efforts was the necessity of religion in education.

The Role of Religion in Education

When talking about education, Freppel often said that religion was the “essential foundation” upon which all schooling must rest.¹⁶ This meant that the Church should take an active role in teaching not just religious instruction, but all areas of education. The origin of this mission was found in the Gospel of Matthew when Jesus said “Go forth and teach all nations,” which referred to spreading Jesus’ message. However, Freppel extended the meaning of the Great Commission:

In this command Jesus proclaimed the inalienable and unalterable right of the Church to educate. Certainly, the primary object of this teaching was Divine Revelation, which is the most important of all. But can man make a division between his intellect on the one hand, and his heart and will on the other? Must these not be united in the shared fulfillment of the true and the good? Do not these intellectual and moral powers form a complete and undivided whole?¹⁷

All types of knowledge are united by truth and the Church has an interest in fostering its people to the truth in all areas of life, which is why it was appropriate to be involved in education beyond religion. The notion of the unity of truth, whether in religion, mathematics, or science, was a central feature of Freppel’s argument for the inclusion of religion in education.

Given this divine mandate and the long history of the Church’s involvement in education, Freppel thought it was imperative for the Church to strengthen its position

¹⁶ See, for example, *O.O.P.*, t.IV, p.112; t.VI, pp. 257 – 262; t.X, p.425.

¹⁷ *O.O.P.*, t. X, p. 400.

against the advance of a state-controlled education system. The outcome of this struggle would be critical, for “it is both common sense and the knowledge of experience that the future of a country, its prosperity or decay, depends in large part on the education of its children.”¹⁸ While parents had the initial responsibility for educating their children, at some point they needed the expertise of teachers in a school to provide additional knowledge in a variety of subjects. Therefore schools were an extension of the parental responsibility for education, with teachers functioning as aids to parents who continued the work that the parents had begun.¹⁹ For this reason, Freppel encouraged parents to be mindful of the instruction their children were receiving and to be certain that what they learned in school was in accord with proper religious values. Parents retained the primary responsibility for educating their children and must be watchful that their children’s teachers were not assuming this role by forming the students in ways that contravened the wishes of their parents. As the school battle intensified, Freppel’s instructions to parents about the types of schools their children could attend became more direct and explicit.

In addition to monitoring the education received in school, Freppel also warned parents that it was their grave duty to make sure their children attend school regularly. Parents should resist the temptation to have their children work instead of attend school so that the family could generate more income.

It would be a great mistake and a miscalculation to try to make a little profit from premature work at the risk of sacrificing higher and longer-lasting interests. For what seems like a gain now would actually be a substantial loss for the future.

¹⁸ *O.O.P.*, t.IV, p. 110.

¹⁹ *O.O.P.*, t.IV, p. 121.

Remember that the wealth of a nation grows with its knowledge, and intelligence adds power to labor that increases its productivity.²⁰ This idea did not apply only to the long-term interests of society, but also to the Church, since many of most important and difficult truths of the faith were learned in school and prepared children to remain faithful in the face of an increasingly hostile culture.

The primary responsibility for education was with parents, but others shared in this responsibility as well. As bishop, Freppel also considered himself responsible for the education of the Catholics in his diocese. He often expressed his interest and concern for the operation of schools and he pledged to make education a top priority shortly after becoming bishop.²¹ Teachers also quite obviously shared in the responsibility of education. Freppel indicated that teaching should not be seen as simply a career, but rather a ministry in which teachers impart a positive moral example beyond teaching a given subject. There was a spiritual significance to teaching and teachers should be conscientious of the moral formation of their students as well as their learning of subject matter.

The shared concern for the moral element of education was also critical because knowledge itself did not necessarily lead one to do good. Freppel made clear it was not an “infallible panacea” as some believed, but he also maintained that ignorance was an evil to be avoided.²² Knowledge could be used either for good or evil, which is why moral considerations must be included as part of education. One only needed to observe the high level of education achieved by certain journalists, philosophers and politicians who used their knowledge to cause social instability, moral corruption, and hatred of the

²⁰ *O.O.P.*, t.IV, p. 123.

²¹ *O.O.P.*, t.IV, pp. 122 – 123.

²² *O.O.P.*, t.III, pp. 401 – 403.

Church. On the other hand, scientific advancements such as the increased understanding and use of petroleum created new opportunities and benefits for modern society.²³

Students must be equipped not just with knowledge, but with a moral sense that guides them to its proper use.

The best models for the type of schools envisioned by Freppel were those run by religious orders throughout his diocese and across France. There were many religious orders involved in education and at one example, a school operated by the Brothers of Christian Doctrine,²⁴ Freppel described the positive characteristics of the school. While focused on a particular school, his praise of the type of education provided by the Brothers could have also applied to other religious schools. Foremost among the positive characteristics of the school was that it provided a moral and religious education to its students. To the students he explained, “Your soul is with you at school just as much as when you are in Church or at home, and in each place it needs nourishment. Here it is not just the alphabet or table of Pythagoras that provides this, but also morality based on Christian dogma.”²⁵ Freppel addressed the critics of his view who claimed that education should not be connected to religious dogma but based on self-improvement and self-respect, saying that the ultimate source of self-respect is the knowledge that one is not a mere animal or machine but rather a creature of God. By grounding education in religion the students benefitted from the insights of figures like Augustine and Aquinas, who themselves built on classical thinkers like Plato and Aristotle. Freppel argued that these Christian luminaries were expressing religious truths that must be accepted as such in

²³ *O.O.P.*, t. IV, pp. 126 – 128; t. III, p. 401.

²⁴ The *Frères de la doctrine chrétienne* were a religious congregation founded in 1822 by Joseph Fréchal.

²⁵ *O.O.P.*, t.III, p.376.

order to fully understand their value. An education that avoided religion was unable to completely grasp the contribution made by these and other Christians throughout history.

In addition to the religious element, Freppel also praised the “national and patriotic” component of the education provided by the *Frères*. He believed these elements were connected, since love of country and interest in the common good were precepts of Christian morality.²⁶ The “national and patriotic” education recognized the past glories of France but also connected the history of France to its fidelity to God’s law throughout time. Thus the pinnacle of France’s glory was during the “centuries of faith.” However, these successes were undone by the attacks against God in more recent times. As a result France was humiliated and wounded while people’s faith was weakened or lost.²⁷ This element also instilled what may be thought of as civic virtues in students, such as hatred of injustice and respect for the liberty of all, as well as a spirit of sacrifice for the country beyond one’s individual concerns. Of course Freppel viewed these civic virtues as directly linked to religious obligations and not as part of “natural” rights that were granted to people outside of a Christian context. There was a close connection between these religious and national components, because by forming good Christians one also formed good citizens. Freppel therefore rejected the claim that Christian schools were a threat in any way to the French government. However, the expansion of public schools continued throughout France and became an issue that Freppel confronted on several occasions as bishop.

²⁶ *O.O.P.*, t.III, p. 378.

²⁷ *O.O.P.*, t.III, pp. 378-379.

Response to State Schools

As mentioned above, education was one of the most contentious issues dividing the government of the Third Republic and the Catholic Church. Initially it was not a grave concern for Freppel because state-run schools were slow to take hold in his diocese. In 1872 he expressed relief that in the diocese of Angers there were no “schools without God or religion,” but threatened action should such a center of “intellectual and moral perversion” be established.²⁸ Leo XIII’s first encyclical, *Inscrutabili Dei consilio*, addressed several evils facing society, including the growing resistance to Christian education. Freppel responded with praise for the encyclical, emphasizing the importance of a Christian education. Those who opposed the Church wanted to destroy its influence in society and Freppel implored parents to heed the pontiff’s call to avoid such threats.²⁹ The passage of the Ferry education laws in 1881 and 1882 mandated a free and lay education for all children in France and forced Freppel to take direct action in his capacity as bishop.

In 1882 he issued an instruction to parents regarding the Christian education of their children which set forth his response. Since the school was the extension of the family, it did not make sense for Catholic parents to send their children to schools which opposed their faith. His direction to those who had children in such “irreligious schools” was quite clear:

Under no circumstances can you send your children to a school where the teachers allow either direct or indirect attacks against the dogmas of religion or

²⁸ *O.O.P.*, t.IV, p. 126.

²⁹ *O.O.P.*, t.VI, pp. 240 – 242.

the institution of the Church. There is no human consideration or persecution that could cause you to fail to fulfill such a grave responsibility. It is prohibited for parents to send their children to an irreligious school, and if they do so they place their eternal soul in danger. About this there can be no doubt or hesitation.³⁰ While some schools had a public reputation for opposing religion, it was less clear for others. If parents were unsure they should seek the advice of devout friends or priests, who were also responsible for monitoring the quality and content of schools within their parish boundaries. If doubt still remained they must remove their children and place them in a religious school because nothing was more important than protecting the faith of their children.

This first directive was fairly straightforward, but a more complex situation arose from the fact that most public schools claimed neutrality in matters of religion. So while it was the case in “irreligious schools” that teachers might attack the Christian faith or promote alternative worldviews, in many public schools the policy was to be silent, and therefore neutral, on religion. Freppel expressed skepticism that such a policy could be maintained or even actually exist. “If you do not talk about God to a child for seven years will he not conclude that he does not exist or at least is of no concern to him?”³¹ Similarly, a student who is taught about his duties toward himself and his neighbor, but never his duties toward God, will conclude that there are none toward God. Despite these concerns, his instruction for parents concerning a neutral school was dependent on their situation: “If there is a school which is neutral in matters of religion and you have the means to send your children to a Christian school where religion will be of primary importance, you have an obligation in conscience to prefer the Christian school to the

³⁰ *O.O.P.*, t.VIII, p.235.

³¹ *O.O.P.*, t.VIII, pp. 237 – 238.

neutral school. You would assume a grave responsibility for entrusting your children to an institution that does not allow religious instruction when you had the ability to place them in one where they would receive a Christian education.”³² Freppel realized that not all families had the ability to pay to send their children to religious schools when the public schools were free. The question left unanswered by Freppel was what parents should do when they did not have the means to send their children to a religious school but the only available public school was known to be negative toward religion.

One way to help parents avoid having to send their children to public schools was to increase the number of Catholic schools. However, obtaining funding for the maintenance of existing schools and construction of new schools was a constant struggle. The taxes paid by Catholics to the government went only toward the public education system. So Freppel developed multiple strategies to help the Catholic schools by relying on the charitable nature of the Catholics of Angers. He appealed to wealthy families to establish and maintain religious schools on their own. Some noble families had already done this, but he encouraged more to use their resources for this cause, because “it is not possible to put your resources to a better use than giving children the benefit of a Christian education.”³³ This was a preferable strategy, but by no means comprehensive enough to meet the funding needs of schools. Another effort was to establish a “general subscription” that centralized all donations for the schools throughout the diocese. The money was then used to open as many schools as possible. Everyone was asked to help in this project: “now is the time to do away with entertainment and extra expenses and

³² *O.O.P.*, t.VIII, p.239.

³³ *O.O.P.*, t. X, pp. 33 – 34.

even make sacrifices in order to preserve the ability to raise Christian youth.”³⁴ But establishing even more schools would create the need for a continuous source of revenue to support them, so Freppel created a long-term fund for Christian schools (*Denier des écoles chrétiennes*). He hoped this fund would continue to be increased throughout the future and eventually be used to pay for other charitable works. Despite the difficult circumstances Freppel persisted in his promotion of Catholic schools.

In the last few years of his life Freppel grew increasingly hostile toward the public education system. He protested the “false notion of state education” in 1888, calling it “one of the most mistaken ideas of our time” which was sure to be judged harshly by future generations.³⁵ He did not object the principle of some state involvement in education, saying that it was understandable in its past forms. Its current form, which removed religion and sought to substitute the state in place of the family and the Church, was no longer acceptable.³⁶ He also found it telling that the rival Germans were not undertaking a program of laicization of their schools but rather maintained religious aspects at all levels. He soured entirely on the concept of neutral schools, calling them atheistic and responsible for producing “a generation of men without beliefs or principles who will be completely incapable of successfully rehabilitating France.”³⁷ Of the many problems that faced French society he ranked the conflict over education as “the first and most important of all.” Both in principle and performance Freppel considered Catholic

³⁴ *O.O.P.*, t. X, pp. 34 – 35.

³⁵ *O.O.P.*, t.XI, pp.73 – 74.

³⁶ *O.O.P.*, t.XI, pp. 74 – 75.

³⁷ *O.O.P.*, t.XI, p. 214.

schools to be better than state schools.³⁸ The Ferry laws and neutral schools were an ongoing struggle for Freppel, but another key front in the battle over education was taking place at the university level. As with primary and secondary schools, Freppel argued forcefully for the rights of the Catholic Church in higher education.

Higher Education and the Founding of the University of Angers

During the Middle Ages the city of Angers was home to one of the relatively few universities in France, but it was suppressed during the French Revolution.³⁹ Freppel's general interest and career in education as well as the historical connection of the city to a university made him interested in exploring the possibility of re-establishing a university in Angers. When he met with the Emperor before he was named bishop, Freppel addressed this possibility which was welcomed approvingly by the Emperor. After becoming bishop, Freppel indicated in personal correspondences that the possibility of a university occupied his thoughts constantly and that he was working "tirelessly" on the idea as early as 1871.⁴⁰ He corresponded regularly with Auguste Pécoul, a Benedictine who was then serving as secretary for the French ambassador to the Holy See. In his letters to Pécoul he discussed his plans and ideas for a university, realizing in its early stages that it would be filled with difficulties.⁴¹ Since the law allowing "free" universities was not passed until 1875, the ability to found a private university was

³⁸ See "On the Superiority of Christian Education" in *O.O.P.*, t.XI, pp. 373 – 379.

³⁹ For the impact of the French Revolution in the Diocese of Angers, including on the university, see François Lebrun, dir., *Le diocèse d'Angers*, (Paris: Beauchesne, 1981), pp. 149 – 172.

⁴⁰ Terrien, t.I, p.587; t.II, p. 73.

⁴¹ Terrien, t.I, pp. 639 – 640.

unlikely. However the issue was being considered in the years prior to the eventual change and Freppel was closely monitoring the debate in Paris.

He began hinting publicly at his desire to found a university in January of 1872 with his address at the inauguration of the *Cercle catholique* of Angers. In this address he reminded the group of the past glories of the University of Angers and hoped that someday the city could return to this tradition and reclaim their previous achievement in higher education.⁴² He expanded on the idea later that year in an address to the members of the *Société d'Agriculture, Sciences et Arts* of Angers, which was comprised of many of the elite members of the city, including Alfred de Falloux. In this address he presented an historical overview of the University of Angers, recalling its five faculties of theology, canon law, civil law, medicine and arts.⁴³ The university educated not only students from Anjou, but also from neighboring provinces such as Normandy, Brittany, and other more distant locations, including Germany. It served as a regional center for higher learning in western France. He lamented the closure of the university and hoped for its eventual return. The issue was that during the Revolution those in charge sought to centralize the administration of the country to foster an increased sense of national unity, which in itself Freppel accepted as useful.⁴⁴ However, this concept was taken too far and the state instituted “uniformity instead of unity” through an “excessive centralization” which failed to recognize that regional distinctiveness throughout France should be appreciated, not eliminated.

⁴² *O.O.P.*, t. III, pp. 418 – 419.

⁴³ *O.O.P.*, t. III, pp. 252 – 253.

⁴⁴ *O.O.P.*, t. III, “In many respects this movement was just and legitimate.”

The solution Freppel recommended was to decentralize higher education and allow freedom for universities to operate as they wish. As an example he pointed to Germany, where several universities operated without specific regulations from the government with great success. Neighboring Belgium also had a more liberal policy toward higher education, with Louvain functioning freely as a religious institution. Louvain served as an example for Freppel in other ways as well. He applauded their commitment to continued moral formation, noting that higher education should not merely be directed toward the formation of careers but also continue to provide religious instruction during what can be a very important time in the lives of students. Finally, Louvain served as an example of another argument Freppel made on behalf of a university in Angers that was based on historical precedent. Certain cities were “predestined” for a specific end which was established throughout the history of a place. Some cities are centers of industry, others trade, and so on. It would be a mistake, Freppel said, for Belgium to transfer the university at Louvain to Brussels or Anvers, because it had been established that the university ought to be in Louvain. This was precisely why Freppel wanted to found a university in Angers. He did not see it as a new undertaking, but rather the restoration of a historical tradition that had been lost.⁴⁵

In the conclusion of his address to the *Société d’Agriculture, Sciences et Arts* of Angers, Freppel explicitly stated the personal importance of this project during his episcopacy. Once again he recalled the past glories of the university and the recognition it received by some as the second most important university in France after Paris. The establishment of a university was not merely his personal objective, but rather the will of

⁴⁵ *O.O.P.*, t. III, pp. 257 – 261.

God: “Our city, with its mild climate, peaceful customs, and hospitable and intelligent population, is marked by the hand of God to become again what it once was: the seat of a great university.”⁴⁶ He also expressed confidence that the government would soon allow “free” universities to be established, thus enabling the project to go forward. In the end there was little doubt of Freppel’s dedication to the “most fruitful task” of establishing a university in Angers.

In order to bring about this goal, Freppel needed to rally support from several groups, including his fellow bishops. Most important was the support of bishops from neighboring dioceses, as Freppel’s vision was for the university to function as a regional center of learning in western France. One diocese that presented some difficulty for his idea was Nantes, where the bishop, Félix Fournier, was entertaining the possibility of founding his own university. In a long letter to his colleague,⁴⁷ Freppel presented his arguments both for a university in Angers and against one in Nantes. Since he was so determined to establish a university in Angers his first point was that if another university were to be founded in Nantes both would suffer as a result of being too close together. The financial resources needed as well as the population from which to draw faculty and students to a Catholic university would be overly limited if spread across two institutions. He also could not think of another example of two Catholic universities being located so closely together, in this case a distance of three hours travel. Unsurprisingly, the point that Freppel believed to be decisive was the historical connection of Angers to a university, while Nantes had no such past.

⁴⁶ *O.O.P.*, t. III, p. 262.

⁴⁷ Reproduced in Terrien, t.II, pp. 80 – 82.

A second element of his argument was that the university was not to be for the diocese of Angers exclusively, but rather for the region. He once again referenced the situation in Belgium, where the bishops of the entire country had settled on Louvain as the center for Catholic higher learning in their country.⁴⁸ Freppel's concept for the university in Angers was that a provincial council of bishops would be formed, with this council, not solely the bishop of Angers, responsible for making decisions about the university. Finally, a meeting in Rennes of the bishops of the province of Tours in 1849 had decided in principle to establish an institution of higher learning in Angers due to its historical connection to a university. This plan was agreed upon "without any kind of challenge," so Freppel believed the same arguments applied to the current debate.⁴⁹ The possibility of division within the episcopate greatly concerned Freppel, as evidenced by his lengthy letter and his efforts to enlist the support of a mutual friend of both he and Fournier, the renowned abbot of Solesmes, Dom Gueranger.⁵⁰ Ultimately the bishop of Nantes did not push very hard for a university in his diocese, but this episode illustrated the delicate nature of gathering support for his project that Freppel faced.⁵¹

Over the next two years Freppel took steps to prepare for the possibility of establishing a university in Angers. This included winning support among the clergy and laity of his diocese and identifying possible sources of revenue for the university. He

⁴⁸ Terrien, t.II, p.81.

⁴⁹ Terrien, t.II, p.82.

⁵⁰ Terrien, t.II, p. 82. It is unclear whether or not Dom Gueranger acted on Freppel's request and communicated with Fournier.

⁵¹ A similar exchange occurred between Freppel and the bishop of Rennes when Freppel learned that some were suggesting Rennes as a location for a Catholic university. Freppel pointed out the historical arguments for Angers and also the concern that since a flourishing State university already existed in Rennes, any new Catholic university there would be unlikely to succeed. Fortunately for Freppel his arguments were accepted by the bishop, who supported Angers as the site of the university. See Terrien, t.II, pp.82 – 84.

also lobbied many government officials, a task made easier by his election to the *Conseil supérieur* on education in 1873. In August of 1874 he met with President Patrice de MacMahon and explained that Catholics were waiting “with legitimate impatience” for a change to the law on higher education, a change “upon which a significant part of the moral restoration of the country depends.”⁵² Perhaps in an attempt at graciousness bordering on flattery, Freppel expressed great confidence in the “sure hand” of MacMahon’s leadership on this issue. And when Freppel met with Pope Pius IX in February of 1875 for nearly an hour the issue of a new university was one of several topics discussed with the pontiff.⁵³ However, all of Freppel’s efforts to promote the project could only be discussed theoretically until the National Assembly changed the law concerning the establishment of “free” universities.

The long-anticipated change occurred in July of 1875 when it was decided that Catholics could establish their own universities which would be independent from the state. Some conflict remained over the process of granting degrees. Initially the law would have forced students from non-state universities to take their examination before members of state faculties. Catholics viewed this as an unfair restriction of their freedom and wanted the ability to award degrees without government interference. The two sides later arrived at a compromise whereby a student from an independent university would be examined by a panel of professors, half from state universities, half from independent universities.⁵⁴ An independent or “free” university was also required to have three

⁵² *O.O.P.*, t.V, p.340.

⁵³ Terrien, t.II, p. 166.

⁵⁴ Dansette, *Religious History of Modern France*, vol. 1 (New York: Herder & Herder, 1961), p. 338.

faculties in order to attain official recognition. Despite the removal of the legal obstacle, Freppel continued to face many difficulties from within the Church.⁵⁵

Undeterred by the lack of support among some bishops, Freppel pressed forward with the establishment of the university. On August 15, 1875, just over one month after the new law regarding higher education was passed, Freppel issued a pastoral letter to the clergy and faithful of the diocese of Angers announcing the project to found a free university in Angers. While making clear his opinion that the law was not entirely to his liking, he emphasized the need to work within the legal framework provided by the government. He expressed confidence that over time the competence of the free universities would be evident to all and lead to a change in the law.⁵⁶ He also acknowledged that the process of forming a complete university would likely take many years to achieve. However, the immediate objective in the formation of the university was the establishment of a school of law. The city of Angers was the site of a Court of Appeals and thus a locus of juridical activity. He closed the letter with a reflection on the moral aspect of the higher education to be provided at the University of Angers. It was not enough for a Catholic university to prepare students for a given career, rather it must also help students through a difficult time in their moral development. Students should

⁵⁵ See Terrien, t.II, pp. 168 – 171. Included among the prelates who did not favor the establishment of a university in Angers were bishops Pie of Poitiers, Sebaux of Angoulême, Lecoq of Luçon, Thomas of La Rochelle, and Freppel's new metropolitan, Bishop Colet of Tours. Their reasons for opposition varied, but were generally related to the possibility of establishing a university in their own diocese or region or concerns about the feasibility of a university in Angers.

⁵⁶ *O.O.P.*, t.IV, p.473.

leave the university “with their faith in tact and their morals still pure.”⁵⁷ The difficult work of continued fundraising and establishing the faculty then began in earnest.⁵⁸

On November 15, a mass was held in the cathedral of Angers to mark the opening of the University of Angers. In attendance were civil and ecclesiastical authorities, including the cardinal-archbishop of Rennes, the bishops of Laval and Mans, as well as a large crowd which gathered for the occasion. A congratulatory telegram from the pope was read and the new professors took the Profession of Faith in which they promised not to teach anything that contradicted the laws and doctrines of the Church.⁵⁹ In his homily, Freppel spoke at length about the significance of the founding of the University of Angers and presented an explanation of his view of Catholic higher education.

Freppel began, as he often did, by placing the topic in an historical context. He spoke about the history of the previous University of Angers as well as the way in which educational philosophy had developed over time. The Catholic Church was behind the establishment of the first universities and for Freppel this was no coincidence. For although classical civilizations like Greece developed important ideas in several areas of knowledge, they lacked a way of unifying this knowledge. The understanding of God and human reason provided by the Church created a “common base” or “core” by which various branches of knowledge could be brought together. Among the first examples of this was the School of Alexandria and its use of philosophy as an aid to understanding

⁵⁷ *O.O.P.*, t.IV, pp. 477-478.

⁵⁸ For details on the technical and logistical elements of the founding of the law school, including financial considerations, the funding and recruitment of faculty, and other obstacles encountered in the months leading to the opening of the university, see Terrien, t.II, pp. 171 – 190.

⁵⁹ Terrien, t.II, p. 193. This was the oath of Pius IV, whose origins were in the aftermath of the Protestant Reformation when Catholic universities were especially sensitive to the doctrinal commitments of their faculties.

theology. In the “schools” of the early Church Freppel saw the forerunners of the Medieval university.⁶⁰ In the Middle Ages this unity of knowledge was continued as art, architecture and science all pointed to theological truths and theology itself was formulated by Anselm’s “faith seeking understanding”. As Freppel explained, “the faith that seeks is not inactive and closed to all investigation, but is a faith which observes, which studies, which reasons, which takes account of things...[and] looks in the entire order of things, in ideas, facts, nature, history, conscience and society.”⁶¹

Freppel’s aspiration for the new university was to restore and implement this approach which he believed was the cause of many of the greatest intellectual developments throughout the past. However it was not enough to merely replicate a medieval university, but rather they must account for the new conditions of the present time and develop and expand on the idea of a “synthesis” of knowledge. One key point of emphasis in the homily, which was also central to his educational philosophy, was the need for a shared reference point, a “unity of doctrine”:

Foremost is the unity of doctrine. An education is not strong unless it is one. If there is not a common doctrine at the center of an institution of learning, then one professes spiritualism, another materialism; this one atheism, that one theism. The only result of these contradictory lessons is universal doubt. Then skepticism invades souls, and skepticism is the death of knowledge. In a Catholic university, there is a fixed and unchangeable body of doctrines, placed under the care of an infallible authority; there are principles from which no one deviates and which accompany each person in their walk of life. Whatever path they follow, whether philosopher, lawyer, naturalist – they are all united at their point of departure and they all meet at their point of arrival. For there are multiple sciences but knowledge is one, just as truth is one, just as God is One.⁶²

⁶⁰ *O.O.P.*, t.V, pp.41 – 44.

⁶¹ *O.O.P.*, t.V, p.45.

⁶² *O.O.P.*, t.V, pp. 47 – 48.

Freppel believed that this unity of doctrine in no way excluded freedom of thought, but rather protected it by providing a framework for intellectual inquiry. The “rule” provided by Divine Revelation was not a hindrance to knowledge, but a necessary condition of the search for truth that intellectual inquiry entailed.⁶³

After laying out his idea of a Catholic university, he then proceeded to explain the plan of future development for the University of Angers. The School of Law was founded first, just as it had been when the earlier university began. After the School of Law the order of new schools was Letters, Sciences, Medicine, and finally, Theology. He concluded by addressing the students, encouraging them to undertake their studies diligently and learn well, but also to grow in faith and to incorporate their beliefs into their work.⁶⁴

Freppel’s vision for a Catholic university in Angers had been realized and in the following years it expanded, beginning with the School of Letters in 1876.⁶⁵ The university remained a priority throughout his episcopacy and he stayed heavily involved in the major decisions, especially after it was established that the bishop of Angers would serve as the chancellor of the university.⁶⁶ He faced several obstacles, including financial hardships and continued opposition to the university from some within the Church.

⁶³ *O.O.P.*, t.V, pp. 50-51. “This sovereign and infallible rule is Divine Revelation which no one can deviate from without being guilty of the crime of rebellion against the authority of God. And this rule, far from being an obstacle to free inquiry, is its aid and support. Does the navigator see an obstacle in the compass that helps him avoid reefs and sandbanks? Does the hiker who climbs the summits of the Alps see an obstacle in the fences that keep him from the precipice? Does the linguist see an obstacle in the rules of Aristotle which prevent him from speaking nonsense? Does a good man see an obstacle in the voice of his conscience that keeps him from going astray? The more one has safeguards against error, the more one is free; and he who knows to make himself a slave to the truth retains all his independence.”

⁶⁴ *O.O.P.*, t.V, pp. 56 – 60.

⁶⁵ The dates for the founding of the respective schools are as follows: Law (1875), Letters (1876), Sciences (1877), Theology (1879). The School of Medicine was never founded.

⁶⁶ See Terrien, t.II, p.244. This was established by the bull *Multiplices Inter* (1877), which also granted canonical status to the university.

However his greatest ongoing struggle was with the government and various legal changes that impacted free universities.

Education was an essential part of the foundational institution of the family. Responsibility for education remained primarily with the parents throughout their children's lives, but they depended on institutions to provide specialized instruction as children progressed. For this reason Freppel devoted a great deal of time and energy to ensuring that there were strong Catholic educational institutions in his diocese. He supported and helped expand existing schools, often run by religious communities, while undertaking the project of founding a university. Education was not to be merely the accumulation of knowledge in a given subject, but also an opportunity for sustained moral development. Therefore a well-educated person would also be a moral person. Freppel's social doctrine rested in part on the idea that moral people were needed to improve society. A moral and ethical code, or lack thereof, was usually instilled in the formative years by the family and schools. This explains why developing strong families and educational institutions remained an ongoing priority for Freppel. At the end of their education, whether or not one attended university, Freppel hoped that children would have developed into good Christian citizens. What it meant to be a Christian citizen depended on a certain understanding of the Church, the state, and the relationship between them.

Church and State

The Christian tradition maintained that all authority originated from God. The relationship between the legitimate authority held by both the Church and the state was often the source of great contention. In France, the issue was complicated in a particular way by the ecclesiological debate over Church authority and the persistence of Gallicanism.⁶⁷ By the late-nineteenth century the Church was increasingly confronted by the question of its relationship to “modern” forms of government. While Freppel had supported these republican forms earlier in his career, as bishop he was steadfastly in favor of a return to monarchy. However, his participation in the Chamber of Deputies indicated that he did not reject the legitimacy of the Third Republic. On the issue of ecclesiology he was not much inclined toward Gallicanism during his early career and even less so as bishop. His views on the respective nature and role of Church and state factored significantly into his social doctrine as a central issue was the role of the state in resolving problems. Freppel’s instruction on the duties of Catholics toward each provides further insight into his conception of the relationship between Church and state.

Nature and Role of Church and State

The structure of the Church was hierarchical and well-defined. The pope was the supreme head, with the plenitude of authority over the entire Church. Below him were

⁶⁷ Austin Gough, *Paris and Rome: The Gallican Church and the Ultramontane Campaign, 1848 – 1853*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986).

the bishops, who exercised authority over their local churches, and priests over their parishes.⁶⁸ The origin of ecclesiastical authority was supernatural in a way that differed from other forms of authority such as paternal or civil authority. Freppel acknowledged that all authority came from God, but differentiated the authority in domestic or civil life as being contained in the very nature of their existence. “As lofty and indisputable as these two types of authority are, they were merely the natural consequence of the order established by God in creation itself.”⁶⁹ On the other hand, since the Church was instituted to lead people to their ultimate end of eternal salvation, ecclesiastical authority assumed a unique quality beyond any other. It resulted from the “miraculous act of the Divine will” which sent the Son of God among men to establish the Church.⁷⁰ This special act of supernatural intervention gave the Church a sovereignty and independence in its power vis-à-vis other forms of authority.

With such an exalted view of ecclesiastical power it is not surprising that Freppel strongly supported a powerful papacy. He argued that those who criticized the centralization of authority in the pope demonstrated “a complete ignorance of doctrine and history.”⁷¹ Various councils and even the bishops of France on several occasions had confirmed the primacy of the pope’s authority.⁷² The definitions of the First Vatican Council stated explicitly the traditions of Scripture and Church history. The bishops had significant authority as the guardians and judges of doctrine in their dioceses, but this

⁶⁸ *O.O.P.*, t.III, pp. 78 – 79.

⁶⁹ *O.O.P.*, t.III, p.82.

⁷⁰ *O.O.P.*, t.III, pp. 85 – 88.

⁷¹ *O.O.P.*, t.VI, p. 184.

⁷² *O.O.P.*, t.VI, pp. 184 – 185. He cited the French bishops at the Assembly of Melun in 1579 and the General Assembly of 1625 professing their belief in the pope as the “visible head of the universal Church and vicar of God on earth.”

power was ultimately subordinate to the pope. A major consequence of the council was that it seemed to put to rest any lingering debate about authority and structure in the Church.

Unlike the Church, the organization of the state was not divinely ordained or immutable. “Nations are free to pass laws and adopt political regimes that seem best-suited to their needs, interests and temperament...God has never been the author of a particular civil or political system.”⁷³ All political authority, however, came from God, and this meant there was a natural connection between religion and the state. Freppel often said that politics was “the application of Christian morality to the government of states.”⁷⁴ Therefore most of his consideration of the state took place within the context of the relationship between it and the Church.

The ideal relationship between Church and state was one of cooperation. Each had distinct responsibilities and objectives, but there was also a mutual assistance: “The salvation of souls is the direct and immediate end of the Church. However, by the virtues that it inspires and the vices it prevents it also aids the state in the temporal prosperity of individuals and nations. This temporal prosperity is the direct and immediate end of the state, but it also aids the Church in the salvation of souls by assuring the liberty and protection of religious interests.”⁷⁵ When a question was “mixed,” that is, it contained both the spiritual interests of the Church and the temporal interests of the state, the two sides would come together to forge an agreement. This “program of peace, liberty, mutual respect, and reciprocal dedication” was the model for Christian nations that

⁷³ *O.O.P.*, t.III, p. 94.

⁷⁴ *O.O.P.*, t.VIII, pp. 111 – 112.

⁷⁵ *O.O.P.*, t.III, p. 100; *O.O.P.*, t.X, p. 70.

prevented any conflict between Church and state.⁷⁶ This harmonious relationship lasted from at least the time of Charlemagne through the discovery of the New World, but was disrupted first by the Reformation, then by the Revolution.⁷⁷

In his own day, Freppel feared that the ideal arrangement of Church-state cooperation was spiraling instead toward a complete separation. There were multiple reasons for this development. First, groups like the Freemasons and Free Thinkers wanted to replace the Church with human reason as the base of society, thereby reducing the role of the Church in several ways.⁷⁸ Furthermore, Freppel's ideal relied on the state to protect the liberty and interests of the Church, but instead he saw the state attacking them. Whether it was laws concerning education, the expulsion of religious orders, or several other Church-related concerns that occupied Freppel's efforts in the Chamber of Deputies, he saw little evidence of the state safeguarding the interests of the Church.

One of the most troubling features of the modern state for Freppel was its increasing involvement in the lives of its citizens. He warned of the "exaggeration of the rights of the state to the detriment of the individual, family, and Church."⁷⁹ Whereas in the previous century the primary concern was the rights of the individual, now it had shifted to expanding the rights of the state. The state was usurping the rights of the family to educate their children and the rights of the Church to freely perform acts of charity and other social services as it wished. As for individual property, it would ultimately become "the only landowner and sole possessor of all goods. Some call this

⁷⁶ *O.O.P.*, t.VIII, p. 175.

⁷⁷ *O.O.P.*, t.X, pp. 75 – 76. Freppel's reading of history overlooked significant instances of conflict such as the Investiture Controversy or Philip IV's "humiliation" of Pope Boniface VIII at Anagni in 1303.

⁷⁸ *O.O.P.*, t.IX, pp. 216 – 218.

⁷⁹ *O.O.P.*, t.VII, p. 164.

the modern state. Definitely not! This is a return to the pagan state, the most despotic and corrupt state which has a place for everything except rights, justice and liberty.”⁸⁰

However, all this was not the fault of political leaders alone, but also the attitude of many French citizens: “It is most unfortunate that in France we are accustomed to expect everything from the state. Everything must be left to the state and requires the use of state resources. Pretty soon the state will be responsible for making everything – your coat as well as my cassock.”⁸¹ Freppel’s general view of the state as excessively involved will become especially important when examining his social doctrine. Also important, and related to the nature and role of the state, is his understanding of law.

Law

Freppel often spoke about the importance of law in society. He began an 1879 address to a group of Catholic lawyers by emphasizing this point:

Religion, morality and law are the three great powers which ought to govern human life. And these three powers share a special link. The principle and sanction of morality are missing without God, and without the idea of duty, the law is reduced merely to constraint, powerless to create a moral obligation.⁸²

The force of law was generated from its connection to authority. Freppel’s reverence for authority thus extended to the law, whether civil legislation from political authorities, or moral obligations commanded by the Church. Law, like authority in general, created security and unity.⁸³ It also imposed an obligation of obedience upon its subjects,

⁸⁰ *O.O.P.*, t. VII, p. 165.

⁸¹ *O.O.P.*, t. VII, p. 219.

⁸² *O.O.P.*, t. VII, p. 157.

⁸³ *O.O.P.*, t. IV, pp. 226 – 227.

including Christians, a point confirmed by Scripture. Therefore Christians must observe all laws, provided they did not violate the law of God, because “after the holiness of religion, there is nothing more venerable than the majesty of law.”⁸⁴ From Cicero’s saying that “we are slaves to the law so that we may be free” to Paul’s instruction to the Romans (13:7) to “Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due...” the importance of the law had been upheld throughout time. However, just as the principle of authority was threatened in the modern world, so also were traditional notions of law attacked by new understandings and theories.⁸⁵

Freppel understood that the law was a central front in the ongoing struggle between competing social visions, calling it the “terrain upon which the most difficult and decisive battles for justice and truth are being waged.”⁸⁶ This made the role of legislators very significant. In a pastoral letter on the duties of lawmakers issued in 1879, the year before he was elected to the Chamber of Deputies, Freppel outlined some characteristics of the ideal legislator. The lawmaker must only desire to do the good and work in the interests of the country, sacrificing any personal ambitions in the interest of the common good. He must also have principles that were founded on unchanging truths. Finally, he should always be interested in the promotion of justice and equality in all laws.⁸⁷ The rights of God must be protected above all else, and the rights of the state, family, and individual must be justly balanced. These generalities shed little light on

⁸⁴ *O.O.P.*, t. IV, p. 229.

⁸⁵ *O.O.P.*, t. VII, pp. 159 – 164. In the same address to the group of Catholic lawyers mentioned above, Freppel cited the ideas of figures such as Bentham, Mill, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Comte, and Rousseau as among the most troubling.

⁸⁶ *O.O.P.*, t. VII, p. 158.

⁸⁷ *O.O.P.*, t. VI, pp. 348 – 350.

what made Freppel's view distinctive, as all legislators would presumably agree to be acting on principle in the interests of the common good, justice, and equality. Rather, Freppel's view was distinctive only in the sense that it represented the general divide between a religious conception of the law's origin opposed to a secular approach: "The commandments of God govern and support all positive law and all political constitutions...The Decalogue and the Gospel, these are the true foundations of the social order of Christian nations."⁸⁸ The gap between religious and secular views of the law meant that in participatory forms of government the choice of the voters could have significant consequences. As with the education issue, Freppel was not hesitant to instruct and direct those in his diocese on their responsibilities as Catholic citizens.

Obligations of Catholics toward Church and State

The Church faced "perilous times" during the Third Republic and it was more important than ever for Catholics to clearly understand their duties. Freppel made it clear that the primary obligations of Catholics in society were to submit to the authority of the Church and to be dedicated to its interests.⁸⁹ Thus whenever there was a conflict between the state or any other social institution and the interests of the Church, Catholics must first be devoted to the Church. He left no doubt about the need for submission to the authority of the Church, saying "to obey the Church is to obey God."⁹⁰ The Church is the Mystical Body of Christ, and like a human body, there were different parts with different

⁸⁸ *O.O.P.*, t.VI, pp. 352 – 353.

⁸⁹ *O.O.P.*, t.VI, p. 382.

⁹⁰ *O.O.P.*, t.VI, p. 397.

functions, but ultimately all were part of the same unit. The same applied to the duties of Catholics toward the Church. Catholics could not be disconnected from the Church's effort in society to extend the reign of God on earth, especially since the interests of the Church were also the interests of God. Freppel deliberately linked these interests as a response to those who wanted to differentiate between the institutional Church and religion more generally.

Catholics were therefore required to act "with the zeal of an apostle and the courage of a soldier" in promotion of the Church's interests. "Do not say that it is only the ministers of the Church who are responsible for this task. No, the Church has the right to count on the zeal of all its children for the fulfillment of its mission."⁹¹ What this entailed specifically depended on one's abilities and state in life. For example, parents advanced the interests of the Church by upholding their obligations to educate their children in the faith. Ultimately the example of faith and virtue was the way most Catholics would accomplish this, but at times they could be expected to go beyond holiness in their daily lives. One important example of when positive action on behalf of the Church's interests was required was on the occasion of an election.

The issue of voting was an ongoing concern for Freppel, who devoted two pastoral letters to the topic, in 1876 and 1889. Voting concerned the duties of citizens toward the state, but in the Third Republic it also presented an instance where the Church's interests were often at stake. Thus Freppel's letters provide further insight into his view of the relationship between Church and state and how Catholics ought to relate to both. His starting point was the principle that Christian morality governed all conduct

⁹¹ *O.O.P.*, t.VI, pp. 403 – 404.

and situations in one's life and was not split into public and private realms. This also meant that public acts were not morally indifferent. The responsibilities of civil life were simply a portion of Christian morality itself.⁹²

In an election one had the opportunity to advance the interests of the Church as well as influence the prosperity or decline of the country. It was therefore a momentous responsibility that should not be neglected or taken lightly. Freppel recalled the moral principle that a moral evil committed by a man can be imputed to the person who provided him the means. Therefore Christians would be at least partly responsible if they voted for someone who banned religious instruction or limited the Church's involvement in other areas of society. "That is why, now more than ever, you have a rigorous obligation to elect only those sincerely dedicated to religion and ready to defend its interests against the attacks of its enemies."⁹³ If a person was uncertain about the candidates they should seek the guidance of a priest or devout friend. At the end of the first letter he reiterated the unity of religious and civil life, rejecting any attempt at dividing them: "There is no human action that is detached from conscience and the Christian conscience ought to be formed on the law of God, of which the Church is the guardian and infallible interpreter."⁹⁴ Though concerned by the momentum of those who advocated the dichotomous view, Freppel was hopeful that a restoration of society could be achieved by emphasizing the unity of Christian morality in public and private life.

His tone in the second letter on voting was much less optimistic. By 1889 he had witnessed multiple elections in which anticlerical forces gained increasing control of the

⁹² *O.O.P.*, t.IV, pp. 221 – 223.

⁹³ *O.O.P.*, t.IV, p. 239.

⁹⁴ *O.O.P.*, t.IV, p. 241.

government. He seemed puzzled by this development, calling it “a matter of inexplicable surprise” that a country like France, which was primarily Catholic, elected so many people hostile to their beliefs. “Men practice their religion in the morning and then vote for people seeking to destroy it at night.”⁹⁵ Rather than considering the possibility that the religious devotion of the majority of France was not at the level he imagined, Freppel attributed this to a misunderstanding of the act of voting. Once again, the notion that voting was morally indifferent was the source of the problem and this resulted from the division of the conscience between Christian and citizen.

The effects of a Christian casting a vote for a candidate hostile to religion were significant and long-lasting. As Freppel pointed out before, the voter incurred some moral responsibility for providing the means of any evil actions. The level of culpability depended on the voter’s disposition. If he was negligent it was less grave than if he was fully aware of the consequences of his vote. “In this case, he formally cooperates in all the evil which results from his vote.”⁹⁶ Even if one recognized the error of his ways it was in some senses too late. There was no way to make restitution because the impact of the vote could last well beyond the next election and be difficult to undo. Faced with the gravity of such actions, Freppel identified another stream of thinking that was equally problematic. “Many people imagine that not taking part in an election frees them from any responsibility. This is a manifest error! There are two ways of cooperating in the selection of unworthy representatives: voting for them, or assuring their success by

⁹⁵ *O.O.P.*, t.XI, pp. 126 – 128.

⁹⁶ *O.O.P.*, t.XI, p. 131.

abstention.”⁹⁷ Too many Catholics were falling into this error which was also a failure to promote the common good to the best of one’s ability.

The second half of his 1889 letter expanded on the principles previously outlined to provide specific guidelines for voting. A Catholic could not vote for an opponent of religion or enemy of the Church, so Freppel explicitly condemned voting either for Freemasons or Free Thinkers. On the other hand, a representative who identified as a Christian was not automatically acceptable. One must beware of “false Christians” who were taken in by utopian ideas, as well as insincere Christians who made no effort to practice their faith.⁹⁸ While religious interests were of grave importance, they were not the only issue that a voter should consider. “There are other issues besides religion that warrant your careful attention. But they do not fall directly under the realm of our pastoral competence.”⁹⁹ It was clear, however, that the greatest priority should be given to religion. In Freppel’s view nearly all issues could be linked to religion or morality, so though he did not comment directly on certain government projects or expenditures, that did not imply there was no moral component to them. Rather, it was not his role as bishop to speak out about things not more directly related to the Church or religious interests.¹⁰⁰

In 1789 the opening of the Estates General was preceded by a Mass of the Holy Spirit. Members of the clergy, nobility, and Third Estate attended in a hopeful sign of unity. Not long after this event the property of the Church was seized and the persecution

⁹⁷ *O.O.P.*, t.XI, p. 133.

⁹⁸ *O.O.P.*, t.XI, pp. 136 – 143.

⁹⁹ *O.O.P.*, t.XI, p. 140.

¹⁰⁰ This explains why he would occasionally comment on the *budget des cultes* in his capacity as bishop but said little else about other government expenditures that did not directly involve the Church.

of the Church was underway. “The cause of these events was mistakes committed in the exercise of suffrage.” The error of that time had only been multiplied many times in the century that followed. Much of the discord and strife that occurred in France after the Revolution could have been prevented by the application of Christian morality to civil life and on election day. “I am not afraid to say that voting is a question of life or death for a nation.”¹⁰¹

Conclusions

The family, Church and state were the foundational institutions in Freppel’s conception of a well-ordered society. A proper arrangement of society, in which people and institutions understood their rights and obligations, was a necessary precondition for resolving the social question. Freppel expressed the traditional Catholic emphases on concepts like a well-defined order and hierarchical structure as key components of these institutions. In all cases he highlighted the importance of authority as the keystone of society. Authority and hierarchy, rights and duties; these would underlie Freppel’s approach to the social question in important ways.

Freppel also placed considerable value on the promotion of education. Few things occupied as much of Freppel’s time and energy as education; the founding of the Catholic University of Angers was one of his proudest achievements as bishop. The battle over education was instructive in that Freppel saw the actions of the state as intruding on the domain of the Church. When the role of the state in the social question

¹⁰¹ *O.O.P.*, t.XI, p. 147.

was being debated he feared a repeat of this development, with the state taking over the Church's charitable activities just as it had its educational efforts. Since education was the key to forming good citizens and good workers, the content and control of it was of great importance.

The battles over education also illustrated for Freppel the breakdown in the proper relationship between Church and state. The ideal of cooperation was so infrequently seen that he had little hope for the state support of the Church's interests in any area. This reality was especially bitter to Freppel since the government was elected by voters who were ostensibly Catholic. His pastoral letters on voting show his frustration with the view that conscience could be divided between public and private affairs. The resulting empowerment of the anticlerical agenda of the Third Republic caused Freppel to articulate a solution to the social question that relied heavily on the Church and little on the state.

Chapter 4

Principles of a Social Doctrine: Bishop Freppel and the Social Question

In February of 1877 Freppel addressed a crowd that had gathered to mark the opening of a new stretch of railway between Angers and Montreuil-Bellay, a distance of approximately seventy kilometers. He reminded them that ultimately God was responsible for the occasion. The ability to design such a project was the result of God's gift of intelligence; the metals used in construction were a product of God's creation of the earth, as was the coal that would be used to power the trains. It was important to recognize God's role in these efforts and ask for continued protection and guidance, lest people become overly confident about their own abilities. "Certainly man's genius shines forth in the marvels of modern industry. They are a magnificent witness to its greatness and power."¹ However, one was greatly mistaken if he failed to realize his own limitations and "the thousand things that he is ignorant of and which escape his power." Ultimately though, developments such as this could be viewed positively: "Religion applauds all the progress of industry and arts. The people involved in these efforts seek to ameliorate their material condition, they attempt to improve and embellish the present life, and as long as they use the fruits of their labor with moderation, the Church is not hostile to them, but rather blesses and encourages their efforts."² This explains why Freppel wanted to be present on behalf of the Church: he wanted to reject any conception that the Church opposed the technological advancements of the day.

¹ *O.O.P.*, t.V, pp. 275 – 276.

² *O.O.P.*, t.V, pp. 278 – 279.

The key point Freppel made was that material progress could not be the only measure of national well-being. For as “the interests of the soul are greater than those of the body...a nation is not truly wealthy or happy unless industrial progress is accompanied by religious and moral progress.”³ The “intangible capital” of virtue and faith was far more significant than how fast a train could travel or how cheaply one could purchase food. True progress was the advancement of justice, morality, and respect for the rights of all. Thus he hoped that the railroad would not just help France economically, but also morally, by fostering bonds of fraternity among citizens and reminding them of their duties to love and help each other.

Freppel’s brief remarks illustrated an important theme in his response to industrial progress, namely, that moral considerations must always take priority over potential economic benefit. As industrialization increased in the second half of the nineteenth century it became clear that in many instances economic calculations of profit and loss were being made without consideration of, or even at the expense of, the value and importance of the workers involved in production. The moral impact on workers as well as society was a grave concern to many religious leaders. During his time as bishop Freppel talked about the social question on numerous occasions. He spoke regularly to groups involved in social action and encouraged their efforts. Within these and other addresses he gradually developed a social doctrine that could function as an analysis of and response to the social question.

The contours of this social doctrine were sharpened toward the end of his career. This was largely in response to political events, the actions of other groups of social

³ *O.O.P.*, t.V, p. 279.

Catholics, and his increasing collaboration with like-minded social thinkers in the formation of the School of Angers. The clearest expression of the social doctrine of Freppel and the School of Angers is found in Freppel's address to the Congress of the *Société des Jurisconsultes catholiques* in 1890. But this address and its aftermath can only be understood as the culmination of an ongoing process of development over the previous twenty years. Therefore this chapter will mainly consider Freppel's social thought up to his address in October of 1890, highlighting the important themes and characteristics. Freppel's background and education did not make him well-qualified to speak about the social question in great technical detail. Rather, he articulated a set of principles concerning the issues that were built upon by others within the relevant specializations. This meant that he did not often discuss economic theory, but that he comfortably expounded the application of Christian morality to the social question. Freppel's social doctrine was formed in light of both the current political situation and his understanding of the role of religion in social institutions.

Theological Considerations

Freppel approached the social question, like other issues, by first considering any underlying theological principles or scriptural teachings and their implications. The problems generated by disagreements between workers and employers or even among workers themselves suggested that some guidance on interpersonal relationships was necessary. Freppel believed the starting point for this must be charity.

“The Law of Charity”

In an extensive discourse to a conference of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, Freppel examined the “law of charity” and its impact on society. The address provides several important insights into Freppel’s understanding of the meaning and function of charity and its relation to the social question. Throughout the talk Freppel described various features and characteristics of charity. Fundamentally, though, he began by defining his subject: “The law of charity is Christianity. It is both its rationale and its end, its soul and its life. Is not the principal goal and mission of Christianity to unite all men by the bonds of love within the same family under the care of God the Father?”⁴ However, the concept of charity even preceded the message brought by Jesus. The Golden Rule was long understood as the simplest and most fundamental principle of action that served as the “cement of peace and unity.” Underlying this rule were the three instincts of sympathy, benevolence, and generosity.

It was “the natural instinct and sentiment of the human heart” to see in one’s neighbor “another self” with the same general experiences and destiny. This acknowledgement created a “mysterious attraction” that allowed people to experience sympathy for others in need. “As long as we are not blinded by self-interest or passion we suffer with our neighbor. Their sadness becomes ours, our tears mix with their tears.

⁴ *O.O.P.*, t.VIII, p. 365.

Whether it is a stranger or even an enemy, it does not matter...There is an involuntary and spontaneous feeling that allows us to sympathize with the pain of another.”⁵

Thus sympathy was important because it created a bond between people, a “mutual exchange of joys and sorrows.” Sympathy would be fruitless and sterile unless it was accompanied by the second instinct of benevolence. It was not sufficient to recognize the pain of another and be sorry with them, but rather one must also hope their suffering is alleviated and their situation improved. That people so often exchange wishes of good health or happiness in conversation was evidence that this instinct to wish others well resided in everyone provided they were not influenced by hatred or negative emotions.⁶ Finally, the third instinct was the completion of the first two. If a person sympathized with another and wished that things would improve, he must also be willing to act on these feelings. Thus it was the role of generosity to convert sentiments into actions on behalf of one’s neighbor. This explained the willingness of so many people to help their neighbor in a time of need.

Freppel continued, saying that these instincts of sympathy, benevolence and generosity were the result of the “voice of nature speaking to the heart of man.”⁷ The exercise of these instincts also brought about the realization of another natural inclination, that of sacrifice. Through the experiences of sympathy, benevolence, and generosity a person could not help but act outside of himself and in the interests of others in a sacrificial manner. Freppel termed this instinct of sacrifice the most beautiful and

⁵ *O.O.P.*, t.VIII, pp. 368 – 370.

⁶ *O.O.P.*, t.VIII, pp. 371 – 372.

⁷ *O.O.P.*, t.VIII, p. 377.

elevated of all, allowing man to do heroic and selfless deeds.⁸ He summarized the link between these instincts the following way:

Benevolence is born from sympathy, as desire proceeds from feelings. The affect of both is generosity, since the will begins with the arousal of feelings and then the desire to act on them. Finally, all three come together and are joined in the accomplishment of sacrifice. This admirable composition of the human heart makes man a constant source of love.⁹

Freppel certainly believed these instincts were created by God, but they were part of man's nature whether or not he recognized their ultimate source.

While these instincts resided in man, he often failed to act on them because of pride and other consequences of sin. The weaknesses of man therefore required additional guidance toward the law of charity. Such direction was provided by the communication of Christian charity in the words and teachings of Jesus. This was the ultimate fulfillment of natural instincts, as "what was a vague need, a simple aspiration of the soul, became a law clearly defined."¹⁰ Sympathy and benevolence were further developed by the recognition that all people were children of God for whom Christ died. Similarly, generosity and sacrifice were made more fruitful through the care and concern of Jesus for the poor and weak, and the ultimate sacrifice of himself for humanity.¹¹ The Christian command to "love thy neighbor" and all it entailed was the perfect fulfillment of the natural instincts of the law of charity.

The law of charity extended beyond the individual level to meet the needs of society under what Freppel termed the "laws of social conservation." The first of these

⁸ He used the example of a man who risks his life by running into a burning building to save another. "A man would perish: this is enough for another man, thinking only of the danger of his brother, to give up his own life to save the other from death." *O.O.P.*, t.VIII, p. 380.

⁹ *O.O.P.*, t.VIII, p. 381.

¹⁰ *O.O.P.*, t.VIII, p. 383.

¹¹ *O.O.P.*, t.VIII, pp. 383 – 390.

was the law of union. This was “the close connection among different groups that combines them in a harmonious, well-ordered, and undivided whole.”¹² If lost, discord and decline would ensue. This law applied to all levels of society, whether the family, a nation, or the entire world as a whole. Thus familial turmoil, civil wars, revolutions, and wars among nations were all evidence of the breakdown of the law of union.

Furthermore, despite attempts to the contrary, union could not be maintained by fear or threat of force. While these may be effective for a certain period, they would ultimately cause further division and fail. Rather than fear or force, the principle of union could only be upheld through love. Love lessened tensions and hatreds among people and nations and by “eliminating the seeds of discord, would unite all members in the realization of the ideal earthly society.”¹³ This law was strengthened by the Christian duty to “love one another as yourself, for the love of God,” as well as the teaching on love contained in Paul’s letter to the Corinthians. Therefore the law of union, aided by Christian charity, was the key to peace and harmony at all levels of society.

The second law of social conservation was the “law of mutual assistance.” This was simply the idea that each member of society plays a particular role while also relying on others to fulfill different roles. As different parts of the body each perform a specific function as members of the same body, in society “all members are united by a reciprocity of services and functions. One supports another, those who have more give to those with less.”¹⁴ People naturally formed societies because they could not do everything themselves, so they joined together in a cooperative effort to help each other

¹² *O.O.P.*, t.VIII, p. 391.

¹³ *O.O.P.*, t.VIII, pp. 393 – 396.

¹⁴ *O.O.P.*, t.VIII, p. 401.

survive. Therefore, if this law was not upheld, society would again crumble, as these necessary supports would be absent. “It is inherent in all society that always and everywhere the weak need the protection of the strong, the poor need the assistance of the wealthy, the ignorant need the knowledge of the wise.”¹⁵ Christian charity added to this the message of Jesus that He “did not come to be served, but to serve,”¹⁶ thereby making this notion of assistance a divine obligation. The obligations of the wealthy and strong toward the poor and weak were rigorous commands that must be followed in a Christian society.

The law of mutual assistance was necessary because inequality existed in society. In the final section of his discourse, Freppel addressed the “incontestable fact” of social inequality. Freppel maintained that it was providentially determined that people would have different amounts of talents, intelligence, and wealth. This traditional notion was challenged by people like Rousseau, who held that equality existed in a primitive “state of nature” but was lost when man formed societies. The restoration of equality then became a goal of political programs founded on the idea that man was ultimately responsible for creating inequality, so he could also eliminate it. Freppel strongly rejected this argument, saying that the best proof that inequality was natural was the fact that all efforts at destroying it had failed. He also suggested a thought experiment that began with the achievement of complete equality of possessions and fortune. How would life in this society proceed? Almost immediately, he continued, this equality would disappear, as the strong would do more work, the more skilled or ingenious would find

¹⁵ *O.O.P.*, t.VIII, p. 402.

¹⁶ Mt. 20:28. Freppel also cited Mt. 25:40, “Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.”

ways to make their work more productive, and so on. Social inequality existed because people were born with unequal talents and skills, thereby leading to unequal results.

“Therefore, if inequality of conditions is a necessary and inevitable fact, it must be recognized that its origin was not in the vicious greed of men but in the very arrangement of humanity.”¹⁷

Freppel did not think that providential inequality was arbitrary, but rather served an important purpose. It existed to foster the interdependence of people. Those with more were to become ministers of God’s gifts who acted like Jesus by helping those in need. “The poor seek help from the rich to prevent indigence, while the rich, through the noble use of their resources, find sources of grace and merit.”¹⁸ The exercise of Christian charity in this way reduced overall social inequality through the sharing of resources though it would not, to be sure, completely eliminate the “natural distance that separates the strong from the weak, the rich from the poor.” Christian charity was necessary for both rich and poor to reach their eternal destiny. “Poverty and suffering will always remain on this earth. However, Christian charity will ease the burden of poverty much better than any theory or speech...It will unite all members of society through the bonds of love.”¹⁹

Freppel’s discourse provides an important theological framework for his approach to the social question. The primary virtue involved in the answer to the social problem must be charity. Interestingly, he begins by presenting charity as a series of instincts that are innately present. Divine revelation only built upon and strengthened what existed

¹⁷ *O.O.P.*, t.VIII, p. 413.

¹⁸ *O.O.P.*, t.VIII, p. 415.

¹⁹ *O.O.P.*, t.VIII, p. 421.

naturally. Freppel did not generally make arguments “from nature,” but the law of charity was so fundamental that it existed even outside of Christian societies. Also telling is his insistence on the natural fact of inequality. His response to the problem of inequality is to insist on a greater need for charity, a reaction that will be seen more specifically in his social doctrine. As Catholics continued to reflect on the social question throughout the nineteenth century, one of the prominent tensions was the balance between charity and justice when constructing solutions. While Freppel strongly upheld the role of justice, there can be little doubt that his starting point was with charity.

Labor

The nature of work was also a fundamental issue to be considered. As with charity, Freppel wanted to remove labor from current issues and reflect on it from a religious perspective. A proper understanding of labor was necessary in any analysis of the “worker question.” In the earliest pages of Scripture God told Adam that he would work the land and the Book of Job confirmed “Man is born to work, and the bird to fly.”²⁰ It was natural for man to work and this work was not without significance: “What gives manual labor its moral grandeur is that it is a religious act by its character and its end. For it is the collaboration of man with God in the work of creation.”²¹ God left part of the work of creation unfinished, in the sense that man was given creative powers of his own to use. While God created the things of nature, it was up to man to develop

²⁰ Job 5:7. Freppel also cited, Psalm 104:23, “Man shall go forth to his work.”

²¹ *O.O.P.*, t.V, p. 251.

agricultural systems, buildings, and even modern uses of metals and oil. It was not only through manual labor that man's creative powers were employed, but also through intellectual and artistic endeavors. "Whether a painter, musician, artisan, or manual laborer, man is a worker who cooperates with God in the transformation and development of the world."²²

The Christian understanding of labor had been responsible for many great achievements. While some pagan societies viewed physical labor as humiliating and appropriate only for slaves, Christ himself engaged in manual labor along with Joseph. Religious orders were the embodiment of the Christian understanding of labor, pairing work and prayer as the central mission of their lives, beginning with Benedict of Norcia. Indeed, Freppel called religious orders the "great schools of Christian work."²³ While religious orders consciously chose to infuse their labor with religious significance, in some cases the same was true of vast numbers of workers who may have been unaware of that fact. For when the Church built structures to exercise its ministry, the workers responsible for the labor were participating in the sanctification of souls that would result: "You see this cathedral, this house of God, where God speaks, acts, forgives and sacrifices Himself at all times. Who made all these things possible?...The worker, the manual laborer."²⁴ By furnishing the means with which the Church carries out its mission the worker had "a direct and active collaboration with God and the Church in the fulfillment of the supernatural world of grace and glory."

²² *O.O.P.*, t.V, pp. 252 – 254.

²³ *O.O.P.*, t. VII, pp. 143 – 150.

²⁴ *O.O.P.*, t.V, pp. 256 – 257.

These were some of the achievements of Christian labor, but they were not descriptive of what was meant by the term. Freppel laid out characteristics of Christian work in a few ways. One was to contrast the approach to work held by a Christian and a non-believer.

There is work that reduces man to the earth and work that points him toward heaven. There is work wherein all hopes and desires are contained in this world and there is work that considers eternity as well as the present. There is work that reacts with bitterness and hatred to pain and suffering and there is work that blesses God in the midst of fatigue and deprivation. There is work that is selfish and seeks only accumulation and pleasure and there is work that is rooted in the principle of obedience to Divine law and devotion to humanity. There is work that rebels and there is work that joyfully submits. There is work that blasphemes and work that prays. Like a living antithesis of good and evil, there is work without God and there is Christian work.²⁵

The attitude of a Christian worker was clearly established. Only by following the precepts of Christian morality will a worker be truly happy. There was an unbreakable link between labor and religion. “The efforts of man will be sterile unless at the same time he cultivates his soul.”²⁶ On one occasion he tied this directly to the worker question, saying that no one had done more to help the situation of the worker class than the Church. The recognition that employers did not always fulfill their obligations to the worker did not mean the worker was without responsibility. “We flatter neither the poor nor the rich. We say that the first job of man consists in perfecting his soul and that his true value is in the principles and virtues he practices.”²⁷

Freppel’s perspective on labor emphasized the religious aspect of work. There was a morality inherent in work and the distinction between “Christian work” and “work without God” was telling. Those who unduly complained or sought to rebel against their

²⁵ *O.O.P.*, t.VII, p. 145.

²⁶ *O.O.P.*, t.V, p. 258.

²⁷ *O.O.P.*, t.V, p. 258.

current situation were presumably employing the latter of the two approaches. Christian work meant submission and acceptance of suffering, which raises the question of whether there was a threshold of abuse that a Christian worker must accept. Nowhere in Freppel's religious treatment of labor does he mention justice. Since the practice of Christian principles was incumbent on both employer and worker one could assume that justice was included, but given the context of the time it is a significant omission. Freppel proposed traditional understandings of charity and labor during a time when these and other social principles were being reevaluated in light of modernity. However, there is little to suggest that Freppel modified this framework throughout the development of his social doctrine.

Understanding the Social Question

Freppel's background as an historian, and an educator more generally, is evident in his approach to the social question. It was something that must be thoroughly studied, with all aspects of past arrangements and developments examined and evaluated. One must first understand how the present situation was reached, what arrangements of economic life had been previously effective, and what had caused the deterioration in the condition of the worker. Overall there is a more theoretical bent to his social doctrine, though he closely followed the efforts of others associated with the School of Angers to find solutions. He was also regularly involved in the meetings and proceedings of various Catholic groups that were involved with the social issues. It was in this setting

that he formulated much of his doctrine while encouraging others to find ways to apply his principles through concrete actions.

The Role of Social Catholic Groups

During the nineteenth century a number of religious groups were established in response to the social question. In France, the most prominent of these was the *Oeuvre des cercles catholiques d'ouvriers*, though there were several other similar groups.²⁸

Before his time in Angers Freppel had little formal involvement with these types of organizations, but as bishop he became more active with them. In the aftermath of the events of 1870 he greatly promoted the efforts of existing charitable institutions in his diocese. In January of 1872 he participated in the inauguration of the *Cercle catholique* of Angers, with nearly 300 members at the founding. He hoped that the *Cercle* would become the “center of action for all who think about the great matters of religion and society.”²⁹ While it was religiously motivated, it was not a religious order or confraternity, but rather a “modern form of Christian association.” This meant that religion was a primary concern and unifying force for all their work.

In another address to a *Cercle* in Paris, he further explained his hopes for the group. Freppel often used battle imagery in his addresses, which reinforced his notion of the Church militant. Catholics were in a battle on several fronts, and the members of the *Cercle* must be involved. They must be “soldiers of the faith,” but at the same time

²⁸ See the references listed in the Introduction for more on these groups.

²⁹ *O.O.P.*, t. III, p. 410.

“apostles of charity” to those with whom they worked. Therefore the work of the *Cercle* was both a battle and an apostolate, whose goal was “the restoration of Christian society by the complete affirmation of Catholic doctrine.”³⁰ This was a very broad goal, but its achievement would be aided by efforts to ameliorate the condition of the worker, both spiritually and materially. Their primary weapons were “prayer, education, and mutual edification.”

There were several groups beyond the *Cercles* that Freppel supported. In 1872 he oversaw the founding of *l’Oeuvre des Crèches* in Angers, which provided care for young children, often when their mothers were forced to work by economic necessity. Freppel pointed out that the problem was created by the current industrial system, but nevertheless charity demanded something be done to help the children in a difficult situation.³¹ Other groups included the *Société de secours mutuel*, *Union des associations ouvrières catholiques*, and a collection of local charitable groups unofficially called the “Associations catholiques d’Angers.” A religious confraternity under the patronage of “Our Lady of the Factory” was also established in Angers.³² Freppel described his hopes for the confraternity:

Drawing from the zeal of religious congregations to serve the interests of the worker class is a wonderful idea that can have many useful and varied applications. For we are no longer in a time when a worker can hold one job alone and support his family in a modest lifestyle. Previous arrangements of labor have been drastically changed by modern manufacturing and this has also affected the moral condition of the worker. Therefore, new needs call for new works. It is up to Christians to act upon their faith and charity to help their brethren and

³⁰ *O.O.P.*, t.V, pp. 112 – 113.

³¹ *O.O.P.*, t. IV, pp. 415 – 419.

³² *La confrérie de Notre-Dame de l’Usine* was established in 1874 and the first group in Angers was founded in 1882. For more on their local efforts, see Leon Cosnier, *La charité à Angers*, t.2, pp. 232 – 243.

transform modern industry so that it serves the glory of God and the well-being of man.³³

While directed specifically toward this confraternity, the sentiment applied equally to other groups of social Catholics and their efforts.

One aspect of social reform that Freppel encouraged many of these associations to avoid was politics. This message was far more common in the first half of his episcopate. For example, at the inauguration of the *Cercle* of Angers, he concluded his address by urging them to focus on issues that united rather than divided them and to avoid political rivalries. A few years later he presented an entire address on the dangers of politics in their efforts. The rules adopted by the *Cercle* attempted to separate their work from any specific political party or cause, but an increasingly divisive political climate made that difficult. Freppel insisted on neutrality, “Do not forget that any expression of political opinions whatsoever ought to be banished from your meetings and conversations.”³⁴ The moment they engaged in political discussions would be the moment the unity so essential to their mission would deteriorate.

Freppel warned that the primary danger in this area was the reading and discussion of newspapers and journals by the members of the *Cercle*. People spent too much time on and gave too much importance to the opinions of the press. There was inevitable discussion of politics and various opinions in these papers. Moreover, reading these publications also took the place of reading other serious, intellectual works that would more greatly benefit the *Cercle*. Freppel did not propose banning the reading of newspapers and journals, “for I do not believe that reading them is incompatible with the

³³ *O.O.P.*, t. IX, p. 159.

³⁴ *O.O.P.*, t. XII, p. 290.

formal and absolute exclusion of political conversation. It is enough to understand and respect in others the liberty one claims for himself.”³⁵ Members could have different political views yet remain united in their efforts at social reform provided they did not let their emotions and passions prompt them to arguments.

These types of warnings about the dangers of politics disappeared from Freppel’s addresses during the 1880’s, however. This was likely due to the increasing chasm between the Church and the Third Republic, and Freppel often suggested that Catholics must be united in their support of the Church. As his pastoral letters on voting indicated, an increasing number of political issues were directly related to the Church’s interests. Another possibility was that by the mid-1880’s divisions in principles and strategies among groups of Social Catholics were becoming more evident. These differences had political implications that thereby made it difficult to separate social Catholicism from certain public policy debates. Finally, Freppel’s election to the Chamber of Deputies made him a direct participant in the political process, perhaps making him hesitant to advocate political neutrality. Regardless of the reason, it was still a subtle, yet important shift in Freppel’s approach which also suggested a change in the political and social climate from the early 1870’s.

Unlike politics, education was a consistent point of emphasis made by Freppel. It was important that the various groups of social Catholics take action, but they must also be centers of learning and discussion. This was especially important for youth, but also

³⁵ *O.O.P.*, t.XII, p. 292.

applied to everyone involved in social reform.³⁶ Rarely did Freppel address a gathering of social Catholics without encouraging them to continue studying the issues and discussing them with each other. Those who were well-educated in religion, history, philosophy and economics could have a significant impact on the future of the country, and “study precedes action.”³⁷ The study of history was especially important for the social question because one learned from the past which arrangements of political and social life were effective and which were not, as well as “the role of the Church in the economic and social development of nations.” Indeed, many of Freppel’s discourses on the social question included an historical account of the situation of the worker and the Church’s role in aiding him.

A History of the Social Question

Freppel’s treatment of the development of the social question centered around the French Revolution as the pivotal moment for the well-being of the worker. The period from the Middle Ages to the Revolution was instructive as a model for how labor could be arranged; the major problems faced by the worker began after the Revolution and were exacerbated by its ideology. As with his treatment of the French Revolution itself, Freppel’s account is less important as a history than as a window into his approach to the

³⁶ In 1886, Albert de Mun founded the *Association catholique de la Jeunesse française*, which became the primary organization of social action for Catholic youth. Freppel addressed the first congress of the association, held in 1887 in Angers.

³⁷ *O.O.P.*, t.X, pp. 132 – 133.

social question. For only by correctly diagnosing the causes of an illness could one determine the proper remedy.

In order to understand the shift caused by the Revolution, the existing order it replaced must first be explained. The Middle Ages was an “admirable” period for labor because it incorporated the law of association into its arrangement. This was the culmination of the transition from slavery to serfdom, then to complete emancipation.³⁸ Each profession arranged its own group of workers in a bond of fraternity and unity that ensured mutual concern and protection for all. Those within the same profession thus rallied together, “around the principle of association where everyone is recognized, respected and loved.” These were the features of the “wonderful institution” known as the worker corporation.³⁹

The structure of the corporation and the role of religion were its two defining characteristics. There was a “powerful hierarchy” from the master down to the apprentice that allowed for regulation of activity and “severe discipline” if necessary. A “true social paternity” existed between the masters and apprentices that passed along the traditions of the profession and monitored conduct. A set of statutes was adopted to provide both internal safeguards and external evidence to the public of the quality of their work. Many also established funds to help members in sickness or old-age. The corporation was therefore like a family in many respects, and Freppel portrayed these institutions as harmonious and undivided.⁴⁰ Like other social institutions of the time,

³⁸ *O.O.P.*, t. VII, pp. 325 – 326.

³⁹ In French, “la corporation ouvrière,” but synonymous with guilds. Paul Misner and others have used these terms somewhat interchangeably, especially in the medieval context.

⁴⁰ *O.O.P.*, t. VII, pp. 327 – 329.

religion was a major influence in its functioning. Many formed confraternities or adopted patron saints for their work. “The prayers of Sunday sanctified the work of the week” and religious feasts were occasions of great commemoration and celebration. The corporations were also motivated by a patriotic sentiment, heroically defending the country in times of war. Whether during the wars of religion or the Revolution, there were examples of craftsmen and artisans fighting on behalf of the Church and France.⁴¹

Freppel was effusive in his praise of the corporations, but admitted that by the eighteenth century abuses had crept in that warranted reform. Although he did not specify the abuses, he said that the corporations had become “too rigid” and needed “more air, more movement and more true liberty.”⁴² What followed with the Revolution was a drastic overreaction in the domain of labor. “One does not cut down a healthy tree if it has one dead branch or demolish a cathedral because it has accumulated dust and spider webs.” It was common sense that when something was generally working well it should not be entirely replaced. But the Revolution rejected this approach and preferred instead to destroy existing social institutions, including the corporations.

This organization of labor was the product of time, experience and reason. It produced long centuries of peace and prosperity and maintained harmony among workers of the same profession who contributed to the renown and glory of French industry. The corporations rejuvenated, improved and met the needs of the time, but in a day of blind rage the innovators destroyed them without thinking of the consequences. That day a previously unknown question was born, a question that filled the nineteenth century with conflicts and alarms: the worker question.⁴³

⁴¹ *O.O.P.*, t.VII, pp. 329 – 332.

⁴² *O.O.P.*, t.VII, p. 332. He made a similar point in his work on the French Revolution but provided no examples there either.

⁴³ *O.O.P.*, t.VII, p. 333.

This connection between the Revolution and the social question was a perennial theme in the speeches and writings of Freppel.

The abolition of associations by the Revolution was the primary cause of the problems faced by the worker. It eliminated corporations and other “intermediate bodies,” leaving only the individual and the state in economic life. The result was “a mass of individuals with equal rights outside of all natural or social hierarchy, and the state imposing its will on all.”⁴⁴ While Freppel agreed with the principle of liberty of work in a general sense, meaning that one should be able to pursue the profession of his choice, the Revolution erred in its pursuit of this goal. Liberty of work could not be applied in an absolute fashion, it needed the “complement and corrective” of association. The ideology of the Revolution overlooked this point and as a result “they placed the poor and the weak at the mercy of the rich and strong.”⁴⁵ Without the benefit of association the worker was isolated and weakened, no longer having the moral and material support offered by the corporation. Each worker was left to fend for himself, which inevitably led to mistreatment and exploitation. Freppel summarized the consequences in an often-repeated trope that the Revolution caused “oppression from above, slavery below; conflict everywhere, unity nowhere.”⁴⁶ The Revolution’s attack on the Church also impacted the worker, as the Church had long been the worker’s ally through its charitable institutions.

The second component of Freppel’s account of the development of the social question, therefore, was the role of the Church in ameliorating the worker’s condition and

⁴⁴ *O.O.P.*, t.X, p. 5.

⁴⁵ *O.O.P.*, t.X, p. 6.

⁴⁶ *O.O.P.*, t.X, p. 7.; *O.O.P.*, t.VII, pp. 334 – 335.

the disruption of these activities brought on by the Revolution. From the earliest days of the Church it had been involved in charitable activities, often in service of the poor. The network of charitable activities, including hospitals for the sick, schools, and new religious orders dedicated to helping those in need, expanded throughout the Middle Ages.⁴⁷ The Church also offered opportunities for workers' children by educating them and training them in the priesthood or religious life. "We took these children from the midst of degradation and consecrated them with holy oil, raising them to the majesty of the priesthood, above all other acclaim."⁴⁸ Popes Gregory VII and Sixtus V were just two examples of men who had risen from the humble origins of the worker class to the pinnacle of power in the Church. In all these ways the Church had understood and supported the interests of the worker. "We pleaded his cause under every regime and brought his grievances before every throne. His shouts of anguish we carried to the world, that all may hear them and be moved."⁴⁹

The fruitful alliance between the Church and the worker was significantly damaged by the Revolution, according to Freppel. First, by seizing the Church's property the Revolution deprived the Church of resources it used to help the worker. Second, by attacking the faith itself and proposing a new worldview it persuaded many workers to abandon their Christianity. "In no other class of French society were the roots of the Catholic faith deeper. However, I must admit with bitter sadness that now the workers are the class in which the passions and excesses of the Revolution have claimed the most

⁴⁷ *O.O.P.*, t.II, pp. 229 – 240.

⁴⁸ *O.O.P.*, t. V, p. 131.

⁴⁹ *O.O.P.*, t. V, p. 131.

victims.”⁵⁰ A struggle for the worker ensued between the ideology of the Revolution and the tenets of Christianity. Unsurprisingly, Freppel characterized the choice in stark terms:

The revolutionaries exploited the terrible problem of suffering, using it sometimes to excite their hopes with unattainable promises. They aroused the sentiments of equality and envy, which led to contempt and hatred for all social superiority. They treated Christian resignation as weakness, faith as superstition, and virtue as deception. They used novels, theater, and the press to portray religious people and concerns as odious or ridiculous. Finally, they presented the Church, with its doctrines and laws, as the great obstacle to a new golden age, an Eden-like fantasy. In this utopia, suffering and poverty would be banished forever and the people would have all imaginable pleasures.⁵¹

In response, the Church rejected this promise of “heaven on earth,” presenting instead its traditional teachings on work, inequality and submission to the will of God.

Freppel understood that the Church was in a difficult position, presenting the worker with “reality rather than illusions.” The problem was further complicated because Christian moral principles were based on underlying beliefs. Thus, if one ceased to believe in the afterlife and instead believed only in the earthly life the message of submission and contentment with one’s status in life was less convincing. Notions of sacrifice, patience and moderation made less sense to those who did not believe in God. To someone who no longer believed the teachings of the Church, “the inequality of conditions seems like an injustice, property a type of usurpation, capital a tyranny, and wealth an insult to his poverty.”⁵² The abolition of associations by the Revolution had been a major setback for the worker, but perhaps even more damaging was the undermining of religious belief and Christian morality which occurred in the century that

⁵⁰ *O.O.P.*, t.VII, p. 337.

⁵¹ *O.O.P.*, t.VII, pp. 337 – 338.

⁵² *O.O.P.*, t.VII, pp. 339 – 340. See also *O.O.P.*, t. XI, pp. 337 – 339 for a similar expression of this idea.

followed. Freppel's proposals for resolving the social question reflected these underlying concerns as well as his admiration for the labor arrangements of the past.

Restoring a "Christian Organization of Work"

Freppel insisted that despite the obstacles, the Church could not abandon the worker and must offer helpful solutions. These efforts must be motivated by love and concern for the worker's well-being. Just as he advocated a strong role for religion in the family, education, and the state, Freppel also considered religion as the key to resolving the worker question. "Before an economic question, the worker question is fundamentally a moral and religious question."⁵³ However, Freppel did not merely want to return to the Middle Ages with an abundance of worker corporations and a strong presence for the Church. The past could not be replicated in a different time with its own unique issues and concerns. The demands of modern industry were much different than the needs of Medieval craftsmen and artisans. But while older forms could not be used, the Christian principles that guided them did not change. The Church, as the "guardian of justice and truth," had preserved these principles in order that people throughout different times could apply them beneficially.⁵⁴ In the current context that meant that the Church would propose an alternative between two existing tendencies:

The Church is called to fulfill this social role in our day as in past centuries. It stands between an individualism which condemns the worker to isolation without any support or connection under the pretext of liberty, and socialism, which turns authority into tyranny by its desire to absorb all forces and all individual activity

⁵³ *O.O.P.*, t.XI, p. 336.

⁵⁴ *O.O.P.*, t. VII, pp. 341 – 342.

into the state. The Christian economy maintains an equal distance from each of these, for it is able to reconcile authority and liberty and effectively apply them to the worker question by the two principles of *patronage* and association.⁵⁵ Before examining Freppel's view of *patronage* and association, however, it is important to first consider his critique of an alternative view of work.

Rejection of "Materialist" View of Labor

An interesting characteristic of Freppel's addresses and writings on social doctrine was how infrequently he criticized laissez-faire capitalism. On multiple occasions he cited negatively the work of Turgot, who could be considered a representative of that approach. Otherwise his critique of economic liberalism is limited mostly to passing comments. While some group him as an economic liberal, Freppel certainly did not consider himself one. However, the work of a more systematic critique of capitalism, along the lines of his pastoral letter on socialism, for example, was never undertaken by Freppel. Others in the School of Angers did engage in such efforts, further evidence that the school, while sharing some of the conclusions of economic liberals, had a different approach to the social question.⁵⁶

On one occasion, though, Freppel did critique an economic view generally considered part of the laissez-faire system. So while Freppel's objections to socialism have already been discussed, he rejected another approach to labor that was also linked in a way to the ideology of the French Revolution. He described this approach as part of a "rationalist political economy," with rationalism being a term he employed very

⁵⁵ *O.O.P.*, t. VII, pp. 342 – 343.

⁵⁶ See Charles Périn, *Les économistes, les socialistes, et le Christianisme* (Paris: Jacques Lecoffre, 1849).

broadly.⁵⁷ This view sought to “materialize” labor by making it, “a piece of merchandise like anything else, subject purely and simply to the laws of supply and demand. Once the salary that was agreed upon is paid justice is satisfied, and the patron who employs the workers has no further concerns about what becomes of them, their living conditions, or their moral and material well-being.”⁵⁸ Without citing a particular theorist, he articulated a view of labor and wages that would have been accepted by many economic liberals.

Freppel’s critique of this position was that it fundamentally misunderstood the nature of labor. Everyone could agree that the product of man’s labor was merchandise, or a good, but the labor itself or the worker himself was much more than that. He could not be considered simply another factor of production, like a machine that takes bread instead of oil. “He is an intelligent and moral being that one employs and towards which one is bound, not by a contract that is incompatible with his dignity as a person, but by a contract that defines his duties and excludes abuse.”⁵⁹ This theory of labor as merchandise was “contrary to all sound notions of morality.” The bond between a patron and his workers must go well beyond the basic question of salary. “There is a moral link that results from their mutual obligations: The worker ought to further the interests of his employer as much as he is able. The patron must provide for the material and moral well-being of the worker. This is a bond of protection on one side, dependence on the other.”⁶⁰ Freppel likened this arrangement of the factory to the family, with the father exercising authority but also caring for his children. Unlike the rationalist view of labor,

⁵⁷ Not unlike his use of Free Thinkers, see above, pp. 70 – 72.

⁵⁸ *O.O.P.*, t. X, p. 13.

⁵⁹ *O.O.P.*, t. X, p. 14.

⁶⁰ *O.O.P.*, t. X, p. 15.

this arrangement could properly uphold the dignity of the worker. This was only one feature of the organization of work advocated by Freppel, the system of *patronage*.

Patronage

The beginning of the *patronage* model is generally credited to Armand de Melun in the middle of the nineteenth century.⁶¹ In succeeding decades it was adapted and modified in various ways. Freppel presented it fundamentally as a form of industrial paternity. For just as a father, ruler, or priest exercised authority over a family, nation or church, there was no reason why someone with industrial authority should not be expected to exercise his authority in similar ways. He had responsibilities of oversight and protection toward his workers and the “care of souls,” for he was also responsible for their moral welfare.⁶² The hierarchical structure and inclusion of religious concerns made the *patronage* similar to the Medieval worker corporations, which was why Freppel believed that this was a key component to resolving the social question.

The person who exercised the most influence on Freppel and others in the School of Angers with respect to *patronage* was Frédéric LePlay.⁶³ Freppel himself acknowledged as much, calling him a “great economist” and citing his work, *Organisation du travail*, as a reference point for the *patronage* system.⁶⁴ Furthermore,

⁶¹ See Misner, *Social Catholicism in Europe*, pp. 63 – 66, for more on the early forms of *patronage*.

⁶² *O.O.P.*, t.VII, p. 343.

⁶³ For more on LePlay, see Robert Kothen, *La pensée et l'action sociales des catholiques, 1789 – 1944*, (Louvain: E.M. Warny, 1945) pp. 158 – 164; Joan Coffey, *Léon Harmel: Entrepreneur as Catholic Social Reformer*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), pp. 110 – 112.

⁶⁴ *O.O.P.*, t.X, p. 16.

there was a close relationship between LePlay and Claudio Jannet, who was also an important member of the School of Angers.⁶⁵ Freppel did not provide many details about how he thought the *patronage* should work, though this task was taken up by others in the School of Angers who studied the concept in detail. He was content to outline the broad principles that should govern it, beginning with the notion of social paternity. The entrepreneur, or patron, was first bound by the usual demands of “rigorous justice” that applied to all work, like honoring contracts and an “equitable proportion” between labor and wages.⁶⁶ His duties extended far beyond this, however, and included setting aside money for employees and their families in times of need, protecting them from vices, and encouraging their religious development through word and example. “In a word, he [the patron] works to bring about God’s reign in the factory, knowing that with God there will be sound ideas and good morals which will lead to peace and unity.”⁶⁷

By the 1880’s the *patronage* model grew less influential. In many of Freppel’s later addresses on the social question he did not mention it directly. However, the underlying principles of hierarchy and industrial paternity built upon a religious foundation remained important. These same principles were employed by some in the new corporations that were formed after the law banning associations was repealed. The efforts of people like Léon Harmel were undoubtedly influenced by the *patronage* system.⁶⁸ As systems of labor organization shifted to corporations, a debate over the best

⁶⁵ See above, pp. 12 – 13.

⁶⁶ *O.O.P.*, t.VII, p.344.

⁶⁷ *O.O.P.*, t.VII, p. 344.

⁶⁸ Coffey, p. 112. Harmel tried to implement many of LePlay’s ideas at his factory, including the planting of a vegetable garden, which LePlay had advocated .

arrangement ensued. Freppel's opinion rested on the principles found in the *patronage* system as well as his understanding of the principle of association.

Association and Corporations

The principle of association was ultimately the foundation of any Christian arrangement of work. It had been the foundation of the Medieval worker corporations and Freppel always highlighted the law of 1791 abolishing associations as the critical mistake that brought on the social question. Since times and circumstances changed, the form of these associations could change, but the principle remained the same. "It is in the nature of things that men pursuing the same goal join their efforts to achieve it more successfully. This is why isolation in the worker class was an abnormality that could not last against the universal tendency."⁶⁹ Even after the Revolution outlawed them, people still sought association in various forms that Freppel characterized negatively as "shadowy underground leagues." These associations were flawed because they lacked the cohesive force of Christianity.

Freppel considered religion to be a necessary component of a lasting association. Associations that were based solely on utility or shared interests would eventually fall apart without the "foundation of faith and cement of charity."⁷⁰ He believed that Christian associations were more likely to support the weak among their group in a time of need and provide positive moral examples that would benefit everyone by keeping

⁶⁹ *O.O.P.*, t.VII, p.346.

⁷⁰ *O.O.P.*, t.VII, p. 347.

them away from ruinous vices. Any advances gained by non-religious associations risked being squandered if no attention was given to developing the virtue of the workers. For example, salaries could increase substantially, but if immorality also increased as a result of the additional financial resources the worker would have ultimately gained nothing. Furthermore, people generally agreed that it was good for the worker to have some savings, but the virtues of temperance and sobriety were found in religion and Freppel doubted they could be taught effectively without it.⁷¹ Therefore, the influence of Christianity was central to the principle of association, whether the workers were organized in the *patronage* model or the increasingly-important corporation.

The structure of worker corporations was a contested issue among social Catholics. There were disagreements about whether it should be optional or mandatory, and whether it should be workers only or workers and patrons together. Once again it was others in the School of Angers who engaged in the more direct and technical debate over the form of corporations, but Freppel laid out some general principles at a celebration of the corporations in 1889.⁷² He began unsurprisingly by blaming the French Revolution for the current problems faced by workers. However, for the first time he specifically addressed the need for reform in the organization of work on the eve of the Revolution.⁷³ These reforms were supported by all three estates, but especially the clergy. “To be able to freely choose one’s profession, establish oneself wherever desired,

⁷¹ *O.O.P.*, t.XI, p. 342.

⁷² Several works by Claudio Jannet focus on this issue.

⁷³ It was noted above (n.43) that Freppel often cited abuses in the Medieval corporations without specifying them. Perhaps these could be considered an elaboration of that point, but what he identified were not abuses but rather structural problems that resulted from a transition to more modern industrial production that no longer made these corporations suitable.

and work according to the methods and processes deemed most advantageous – these were the three rights whose exercise became useful and necessary as a result of modern industry.”⁷⁴ The expansion of manufacturing and commercial relations between nations had dramatically altered the structure of the economy, making the worker corporations increasingly obsolete. The local organization of workers around specific trades was effective in the Medieval economy, but no longer. The Revolution supported the “liberty of work” in principle, but undermined it by neglecting the importance of association. In response, there were efforts throughout the nineteenth century to fill this void by creating mutual-aid societies, popular banks and other groups to perform some of the functions previously left to associations. The principle of association gradually reappeared, even if not fully sanctioned.

After 1884 the debate focused on how corporations should be organized. Freppel rejected the “forced and obligatory corporation” because he thought it would impair the liberty of work. “We wish to combine, in a fruitful alliance, the principle of liberty of work with the principle of free and voluntary association.”⁷⁵ He also preferred that corporations be “mixed” with both patrons and workers together. In addition, they should have the ability to establish funds to help the workers if they were injured or experienced other forms of need in their families. Freppel envisioned a modern adaptation of the worker corporation, though similar to its Medieval forerunner in the role played by religion and the enjoyment of legal protection.

⁷⁴ *O.O.P.*, t. XI, p. 171.

⁷⁵ *O.O.P.*, t. XI, p. 173.

Freppel's support for the non-obligatory corporation was logical given his emphasis on the liberty of work. His support for the mixed corporation also made sense because it was more similar to the Medieval corporations and *patronage* system to have a clear hierarchy within the corporation. He also expressed concern that having the workers alone form a corporation would serve to reinforce the division between patron and employers, between capital and labor. Rather than the "wicked antagonism" that was so often encouraged by the successors of the Revolution, patrons and employers should be "united under the banner of the cross, with a sense of justice and Christian charity."⁷⁶ The division between capital and labor also clouded the fact that the two groups fundamentally shared the same interests. They should be joined together in solidarity through both good and difficult times. Freppel even went so far as to remind workers of the risk incurred by their employers. The workers worried about unexpected events or circumstances costing them their jobs; employers could lose their entire fortune and fall into total ruin as a result of such things. Furthermore, the worker could seek a new job with a rival employer while the patron's resources were permanently lost. "I like to say these things at a time when people only wish to look at one side and close their eyes to the interests, no less important or respectable, of business leaders, which risks placing them in danger along with the future of French industry."⁷⁷ This defense of the employer was unusual among social Catholics, but Freppel mainly wanted to point out that the shared interest in positive outcomes should bond workers and employers together in pursuit of a productive organization of labor.

⁷⁶ *O.O.P.*, t. XI, p. 340.

⁷⁷ *O.O.P.*, t. XI, p. 341.

Lastly, the existence of well-founded and organized Christian corporations was important for Freppel because a strong corporation would engage in charitable relief for its members and their families, especially in times of injury or need. Activities like this were better handled by corporations or other associations than by the state, which Freppel feared was becoming too involved in people's lives. The Christian corporation could also promote morality, another task Freppel dared not allow to the state. The social question could not therefore be resolved by state action alone. "There are no laws or regulations that can effectively improve the condition of the worker without the observation of the precepts of religion."⁷⁸ The worker question must include some way to help the worker's moral needs as well as his material ones. The corporations were much better ways to meet this goal:

The more you apply and develop the principle of association, the more you bring into being the corporative idea, the less you will be tempted to turn to the intervention of the state. The regulation of your affairs by the state is always dangerous for your rights and liberties, even though they may seem justified. Justice and charity, mutual sacrifice and respect for the rights of each – this is your motto. Stay faithful to it and you will assure social peace.⁷⁹

The Christian organization of work was central part of Freppel's social doctrine, but this quote also touches on two more important components, namely, the role of the state and the relationship between justice and charity.

⁷⁸ *O.O.P.*, t. XI, pp. 341 – 342.

⁷⁹ *O.O.P.*, t. XI, pp. 343 – 344.

Contested Questions

Perhaps more than any other issues, the role of the state and the relationship between justice and charity defined the differences between the various schools of social Catholics. To be sure, there were important disagreements over issues like the nature of corporations and other matters, but one's view of the answer to these two foundational questions largely shaped his social doctrine. It was clear to all that action needed to be taken to resolve the social question. But whether the state or Church should do certain things was less clear, and often rested on whether the issue in question needed to be done as a matter of justice or charity. The state was responsible for ensuring justice through its laws and the Church was better-suited to engage in works of charity, so there was typically an alignment of these issues. Those who viewed the problems faced by the worker as issues of justice generally favored greater state action while those who thought charity was needed preferred the Church to be the primary actor. This contrast will be revisited later with the School of Angers and other schools, but for now the general alignment described can be seen in the views of Freppel.

Justice and Charity

Freppel's emphasis of charity in the social question is evident from his lengthy discourse on the "law of charity" and its implications. However, justice was certainly an essential feature of any consideration of the social question and the two were not in conflict.

The worker question cannot be resolved outside of the two principles of justice and charity, of which the Church is their timeless guardian. First of all justice, which is the primary foundation of the economy. In the meaning of this word given by Christian doctrine, justice is an equitable proportion between labor and wages, between pain and compensation. It is the honoring of contracts, the respect for mutual commitments, the possibility for each person to improve his situation without harming anyone, and the right of all to be treated according to their merits and abilities. Then charity, for though the obligations of justice are rigorous, charity will always retain its lofty role in the economy.⁸⁰ He often said that "charity fulfills and completes justice," further suggesting that the two principles must be considered in tandem.⁸¹ The relationship between the two, and which principle predominated issues requiring action were the questions that remained. For many years the efforts of social Catholics to help the worker were seen as acts of charity. However, toward the end of the nineteenth century the notion that the worker was suffering injustices shifted the dynamic in the direction of justice.⁸²

Freppel's position clearly aligned with the more traditional approach and its emphasis on charity. In a discussion of the role of the two principles in resolving the social question, he presented his perspective:

⁸⁰ *O.O.P.*, t.IX, pp. 152 – 153.

⁸¹ *O.O.P.*, t.XI, p. 416.

⁸² For a general discussion of this topic, see Jean-Yves Calvez, S.J., and Jacques Perrin, S.J., *The Church and Social Justice: The Social Teaching of the Popes from Leo XIII to Pius XI (1878 – 1958)*, (Chicago: Regnery, 1961), pp. 162 – 173.

It has always seemed to me that some have not sufficiently trusted the effectiveness of charity. These loud and repeated calls for state intervention seek to obtain through constraint that which could be achieved with greater success through liberty supported by charity. Surely justice is a great and beautiful thing, and we must be careful not to narrow its reach. But whatever we do, the obligations of justice will always remain very limited. The nature of things wills it so, and the rights of individuals make it absolutely necessary. The scope of charity, however, is much more expansive.⁸³

Freppel offered no further explanation for why justice is so naturally limited. It is also telling that he linked justice to state intervention, signaling perhaps his unease with the idea that expanding the scope of justice would necessarily entail more state involvement.

Freppel pointed to several reasons for giving charity a broader role in the social question than justice. On a basic level, a charitable person would also be a just person because giving to others in charity made one accustomed to not keeping everything for himself. “When one loves his neighbor enough to give [his neighbor] something that does not belong to him, it is impossible to be unwilling to give that which is in fact due to him.”⁸⁴ Freppel doubted that the converse was necessarily true, citing the words of Jesus that love of God and neighbor were the fulfillment of all the Law and Prophets.⁸⁵ He also cited approvingly some words of Pope Leo XIII praising the role of charity, suggesting that there was both Scriptural and papal support for his position. Freppel argued superficially that history also confirmed this view. The idea of justice was known in pre-Christian societies like the Roman Empire and yet the mistreatment and poverty of workers was widespread. It was only through the transformative power of Christian charity that their condition gradually improved.

⁸³ *O.O.P.*, t.XII, pp. 35 – 36.

⁸⁴ *O.O.P.*, t.XII, p. 37.

⁸⁵ *O.O.P.*, t.XII, p. 36.

In Freppel's view, the focus of social Catholics should therefore be primarily on developing and strengthening charity in the hearts of those who help the workers as well as the workers themselves. He warned against heeding the call of those who emphasized justice too strongly. One reason was that socialists framed their arguments as a matter of justice when they wished to force people to do things that were actually acts of charity. They did not distinguish the two and confused people by making everything the domain of justice. He also criticized some Christians that he thought viewed charity or almsgiving as a "type of humiliation," reprimanding this position for ignoring the teachings of the Gospel.⁸⁶ These Christians overlooked the mutual need the rich and poor have for each other that resulted from the law of charity. If everything was a matter of justice, the practice and fostering of important Christian virtues like generosity, sacrifice, and gratitude would be lost.

Freppel did not often go beyond these types of generalities when analyzing justice and charity. One example of when Freppel specified the application of these principles was in his critique of the materialist view of labor as merchandise. The employer who did not consider the moral welfare of his worker, "lacks not only charity but also justice." Freppel listed multiple examples of how the employer acted unjustly toward the worker, including making him work beyond the limits of his strength; hampering his religious liberty by forcing him to work on Sundays; and allowing a working environment and conditions that would be damaging and demoralizing, especially to women and

⁸⁶ *O.O.P.*, t.XII, p.38. He does not specify or hint at any specific people or groups. It is unlikely that it was directed at other social Catholics, many of whom had long been involved in charitable efforts.

children.⁸⁷ All of these injustices resulted from the failure to recognize the unity of a worker's physical and moral well-being. The violation of these moral rights possessed by the worker was often an overlooked form of injustice. In those instances where the worker's religious liberty or moral welfare was impeded it was appropriate for the State to take action. However, Freppel's application of this principle, to specific situations that necessitated state involvement and the nature of the measures that should be taken, was sometimes ambiguous.

The Role of the State and "Social Protection"

Freppel's position on the role of the state in the social question was undoubtedly influenced by his view of the Third Republic. The numerous reasons for his hostile view of the French government have been discussed above, but it is important to recall this context. There can be a danger in considering the position of Freppel and the School of Angers on this issue without sufficiently accounting for the political situation of the time. The role of the state became a more contested issue for social Catholics toward the end of the 1880's. By that time Catholics had experienced conflict with the government on several fronts. As John McManners suggested, their experience with the government on an issue like education made them ill-disposed to seek much from the state on the social question.⁸⁸ So while it is difficult to know the extent to which the political climate

⁸⁷ *O.O.P.*, t.X, pp. 14 – 15.

⁸⁸ McManners, p. 30.

affected Freppel on this issue, he nevertheless outlined some principles for state intervention that can be considered on their own.

The first point to note is that Freppel's social doctrine always allowed for some state intervention. Other social principles like association or justice could not be effective without the legitimate authority of the state. Freppel characterized this function of the state as "social protection" and it applied especially for the weaker groups in society like women and children.⁸⁹ Freppel observed a problem, however, when discussing the issue of state involvement. Whenever one advocated some role for the state he was open to the charge of being a socialist, and if the person was arguing from a religious perspective he was called a Christian socialist. Freppel vigorously rejected this term, saying it was nonsensical for a Christian to support a system that "is the negation of the principles on which the social order rests, which rejects property, the family, and religion."⁹⁰ Thus one could advocate some state intervention without being grouped with a system that envisioned the state's role in society in an entirely different way.

The principle of social protection was therefore applicable to several situations that demanded state action. "If it is true, as no one doubts, that governments exist to promote the good and prevent evil within the measure of their power, how can we not admit that the legislature has at the same time the right and the obligation to intervene...?"⁹¹ The issues listed by Freppel centered on the groups he considered weaker, including protecting children from "excessive and premature" labor, promoting as much as possible the presence of mothers in the home, and "imposing wise limits on

⁸⁹ *O.O.P.*, t. X, p.18.

⁹⁰ *O.O.P.*, t. X, p. 19.

⁹¹ *O.O.P.*, t. X, p. 20.

enterprises that could lead to the destruction of the family and are guided only by financial profit.” The government should also be concerned with the conditions in factories because they affected the health and safety of the public. This would include whether or not they operated on Sundays, which should be a day of rest for the physical and religious well-being of the workers. Finally, he also granted to the state the rights “supported by justice and equity,” to “protect workers against the effects of old age and sickness, and to allow them to obtain compensation for injuries sustained as a result of their work.”⁹² Freppel firmly rejected the idea that these were characteristics of a socialist state, maintaining instead that they were merely the fulfillment of the state’s role of social protection by ensuring that the moral and material condition of labor contributed to the prosperity of the nation.

This vision of the role of the state was offered by Freppel in 1886, which makes it particularly intriguing. Freppel and the School of Angers came to be identified largely by their opposition to state intervention in the social question, yet Freppel himself seemed to endorse many of the efforts he would later vociferously oppose as a social Catholic and vote against as a Deputy. The reasons for this tension will be developed in conjunction with the discussion of Freppel’s career in the Chamber and the influence of others in the School of Angers, but it is worth noting at this point that he at least supported these types of interventions in principle, if not in practice. This is not to suggest that Freppel favored a broad involvement of the state, against which he explicitly cautioned. Care must be taken to avoid falling into either extreme, although Freppel admitted in a revealing comment that “the modern state has encroached so greatly on the rights of the individual,

⁹² *O.O.P.*, t. X, pp. 20 – 21.

family, and Church that I understand the defiance with which some well-intentioned souls react to all state intervention in the economy.”⁹³ Despite the abuses which have occurred the principles remained valid and they dictated that the state has the natural right and duty of social protection, a position demonstrated and upheld in the Church’s tradition.

The views of Freppel on these contested questions can be summarized as maintaining the predominance of charity to justice and a well-defined role for the state in fulfillment of its duty of social protection. The emphasis on charity did not preclude concern for justice, and the role for the state was located between the poles of socialism and economic liberalism. In many ways, these views were not overly extreme or unusual. It was only when debate among Catholics over the social question became more pressing that the differences and disagreements became more vivid. Therefore the direct contrast with other social Catholics on the eve of *Rerum novarum* will help clarify the distinctiveness of Freppel’s approach. His social doctrine was also further illuminated by the application of these ideas to actual situations. In other words, this discussion of Freppel’s social principles presents his social doctrine mostly from a theoretical standpoint. But the entirety of his social doctrine must include the context of his approach as well as the application of these principles, that is, their practice. In the case of Freppel one has an interesting and helpful way to see how he acted on his social principles by examining his ten years in the Chamber of Deputies. Whether the issue was related to the family, Church, or some aspect of the social question, the involvement or

⁹³ *O.O.P.*, t. X, p.21.

abstention of the public authority was an ongoing illustration of the struggle to define the nature and shape of French society in the late-nineteenth century.

Conclusions

The starting point for Freppel's social doctrine was charity. His lengthy discourse on the "Law of Charity" demonstrates his view that the sufferings and inequalities of society were fundamentally the domain of charity. While the social question was a new problem in terms of the changes brought about by modern economies, the underlying difficulties were in some ways a result of the natural order of society. This traditional focus on charity was accompanied by an emphasis on the importance of resignation and sacrifice in matters of work. These theological considerations guided Freppel's approach to the social question.

Groups like the *Cercles* were promoted by Freppel, who saw them as a means of restoring the traditional Christian understanding of work. He also encouraged them to study the social question in order to develop new ideas and methods that were suitable for the needs of the modern economy. These groups of social Catholics were an important step toward restoring the vibrant, Church-centered associations of the past which had been destroyed by the French Revolution. The principle of association, whether embodied in the *patronage* system or corporation, was necessary to provide both moral and material support for the worker. Freppel pointed to these groups as the primary

solution to the social question for several reasons. First, because when properly arranged, these associations would be connected to the Church, thereby offering the worker moral guidance and protection for his labor and his overall way of life. Second, associations were intermediate bodies that could support the worker without involving the state. Freppel preferred this arrangement in principle, but also because he believed the associations would be better equipped to meet the needs of workers, which varied by place and circumstance. They were more adaptable and efficient in providing various services like accident insurance, injury compensation, support in difficult times, and offering solutions to whatever other problems arose. The state should offer its legal protection and encouragement for these types of associations by allowing them to possess property that could be passed on to succeeding generations of members, thereby granting them the stability to be a lasting social institution. On the other hand, Freppel was critical of the state's tendency to obstruct or otherwise interfere with the autonomy of these associations. Examples such as Léon Harmel's factory proved that a Christian organization of work could function efficiently and effectively in the modern economy. Such models were to be emulated, not subjected to the infringement of the state on their activities, whether by legal obstacles or by the state provision of services more properly left to the associations themselves.

The question of the role of the state loomed over nearly all aspects of the social question. Whether the issue was property, associations, wages, or any of the other central aspects of the tension between capital and labor, the influence of the state through legislation and regulation was a necessary consideration. Part of one's view on the

matter was determined by his conception of the state's role in society. For Freppel this was rather limited, as the state should offer "social protection," and uphold the basic features of society like property and association. His notion of social protection was somewhat ambiguous, however, and his 1886 address to the *Cercle* of Angers reveals a broader acceptance of state intervention than what he ultimately adopted at the height of the debate in 1890. Another component to one's view of the state involved the analysis of justice and charity. If the difficulties faced by the worker were the products of injustice, it was proper to turn to the state as the guardian of justice which should impose laws to restore to the worker his due. However, if the difficulties of the worker were caused by a lack of charity, or some situation that merely called for a greater practice of charity, it was not the state's role to take action. Freppel was clearly aligned with this latter view, as demonstrated by his emphasis on the law of charity and his warnings about an exaggerated notion of justice. The manner in which this notion of the state was applied by Freppel deserves special attention, as a noticeable shift can be detected in the latter years of his career.

Chapter 5

Deputy Freppel and the Fight against State Overreach in the Chamber of Deputies

The government of the Third Republic was split among rival political factions during its first decade. In 1871 the Assembly was largely controlled by conservative royalists, though they lacked the power to restore the monarchy. Division among the rival claims to the throne made by the Legitimists and Orleanists weakened their position and Conservative power diminished in subsequent elections.¹ The constitution passed in 1875 established a presidency elected by the bicameral National Assembly comprised of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies.² The first elections of 1876 resulted in a Republican majority of more than two to one over the Conservatives.³ However, it was not until the elections of 1879 that the Republicans gained control of the Senate as well, allowing for the election of a Republican president, Jules Grévy. Having attained the Presidency, Senate, and Chamber of Deputies, the Republicans were able to fully proceed with their anticlerical program.

A centerpiece of this program was the reform of the education system. Under the leadership of Jules Ferry, the Minister of Public Instruction from 1879 to 1881, a series of

¹ John McManners, *Church and State in France, 1870 – 1914*, (London: SPCK, 1972), pp. 34 – 37. For a helpful work on the political issues at the beginning of the Third Republic and the response of the French bishops, see Jacques Gadille, *La pensée et l'action politiques des évêques français au début de la III^e République, 1870 – 1883* (2 vols), (Paris: Hachette, 1967).

² Senators were elected indirectly by local municipal councils, which favored rural areas and was seen as a Conservative safeguard to the heavily Republican urban areas. The constitution passed by one vote, 353 to 352.

³ McManners, pp. 38 – 39. McManners groups the parties broadly into the two camps of Conservatives and Republicans, with each comprised of a range of positions.

educational laws were passed that sought to lessen the influence of the Church. To this end, the “Ferry Laws” made primary instruction “free, obligatory, and lay.”⁴ They further weakened the Church’s power in education, reserving the title “university” for state institutions alone, excluding priests and religious from departmental educational councils and forbidding all members of “non-authorized” religious congregations from teaching in any school, a move aimed directly at the Jesuits.⁵ A decree of March 29, 1880 required non-authorized congregations to obtain recognition within three months, with the exception of the Jesuits, who were to be dissolved after that time. This act was met with defiance by the Jesuits and other religious orders, setting up a showdown with the government.

It was during this time and within this context that Freppel was elected to the Chamber of Deputies, where he served for over a decade. His efforts were primarily in opposition to the policies of the Republican government against the Church, placing him reliably with the Conservatives on most issues. Although the issues and interventions of Freppel in the Chamber are too numerous to be treated comprehensively here, selected examples can help illustrate the manner in which he applied his social doctrine to the political debates of the 1880’s. The central and recurring theme is Freppel’s attempt to thwart the encroachment of the state into areas of society he believed it did not belong and which were traditionally the domain of the Church. Conservative influence in the Chamber of Deputies varied during Freppel’s tenure, though it was generally diminishing

⁴ For an examination of education during the Third Republic, see Sarah A. Curtis, *Educating the Faithful: Religion, Schooling, and Society in Nineteenth-Century France*, (DeKalb: NIU Press, 2000), pp. 107 – 127.

⁵ McManners, p. 50. Freppel served on the *Conseil supérieur* for six years and was forced to give up his position in 1879 as a result of Ferry’s policies. Freppel’s harsh critique of this policy can be found in *Oeuvres Polémiques*, t.II, (Paris: Tequi, 1894) pp. 145 – 164. Hereafter abbreviated, *O.P.*

as Republican support increased. Therefore the focus is less on Freppel's success or failure in advocating his views, but rather understanding how his interventions further articulated or clarified his social doctrine. It is also interesting to note the type of arguments employed by Freppel in the Chamber, which often eschewed overly-theological claims for legal or pragmatic rationales. This did not mean that there was no religious element to his work as Deputy, but that he expressed his positions with a greater reliance on other fields of knowledge.

Freppel's Election to the Chamber and his Early Interventions

The events that lead to Freppel's election to the Chamber were reminiscent of the maneuvering that occurred before his rise to the episcopacy in that they both exposed the quarters from which he was supported and opposed. In this case, the opposition of liberal Catholics further cemented the divide that existed since the Vatican Council. In April of 1880, Freppel received letters from the editors of two royalist newspapers asking if he had interest in standing for election as deputy in the third district of Brest, located in the Finistère department of Brittany. This was a heavily Catholic and royalist area, thereby making it likely that Freppel would be elected. Dupanloup had been the last bishop to serve as a legislator, so his candidacy was not unprecedented. Many local leaders believed that Freppel would be a strong representative of their views and bring some

attention to the area given his status as bishop. So, with their support and the promise of support from *l'Univers*, Freppel agreed to be a candidate.⁶

This idea was not universally favored, however. Some worried that Freppel was too inexperienced politically or too ambitious to be a good deputy. Opposition to Freppel emerged, comprised mainly of liberal Catholics within the region. Even the bishop of Quimper, then the diocese in which Brest was located, vacillated between opposition and indifference, though he later explained his tepidity as a result of not having his approval sought before Freppel accepted the candidacy.⁷ Others questioned Freppel's ability to represent an area where he did not reside, though this was not a legal impediment to his election. As the debate over his candidacy continued, Freppel complained about the opposition of liberal Catholics, writing in a letter that "they would rather have a Republican than the bishop of Angers."⁸

On May 23, 1880, Freppel wrote a letter to the voters of his district explaining the rationale for his candidacy. The "most important religious interests" of the country were at stake, beginning with the decree of March 29, as well as other government actions against the Church in education. "In short, hardly a day goes by without some type of proposal that menaces the rights and liberties of the Catholic religion."⁹ In such an environment it would be useful to have the presence of a bishop to ensure the promotion of the Church's interests. Freppel remarked that though he did not have the technical competence of the previous deputy in "promoting your material interests," he would not

⁶ Terrien, t.II, pp. 310 – 311.

⁷ See Terrien, t.II, pp. 311 – 319 for an extensive account of the support of and opposition to Freppel's candidacy.

⁸ Terrien, t.II, pp. 313 – 314.

⁹ *O.P.*, t.II, pp. 237 – 239.

remain indifferent to the material prosperity of the country, which was part of its overall progress. By voting for him, they would be acting in the interests of both religion and country.¹⁰ On June 12, Freppel received a telegram informing him that he had been elected by a margin of 8,703 to 4,180 votes.¹¹ The following day he sent another letter to the voters thanking them for their support. He promised to work on behalf of religion and to serve all the people of Brest. “We are all children of the same country, and though we may have different views on the best way to serve our interests, we are all united through the bonds of Christian charity.”¹²

Expulsion of the Jesuits and other First-Year Issues

Freppel joined the Chamber of Deputies on June 12, taking his place with the Conservative coalition. He returned to Angers at the end of the month, at which point the three months given to the Jesuits to leave had elapsed. In Angers and throughout their other residences in France, the Jesuits were forcibly removed by the police. In many of these instances crowds gathered to voice either their support or disapproval at the action. Freppel led a crowd of Catholics to the Jesuit residence as they were being seized and then they marched through streets of Angers in protest.¹³ Freppel returned to Paris and was present in the Chamber on the following day, when he made his first address. The president of the Chamber at the time, Léon Gambetta, recognized Freppel to speak and

¹⁰ *O.P.*, t.II, pp. 241 – 243.

¹¹ Terrien, t.II, p. 319.

¹² *O.P.*, t. II, pp. 245 – 248.

¹³ Terrien, t.II, pp. 320 – 321.

introduced him as “Deputy Freppel,” which drew a reaction from both Left and Right. Gambetta remarked to the Right that he did not know why they reacted, for “in this setting, I know no other title except deputy.” Freppel responded, “The president gives me a title which I am proud and honored to have.”¹⁴ Undeterred by this initial provocation, Freppel then addressed the Chamber on the events of the previous day.

He immediately challenged the legality of the manner in which the Jesuits had been seized in their forty residences across France. He questioned whether it was appropriate that the government sent agents to “break the locks and knock down their doors” and then forcibly lead them through the streets. Freppel suggested that the proper course of action would have been to deem the Jesuits in violation of the law and then initiate a court proceeding to determine the next stage of action. “This is the way that is followed when justice is preferred to the police and when one does not need to cover up the arbitrary oppression of the state.”¹⁵ The Minister of the Interior responded to Freppel that their actions were necessitated by the defiance of the Jesuits as well as the interference of the crowds which had gathered. Indeed, the first person the police encountered in Angers was Freppel himself.¹⁶ Freppel responded that the actions of the government set a dangerous precedent for religious and individual liberty, and quoted negative accounts in European newspapers that called the episode “an act of despotism.”¹⁷ The official record noted a number of interruptions throughout his address,

¹⁴ *O.P.*, t.II, pp. 251 – 252.

¹⁵ *O.P.*, t.II, p. 256.

¹⁶ *O.P.*, t.II, pp. 262 – 263.

¹⁷ *O.P.*, t.II, pp. 268 – 272.

indicative of the contentious nature of debate in the Chamber and an occurrence to which Freppel grew accustomed.

A brief overview of the topics of Freppel's other speeches during his first year in the Chamber provides a helpful sense of the types of issues in which he intervened. Most of his attention for the remainder of 1880 was focused on education and in response to the proposed Ferry laws. Other issues during the first half of 1881 included proposals to place restrictions on religious congregations, force seminarians to serve in the military, and cut off the salaries of the chaplains of Sainte Geneviève in Paris. Thus Freppel spoke out when an issue touched directly on an interest of the Church. During his time in the Chamber he became involved in a broader set of issues, but the basic pattern from the beginning was that there must be some interest of the Church involved.

Before the summer elections of July 1881, Freppel issued another letter to the voters of his area reporting on his work in the Chamber. He admitted that he did not intervene very often, but asked whether his efforts were reflective of the will of the voters. He explained his protest of the expulsion of the Jesuits, which he said represented a violation of "individual liberty, liberty of association, liberty of education, and the right of property. In short, a violation of all the rights and liberties that a civilized country honors and regards as its most precious commodities."¹⁸ He also provided the reasoning for his other interventions in order to clarify to the voters his intentions. Finally, he noted that he was united with others on his side to work in the material interests of the people, even though he did not directly intervene. He promised to continue working on their behalf should he be reelected, and encouraged them not to lose hope in this difficult time,

¹⁸ *O.P.*, t.III, pp. 392 – 393.

for it was no worse than past struggles the country had overcome.¹⁹ Freppel was reelected by a wider margin than before, receiving an additional 1,500 votes. His position as deputy was secured; subsequent elections were never in doubt. In a private letter shortly after his reelection, Freppel made an interesting admission that he was taking a “moderate tone” to avoid accusations that he was provoking actions against the Church.²⁰ Thus Freppel seemed to understand the political maneuvering that his role as deputy required.

Whether his tone was “moderate” can be questioned, but his interest in fighting government action that he believed was harmful to the Church was certain. Freppel’s emphasis on the foundational social institutions of the family, school, Church, and state, as well as the principles related to the social question were all further articulated through his arguments in the Chamber. Freppel served as deputy until his death in 1891 and in an important way his actions in this setting were a contribution to his social doctrine.

Family Issues in the Chamber: Divorce

As bishop, Freppel often lamented the struggles faced by families and the need for them to be based in Christian principles.²¹ In the Chamber, Freppel was likewise concerned with the effects of various policies on the family. One example that had perhaps the most direct impact on the family was the proposal to restore the law allowing

¹⁹ *O.P.*, t.III, pp. 402 – 404.

²⁰ Terrien, t.II., p. 364.

²¹ See discussion above, pp. 91 – 96, and Freppel’s Pastoral Letter on the Family, *O.O.P.*, t.IV, pp. 249 – 281.

divorce that had been implemented during the Revolution.²² The issue was brought up in 1881 and again in 1882, when for the first time Freppel addressed the Chamber in opposition. However, he did not analyze the issue as deputy in the same manner he had as bishop. He began by saying, “I do not have any intention of raising a theological discussion which, in these surroundings, would certainly be out of place.”²³ His first observation was then of a political nature. When the proposal was made in 1881 the Republicans were confident that they had the support of their voters. However, when the members drafted their platform for the voters very few of them, even the member who proposed the law, included the reestablishment of divorce as part of their program. Freppel concluded that this omission was due to the fact that most knew that they did not enjoy popular support and would endanger their election by making it an issue.²⁴ Furthermore, he accused the Republicans of pushing the issue now because the next election was not for another three years, removing any risk of immediate electoral consequences.

In addition to the political situation, Freppel outlined other reasons he opposed the law. He argued that marriage had historically been a feature of advanced civilizations, and divorce would represent a regression. The fact that other European countries were adopting similar laws should not influence France to do likewise. Moreover, even if one could produce statistics that such laws in other countries had no harmful effects he would reject them because each nation has its own unique set of circumstances and traditions

²² Roderick Phillips, *Putting Asunder: A History of Divorce in Western Society* (New York: CUP, 1988).

²³ *O.P.*, t.IV, p. 316. The official account records someone from the Left exclaiming “You are right!” in response.

²⁴ *O.P.*, t.IV, pp. 316 – 326.

that eliminate any type of sociological comparisons.²⁵ In addition, reinstituting divorce would weaken France on individual, social, and political levels. It would weaken individuals by diminishing the importance of commitments, which could lead to people being unwilling to honor commitments in other areas of life such as work. Similarly, it would weaken France socially and politically by introducing instability on the familial level which would then extend into the social and political realms. In a nation that had experienced so much social and political upheaval, Freppel argued, stability was more necessary than ever and must be reinforced at every level of society beginning with the family.²⁶ Finally, though he avoided it for most of his address, Freppel touched on the religious aspect of the issue. The majority of France was Catholic, and since Catholics believed marriage was a sacrament the Chamber was attacking the sacrament itself.²⁷

Freppel concluded by summarizing his arguments:

Divorce is a diminishment, a weakening of the moral, political and social strength of the country. You do not have the right to introduce such a cause of dissolution. It is a violation of natural law and a direct attack against the beliefs and institutions of the majority of French citizens. You do not have the right to sacrifice the great majority for a small minority.²⁸

This long speech was met with several interruptions, especially the concluding portion when Freppel alluded to religion and natural law.

It was not until 1884 that the law reestablishing divorce was ultimately enacted.

In the final days of debate, with passage inevitable, Freppel again addressed the topic.

He reinforced some of the points made in his speech from two years prior, such as the

²⁵ *O.P.*, t.IV, pp. 347 – 349.

²⁶ *O.P.*, t.IV, pp. 350 – 352.

²⁷ *O.P.*, t.IV, pp. 363 – 369. His opponents quickly countered that no one was forced to divorce, and there were plenty of French citizens who were not Catholic.

²⁸ *O.P.*, t.IV, p. 372.

historical continuity of marriage in Western civilization, but he also employed some new arguments. The support for divorce was not among the common people, for the worker earned a modest living and honored his wife and children. Rather, it was advocated primarily by the wealthy, as an “aristocratic luxury” that they wished to enjoy. Even more specifically, Freppel accused influential French Jews of driving support for the law.²⁹ He also attacked the law for violating religious liberty, since it contained a provision that after three years of physical separation one of the spouses could initiate a legal divorce. Though Freppel did not favor separation, it was less bad than divorce and an option for Catholics under certain circumstances. However, a Catholic who agreed to separate but did not want to divorce would not be able to stop a divorce from moving forward should the other spouse want to proceed with it.³⁰ At the end of his remarks Freppel warned, “by voting for this law you will be pronouncing a divorce between the Church and the Third Republic.”³¹ By 1884, however, the process of separation between the two sides was already well underway, in no small part because of the government’s actions on education.

Education Laws

The reform of education undertaken by the Third Republic affected all levels of education. As noted above, Freppel’s personal involvement and interest in education as bishop applied equally to his work in the Chamber. An examination of his speeches in

²⁹ *O.P.*, t.VII, pp. 147 – 150.

³⁰ *O.P.*, t.VII, pp. 157 – 161.

³¹ *O.P.*, t.VII, p. 163.

the Chamber reveals that education-related laws were among the most likely to prompt an intervention.³² It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss Freppel's arguments on education in a comprehensive manner. Rather, selected speeches in response to the reforms will suffice to illustrate how education fit into the framework of his social doctrine and how his arguments against state action in education further exemplified the principles underlying his vision of society. In this way there was an important connection between education and the social question in Freppel's thought.

Primary Education and the Ferry Laws

The goal of the Ferry Laws was to provide “free, obligatory, and lay” primary education for the children of France. Freppel objected to elements of each of these three characteristics, though the final one was the most unacceptable to him. While maintaining the religious foundation of education and the significance of the Church's involvement in it, he employed arguments in the name of justice, liberty, and pragmatism in opposition to the proposals. The law establishing free primary education is a good example. Freppel began by pointing out that free education was an idea that had long been practiced by the Church, whether through gifts and donations allowing children to attend school or religious orders established specifically to provide free education for children. But the current proposal gave the appearance of providing free education while not really doing so and unjustly hurting the poor and helping the rich. The school fee

³² This is difficult to quantify, as several issues not directly focused on education impacted it at least tangentially. For example, debates over the *budget des cultes* or local funding had implications for education even though they were not aimed exclusively at education.

(*rétribution scolaire*) was to be abolished but the revenue to fund schools would come from new taxes and fees. However, the poor had been exempted from the *rétribution scolaire*, meaning that funding for education had come entirely from the more well-off in society. The replacement of the fee with a general tax meant that the poor would now pay for something from which they were previously exempted. “You will arrive at this strange result that, under the pretext of being free, school will stop being free for the poor – precisely those who have the most need of it. And the rich alone will benefit from a measure they did not even ask for.”³³ This result seemed neither just nor equitable to Freppel.

Along with his objection to the financial impact of the law on the poor, Freppel also rejected the claim that it would be a more useful and productive system of primary education. First, people had the tendency to appreciate and value something that they paid for more highly than that which they received for free. Freppel said that the worker would view his children’s instruction as more important if he knew he was paying the *rétribution scolaire* in order for his children to go to school, while the children would do likewise by seeing the material sacrifice made by their father to enable their education.³⁴ He then cited empirical data from a study of existing systems of free education in parts of France which showed that the majority of evaluations were negative. He read twenty-six examples of these reports which reflected poorly on the free schools while many mentioned the success of the older system.³⁵

³³ *O.P.*, t.II, p. 299. For Freppel’s entire argument on this point, see pp. 286 – 299.

³⁴ *O.P.*, t.II, pp. 304 – 305.

³⁵ *O.P.*, t.II, pp. 315 – 331.

Yet another argument made by Freppel against a universal system of free primary education was the dangerous precedent it would establish. The principle that the state should provide free education was the first step in the direction of the “theories of the socialists or communists.” The next logical step would be to demand that the state provide free secondary and higher education, a comment that drew reactions of “Yes! Yes!” from some on the Left.³⁶ Under the same pretext of equality employed by proponents of the law, the state could then be responsible for providing much more than education. “You do not have to wait a long time to move from the alphabet to soup; from free instruction to free food, clothing, and lodging; from the theory of the state as universal instructor to universal provider.”³⁷ This familiar sentiment of ever-increasing state power illustrated a central concern that had implications for education as well as other issues, including the social question.

The fear of the state’s influence was also a large part of Freppel’s objections to the aspect of the law making primary education obligatory. He did not think the state should use its coercive power to tell parents they must send their children to school during a certain period of their lives. Freppel thought that the education of children was obligatory in a moral sense, that parents must ensure the basic education of their children, but it was not something that should be made a legal obligation. Such an action by the state would be “equivalent to tyranny and oppression.”³⁸ However, the biggest problem with the Ferry Laws remained the attempt to laicize primary education, an effort Freppel found unacceptable.

³⁶ *O.P.*, t.II, pp. 332 – 335.

³⁷ *O.P.*, t.II, p. 341.

³⁸ *O.P.*, t.II, pp. 366 – 367.

Freppel's argument against the laicization of primary education was that adopting a neutral position was the same as adopting a position against the teaching of Christianity. In addition, the inculcation of moral virtues, something most agreed was an important element of early education, would become either more difficult or meaningless without a Christian foundation. Freppel outlined these arguments in various settings as bishop, but in the Chamber he took a more empirical approach. Though he did mention these basic points, his speeches in the Chamber were filled with quotations from various books and studies that showed lay education to be less effective. Moreover, he relied on non-ecclesiastical sources and several quotes from liberals of previous generations to prove that it was not only Catholics who objected to lay education.³⁹ Freppel's use of educational studies demonstrated not only his willingness to adapt his arguments in different settings, but also the value he placed on empirical research in the social sciences. Here again was a principle that had implications for the social question, as he valued and promoted such efforts with respect to worker's issues.

In a similar fashion to his arguments against divorce, Freppel also raised the issue of religious liberty or freedom of conscience in the debate over lay schools. If the problem was that the presence of non-believers in schools required that religion be omitted entirely in order to safeguard their religious freedom, this established a dangerous and unworkable precedent. Since the "domain of conscience is quite vast" any number of accommodations could be requested. A parent who was a socialist could object to teaching about private property, or a fatalist could object to teaching about free

³⁹ *O.P.*, t.II, pp. 257 – 268.

will.⁴⁰ Freppel warned there would be no end to arguments like this made in the name of liberty of conscience. Furthermore, he thought the idea of protecting the rights of a small minority at the expense of the majority was in itself a violation of religious liberty. The government knew that a majority of schools were Catholic and most of their students were Catholic, yet they were willing to prohibit any mention of religion. This could also diminish the overall quality of education, since it would strip subjects like ethics and history of essential religious references. Freppel's attempt to turn the logic of his opponents against them was ultimately unsuccessful, however.

Funding Church and State: Budgetary Battles

In theory, Freppel envisioned the relationship between Church and state to be characterized by cooperation. Each had a distinct sphere of competence and issues that overlapped would be handled with mutual respect. This was by no means the relationship that existed between the Catholic Church in France and the Third Republic at the end of the nineteenth century. There are a number of ways to examine the tension between Church and state in the Chamber: the debates over education, laws demanding military service from seminarians, the expulsion of non-authorized religious congregations. What these and other debates reveal is the fundamental disagreement that existed over the precise nature and role of both Church and state and the limits of their spheres of competence and action. This was particularly evident when financing was at stake. Freppel's participation in the debates over the *budget des cultes* as well as the

⁴⁰ *O.P.*, t.II, pp. 439 – 440.

overall budget provides useful insight into the application of his principles about Church and state in less-than-ideal circumstances.

The 'Budget des cultes'

Part of the anticlerical movement of the Third Republic was an attempt to suppress the *budget des cultes*, which effectively funded Catholic Church in France.⁴¹ Freppel vehemently opposed these efforts and offered a number of arguments against them. His most basic point was that the *budget des cultes* was owed in justice to the Church on account of the historical circumstances under which it arose. The confiscation of Church property in the early stages of the French Revolution was its basis, and it had been maintained by subsequent regimes through the current day. In an extensive address in 1882 Freppel outlined the development of the *budget des cultes* in the Chamber. He began by citing the original decrees of the Revolution pertaining to the issue, beginning with the action of the National Assembly in November of 1789 that seized ecclesiastical property.⁴² The following year the assembly codified its financial commitment to the Church:

Considering the attachment of the National Assembly to the Catholic faith, it does not wish to place in doubt that this religion will have *the first place of public expenditures*, and that, out of a unanimous movement of respect the Assembly expresses its sentiments in the only way acceptable to the dignity of religion and the character of the National Assembly by decreeing: ...Annual public expenditures will include a significant amount to provide for the costs of the

⁴¹ For more on this topic, see Jean-Michel Leniaud, *Le budget des cultes*, (Paris: École des Chartes, 2007)

⁴² The text of the decree read, "That all ecclesiastical goods are at the disposal of the nation, which is responsible for providing in a suitable manner for the costs of the cult, the support of its ministers and the relief of the poor." Quoted in *O.P.*, t.V, p. 10.

Catholic religion, the support of its ministers and the provision of ecclesiastical pensions, for both regular and secular clergy. The amount necessary for funding in 1791 will be determined shortly.⁴³ Freppel cited this legislative act, issued before the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, as the origin of the *budget des cultes*. He said it constituted a “rigorous debt of justice that cannot be erased” which resulted from the confiscation of Church property.

This arrangement was generally maintained throughout the Revolution, though the Convention did suppress clerical salaries for a time. The Concordat of 1801 between Napoleon and Pope Pius VII solidified the provision of clerical salaries and in exchange the Church surrendered any claim to property seized during the Revolution. After Napoleon’s reign of the First Empire, subsequent regimes under the Bourbon Restoration, July Monarchy, and the Republic of 1848 affirmed the *budget des cultes*. In fact, the Constitution of 1848 explicitly characterized the payment of clerical salaries as a right.⁴⁴ Despite the changes in government that had occurred in the century since the Revolution, the commitment to the *budget des cultes* remained intact. For the government of the Third Republic to threaten to decrease or end it would signify a grave injustice and novelty among the regimes of modern France.

One of the arguments against continuing the funding of the *budget des cultes* was that it was a violation of conscience to force non-Catholics to pay for the salaries of priests when they neither attended church nor believed in the faith.⁴⁵ Freppel responded by saying there were a number of government expenditures that went to services that some taxpayers would never use or need. For example, the government allocated money

⁴³ *O.P.*, t.V, pp. 11 – 12. Emphasis by Freppel.

⁴⁴ *O.P.*, t.V, pp. 36 – 37.

⁴⁵ The *budget des cultes* had expanded to include Protestant and Jewish ministers, so the issue was not strictly non-Catholics, but rather non-believers.

for theatres, yet some people had moral objections to this form of entertainment and would never attend. Similarly, everyone had to pay for the public school system even though they sent their children to religious schools. “The conscience of taxpayers is not bound to the participation in these public expenses. When one is part of a social body he does not have the right to evade shared obligations because he does not agree with them.”⁴⁶ A taxpayer was not signaling his agreement with every government expenditure by fulfilling his duty to pay taxes. Furthermore, the failure to uphold this shared responsibility would lead to a breakdown of the social pact, “the return of barbarism, the end of civilization, the dissolution of the social order.”⁴⁷

Philosophical objections aside, the *budget des cultes* was used as a vehicle for the Republicans to weaken the Church. For example, an amendment to the budget in 1882 sought to fund only the bishoprics and archbishoprics in existence at the time of the Concordat, which would have effectively suppressed the new dioceses created since 1801. Freppel characterized this move as a blatant violation of the Concordat, which had required the agreement of both the Holy See and the French government in order for any changes to the boundaries of dioceses to occur. Such agreements had been reached since 1801, largely a result of the lost territory that had previously been claimed by the Revolution and Napoleon.⁴⁸ New dioceses were also created as a result of colonial expansion and the recognition that earlier boundaries were no longer feasible. All of these changes were made in accordance with the terms of the Concordat and the

⁴⁶ *O.P.*, t.V, p. 40.

⁴⁷ *O.P.*, t.V, p. 41.

⁴⁸ For example, there were dioceses in Mainz, Trier, Aachen and Liège, all of which no longer belonged to France.

agreement of the Holy See and France. Subsequently, each year the *budget des cultes* included funding that reflected these changes. Thus Freppel accused the Chamber of wishing to arbitrarily ignore the Concordat and precedents of other legislatures.⁴⁹ The law clearly outlined the relationship between Church and state on this issue and yet the Chamber was unwilling to respect the authority of the Church. Like other similar efforts, this measure ultimately failed, but it still signified to Freppel the bad faith of the government toward the Church.

Even more troublesome to Freppel was the claim that the Minister of Cults had the authority to reduce or revoke the salary of priests as punishment for violations. During a debate over the *budget des cultes* in 1882, Freppel argued against this notion that was upheld in a report of the commission responsible for drafting the budget. He called it “arbitrary and illegal” and another action that set a very dangerous precedent for the government. His first objection was that French law did not allow specific penalties to be assessed unless explicitly stated by the law. In other words, the punishment was to be left to the courts when the law did not provide for an automatic penalty or reserve the punishment to the relevant minister. For example, a law enacted in 1852 granted the Minister of Education the ability to reduce or withhold the salaries of public school teachers for disciplinary reasons.⁵⁰ Since a similar law did not exist for the Minister of Cults and clerical salaries, it was not justifiable for the minister to take these actions.

Secondly, the law was clear that the competent authority in determining the status of a priest was the bishop. He alone had the ability to say which man was or was not a

⁴⁹ *O.P.*, t.V, pp. 51 – 64.

⁵⁰ *O.P.*, t.V, p. 72.

priest in good standing. Once again, Freppel warned of a dangerous precedent if the government was not strictly required to pay those promised compensation by the budget: “There is not a single person whose salary comes from the state that should not fear for his livelihood. For if his salary ceases to be a rigorous right and becomes instead compensation for volunteering, dependent on the whim of the minister, no one has any security or guarantee.”⁵¹ A number of laws from the Revolution onward confirmed the clerical salary, thereby guaranteeing it for the priest provided his bishop did not say otherwise. Furthermore, as long as his bishop did not suspend him, the priest continued functioning even if penalized by the minister, creating an untenable situation where the priest would be required to continue his duties without any compensation. By penalizing a priest outside the framework of the law, the minister was claiming competence where it was explicitly left to the bishop.

Finally, this claim of authority by the Minister of Cults illustrated another constant criticism leveled by Freppel at the government, which was the disregard of their respective limits of power by various ministers. The minister’s adjustment of salaries was an intervention into the budgetary laws passed by the Chamber, thus breaching the separation of powers. “Is this not an encroachment of the executive power upon the legislative power? Please note, that if you allow the minister the authority to suspend or suppress entirely the salary of one priest, are you not logically obligated to grant him the authority to do likewise for ten, twenty, one hundred, one thousand – for all?”⁵²

⁵¹ *O.P.*, t.V, p. 77.

⁵² *O.P.*, t.V, p. 88.

This meant that the minister theoretically had the authority to completely annul the laws of the budget pertaining to certain areas that had been passed by the Chamber. Freppel's argument on this point carried important implications for the social question. He was observing what he believed to be the arbitrary and extra-judicial exercise of authority by government ministers, with the assent of the Chamber. What would stop a similar process from occurring with laws pertaining to the worker question? Freppel was greatly troubled by this expansive view of state authority and its application to other issues. Despite his efforts, the reduction or suspension of ecclesiastical salaries remained an ongoing problem for the Church throughout Freppel's time in the Chamber.⁵³

The continuous political manipulation of the *budget des cultes* was part of a broader attempt, fueled by the Radical Left of the Chamber, to achieve a complete separation of Church and state, thus ending the need for government support of the Church. Though this goal was not fully achieved until 1905, this ultimate end was evident by the 1880's. For example, in 1882 far-Left deputy Jules Roche proposed a law to secularize ecclesiastical goods through confiscation and enact a complete separation of Church and state. The proposal would have applied to religious congregations, seminaries, and parishes, transferring possession to the state "immediately" and required the state to sell all the "religious goods" of the Church, including altars, sacred vessels, and other ecclesiastical "ornamentations" within six months. The proceeds of this sale

⁵³ For other remarks on the issue by Freppel, see *O.P.*, t.V, pp. 313 – 333; t.VI, pp. 249 – 255; t.VII, pp. 291 – 323; t.VIII, pp. 259 – 266. Freppel spoke out against a significant reduction in the salary of the Archbishop of Paris, even though their ecclesiastical policies were often at odds (*O.P.*, t.VI, pp. 267 – 271), and Freppel himself saw a reduction when the government decided he should not be paid as both a bishop and deputy, so they revoked his salary as deputy. See Terrien, t.II, p. 433.

were then to be used to fund the expansion of the public school system.⁵⁴ In this way the proposal compounded the insult toward the Church, seeking not just the seizure of goods but to use their sale for the lay schools. Unsurprisingly, Freppel reacted strongly to this proposal in a lively speech to the Chamber.

After Freppel read the relevant portions of the proposal some on the Left demonstrated their approval, to which Freppel replied, “I hear some say ‘Very well!’, which simply proves that the seventh commandment of God is not understood well enough, especially in this very Chamber.”⁵⁵ The proposal, Freppel argued, amounted to nothing more than theft. His opponents objected to this characterization as too harsh, but Freppel was unrelenting. “Their possessions are as legal and legitimate as those of any member of this assembly. Thus, what you propose to decree, under the euphemism of ‘secularization’, is quite simply the rejection and destruction of the principle of property.”⁵⁶ Undermining the property rights of any group would establish a dangerous precedent for all. This was the implementation of socialism, and could lead ultimately to the confiscation of factories, the personal wealth of the rich, or any other target of the law. Freppel warned that the “openly communist” proposal would be difficult to implement and would stoke civil discord. He mocked the promise of one year’s compensation as an attempt at fairness and the text of the proposal allowing the religious to keep their clothing.⁵⁷ Freppel’s repeated use of the word “theft” drew the ire of the

⁵⁴ *O.P.*, t.IV, pp. 189 – 190.

⁵⁵ *O.P.*, t.IV, p. 191.

⁵⁶ *O.P.*, t.IV, p. 192.

⁵⁷ “Oh, I know that you agreed to leave, as some assistance, a year of revenue, and you applied this same generosity in allowing them to keep their robes and their shirts: «Article 13: The members of the suppressed congregations, whether authorized or unauthorized, will be able to use the items of their chambers, including clothing and personal linens.» I admit that you could have gone further. (Laughter)

president of the Chamber, but he countered that no other term could describe the proposal as accurately. He concluded by criticizing those involved with the proposal for playing political games by putting forth unworkable proposals aimed at the Church in order to feed anticlerical sentiment.⁵⁸ Although he recognized the proposal was unlikely to be enacted, Freppel still feared the impact of putting forth ideas that so fundamentally threatened the principles he considered central to an ordered society.

Freppel's impatience and disgust with the mixture of politics and ideology at work in Roche's proposal as well as the debates over the *budget des cultes* was evident by the end of the 1880's. In 1889 he addressed the use of the *budget des cultes* as a political issue, saying that the Left truly favored the status quo but liked having the ability to appear as if they might dramatically change the relationship between Church and state. Two and a half years prior, Freppel had been named to a commission that was formed to study the Concordat and other related issues. However, the commission had met only a few times over that period, suggesting that they were not seriously interested in cutting the *budget des cultes* or abolishing the Concordat.⁵⁹ Freppel's analysis of the situation was that the Left was uncertain whether there was enough popular support for such measures, and at the same time they had achieved a level of separation between the Church and state that allowed them to undermine the Church without a legal separation. He rejected this situation and called instead for a clearer articulation of goals, arguing that the Left should promise explicitly the separation of Church and state in the next

But you stopped yourself before clothing and personal linens. Everything else will be sold for the profit of the State." *O.P.*, t.IV, pp. 199 – 200.

⁵⁸ *O.P.*, t.IV, pp. 216 – 222. On this charge he was almost certainly correct.

⁵⁹ *O.P.*, t.X, pp. 248 – 250.

election. This idea, he continued, would force them to admit that they wished to reject the actions of the Revolution which had effectively instituted the *budget des cultes*; that they wished to keep the property of the Church which had been seized and allow the clergy to live in poverty without any compensation; that they were willing to “subsidize theatres for the satisfaction of the wealthy while not spending a penny for the millions of women and children who receive comfort and consolation from religion;” and that they would force Catholics to continue paying for public schools they objected to while not spending any money for their religious interests.⁶⁰

It is in these clear, precise, and perfectly understandable terms that you should pose the question. For if you do not, if you limit yourselves to vague generalities and abstract formulations, you will not be acting straightforwardly and sincerely! But if you do ask the question in these terms the French people will respond to you, and you will find their response on these benches in the next legislature.⁶¹

Freppel was likely overconfident in his analysis of the popular opposition to the

separation of Church and state at that time, but for the moment the uneasy relationship between the two remained joined by law. In a parting shot to his opponents on this issue, Freppel modified the proverb, saying “fear of the voters has become the beginning of wisdom” for the Left. But the entire debate over the *budget des cultes* and the political calculations about voters’ desires was also part of a broader question about the role of the state in modern society.

⁶⁰ *O.P.*, t.X, pp. 256 – 257.

⁶¹ *O.P.*, t.X, pp. 257 – 258.

“The Doctrine of the French Budget”

The budget of a country is a useful way to evaluate national priorities, showing in what areas the government spends money as well as how it generates its operating revenue. It also reflects the prevailing view of the state and the influence it should have in various elements of life. The conception of the state and its role in society was one of the fundamental issues in the debate among social Catholics. Therefore, Freppel’s reaction to the French budget offers further insight into his view of the state. As bishop, he outlined the state’s role as one of “social protection,” a principle with a good deal of subjectivity. His position on the budget is one way to see the application of this principle; his view of laws relating directly to the social question is another. Before proceeding to the latter, a useful framework for state action can be ascertained from the former.

As deputy, Freppel did not intervene very often in debates over the budget. He was much more active with the *budget des cultes*, but left arguments over the budget to those with more technical expertise. However, after ten years in the Chamber he gave an illuminating speech on “the doctrine of the French budget” in which he analyzed the implications of the budget from a general perspective.⁶² The budget, he began, is “the

⁶² The context of this speech and its implications for Freppel’s social doctrine are important. The address was given on October 24, 1890, only a few weeks after his “Bombe d’Angers” (see below) in which he criticized other groups of Social Catholics for relying too heavily on state involvement in the social question. In addition, much of the legislation that dealt directly with the social question during Freppel’s tenure in the Chamber was debated between 1889 and 1891, so it is not unreasonable to link some of his remarks with these issues.

most sensible and tangible expression of the nation's situation" because it reflects the errors or achievements of the past as well as the hopes of the future.⁶³ He then offered three ways in which the "doctrine" of the budget, by which he meant the principles underlying its creation, was errant.

The first problem was "the abuse of civil service, which used to be called the excessive development of bureaucracy, but can be stated more clearly as the unfortunate tendency to needlessly increase offices and jobs in all areas."⁶⁴ Freppel acknowledged that this was not a product of the Third Republic or even the Revolution, since as far back as Louis XIV governments had fallen victim to this tendency. He said this occurred because leaders hoped that increasing the number of departments and workers would give them security against unexpected events and add stability to the government. However, the Third Republic had increased the level of bureaucracy by considerable amounts, increasing the number of government employees since 1876 by one-third, which added an additional 118 million francs to the annual budget. Furthermore, at least one of the ministers had recently reported to the budget commission that he could operate with half the number of current personnel. This was just one example, and Freppel argued there was no reason to increase taxes or cut certain areas of expenditures when such a situation existed. Technological improvements such as the telegraph, telephone, railroads and an increase in the number of post offices should also diminish the need for as many government employees.⁶⁵

⁶³ *O.P.*, t.X, p. 365.

⁶⁴ *O.P.*, t.X, p. 367.

⁶⁵ *O.P.*, t.X, pp. 368 – 369.

The financial impact of this trend should not only be considered, but also the moral and social implications. Freppel called it “wicked” to foster in youth this “penchant for bureaucracy,” which was the inevitable effect of these policies. “Far from bringing any strength to society, it removes precious resources from agriculture, commerce and industry, which are useful professions for the prosperity of a nation. Yet they are deserted. Why? Because people want any position that places them on the payroll of the budget.”⁶⁶ As a remedy for this situation, Freppel proposed returning to the levels of government employees and funding that existed in 1876. He was not hopeful that his advice would be heeded, however. “The same reasons that caused you to increase the number of public employees will prevent you from reducing it, because you fear creating enemies out of those you rely on for support.”⁶⁷

The second problem, which Freppel referenced in other settings as well, was that the budget reflected an exaggerated and overly expansive view of the function of the state. This also had a damaging financial impact on the country. Freppel then offered insight into his own view of the matter:

It is common sense that in civil and commercial matters, primarily in the areas of works and construction, the state should not undertake what individuals or natural and free associations can do by themselves. Likewise, all that concerns public order, international relations and national defense should be left to the state. Apart from this, the true role and function of the state is to encourage, promote, stimulate, even guide, if you wish, individual and collective action toward its general ends and in the interest of all. But it is not to insert itself into, and replace, everything that occurs.⁶⁸

The state’s involvement in schools, commerce, industry, and other similar areas therefore represented a misunderstanding of its proper role. In response to this objection a

⁶⁶ *O.P.*, t.X, p. 370.

⁶⁷ *O.P.*, t.X, p. 374.

⁶⁸ *O.P.*, t.X, p. 377.

member of the Left asked whether Freppel was proposing the separation of Church and state if the state should not be involved in other areas not covered by his definition. Freppel replied that such a question only proved his point: he would much prefer the Church had retained its property, in which case there would be no *budget des cultes* or state support of the Church, however the state had exceeded its proper limits and seized the Church's property, thereby creating the current need.⁶⁹

Freppel then offered two examples to illustrate his point. The first was the situation with France's colonial efforts.⁷⁰ In the past, various "companies" were established to settle and develop new lands. This model could be adapted to the current day, though Freppel did not want the companies to receive monopoly privileges as they had under the *ancien régime*. Instead, the government was controlling nearly all the colonial development, requiring authorization from the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies to permit any new buildings, whether hospitals, barracks, or stores. The logistical difficulties of this system, as well as the notion that a faraway government official should have control, had become costly to France in terms of finances and development. The consequences could be felt both at home and abroad: "By doing this, the spirit of private initiative with all its passion and vigor is removed and national activity is paralyzed, preventing progress. Because they have seen the government

⁶⁹ *O.P.*, t.X, pp. 377 – 378.

⁷⁰ It must be pointed out that Freppel was unique among the Right in his support for the majority of France's colonial expenditures. See P. Haudrère, "Monseigneur Freppel et la question coloniale (1880 – 1891)," in *Catholiques entre monarchie et république*, pp. 137 – 143 for an excellent overview and explanation of Freppel's views on this issue.

ultimately decide the most insignificant local issue in the smallest village, the French people have become accustomed to giving the state the control of all their affairs.”⁷¹

The second example of the state being unable to act as efficiently as private enterprise was the continued impediment of a portion of the Loire river that was unnavigable.

Freppel wondered why no solution had been found, perhaps by building a canal, to a problem that was costing France in lost commercial opportunities. Freppel’s answer was that everyone left the problem to the government, which was slowed by bureaucracy and other concerns from doing anything to resolve it. In a rare example of praise for a rival, Freppel lamented that if France were more like England the problem would have been solved long ago.⁷²

Another problem with the state taking on additional functions was the impact on cost and efficiency. In a statement that echoed the arguments of economic liberalism against government projects, Freppel said,

If the state worked better and more cheaply, one could at least be comforted to a certain point by its replacement of private industry. But it is practically an axiom that projects undertaken by the state cost more than others without being either better conceived or better executed. The reason for this is simple. It is only through borrowing that the state can fulfill this role of universal engineer and builder that it accepts so willingly. However, since above all it must avoid alarming the public, the state conceals its borrowing as much as it can.⁷³

Since the state was funding many of its projects through borrowing, the typical impact of cost overruns was not felt. Rather, Freppel continued, the state added loan upon loan indefinitely. He did not entirely fault the Third Republic for this situation, recognizing that a primary cause of the nation’s debt was the century of war it had undertaken,

⁷¹ *O.P.*, t.X, p. 381.

⁷² *O.P.*, t.X, pp. 383 – 384.

⁷³ *O.P.*, t.X, pp. 385 – 386.

especially during the reign of Napoleon. Yet the expansion of the state's functions was also an undeniable cause of the current situation. Freppel's proposed corrective for this problem was to employ the principle of decentralization. The state could significantly reduce its budget expenditures by simply allowing local departments, associations, and companies to do the type of work they had done before a more expansive view of the state took hold. Decentralization also had a non-financial benefit for Freppel, as it would contribute to the restoration of a proper conception of the state.

Freppel's third critique of the French budget was that it had become a weapon of the majority against its opponents. This objection has less application to the social question in general, but is important when considering the context of his positions for or against specific state action. The principles of justice and equity demanded that since the budget was funded by the contributions of all taxpayers, it should benefit all, not just the particular party in control.⁷⁴ Instead, it was being used to implement policies against the will of what Freppel supposed was a large portion of the country. For example, the building of new schools was a costly project that was started not because there was a major shortage of schools in France but because the government did not like Catholic schools. Freppel then gave the most extreme examples of towns where the public school only had a few children enrolled while the religious schools had many more students.⁷⁵ Despite the lack of need or interest in these schools, they were built at a great expense to the taxpayers and staffed by teachers whose salary was also paid by the state. The

⁷⁴ *O.P.*, t.X, p. 389.

⁷⁵ *O.P.*, t.X, pp. 390 – 391. According to Freppel's reports, the lay school in Le Conquet had one student while the religious school had 130; in Chanzeaux there were four students in the lay school with eighty in its religious counterpart.

government's battle against the Church had therefore become far costlier than arguments over the *budget des cultes*.

Freppel concluded his speech by saying that the only way to restore a sound budget that served the general interests in justice and equity was by electing a conservative majority. He was also candid that unless such a political overhaul occurred, he expected nothing in the current doctrine to change. Thus it was within this setting, with his bleak and critical perception of the political dynamics and intentions of the Republican government, that Freppel intervened on proposals aimed at resolving the social question. Though he was clearly opposed to the state becoming overly involved in industry, he was not absolutely opposed to all the proposals on this issue. In this way his notion of "social protection" provided by the state comes into even sharper relief.

The Social Question in the Chamber

Freppel did not speak out on proposals relating directly to the social question during his first several years in the Chamber. As with the national budget, he deferred to those with more technical knowledge. The one exception to this early reticence was a speech on the worker question in 1884. Freppel did not present many technical arguments about proposals to help the worker, offering instead his praise for Albert de Mun's articulation of the Right's position.⁷⁶ Freppel used the opportunity to focus on the role of religion in the social question, a constant theme of his addresses as bishop. He acknowledged that there were a number of ideas about how to approach the problem, but

⁷⁶ *O.P.*, t.VI, pp. 303 – 304.

he did not wish to criticize any particular approach, including those that relied on the government. His sole purpose was to call attention to the moral aspect of the worker question and the need to recognize that religion must be a part of any solution. Christian virtues like justice, sacrifice, and temperance were ultimately the foundation that must exist in both patrons and workers. “The liberty of work, yes! But if, in theory, the habits of idleness and misconduct separate the worker from his task, no economist in the world can preserve him from ruin and misery.”⁷⁷ Freppel even supported personal interest as a motivating factor in work, provided that justice and dedication kept it from becoming egoism. These principles, in combination with the effective elements of prior working arrangements adapted to the demands of modern industry, would lead to the improvement of the worker’s situation.

Freppel warned that the policies and proposals of the Republicans were leading to a much different outcome. Since the social question was a fundamentally a moral question, the moral formation of French workers was crucial to the future. The actions of the government, beginning with the laicization of schools, were weakening the social fabric of the nation:

In this worker, formed in your schools henceforth without religion, atheism will create dissatisfaction, a revolt against the social order, a man who will lack the strength to endure suffering and misfortune. And because he will have no hope in a better life he will concentrate in this life completely on satisfying his desires and pleasures which, as a result, will cause him to view anyone with more fortune or happiness as an enemy. This is the worker that you are preparing, the worker of the future, the worker of social conflict. Do I not have the right to say that instead of resolving the social question, you have turned your back on it?⁷⁸

⁷⁷ *O.P.*, t.VI, p. 309.

⁷⁸ *O.P.*, t.VI, pp. 327 – 328.

Freppel refrained for the most part from any further involvement in these types of issues until the last few years of his career.

Tension and Development in Freppel's Approach

Freppel's portrayal of the state in his speech on the "Doctrine of the French Budget" could easily give the impression that he opposed any state intervention on the social question. However, the record of Freppel's application of his social principles to specific votes in the Chamber is more complex. He did not oppose all state intervention and actually endorsed the possibility of fairly broad government involvement. In the end he often opposed a particular proposal because he disagreed with a certain element of its application, not the underlying principle. Another complexity in Freppel's actions in the Chamber on the social question is that there is clear evidence that between 1888 and 1891 he changed his position on specific issues of government involvement. This development is not evident in his votes alone, but by comparing his speeches in the Chamber to later addresses in his capacity as bishop. Therefore there are several aspects to consider when examining Freppel's approach to the social question in this setting.

The first element of Freppel's view that is important to note is that he accepted the principle that the state could and should intervene in the regulation of work under certain circumstances. He did not reject all interventions as an illegitimate use of authority. The conditions or circumstances that permitted state action must clearly serve

some public good. The clearest example of this, from which Freppel never wavered, was the ability of the state to legislate a weekly day of rest. More specifically, Freppel believed the state should require Sunday to be a day of rest for workers in factories and stores. A proposal in 1888 required that children under eighteen years of age and women could work no more than six days per week nor on legal holidays. Freppel offered an amendment to this proposal to prohibit them from working on Sundays. He supported the effort to pass a law along these lines, but thought it did not make sense to allow the employer to choose which day would be the day of rest.⁷⁹ It was telling, he thought, that the legal holidays described by the proposal included Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, All Saints Day and other religious feasts.⁸⁰ If the Chamber did not think it was problematic for the religious liberty of all French citizens to require these days as days of rest from work, why should Sunday not also be acceptable? In addition, he was not proposing that anyone be required to attend Mass on Sunday, merely that they did not work. Therefore, this would not infringe on anyone's religious liberty, but the current proposal allowing patrons to choose which day would be the day of rest easily could. Allowing the patron to choose meant that the day of rest could be Tuesday or Friday, forcing a worker to work on Sunday or risk losing their job, an untenable position for an observant Christian.⁸¹ In a family with members working at different places it could also create a situation where their days off never coincided, which would undoubtedly weaken the family bond.

Freppel also offered some pragmatic considerations in favor of his view. He argued that from the standpoint of enforcement it was more practical to specify Sunday.

⁷⁹ *O.P.*, t.X, pp. 16 – 17.

⁸⁰ Though a quick-witted member of the Left added that July 14 was also one of the legal holidays.

⁸¹ *O.P.*, t.X, pp. 19 – 20.

The state inspectors responsible for assuring legal compliance would have a much easier task if the day of rest was uniformly Sunday than if it could vary from factory to factory. In addition, a prior law of 1874 had prohibited the work of minors on Sundays, so his amendment was not a novelty.⁸² Finally, some questioned whether Freppel's proposal was an infringement on the religious practice of Jewish workers. He responded that he would willingly include an exception for Jews but that he did not think the concerns of a group of fifty-seven thousand should outweigh those of thirty-six million.⁸³ The issue remained unresolved and was raised again the following year, with Freppel offering mostly the same arguments, adding only that the Chamber often compared France's laws to those in other countries and in this case other European countries observed Sunday rest.⁸⁴ Finally in 1891 Freppel raised the possibility of extending mandated Sunday rest to all workers, not just women and children.⁸⁵ As in his prior attempts, Freppel's intervention was ultimately unsuccessful. Yet it was a clear illustration of his willingness to use the power of the state to impose restrictions on businesses.

The issue of restrictions on Sunday work was straightforward for Freppel because of its religious implications. Other issues did not have such an obvious religious element and therefore required Freppel to demonstrate the limits of the "social protection" function of the state. In some cases, he agreed with the sentiment of the proposal but objected to a specific technicality, while in others he was opposed in principle. An example of the former was a series of proposals aimed at limiting the work of women and

⁸² *O.P.*, t.X, pp. 22 – 23.

⁸³ *O.P.*, t.X, p. 202.

⁸⁴ *O.P.*, t.X, pp. 203 – 204.

⁸⁵ *O.P.*, t.X, pp. 424 – 425.

children in industrial settings. In one proposal, the law was written so broadly that it included orphanages and other charitable institutions run by the Church in its restriction of work by children below the age of thirteen. Freppel argued that orphanages and other similar institutions for children without parents should be allowed to require a minimal amount of work, primarily to teach them the importance and benefits of labor.⁸⁶ Freppel wanted the law to be amended to exclude these types of charitable institutions, but the final vote was on the original text. Therefore Freppel opposed the law because of its negative impact on certain worthy organizations, even though he supported the principle of restricting the work of children below a certain age. He reiterated this point in 1891, saying “we willfully admit that the legislature has the right to prevent excessive work by women and children because there would be manifest abuse otherwise, and the legislature has the duty to justly protect those who by their age or situation cannot protect themselves.”⁸⁷ In this later case, the proposal included family-run businesses in its prohibition of child labor. Freppel thought that the state was exceeding its limitations by dictating to parents, who presumably knew the capabilities of their children best, how they must treat their children. He expressed his support for the general principle, indicated his regret at the state’s excessive reach, then voted against the proposal.⁸⁸

A similar pattern occurred in a proposal to limit the number of hours worked by a minor. The debate ranged between eight to eleven hours as limits, and Freppel indicated that he supported the general idea of limiting the amount of time someone under eighteen years of age could work. The problem was that the proposal applied not only to factories

⁸⁶ *O.P.*, t.X, pp. 3 – 5.

⁸⁷ *O.P.*, t.X, p. 426.

⁸⁸ *O.P.*, t.X, p. 428.

and other industrial labor, but also to stores that sold merchandise. There was a difference, Freppel said, between “houses of commerce” and “industrial establishments” and restricting the number of hours a teenager could work at a store might have negative consequences.⁸⁹ Once again, he was willing to grant to the state the ability to impose restrictions if the protected group was women or children. As for laws that applied to adult men, he was more cautious with state action, but not altogether opposed.

An issue of great importance to workers was the establishment of insurance funds in the case of accidents, sickness and old-age. A proposal was introduced in 1888 to regulate insurance specifically for miners by creating a mandatory insurance fund. This would be funded by a contribution both from the worker’s salary and the employer. Freppel again began his speech on the topic by affirming the state’s role in this situation: “Modern industry, with its progress and dangers, has created for workers a situation that requires the attention and concern of the legislature.”⁹⁰ Professions that were particularly dangerous warranted the “special protection” of the state. In the case of the insurance fund under consideration, Freppel gave his strong support. The proposal was in accordance with justice and equity because the worker ought to have some protection against these conditions, and it was proper that both he and the employer contributed to the fund.

Freppel elaborated by responding to potential objections to his position. Some people were arguing that it should not be made mandatory, or that it was not the proper

⁸⁹ *O.P.*, t.X, pp. 9 – 11. Freppel maintained that the law could force stores who relied on youth workers to only remain open the number of hours the youth were allowed to work. He offered no response to the obvious counterargument that a store-owner would just hire another shift of workers to stay open.

⁹⁰ *O.P.*, t.IX, p. 554.

subject of legislation, lest it lead to “state socialism.”⁹¹ Freppel was especially sensitive to the latter criticism, and he wanted to clarify why he was not supporting a socialist policy. The only way the proposal under consideration would be socialist was if it charged the state with funding the insurance itself and administering the program in all its aspects. In that case it would be problematic, for it was not the state’s role to engage in such actions, but here it was only requiring the funds be established. The specific operation and management of the funds was left completely to the patrons and workers, which he found entirely agreeable and not at all tending toward socialism. The principle of mandatory insurance was rational to Freppel, especially for dangerous professions like mining.⁹² The employer had a duty in justice to exercise his role of social paternity in caring for his workers, and the state had to institute preventive measures in the interest of the public good.⁹³

A few months later a similar debate took place over the compensation to coal-miners for accidents that occurred on the job. Though Freppel was sympathetic to the idea, he could not support it because it placed the entire burden of compensation on employers instead of sharing it between employers and workers. This imbalance made the law unjust and inequitable because it did not account for the circumstances of the accident. An employer could take every necessary precaution and even warn the worker of an error he was committing, yet if the worker was careless and at fault all the blame would fall to the employer.⁹⁴ In addition, the policy did not respect the dignity of the

⁹¹ *O.P.*, t.IX, p. 556.

⁹² *O.P.*, t.IX, pp. 559 – 560.

⁹³ *O.P.*, t.IX, pp. 561 – 562.

⁹⁴ *O.P.*, t.X, p.30.

worker, treating him as a mere machine with no personal responsibility whose employer pays in advance for any costs of “repair.”⁹⁵ Freppel called a system like this “absolutely immoral” and concluded “you are not proposing a law in favor of workers, you are proposing one opposed to patrons – a just and equitable law ought to equally protect both.”⁹⁶ Thus Freppel believed that in any instance of insurance or accident funds, both sides ought to contribute in the interest of fairness.

The final issue related to the worker question that Freppel briefly addressed was a proposal to establish a minimum wage. Unlike the other cases, Freppel opposed this action in principle. Proposed in 1889, it was the first attempt to legally establish a minimum salary for workers. Freppel called this action “extremely dangerous” and the fruit of a false theory that leads to injustice. The problem was that the state could not guarantee minimum sales or profits to the employers that it was forcing to pay a minimum wage.⁹⁷ Freppel argued that the two were related, that “salaries rise or fall as income rises or falls” and it was therefore unjust to demand an employer pay a certain amount that could ultimately impose losses on him.⁹⁸ Furthermore, it was another slippery slope toward socialism once the state began establishing wage rates. When Freppel pointed out the logic of his argument leading to socialism, several on the Left interrupted by exclaiming, “That is what we want!”⁹⁹ This brief exchange is important to consider when examining the debate over the minimum wage among social Catholics, as

⁹⁵ *O.P.*, t.X, p. 32.

⁹⁶ *O.P.*, t.X, p. 33.

⁹⁷ *O.P.*, t.X, p. 294.

⁹⁸ It should be noted that this was not the primary argument employed by others in the School of Angers against the minimum wage, see below pp. 257 – 259.

⁹⁹ *O.P.*, t.X, p. 295.

Freppel undoubtedly associated support for the issue with the expressed intentions of his political adversaries to implement socialism.

In light of these interventions in the Chamber, Freppel's doctrine on the role of the state was clarified to some degree. However the precise application of principles remained somewhat ambiguous. It was not entirely clear which laws constituted a necessary preventive measure on behalf of the public good and which were governmental overreach. For example, Freppel defended the principle of mandatory insurance against charges of socialism because the state was not funding and administering the actual program. But he did approve of the law dictating the percentage contributions of both workers and patrons. To some, this did not seem far removed from allowing the state to require a minimum wage. At the very least, they were both significant interventions of the state into private industry; at the worst they were equally likely to lead France down a path to socialism.

Considered separately, Freppel's votes reveal a tension in his view of the state in general and its role in the social question. When paired with the positions he articulated in his "Bombe d'Angers" in 1890 and subsequent addresses until his death, they reveal contradictions. For example, the School of Angers explicitly opposed mandatory insurance in 1890 and 1891. And while it is possible that the majority of the School of Angers opposed it and Freppel maintained his support for it, this is unlikely due to Freppel's addition of "Universal Insurer" onto his list of the negative characteristics of the modern state. Freppel's social doctrine therefore developed further between 1888 and 1891. One likely reason was the growing debate among social Catholics, including on

the issue of insurance, and the need for each side to draw clear distinctions. Another reason was the increasingly close alliance between Freppel and a number of economists and lawyers that formed the basis of the School of Angers. Freppel was not trained in economics, but his interaction with those who were sharpened his thought. It is therefore necessary to turn next to the people who, under Freppel's leadership, comprised the School of Angers.

Conclusions

Freppel's career in the Chamber of Deputies is helpful in shedding further light on his social doctrine. His election itself is useful in highlighting the political divisions both within French society and the French Church. He was a reliable vote for the Right, with the exception of colonial issues, a fact that demonstrates his primary motivation was promoting the interests of the Church. He accepted colonial expenditures from a government that he thought was overextended and overly indebted because these colonies represented new missionary opportunities to spread the Gospel. Freppel offered little support for the Third Republic in most other areas. He entered the Chamber just as the expulsion of non-authorized religious congregations and the Ferry Laws demonstrated an acceleration of the anticlerical agenda of the Republicans. Once again the issue of education confirmed Freppel's suspicions about the ever-expanding power of the state coming at the expense of the Church.

Freppel's speech on the "Doctrine of the French Budget" is one of his most noteworthy and interesting contributions to the Chamber. He outlined a scathing critique of governmental policies that led to bureaucracy, inefficiency, overreach, and politicization. The fight over the *budget des cultes* was just one example of the state using its budgetary power to threaten the interests of religion. The broader problem was that there were few signs of cooperation between Church and state in the government of the Third Republic. This again suggests an explanation into Freppel's reluctance to invoke the power of the state to address the social question, which he viewed primarily as a moral problem.

Freppel's record on the social question is uneven, reflecting a certain amount of inconsistency in his application of social principles. He supported the prohibition of work on Sundays and certain restrictions on work for women and children. On the latter issue he again demonstrated the predominance of his concern for the Church's interests by opposing a law limiting work by children since it did not have the necessary exception for orphanages or other charitable organizations that might be adversely impacted. His position on interventions for adult men was murkier. His speeches reveal at least limited support for regulation of the workday length in certain dangerous industries as well as legislation requiring accident insurance. Freppel often voted against these measures for technical reasons or tangential problems with the application of the law. But the important point is that he seemed supportive of such measures in principle, and would have been willing to vote for them given the proper circumstances. Freppel's words on

these proposals would be used against him by opponents who identified his inconsistencies when Freppel later warned of such measures as being socialistic.

One issue related to the social question where Freppel was clear was his opposition to the establishment of a minimum wage. He criticized this action as an overreaching act that would be inefficient due to the diversity of circumstances surrounding the level of wages. A difference between this proposal and, for example, the proposal to institute accident insurance was the role played by intermediate organizations. In the first case the state was seeking to directly impose its action on the economy; in the second case it was only requiring that insurance be provided, with the funds maintained by the corporation or some other association. This is a plausible explanation for his respective positions and is consonant with the general preference among social Catholics and the later teaching of *Rerum novarum* for intermediate associations to play a strong role in the social question. If this was simply Freppel's application of the state's role of social protection it raises the question as to why, by late 1890, he had apparently reversed his position on the possibility, in certain circumstances, of regulating workday length or requiring accident insurance. One likely explanation is the increasing polarization among social Catholics which occurred in the year before *Rerum novarum* was released.

Chapter 6

Social Catholics Divided: The School of Angers and the Congresses of 1890

In November of 1884 Freppel was honored by the Catholics of Anjou for his efforts as bishop. After receiving a special cross and mitre he reflected on his public career to that point. He expressed gratitude for his ability to partake in the “battles of the Church against the errors of the age” for over thirty years. He acknowledged frankly that his goal was not to be popular but to stand up for what he believed was in the best interests of the Church, regardless of whether people liked him. He also admitted that he had a reputation for pugnacity, but that he only engaged in arguments and battles that he thought were necessary for the protection of the Church and only in response to attacks made against the Church.¹ He then made an interesting remark that he rarely involved himself in any debates that would divide Catholics, “You can look through the twenty-six volumes of my works and you will not find any controversy with those who share our faith.”² He could not think of a single Catholic who could criticize him for publicly attacking his doctrine or writings. Freppel concluded by pledging to continue fighting the dechristianization of French society and to reject the separation of religion from politics.

It is, of course, only with the benefit of history that one can see the irony in Freppel’s comment about avoiding intra-Catholic conflict. The following year he became

¹ *O.O.P.*, t.IX, pp. 127 – 130.

² *O.O.P.*, t.IX, p. 131. He did mention one exception, his involvement in a debate over rationalism early in his career. See above, pp. 4 – 5.

involved in a public and somewhat embarrassing argument with another bishop over the proper interpretation of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical on the Christian constitution of states, *Immortale Dei*.³ Even more divisive, however, were the events of 1890 concerning the social question, at which point two clearly defined schools of social Catholicism were distinguished. Their disagreements were fully displayed after two social congresses were held: one in Liège in September, another in Angers in October of 1890. These gatherings were the culmination of years of debate and discussion about the social question.

Therefore the formations of the "schools" of Liège and Angers were not entirely new developments but rather the coalescence of two existing streams of social thought around separate and opposing congresses. Until this point Freppel's social doctrine has been considered mostly in isolation from others in the School of Angers. Furthermore, it only makes sense to speak of the School of Angers after the October congress of the *Jurisconsultes catholiques* and only in opposition to the School of Liège that developed from the Belgian congress a month earlier. Thus a concrete presentation of the social doctrine of the School of Angers and a very useful survey of the divide between schools of social Catholicism can be made by examining in detail these two important social congresses.

The Third Congress of Liège

The social congress of Liège, held from September 7 through 10, 1890, was the third such gathering to discuss issues related to the social question. The first, held in

³ See below, pp. 267 – 273.

1886, took place in a context of economic tension. Strikes had spread throughout Belgium earlier in the year, and most of Europe was mired in an economic depression.⁴ All three congresses were presided over by the local ordinary, Bishop Victor-Joseph Doutreloux, who was himself quite interested in the social question. The first congress featured a mixture of views and examined the social question not only from the perspective of the worker, but the patron as well. It focused on the solutions offered by private initiative, but also advocated legislation to regulate the work of women and children and mandate Sunday rest.⁵ The second congress, held the following September, examined many of the same issues but made little noticeable progress. Doutreloux offered a declaration that rejected the liberal notion of supply and demand as the only factor in establishing wages, instead maintaining that there must be a connection between the wage and the work done by the laborer.⁶ Despite some of these modest steps, the most fruitful gathering was by far the third.

Proceedings and Positions

There was a wide range of participants at the third Congress of Liège, and the topics of discussion and debate were the central features of the social question.⁷ There

⁴ Misner, pp. 190 – 194. For more on the activity of social Catholicism in Belgium in the years leading to 1886, see Paul Gérin, *Catholiques Liégeois et question sociale (1833 – 1914)*, (Brussels: Études sociales, 1959), pp. 81 – 87.

⁵ Gérin, *Catholiques Liégeois*, pp. 90 – 91.

⁶ Gérin, *Catholiques Liégeois*, pp. 93 – 94.

⁷ The full proceedings of the congress are recorded in *Congrès des oeuvres sociales à Liège : troisième session, 7-10 septembre 1890*, (Liège: Démarteau, 1890). However, a useful account of the key points in the congress was published shortly thereafter by Urbain Guérin in *L'Association catholique* (Vol. 30, pp. 395 – 422). The following summary of the proceedings relies mainly on Guérin's account which, while not

were representatives from nearly all European nations, including several bishops and political dignitaries.⁸ The letters of several cardinals who could not attend but wanted to praise the congress were read at the outset. This group included Cardinals Manning, Gibbons, and Mermillod. In a way Manning, whose involvement with a strike of dock workers in England had made him a leader among social Catholics, set the tone and agenda for the congress in his letter.⁹ He called for the length of the workday to be set at eight hours for those engaged in very demanding labor, such as miners, and at ten hours for workers engaged in less strenuous jobs. He also advocated restrictions on labor for women and children and laws requiring Sunday rest. His final proposal, however, was certain to be more contentious: “I do not think that it will ever be possible to establish an effective and long-lasting peace between patrons and workers until there is a just and fair measure to govern wages and profits that is publicly established and applies to all contracts.”¹⁰ Since economic conditions are fluid, he also wanted this standard to be reevaluated and updated every three to five years. While all of Manning’s proposals were not fully adapted, he nevertheless established an aggressive and ambitious program of social reform.¹¹

entirely unbiased, provides a balanced description of the arguments. The text of the final resolutions adopted by the congress is also in Jean Corbiau, *Le Congrès de Malines et les réformes sociales* (Brussels: Société Belge de Librairie, 1892) pp. 155 – 200, which also includes the resolutions of other important nineteenth-century social congresses.

⁸ Most prominent among these was the Cardinal-Archbishop of Malines, Pierre-Lambert Goossens. René de la Tour-du-Pin was the most significant French social Catholic who participated. Albert de Mun could not attend but sent a letter to the congress encouraging their efforts.

⁹ *L’Association catholique* Vol. 30, pp. 396 – 397.

¹⁰ *L’Association catholique* Vol. 30, p. 397. There was some controversy about the meaning of this statement, especially the word *publicly*, see below, note 25, p. 228.

¹¹ Cardinal Mermillod also advocated legislation to limit the length of the workday in his letter to the congress, and criticized the view of those who see the worker as merchandise.

The work of the congress was divided into four sections: the workers and publicity, international conventions of work, legislation, and the union of patrons. The first section generated the least debate and featured miscellaneous reports on social terminology, the protection of emigrants, and the role of the socialist and Christian press in publicizing the social question.¹² The second section on international rules for labor drew the largest number of participants. Doutreloux, anticipating disagreement, recalled the pope's words to French workers that accepted the wisdom of state intervention in certain circumstances. He also cited a letter from the papal Secretary of State to the Swiss social reformer Gaspard Decurtins in which the right of the state to intervene not just on behalf of women and children but also for adult men was permitted.¹³ The first issue discussed was the need for laws allowing Sunday rest, including the obligation of factories to stop production on Saturday night and of railroads to halt commercial activities on Sunday. The resolutions also called for Christians to avoid consumer activity on Sunday as much as possible.¹⁴ The next report advocated the idea of international laws restricting the work of women and children and the establishment of an international body to oversee these matters.¹⁵ However there was little sense that such measures would be enacted in the near future.

The first major disagreements took place over the issue of regulating the length of the workday. While the majority favored international regulation for factories, a small group warned that such actions would lead to socialism. Among the group opposed were

¹² Corbiau, pp. 155 – 163.

¹³ *L'Association catholique* Vol. 30, p. 403.

¹⁴ Corbiau, pp. 163 – 165.

¹⁵ Corbiau, pp. 165 – 167.

Auguste Roussel, editor of *l'Univers*, and Gustave Théry, a lawyer and contributor to the *Revue catholique des institutions et du droit*. The question of wage regulation was also raised in this context, as the two issues were often considered together. However it was decided that wages would not be included in any further discussion. Those advocating regulation of the workday criticized opponents for being too content to look at theories and ignoring the facts of the present situation, namely that many workers faced excessively long days of work and risked their health as a result. Two bishops also forcefully intervened on behalf of state regulation in this area. The bishop of Nottingham, Edward Bagshawe, argued that such regulations were necessary in the name of “justice and the public interest.” Anatole de Cabrières of Montpellier, the only French bishop at the congress, also argued that in principle the state should remain out of such questions as long as no abuse is occurring, but in obvious cases of injustice it must get involved.¹⁶ The final resolution called for international guidelines on the maximum length of the workday, but granted that conditions would vary according to country and industry.¹⁷ The second section also discussed a few other issues, notably among them it expressed approval for the Congress of Berlin, held earlier in the year.

The third section, on legislation, began by treating the question of mandatory insurance. The congress reaffirmed its previous support for such measures in the event of accidents and sickness. The other issues dealt with a variety of topics including pension funds, the work of prisoners, vagabondage, and associations. They favored “professional corporations” between patrons and workers and a strong pension system that included the

¹⁶ *L'Association catholique* Vol. 30, p. 409.

¹⁷ Corbiau, pp. 167 – 168.

support of the state.¹⁸ The final section was dedicated to the role of patrons, and featured a presentation by Léon Harmel. The participants stressed the importance of Christian principles for patrons and passed resolutions suggesting that women be separated from men, that crucifixes be placed in factories, and alcohol prohibited. While the patron must care for and watch over his workers, he should not view them like children and should always treat them with respect and dignity.¹⁹ Christian patrons should join together in organizations to promote workplaces that encourage morality and the fair treatment of workers.

The Congress of Liège thus developed a program of social action that was based on Christian principles and the conception of the social question as a moral problem. This foundation was shared by all social Catholics, as was the idea that the state had the right to intervene in certain situations. Once again, however, the major question was how to determine the limits and rationale of state intervention. While beginning in several respects from the same point, the Congress of Angers arrived at different conclusions.

The Congress of Angers

The Congress of Liège received considerable attention in the Catholic press as a result of the stature of some of its participants and the ambitious efforts it promoted. In the monthly chronicle of the *Revue catholique des institutions et du droit*, a brief report on the congress was given in the October issue. It noted the fear of some that the

¹⁸ Corbiau, pp. 172 – 183.

¹⁹ Corbiau, pp. 184 – 196. In addition to factories, there were also reports specifically focused on agricultural settings and smaller businesses.

congress would adopt “German theories on regulation of work,” which were essentially socialistic in the journal’s view. It was pleased, however, that on some of the most contentious issues, such as wage regulation, the congress either indicated the need to study the question more closely or avoided any formal statement. “We believe that one can welcome these results, which were very different from what some expected, since they avoided dangerous and excessive theories.”²⁰ The *Revue* then reaffirmed its acceptance of the principle of state intervention, but noted that it favors the resources of the Church, Christian charity, and individual initiative as the best means for resolving the current problems.

The conciliatory tone of the *Revue catholique des institutions et du droit* was not nearly as evident in the gathering of the same group of *jurisconsultes catholiques*, held in Angers exactly one month after the Liège meeting. This congress is generally seen as a direct response to the Congress of Liège but it should be pointed out that in one sense it was simply the annual conference of the *Société des jurisconsultes catholiques*. The dates, location, and topic of the congresses were announced several months in advance, so it is not as if any plans for the conference were made after the events of the previous month. Certainly the presentations and discussions were shaped by Liège, as will be obvious, but the official theme of the congress was in two parts on the “social role of property” and “the dangers posed by the current application of revolutionary principles.” Furthermore, Freppel’s prominent involvement was mostly a result of the location of the congress. It was not uncommon for the ordinary of the diocese in which the meeting occurred to address the group, as past proceedings reveal, and Freppel did not attend any

²⁰ *Rev. cath.*, (October 1890), p. 364.

other congress besides the 1879 meeting that was held in Angers. However, the aftermath of the Congress of Liège afforded Freppel the opportunity to present, with a group of like-minded social Catholics, a different approach to state intervention from what had been articulated in Belgium. The Congress of Angers was in this way a response to Liège and as a consequence it marked the appearance of the two “schools” which had existed for many years without the direct statement of social principles that occurred at both congresses.²¹

The “Bombe d’Angers”

The Congress of Angers proceeded in the same manner as previous meetings. After Mass the participants gathered at the Catholic University of Angers to begin their work. Lucien Brun, who usually presided, was too ill to attend and was replaced by Jules Bresson, a lawyer from Dijon. The opening address of the first session was then given by Freppel, who spoke at length about the social question. He began by recalling their past meeting in Angers and praising the work of the “excellent” *Revue catholique des institutions et du droit*, which he followed with interest. Formalities aside, he then turned to his topic and offered a series of critiques, some veiled, others direct, at the

²¹ For example, the School of Angers is not traced to the 1879 meeting of the *jurisconsultes catholiques*, which was essentially the same gathering. It was the context of the debate among social Catholics that created this distinction. Similarly, it is not as though the school arose unexpectedly: many sentiments like those expressed at Angers were also promoted at the previous year’s congress in Arras, or in the 1884 gathering in Dijon on “Caesarism and state socialism.” Indeed, there is not much “new” social doctrine to be found at Angers, but rather a focus and contrast that was provided by the occurrence of the two congresses.

deliberations of the Congress of Liège and the perspective of those who favored state intervention in the social question.

Freppel argued that this particular meeting and the work of the *Société des jurisconsultes catholiques* had a unique and important role to play in the debate over the social question. Other groups were concerned primarily with finding immediate and workable solutions to the issues faced by the workers. This group, while still very much interested in practicality, was also dedicated to the important areas of studying the law and principles. “For outside of the law there is only injustice, and without principles one cannot build anything solid or lasting, even with the best intentions in the world.”²² Catholics must have solid social principles, for the threat of state socialism was spreading throughout Western Europe. He pointed to the discussions of the Chamber in France, where people debated fixing the length of the workday, a minimum wage, regulating the proportion between profits and salaries; as if the state could regulate all these aspects of the economy. Freppel’s reaction to this trend was direct: “I do not hesitate to say that this is a tendency as wicked in its consequences as it is ill-founded in principle.”²³ He quickly reiterated that this did not signal a pure *laissez faire* position vis-à-vis government intervention: “No one I know, at least among us, would dream of challenging the idea that the state has not only the right, but even the obligation to intervene in the economic and social domain to prevent or repress the manifest abuses that could occur, especially towards the young and weak.”²⁴ It was the *raison d’être* of the state to protect

²² *O.O.P.*, t.XI, p. 429.

²³ *O.O.P.*, t.XI, p. 430.

²⁴ *O.O.P.*, t.XI, pp. 430 – 431.

the rights of all people. The principle of state intervention was agreed upon by all, but the question of measure was in dispute.

It was in this area of the question that Liège had gone too far. There was a difference, Freppel argued, between saying the state should protect justice and morality in contracts and saying that the state should itself determine the terms of contracts. Once the principle was applied in this manner, it was only logical to grant the state the ability to set the length of the workday and the minimum wage. In other words, part of Freppel's criticism was that by applying the principle of state involvement too broadly, those who held this view were sliding down the slippery slope toward state socialism. The clearest example of this was Cardinal Manning's letter, in which he read with "great surprise" the notion of the state fixing the terms of contracts and the ratio of salaries and profits, even revising them periodically. "How can allowing the public authority to determine the proportion between profits and salaries be considered anything other than the handing over to the state of not just individual liberty, but the entire economic life of a nation?"²⁵

Freppel then turned to the theoretical arguments used to justify an interventionist perspective in the worker question. He presented a number of rationales used by others

²⁵ *O.O.P.*, t.XI, p. 433. There was a good deal of confusion and discussion about this comment by Freppel. Freppel interpreted Manning's call for the terms of a contract to be "fixed and publicly established in a just measure" to mean through legislation. In December of 1890 (Vol. 30, p. 632), *L'Association catholique* published a letter from Manning indicating that he meant "publicly" in the sense of "an open and recognized convention," that would be determined jointly by patrons and employees. Manning added, "Recourse to the legislature ought to be avoided in these matters as much as possible." Freppel's interpretation, however, was not unreasonable at first glance. In Manning's letter to Liège he spoke about legal prohibitions of certain types of work for women and children, and legislation outlawing Sunday labor. Immediately before the comment in question he spoke of recourse to legislative authority as a way of resolving disputes between patrons and employers. Furthermore, Manning continued that the "fixed and publicly established" measure to regulate profits and salaries ought to be "the measure according to which all free contracts between capital and labor will be governed." This type of universal rule governing all contracts would be most obviously achieved by law.

to defend their view, dismissing them all as specious. The first position argues that work is a social function and as a result it belongs to the state to regulate such activity. Freppel responded that while work does have a social function, the contract between a patron and employee is in the private order, between individuals, and not subject to state interference, “except to enforce justice and morality.”²⁶ Furthermore, if this claim grants the state authority to regulate work because work interests society, “there is no manifestation of human activity that would not give rise to an army of bureaucrats,” because man is not separate from society but linked to it by nature. By this standard nearly every activity can be said to be “in the interest of society,” creating an obviously undesirable outcome.²⁷

The next argument Freppel examined touched directly on the relationship between justice and charity in the question of wages. Some interventionists argued that in the interests of justice the salary of the worker should be in proportion to his needs, not just his labor. Freppel responded that this obfuscated the obligations of justice and charity. Justice deals with what one is due, and as soon as the wage is paid at the agreed-upon rate, in an equitable proportion to the work done, justice is fulfilled.²⁸ Any additional compensation is the domain of charity, otherwise in justice a single man must be paid significantly less than a father of several children. This is an example, as Freppel often said, where charity may “complete” justice, but it is not a matter of justice strictly

²⁶ *O.O.P.*, t.XI, p. 435. This is precisely the question at hand, namely whether justice and morality are violated through exploitative contracts. Freppel does not acknowledge that point here, but addresses it in his next critique. Further analysis of the obligations of justice in contracts by others in the School of Angers suggests that in most circumstances they would claim that justice and morality were not contravened. This demonstrates the centrality of the “justice/charity” issue in the social debates.

²⁷ *O.O.P.*, t.XI, p. 435.

²⁸ *O.O.P.*, t.XI, p. 436.

speaking. As a result the state, which is the “guardian of justice,” has no role and should not “convert individual acts of charity into obligations of justice.”²⁹

A third rationale for intervention that Freppel mentioned was the idea that the salary is the “just compensation for the worker’s renunciation of the profits of his labor.” This argument, however, suggested that the worker had some claim to the profits of the enterprise in which he was engaged, as if he were a co-proprietor with the patron. Such a position seemed like an attack on private property to Freppel. He did not object to some type of agreement between patron and worker to distribute or share a portion of profits, and in fact encouraged them. But the claim that the worker was entitled to his wage as a result of sacrificing his labor’s profit granted to the worker a portion of ownership in the overall enterprise that did not belong to him.³⁰ The patron alone was entitled to his profits, though he may wish to share them with his employees. Freppel argued that instead of seeing tension in this arrangement between capital and labor, one should acknowledge that the owner most likely acquired his capital and his business through his or his family’s labor. Thus there was a bond between the patron and the worker since any worker could, under the right conditions and with ambition and enterprise, someday achieve the same level of success as his current employer. The intervention of the state was more likely to place obstacles in the way of this upward mobility, under the pretext of protecting the worker, since Freppel believed it ultimately harmed business activity.³¹

Another argument for state intervention was that the freedom of the worker to make contracts was “purely illusory” and an uneven struggle between the weak and the

²⁹ *O.O.P.*, t.XI, p. 437.

³⁰ *O.O.P.*, t.XI, p. 438.

³¹ *O.O.P.*, t.XI, pp. 438 – 439.

strong that required the state to equalize the balance on behalf of the worker.³² Freppel's response reflected his overall acceptance of social inequality as an axiom of life. Of course there was inequality, but inequality of wealth or condition did not affect the validity of contracts that were freely entered into by workers. Asking the state to intervene in this manner would lead to a new form of absolutism. Freppel was not completely unconcerned with the exploitative potential of power imbalances in contracts, but he argued that the current worker was in a much better position than previously in this regard. Fifty years prior workers lacked the right of association and the right to strike, two "weapons" that were a "permanent threat" to businessmen.³³ Freppel believed these tools were more than adequate to even the balance of power. He argued, in somewhat remarkable fashion, that the patron was actually in a more disadvantageous position because he faced greater risk than the worker. A worker strike could potentially cost the patron his entire business and the loss of his fortune, thus the patron was dependent on the worker in a way that put him in a position of weakness toward them.³⁴

Freppel explained that he was not trying to minimize the difficulties posed by the modern economy, only that one must be careful not to seek a remedy that is worse than the ailment. His experience in other areas suggested that state involvement might not yield the best outcome. "Let us not add excessive new legal constraints to those which already surround us on all sides, in education as in everything else."³⁵ What was needed instead was a return to morality that would mitigate much of the abuse. He then

³² *O.O.P.*, t.XI, p. 439.

³³ *O.O.P.*, t.XI, p. 440.

³⁴ *O.O.P.*, t.XI, pp. 440 – 441.

³⁵ *O.O.P.*, t.XI, p. 441.

highlighted the work of Léon Harmel as an example of a Christian industrialist who has organized work along the principles of the Gospel with great success. There was no reason, Freppel said, for the state to dictate to Harmel and others how they must run their factories.

Freppel turned next to the organization of work and associations. He recounted the familiar history of the Revolution causing the worker question and giving rise to socialism, followed by the need to adapt earlier forms of association to the demands of modern industry. He raised the issue of mandatory, closed corporations, a position favored by Albert de Mun and others in the Liège school. He rejected the idea as being stuck in the past, but more importantly, as failing to embody the correct social principles on labor associations. Freppel favored “the fruitful alliance of the principle of freedom of work with the principle of free and voluntary association.”³⁶ This meant corporations would be formed freely and would ideally combine both workers and patrons but not force either side into such an arrangement. These corporations should also be given legal protections to establish insurance programs, pensions and collective property that could be maintained among the members across generations.

In closing he returned again to the role of the state. The worker question will be resolved by inspiring “personal initiative and collective action,” not by state intervention. It would be too easy for the state to expand its regulatory power in the economy if it was sought as a solution. Freppel gave the example of allowing the state to regulate the length of the workday for an adult worker. If he is physically able and willing to work longer than eight or ten hours the state should not prohibit him.

³⁶ *O.O.P.*, t.XI, p. 446.

I search in vain for the principle upon which such a prohibition is reasonably justified. Is it to assure the common good? But who cannot see that this is opening the door, without the possibility of closing it later, to all the features of contemporary socialism? After the regulation of work for adults, it will become necessary and logical to allow the state to fix a minimum wage, a proportion between salaries and profits, and the prices of stocks, rents and all other products, since all of these equally interest the common good. This would be state control of all conditions of human activity.³⁷

Freppel finds it especially ironic that many of those who advocate personal freedom and liberty are the ones most willing to seek the intervention of the state.³⁸ Only Christianity can restore the true conditions of human fulfillment, so he refuses to give in to the “modern error of state omnipotence.” He offered instead his program for resolving the social question, a slogan which succinctly represented the social doctrine of the School of Angers:

Individual freedom;
Freedom of association with all its legitimate consequences;
Intervention of the state limited to the protection of rights and the repression of abuse.³⁹

This closing formula was very much in line with the social principles Freppel had advocated throughout his public career. However, in the context of the opposing congresses and the forcefulness of his address, it represented a platform around which like-minded social Catholics could rally.

³⁷ *O.O.P.*, t.XI, p. 448.

³⁸ Freppel is not referencing other social Catholics here, but rather his republican counterparts.

³⁹ *O.O.P.*, t.XI, p. 450.

Additional Responses to Liège and Explanations of Social Principles

Freppel's opening address set the tone for the remainder of the Congress of Angers much like Cardinal Manning's letter had at Liège. Several presentations built upon and expanded the social doctrine presented by Freppel. The exploration of socialism was a common theme, and some participants offered a direct response to Liège. Taken as a whole, a fairly comprehensive presentation of the social doctrine of the School of Angers can be found in the works of the congress.

After Freppel, the next major address at the congress was given by Gustave Théry, a lawyer from Lille who had attended the proceedings at Liège. His presentation focused on socialism, but also incorporated a critique of the interventionist position. It deserves to be examined in some detail, for the content of his address formed the basis of the proposals adopted by the Congress before its close. Théry started by defining socialism as the negation of the right of property, whether in principle or in practice.⁴⁰ Another key feature of socialism is that it depends on the authority provided by the state to implement its vision. This linked it with the concept of "Caesarism," which was the broader principle that attributed all power to the state.⁴¹ Caesarism was the means of attaining the end of socialism.

Even more narrowly, Théry is focused on state socialism, rather than its "pure" or "revolutionary" form. State socialism is more dangerous because it acts "under the

⁴⁰ *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), p. 428. For example, Proudhon had said "property is theft" and denied the principle of private property, while others rejected this notion but their actions indicated they did not respect property.

⁴¹ The 1884 congress in Dijon was dedicated in part to this topic. See *Rev. cath.* (December 1884).

pretext of the public interest” and disguises its true intentions, even appearing charitable to some. Whereas pure socialism seeks to seize property in its entirety, state socialism takes it incrementally.⁴² At its core it is based on false conceptions of the state and justice, thereby leading to oppressive results. Instead of immediately critiquing these elements, Théry turns instead to an explanation of what he considers the true role of the state and other institutions. His argument is a clear presentation of the fundamental conception of society that is the foundation of the social doctrine of the School of Angers.

The ultimate purpose of all societies, including the state, is to contribute to the attainment of man’s final end of eternal happiness. Most societies serve to achieve some intermediate earthly end, but ultimately these should lead to the supernatural end. Beginning with the family, people participate in several types of societies, all of which allow them to attain goals they could not otherwise achieve in isolation.⁴³ There are both voluntary societies, like those related to commerce, which people freely create and enter into, but there are also necessary societies like the Church and state which through the divine law govern all people. Théry then offered the following definition of political society: “The goal of political society is, by help and protection, to obtain for man a well-being that he could not otherwise achieve through his own efforts or with the help of other preexisting or superior societies.”⁴⁴ The implications of this definition are significant. First, the state cannot substitute itself for the individual or any societies in which he takes part. Second, “in the order of societies, the state comes, by the very

⁴² *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), p. 430.

⁴³ *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), p. 332. These societies can be based in several different areas, including piety, work, and even leisure.

⁴⁴ *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), p. 433.

nature of its mission, last in line.” Since an individual can work to obtain food it is not the role of the state to feed him. Since the family, which precedes the state, has the responsibility to provide education for their children the state should not dictate to them how they must achieve this goal. Therefore with respect to the social question, the state should be the last to take action, only after it was clear that the individual or other societies could not attain a certain good.

One function that the state by its nature has a positive duty to perform is the defense of law and the rights of citizens. Although the Church commands respect for the law, the consequences of original sin necessitate the existence of an authority to uphold the law by punishing those who violate it and infringe upon the rights of others. In this role the state contributes to man’s ultimate end which is why, at least in theory, the state should be vigilant to punish any offenses against God.⁴⁵ However, the idea, contained in Freppel’s slogan, that the state should “repress abuse” needs to be carefully delineated. Any violation of the law is an abuse that should be repressed, but not all abuses are violations of law. There are several ways that a person can abuse his intellect, physical strength, or freedom, but if he abuses only himself without harming another the state does not necessarily have the duty to intervene. An uncharitable person, for example, endangers his ultimate end by lacking virtue, but the state cannot legislate that he perform acts of charity because this would exceed the state’s proper role. Therefore the repression of abuse must refer to the violation of some legitimately existing law. There are also certain benefits that people experience living in political society that it is proper for the state to provide. These include measures that contribute to “public prosperity,”

⁴⁵ *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), pp. 433 – 434.

such as building roads, railways, canals, ports, negotiating treaties, and promoting the commercial and industrial interests of the nation on an international level.⁴⁶

In light of these principles, Théry returned to state socialism to point out the ways in which it was not based on these principles. In the process, he occasionally cited the proceedings of the Congress of Liège to suggest the influence of such ideas on their gathering. For example, in the discussions on regulating the length of the workday, the working report argued that the source of the economic power of a nation was man, “and society unquestionably has the right to prevent this economic force from being diminished, worn down, and wasted.”⁴⁷ Théry found such a view ominous in its implications, but later conceded that it was not included in the final proposals and did not appear to be widely favored among participants. His larger criticism was that “German socialism,” as outlined extensively by Claudio Jannet, was heavily influential in the proceedings at Liège.⁴⁸ This was most evident in the discussion of wages, in which it was suggested that there was a connection between the wage level and the “support of the worker and his family.”⁴⁹ Théry also connected the influence of German socialism to the *Oeuvres des cercles* of Albert de Mun as well as the discourse of the Abbé Antoine Pottier, a leading voice of the interventionist school.⁵⁰ The specific disagreements between the two schools will be examined below, but it is telling that Théry made no effort to hide the target of his attacks. In one case, after citing Liège on workday

⁴⁶ *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), pp. 434 – 435.

⁴⁷ *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), p. 436.

⁴⁸ Jannet, *L'État socialisme et la réforme sociale*, (Paris: Plon, 1889), pp. 125 – 156.

⁴⁹ *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), p. 439.

⁵⁰ *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), pp. 440 – 442.

regulation he then cited a recent socialist congress which he said was arguing for the same principle.⁵¹

Not all of the subsequent presentations were as direct, but overall they presented a social vision that differed from the Liège school. The Belgian priest Auguste Onclair examined contemporary socialism, also noting the spreading influence of German ideas into other countries.⁵² Jules de Kernaëret, a priest and professor at the Catholic University of Angers, examined the specific rights of the state in economic issues. While affirming the principle of state intervention, he argued that it was dangerous to make laws in the abstract, suggesting instead careful study of actual circumstances and consequences. He also warned against France automatically following the legislation of other countries, since economic conditions unique to France required customized solutions. Both Onclair and de Kernaëret addressed the application of principles to the issues of workday length regulation, a minimum wage, and mandatory insurance. Other presentations addressed a variety of topics related to property, militarism, the press, and a fairly technical presentation by Claudio Jannet on the role of capital in modern industry.⁵³

The Social Doctrine of the Congress

The other main development from the congress, besides Freppel's address, was the adoption of a set of resolutions by the participants. After Théry's address, Freppel established a commission to formulate a series of proposals based on his text. The

⁵¹ *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), p. 451.

⁵² *Rev. cath.*, (December 1890), pp. 481 – 510.

⁵³ For a summary of these, see *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), pp. 393 – 408.

commission included Théry, de Kernaëret, Jannet, the Franciscan economist Ludovic de Besse, and Armand Gavouyère, from the Faculty of Law at the Catholic University of Angers. On the morning of the final day, five proposals were adopted by the entire congress. The first proposal outlined their doctrine on state intervention: “The state does not have the right to intervene directly in industrial relations to impose something that it thinks is more advantageous to one or another party.”⁵⁴ It then detailed the implications of this principle, saying the state cannot determine how many hours the worker should rest or spend at home, thus rejecting the regulation of the length of the workday. It also could not prohibit working at night simply because of the belief that it was wiser to work during the day, or force the worker to buy insurance against accidents. “In effect, the interests of citizens are left to their own discretion.” The intervention of the state was permitted “only when the rights of someone are violated or placed in grave and obvious danger.” Thus, the state could regulate working at night if the conditions endangered the life of the workers, or if a patron was forcing his employees to work more hours than they had freely agreed to work.⁵⁵ The requirement of the violation of another’s rights was to be the standard for intervention in all areas of the economy, not just industry.

The second resolution addressed the argument that the worker was not truly free when he entered into contracts because of his circumstances or the relative power imbalance vis-à-vis the patron. The reality that a man needed to work in order to live did not eliminate his freedom to enter into a contract. This and other “impulsive causes”

⁵⁴ *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), p. 402.

⁵⁵ *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), pp. 402 – 403.

should not be confused with the “absence of freedom that vitiates consent.”⁵⁶ A contract entered into through coercion was invalid, but the necessity of work was not such a compulsion. The third resolution addressed the issue of wages and justice. “Since the contract is commutative by nature, justice requires that each party receives the equivalent of that which was given, which is for the worker, the just wage.”⁵⁷ Furthermore, the wage must take into account the work performed, not the needs of the worker. Lastly, since the value of the work performed differs by industry, location, and even the skill of the worker, “it is therefore impossible to establish through legislation or regulation something as variable as the just wage.”

The fourth proposal addressed the other half of the justice/charity issue, affirming that the patron owes charity toward his workers just as he owes it more generally to his neighbor. In addition, the obligation in charity is greater toward the worker than a stranger, for charity is owed first to those closer to a person, then those further removed. However, state intervention imposing charity on the patron is unwarranted and illegitimate.⁵⁸ Finally, the fifth resolution stated, “The social question is before all a religious and moral question which cannot be completely resolved through state intervention alone.”⁵⁹ The state could contribute to its resolution in a few ways, namely, allowing the Church the freedom to perform its legitimate social function, preventing or repressing violations of the law, and encouraging the creation of intermediate associations like aid societies and pension funds that help the worker. It also mentioned

⁵⁶ *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), p. 403. The translation is literal, “les causes impulsives.”

⁵⁷ *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), p. 403.

⁵⁸ *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), pp. 403 – 404.

⁵⁹ *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), p. 404.

the responsibility of the state to use the political system to promote national prosperity, which the members clearly thought was endangered by the actions of the Third Republic.

Freppel's closing remarks to the congress indicated his approval of the outcome. He spoke of the "perfect unity of views" and the "most ardent desire to find the truth." He also praised the work of other groups of social Catholics, like the *Cercles catholiques des ouvriers*, which he said had the same intention of helping the worker. But he did not overlook the effort of the congress to examine the overall landscape of social Catholicism and point out "certain tendencies, certain deviations of language, and even certain theories which you think compromise rather than serve the cause of the worker that all Catholics defend with equal devotion."⁶⁰ The reference to Liège was clear, even if unnamed.

Reaction to Freppel's discourse aligned with existing sympathies. Lucien Brun wrote to Freppel shortly after the congress to express his regret at being unable to attend but pleasure at Freppel's "admirable and irrefutable" address.⁶¹ Charles Périn, also unable to travel to Angers due to health reasons, indicated that he would have gladly voted for the resolutions adopted by the congress and praised Freppel's leadership.⁶² *L'Association catholique* also briefly noted the Congress of Angers and the role played by Freppel. The journal pointed out that in comparison to Liège the gathering at Angers lacked stature and importance relative to social Catholicism because it did not feature as many prominent participants, or as many international representatives. Furthermore, it treated the regulation of work from a "restrained, juridical view, avoiding the loftiness of

⁶⁰ *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), pp. 410 – 411.

⁶¹ For the text of the letter, see *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), pp. 426 - 427.

⁶² *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), p. 463.

doctrine...that characterized the deliberations at Liège.”⁶³ It also criticized Freppel for articulating a view of state intervention at odds with his 1886 address to the *Oeuvres des Cercles*.⁶⁴ Lastly, turning the tables, the journal noted that Freppel’s emphasis on freedom of work and association reminded them of the solutions advocated by the German socialist Wilhelm Liebknecht.⁶⁵ In further response to Freppel, the December 1890 issue of *L’Association catholique* featured an article entitled “Was Saint Louis a State Socialist?”⁶⁶ In addition to stirring up a reaction, the Congress of Angers also led to another venue for the expression of the school’s social doctrine.

The Catholic Society of Political and Social Economy

On the final day of the Congress of Angers Ludovic de Besse proposed the creation of a society of Christian economists and others interested in the connection between economics, law, and morality. Claudio Jannet also favored this idea and after a brief discussion Freppel agreed to oversee the creation of such a group. The *Société catholique d’Économie politique et sociale* was created in December of 1890 as a sister organization to the *Société des Jurisconsultes catholiques*. The statutes of the society are brief, but its objectives are clearly communicated. The first article states the goal: “to study contemporary social problems that affect the economic order, and especially the means of improving the condition of the working class in light of the principles of

⁶³ *L’Association catholique* Vol. 30, p. 583.

⁶⁴ This inconsistency was pointed out above, pp. 167 – 170.

⁶⁵ *L’Association catholique* Vol. 30, p. 584.

⁶⁶ *L’Association catholique* Vol. 30, pp. 666 – 677. Freppel’s address is cited at the outset of the article.

theology, law, and economics.”⁶⁷ The membership was to be comprised of a broad range of expertise, including theologians, lawyers, economists, industrialists, farmers, and many others who had demonstrated knowledge with respect to the social question, whether theoretical or practical. The rest of the statutes address the structure and operations of the society, including guidelines for membership, meetings and fees. The general assembly was to be held in May, with monthly meetings from November through May, if possible. Freppel served as the first president, with vice-presidents Lucien Brun, Claudio Jannet, Emile Keller from the *Comité catholique de Paris*, and Monsignor Maurice d’Hulst, rector of the Catholic University of Paris.⁶⁸ There were ninety adherents to the statutes, and most fell into one of the following groups: academics, clerics, lawyers, or industrialists.⁶⁹

Freppel’s Vision for the Society

Freppel elaborated on his goals for the Society as well as the social doctrine of the School of Angers at the inaugural meeting in January of 1891 and a later gathering in April. The slogan from his address in Angers was their starting point, and he hoped they could explore these issues in further detail to arrive at common ground among all social Catholics. They must articulate true principles, not “equivocations, omissions, or misunderstandings.” Among these principles were an equal rejection of individualism and socialism, a voluntary and open corporation, a proper understanding of the roles of

⁶⁷ *Rev. cath.*, (January 1891), p. 5.

⁶⁸ Monsignor d’Hulst also assumed Freppel’s seat in the Chamber of Deputies after his death.

⁶⁹ For the statutes and the full list of initial adherents, see *Rev. cath.*, (January 1891), pp. 5 – 11.

justice and charity, and having the same regard for the rights and freedoms of patrons as for workers.⁷⁰ He also warned against taking a harsh and divisive tone in their analysis of the social question. Again referencing Cardinal Manning, he advised that they not denounce “the wealthy and the capitalists,” but instead recognize that the interests of social peace are better served by not pitting classes against each other. It is important to understand, however, that the new features of the modern economy require certain reforms and adaptations, though this need not imply societal upheaval.⁷¹

Freppel again spoke in broad terms about the Society at its April meeting. He reiterated several familiar themes, continually emphasizing the threefold approach to examining the social question from the perspectives of law, moral theology, and economics. The major threat to society is the spread of socialism, and they must avoid lending arms to its ends by instead applying “economic principles whose wise and reasonable application play a major role in bringing social peace.”⁷² This explains the desire of Freppel and others involved in the founding of the society that economists play a significant role. Clearly law and theology were central aspects, since “the social question is before all else a moral question,” but the value of understanding and implementing sound economic principles must not be underestimated. He compared the new economic age of industrialism to the European discovery of the New World and the process of developing transoceanic economies, or other periods of dramatic economic adjustment. This economic context, along with the rise of the modern political state, presented a number of challenges that must be carefully examined. The study of these

⁷⁰ *O.O.P.*, t.XII, pp. 42 – 43.

⁷¹ *O.O.P.*, t.XII, pp. 44 – 45.

⁷² *O.O.P.*, t.XII, p. 98.

concerns is the explicit goal of the society, according to Freppel. They were not a group engaged in direct social action, but rather the intellectual task of constructing a Christian alternative to socialism, “which to us is the worst of all.”⁷³ This approach reflected Freppel’s background in and emphasis on education, as well as the academic backgrounds of many of the Society’s members.

Freppel concluded by expanding upon his slogan to give further clarity to his objectives. The state may intervene to repress abuses “manifestly contrary to the divine and moral law,” but for everything else freedom should be permitted. Freedom of work and association means that no obstacles are placed in the way of people choosing their occupation, or forming associations to their benefit, or joining together with patrons without obligation or state involvement. Finally, it also includes freedom for Catholics and for the Church to establish charitable societies to help workers without interference or legal consequences.⁷⁴ The perspective and approach of the Society was clear and reflected the approach to the social question laid out by Freppel at the Congress of Angers. As an outgrowth of this gathering, it had the opportunity to be a vehicle for the continued development and promotion of the School of Angers.

Division over State Regulation of Labor: Three Issues

In the months between the close of the Congress of Angers in October of 1890 and the release of *Rerum novarum* in May of 1891, the lines of division between social

⁷³ *O.O.P.*, t.XII, p. 102.

⁷⁴ *O.O.P.*, t.XII, pp. 102 – 103.

Catholics were clearly drawn. There were three central issues on which the School of Angers and the School of Liège differed: regulation of workday length for adult men; minimum wage laws; and mandatory insurance. An article highlighting these differences appeared in early 1891 in the *Revue catholique des institutions et du droit* by Theo Schyrgens, a lawyer and occasional contributor to the journal. The article was a direct response to an important and widely published article of Albert De Mun in *L'Association catholique*, in which De Mun himself identified areas of agreement and disagreement among social Catholics.

Albert de Mun's "Words of Explanation"

The January 1891 issue of *L'Association catholique* featured the article, titled "A Few Words of Explanation."⁷⁵ The importance of this work is generally attributed to its introduction, in which de Mun announces the separation of *L'Association catholique* as the official organ of the *Oeuvres des cercles*. The two had been linked since the journal's inception in 1876, but de Mun cited the divergence of goals between the two as the reason for the separation. The journal sought to be the leading forum for intellectual social Catholicism, but the work of the *Cercles* was more practical. While there was agreement on principles, ongoing debates and disagreements about the application of these principles threatened the unity of the *Cercles*. De Mun described it as the difference between the goals of a "school" and those of a group more focused on social

⁷⁵ *L'Association catholique*, January, 1891; Also contained in De Mun's collected works, *Discours et écrits divers du Comte Albert de Mun*, t. IV, (Paris: Poussielgue, 1895), pp. 314 – 353.

action. The problems with this arrangement had been increasing, and de Mun argued it would be better to separate than to risk limiting either the intellectual freedom of the journal, or the unity of the *cercles*.⁷⁶ This development demonstrated the increasing distance between de Mun and his longtime collaborator in these efforts, René de la Tour du Pin. La Tour du Pin continued as editor of *L'Association catholique*, while de Mun focused his efforts on the *Cercles*, in addition to his responsibilities as a leading conservative voice in the Chamber of Deputies.⁷⁷

De Mun's article was also important because of its analysis of the division among social Catholics and his forceful arguments on behalf of the School of Liège. Published just a few months after the opposing congresses of Liège and Angers, and one month after the founding of the Catholic Society of Political and Social Economy, it was also effective by pointing out some embarrassing inconsistencies in Freppel's positions on the social question between earlier addresses and his most recent stance. Before addressing the specific areas of disagreement, de Mun emphasized some of the areas of common ground. The acceptance, in principle, of state intervention in the economy was not contested by any group of social Catholics, as Freppel himself had indicated at the Congress of Angers.⁷⁸ There was also agreement that moral considerations were a necessary component of any social action and that the materialist conception of man inherent in economic liberalism made its adherents "unknowing accomplices and

⁷⁶ *Discours*, t.IV, p. 316.

⁷⁷ McManners, pp. 85 – 89.

⁷⁸ *Discours*, t.IV, p. 320. Freppel's remark was that "no one I know would think to challenge the idea that the state...has not only the right but even the obligation to intervene in the economic or social domain to prevent or repress the manifest abuses which can occur."

involuntary precursors” to the radical designs of socialism.⁷⁹ As Freppel and others in the School of Angers had indicated, the problem was not a conflict of principles, but rather a different view of the proper application of shared principles to the current situation.

The first issue of disagreement was the regulation of the length of the workday for adult men. On this issue and others, however, de Mun rejects the division of Catholics into “interventionists” or “non-interventionists” because there are no absolute “non-interventionists” among social Catholics.⁸⁰ De Mun then cited the recent creation of the Catholic Society of Political and Social Economy and its limitation of state action to the “protection of rights and repression of abuse” as the same formula that he had always favored. The only difference among social Catholics was the extent and means of this protection and repression. De Mun was united with others on his side in advocating workday regulation not only for women and children, but also for adult men, while prominent figures within the School of Angers were much less unified on any type of program for this issue. For example, Freppel had been among the signatories to de Mun’s initial attempt to propose a law in 1886 that would fix the workday at an eleven-hour maximum for adult workers. That same year, Freppel addressed the *cercle* of Angers and articulated several social principles that contradicted his current stance. On this particular issue, Freppel had advocated laws regulating work for women and children, but also the prevention of abuse that resulted from the “precarious situation of

⁷⁹ *Discours*, t.IV, p. 319.

⁸⁰ *Discours*, t.IV, p. 323. The only true “non-interventionists” were the liberal economists who held to their theories in an absolute form. This group, de Mun noted, was “decreasing every day.”

workers whose duration of labor exceeds their strength.”⁸¹ Freppel was not the only one to express a position at odds with the Congress of Angers: Pierre-Charles Chesnelong had endorsed a proposal in the senate to prohibit nighttime labor; Claudio Jannet had implied at least the possibility of laws regulating workday length for adults in extreme cases of abuse in his work *Le socialisme d’État et la réforme sociale*; and in 1881 Émile Keller had proposed to the Chamber of Deputies a law establishing the total length of the work week at sixty-one hours.⁸² All of these men were members of the Catholic Society of Political and Social Economy, suggesting perhaps less rigidity and uniformity in their stated opposition to these types of regulations.

De Mun was not suggesting that the only problem with the position of the School of Angers on this issue was the inconsistent past statements of some of its members. He does not find any logical reason to support certain types of interventions into work, whether prohibiting it on Sunday or limiting it at night or for women and children, while being steadfastly opposed to any regulation of work for adult men. For de Mun, the principles and arguments for applying them would be the same, so it seemed arbitrary to oppose this specific intervention.⁸³ Furthermore, the position taken at the Congress of Liège was more precise than was being represented by its opponents. The congress supported regulation of the maximum length of the workday, not the normal length, and it was to apply only to factory work and no other kind.

⁸¹ *Discours*, t.IV, pp. 324 – 325. Freppel’s address to the *cercle* of Angers in 1886 is found in *O.O.P.*, t. X, pp. 1 – 24; the portion cited by de Mun, p. 20.

⁸² Keller’s proposal would have fixed the length of work on Monday through Friday at eleven hours per day and Saturday labor at six hours.

⁸³ *Discours*, t.IV, pp. 326 – 327.

As a result of his support for limiting the length of the workday to eleven hours, de Mun and others in the School of Liège were labeled as proponents of socialism, “statolâtrie,” and the German system. On the first charge, de Mun again cited Freppel’s words that condemned labeling as socialist anyone who favored a measure of state intervention. He also pointed out that the aims of socialism were much broader than his goals and antithetical to Christian social principles. However, he acknowledged a shared analysis of the effects of economic liberalism: “If the state seems like the only power facing individuals, it is because the economic regime that has prevailed for the last century has destroyed all others. We think that the evil is precisely in this regime itself.”⁸⁴ On the second charge, de Mun responds that “while we are not *statolâtres*, we are also not, to follow the terms, *statophobes*, as we believe the public authority has a well-defined role of social protection.”⁸⁵ Finally, de Mun argues that Germany is actually lagging behind other countries in terms of its labor legislation and that this charge has little bearing on the situation and debates in France.

De Mun also identified support for his position on this issue in the words of Pope Leo XIII himself. In 1887 he addressed a pilgrimage of French workers and said that in situations where industrial conditions violate justice, morality, or human dignity, “the public powers should intervene in a just measure” and thereby fulfill their obligation of “protecting and safeguarding citizens.”⁸⁶ At the second pilgrimage of workers in 1889, the Secretary of Propaganda Fide had also indicated his support for the idea that adult workers should be protected by law from excessive work. De Mun is clear that the

⁸⁴ *Discours*, t.IV, p. 330.

⁸⁵ *Discours*, t.IV, p. 330.

⁸⁶ *Discours*, t.IV, p. 332.

pope's words do not settle all questions of application, but that when the issue is discussed it should be recalled that the pope himself expressed support for the legal protection of adult workers. His central point, however, that he emphasized repeatedly, is that the same arguments used to oppose regulation of adult workday length would apply equally to any other regulation, whether involving work at night, on Sunday, or by women and children. Since no group of social Catholics is opposed to these things, they have no reason to be opposed to the additional and necessary protection of adult male workers.⁸⁷

The second issue treated by de Mun was the minimum wage. On this issue there was less unanimity among the School of Liège, as not everyone favored its establishment by law. De Mun himself indicated the importance of the question, and said that there was not an easy answer to how the worker's livelihood, earned through his wage, could be best assured. He continued, "At no time, despite whatever may have been said, have I thought or admitted that a minimum wage can be determined and established directly by a law of the state."⁸⁸ While perhaps technically true, de Mun's opponents were not unjustified in thinking he had previously supported the principle. In 1889, de Mun addressed the Chamber of Deputies on a proposal to establish a minimum wage and said: "I believe, and I say with some embarrassment for it may be rash to express an opinion that does not conform to Monsignor Freppel's (*smiles on the Left*), that this question can and ought to be studied, and that the establishment of a minimum wage is neither an

⁸⁷ *Discours*, t.IV, p. 337.

⁸⁸ *Discours*, t.IV, p. 338.

injustice nor an impossibility.”⁸⁹ De Mun did not support the proposal because he thought the process was too hasty and that the issue required a great deal of careful study and reflection, but he did seem to suggest a willingness to support the idea in principle.

Regardless of his sentiments in that speech, in 1891 de Mun supported that minimum wages be established either by an arbitration council composed of the interested parties or within the structure of the corporation itself.⁹⁰ This position was similar to the one expressed by Cardinal Manning in his letter to the Congress of Liège, and de Mun reiterated the confusion surrounding Manning’s call for regulation to occur “publicly,” which was widely misinterpreted as meaning “legislatively.” De Mun thus agreed with Manning that wages should be determined jointly by patrons and employees “as much as possible without recourse to the legislative power.” Although some in the School of Liège favored a legal minimum wage more strongly than de Mun, he was “far from claiming to propose a definitive and precise solution.” He did, however, reject the notion that legal regulation of the workday length and the minimum wage were two linked issues and that support for the former automatically indicated support for the latter.

The final issue on which the sides were divided was insurance for workers against accidents, illness, and old age. Once again, de Mun noted that in 1886 Freppel had indicated support for some state involvement in the issue and that such support did not make one a socialist.⁹¹ Furthermore, in the current debate the support of de Mun and the

⁸⁹ *Discours*, t.IV, pp. 232 – 233. De Mun also indicated his support for a minimum wage in an article, cited by Schyrgens, in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, in which he explicitly advocated a legal remedy. See *Rev. cath.*, (March 1891), p. 251.

⁹⁰ *Discours*, t.IV, p. 338.

⁹¹ *Discours*, t.IV, p. 339. “If the state acts on principles of justice and equity and to protect the workers against the effects of old-age and illness, and to allow them compensation when they are the victims of accidents in their work, can one say that this opens the way to socialism? Not at all.” *O.O.P.*, t.X, p. 21.

School of Liège for mandatory insurance was being misrepresented. “We will accept mandatory insurance as a way to guarantee workers the compensation to which we believe they are entitled. But we will absolutely refuse to allow this insurance to be contracted by recourse to a state fund.”⁹² In other words, the state could require workers to obtain insurance but not administer the program itself. Instead, funds should be established primarily through corporations or other industrial organizations that would then operate the collection of contributions and distribution of payments. De Mun then pointed out that in 1888 Freppel supported the proposal to require miners to participate in an insurance program, thus demonstrating his acceptance of the principle that the state could legislate this type of participation without being socialist.

De Mun’s article was widely read and viewed as compelling; it was also published separately to increase its distribution. Several prominent members of the School of Liège wrote de Mun to congratulate him on his effort, including Cardinal Manning, Cardinal Langénieux of Reims, Cardinal Gibbons, and Archbishop Doutreloux.⁹³ Doutreloux expressed his sadness at “a certain tendency of the Congress of Angers to insufficiently account for the legitimacy of the workers’ demands on more than one issue,” but thanked de Mun for clarifying the issues so strongly.⁹⁴ Two months later, in the March issue of the *Revue catholique des institutions et du droit*, Schyrgens responded to de Mun’s critique and restated the arguments frequently made by members of the School of Angers on behalf of their positions.

⁹² *Discours*, t.IV, p. 340.

⁹³ *Discours*, t.IV, pp. 353 – 361.

⁹⁴ *Discours*, t.IV, pp. 356 – 357.

Response of the School of Angers

Schyrgens began his response by addressing the news of the separation between *L'Association catholique* and the *Cercles*. He praised the latter group's "magnificent work" and widespread influence throughout France, but admitted that toward the journal many maintained "a prudent and circumspect attitude, too often justified by hazardous doctrines which sometimes lead to the complete confusion of justice and charity."⁹⁵ Schyrgens then proceeded to respond to each of de Mun's critiques, relying largely on the report of Gustave Théry from the Congress of Angers, upon which the adopted resolutions were based. Schyrgens suggests that de Mun did not adequately understand or address the arguments made by the School of Angers, thus by revisiting Théry's report one finds much of their response.

On the issue of regulating the length of the workday, Théry had argued that such action was dangerous in principle because it promoted the idea that the state could legislate what was good for a person. One of the arguments on behalf of regulation at the Congress of Liège was that any calculation of the limitation must account for the time required for a man to fulfill the normal requirements of life. Théry suggested that this means the state would decide how much time should be given to rest, to spend with family, to eat, and so on, and then it could determine the maximum length that could be

⁹⁵ *Rev. cath.*, (March 1891), pp. 247 – 248. Schyrgens specifically mentions a passage from the journal in January 1886, p. 109: "Let us not forget that we are living under the new law, law of Christ which perfects and fulfills the old law. Therefore, under this new law charity has become justice, the universal law." At the Congress of Angers, Auguste Onclair also cited this excerpt as evidence of the "foreign doctrine" sometimes promoted by the School of Liège.

dedicated to work. Théry calls such an idea “an excessive interference in private life” and he ominously warned that this principle could lead to the regulation of all actions by the state.⁹⁶ While overreaching with such dire predictions, Théry argued that it was not the function of the state to guide man “toward his own good” because man could make these types of decisions without the state, thereby removing the need for the state to be involved.⁹⁷ Man’s free will allowed him to make decisions that involved risks and dangers, but it was not the state’s duty to intervene unless the right of another was threatened or violated.⁹⁸

De Mun had indicated that no school of social Catholics supported an absolutist position on workday regulation, and the proceedings of the Congress of Angers proved this point. Théry described the possibility of such intervention only in specific circumstances. For example, “if patrons and workers saw themselves constrained by competition to work an amount of time clearly exceeding what a man would freely dedicate to work.”⁹⁹ At the Congress of Liège someone had given the example of an industry where a factory worker was forced to work twenty-four hours continuously, which led to competing factories changing their policies in the same fashion to keep up with their competition. If such a situation ever arose and the patrons and workers believed they had no other choice than to alter their policies, this would be an attack on their freedom that could be justly limited by law. In summary, “the state cannot

⁹⁶ *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), p. 451.

⁹⁷ This was the application of the principle articulated by Théry earlier in the same address, see above, pp. 235 – 236. The state was the “last in line” and involved itself only when man’s own efforts or another society were incapable of providing for a need. Thus, he argued, the state did not need to tell someone how long they were allowed to work.

⁹⁸ *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), p. 452.

⁹⁹ *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), p. 452.

intervene to impose upon the worker or patron that which is good or reasonable, but simply to ensure respect for the freedom of the worker and safeguard equally that of the patron.”¹⁰⁰

After Schyrgens recalled the arguments presented by Théry at Angers, he claimed that the final resolution adopted by the Congress of Liège was not ultimately much different since it spoke only in general terms and avoided specific numerical limitations. This outcome, he claimed without offering any citations to the record of discussions, was brought about by the efforts of Théry, Roussel and other members of the School of Angers who participated at Liège, “in spite of the partisans of *L’Association catholique*.”¹⁰¹ Though the official position of the opposing congress may have been softened, he still labeled the view of de Mun and others as socialist. To support this charge he cited Charles Périn’s argument that the worker should be entitled to pursue the fullest reward of his efforts and that he should not be prohibited by law from undertaking “more severe labor” since it is not contrary to human nature to do such a thing. There was no guarantee that working beyond eleven hours was necessarily an excessive amount or abuse of the worker, so to generalize all situations by passing a law would be unjust. Certain types of work may allow for longer hours and a worker who freely chooses this additional burden should not be prohibited.

Schyrgens also briefly addressed de Mun’s criticism that the same arguments used to justify restrictions on the labor of women and children or prohibition of Sunday labor would apply equally to adult men. Since the School of Angers did not hold that the state

¹⁰⁰ *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), p. 452.

¹⁰¹ *Rev. cath.*, (March 1891), p. 249.

could never limit the length of the workday for adult men it was not guilty of any inconsistency. As Théry had explained in Angers, the state could intervene only in cases of “urgent abuse” to the freedom of the worker. The standard of this abuse would be lower for women and children, allowing for broader regulation in these categories. As for laws prohibiting work on Sunday, the worker had a right to his moral and religious freedom and forcing him to work in this situation constituted a severe violation of his rights that the state could properly correct. Since this right of all Christian workers would be equally threatened by any factory operations on Sunday, it was appropriate to pass legislation that would apply to all industries.

Thus the key distinction between the two positions was the judgment of what was an urgent abuse that required intervention. De Mun and others of the School of Liège surely thought that many of the common factory conditions forced men to work excessively beyond their capacity and that this was severe enough to require legislation. Members of the School of Angers did not accept this picture as generally applicable and thought the cases of genuine abuse were more rare. Therefore, passing a law limiting the capability of workers whose rights were not in any way violated was an illicit action on the part of the state that must be opposed both in principle and in the interest of avoiding a slippery slope.

On the issue of legally establishing a minimum wage, Théry’s report at the Congress of Angers was less nuanced than on workday-length regulation. State involvement in the fixing of wages, “must be absolutely rejected, as it is useless and

impossible to realize.”¹⁰² Such an effort was useless because the wage level was almost always determined by freely contracting parties, in which case it was just.¹⁰³ There was no need for the state to involve itself in a process that could be settled by the patron and worker. Furthermore, it was impossible to realize such a goal because wages varied according to place, time, industry, and even the individual value of specific workers. There was no way the state could determine the proper level of wages in such circumstances: if it set the level too high it would ruin industries, if it set the level too low it was a meaningless action.¹⁰⁴ Théry also cited previously unsuccessful efforts at price controls as analogous to the legal establishment of a minimum wage.

A common objection to this position, which also lent support to the argument in favor of state involvement, was that the worker does not contract freely because he is forced to work in order to live. Freppel mentioned this point in his address to the congress, and Théry expanded it further. The worker’s need for a job does not mitigate his freedom to contract one. People do not enter into contracts on a whim, but because they want or need the object of the contract. For example, a tenant needs a space to shelter himself and his belongings just as a traveler needs a hotel room to rest for the night, yet no one questions the validity of these contracts. The same logic therefore applies to the worker and patron. Furthermore, this argument could be considered from the perspective of the patron, that is, that the patron needs workers in his factory in order

¹⁰² *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), p. 447.

¹⁰³ For further discussion of the just wage, see below, pp. 304 – 324.

¹⁰⁴ *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), pp. 447 – 448.

to maintain his livelihood. There is a reciprocal need between patrons and workers which brings the parties together and in no way eliminates their freedom.¹⁰⁵

Théry also followed Freppel in arguing that the worker was more free than the patron in the establishment of contracts. The worker can leave his job and, according to Théry, easily find other employment, while the patron is tied more permanently to his factory and may experience permanent ruin in bad conditions.¹⁰⁶ The only instance where this mutual freedom to contract might be threatened and therefore require state intervention was in certain types of strikes. If the workers fulfilled the terms of their contract and then decided to stop working unless they received a new contract at a higher wage, there was no objection. However, as was often the case, strikes occurred when workers had not fulfilled the terms of the contract and the interruption of production and threats of violence forced the patron to agree to terms he would not have otherwise accepted. The state would intervene in this case to restore the freedom of the patron by breaking up the strike. This lone example of state intervention in wage contracts on behalf of patrons was vastly different than a law requiring a minimum wage with the intent of avoiding exploitation of workers. While de Mun himself may have no longer advocated legislative action on the issue, the School of Angers continued to argue against it, as the sentiment of some in the School of Liège still favored such proposals.

The arguments of the School of Angers against de Mun's position on mandatory insurance were also laid out at the congress and reinforced in Schyrgens article. At the congress Théry began by pointing to what he viewed as a fundamental confusion in the

¹⁰⁵ *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), pp. 448 – 449.

¹⁰⁶ Théry seemingly overlooks the obvious rejoinder that the patron himself usually had an excess of potential workers from which to hire if one of his employees left.

issue, which was that the question “was not whether the state had an interest in the worker being insured, but if it had the right to impose it upon him.”¹⁰⁷ There was a “public interest” in a lot of situations, but the state did not therefore have the right to act in fulfillment of this goal.¹⁰⁸ By imposing insurance, the state had to require either the patron to pay an amount in addition to the salary of his workers, the worker to contribute a portion of his salary, or both. Théry admitted that insurance was “good, useful, and advantageous,” but it should be encouraged rather than required.

Théry concluded that mandatory insurance was “pure socialism” because it “wrongly takes from the fortune of one individual to give to another.”¹⁰⁹ He again believed any law, even if pertaining only to a specific industry, was a slippery slope that would lead to total state control. Thus if the state could require insurance in some industries it would soon spread to other industries, for no job was without risk. Then it could impose other types of insurance, for example, against fires or forced contributions to pensions. The final step for Théry was the inevitability that over time the state would decide that since it imposed the insurance it should also guarantee the insured, thereby making the entire system state-run.¹¹⁰ This arrangement was the essence of state socialism and would feature special treatment of allies, discrimination of bureaucrats against disfavored groups like Catholics, and an increase in taxes to fund the new program.

¹⁰⁷ *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), p. 453.

¹⁰⁸ Théry gave the example that it was in the public interest and the interest of the state for the mass of people to live comfortably, but this did not give the state the right to seize the goods of the wealthiest in society and distribute them equitably among those with less.

¹⁰⁹ *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), pp. 454 – 455.

¹¹⁰ *Rev. cath.*, (November 1890), p. 455.

Schrygens summarized Théry's arguments and cited similar claims from Charles Périn to enhance their position. He concluded by expressing the hope that unity could be achieved by social Catholics, which would unsurprisingly be achieved most quickly by the School of Liège adapting their positions to those of Angers. He also included a final comment on Doutreloux's letter to de Mun in which he questioned the effectiveness of the Congress of Angers. He was surprised at such a remark, and responded that a fair reading of the proceedings at Angers reveals no such tendencies to overlook the needs of the worker. In addition, the Congress of Angers addressed precisely the issues that were "missing" from the Congress of Liège: "to outline with certainty the concerns of the workers which are legitimate, to distinguish those which ought to be provided by law, and those which are the domain of charity."¹¹¹ Schrygens reiterates his respect for Doutreloux and his efforts on behalf of workers, but ultimately finds the doctrine of Freppel to be more compelling. The Congress of Angers gave clear expression to the legitimate concerns of the workers while "stopping short of certain errors which, even coming from generous souls, are no less deadly." It was only through the proper understanding and application of social principles that positive social reforms could occur.

The state of the debate among French social Catholics in early 1891 was intense and, in some cases, personal. The three issues of workday-length regulation, minimum wage, and mandatory insurance all shared the common thread of state involvement. Both sides supported the principle that the state could intervene in some circumstances, but in these cases the extent of this intervention was questioned. Closely related to the issue of

¹¹¹ *Rev. cath.*, (March 1891), p. 254.

state involvement were the respective roles of justice and charity. Though much of the debate focused on the state, this latter question remained connected, with the School of Angers criticizing “legal charity” or “charity-justice” as a feature of German socialism that threatened France and was implicitly promoted by the School of Liège. The division among social Catholics raised another issue: what was the nature of the Church’s involvement in the social question? Could it express only broad principles and leave open their particular application, resulting in the type of debates seen in 1890? If it went beyond generalities, were its teachings binding on all Catholics? These and other thorny issues confronted Pope Leo XIII as he decided to issue the first social encyclical. After *Rerum novarum* was released one might have expected these disagreements to abate. On the contrary, the immediate aftermath witnessed an increased intensity in the division between Liège and Angers as they argued over the proper meaning of the pope’s words.

Conclusions

The events of 1890 crystallized the divisions within social Catholicism. The Congresses of Liège and Angers gave voice to two competing visions of how the Church should respond to the social question. The School of Liège represented a broad coalition of prelates and influential social thinkers who favored local associations as the primary means of resolving the problems of labor but who were also not averse to turning to the power of the state when the situation dictated it. The School of Angers was comprised largely of the membership of the *Société des jurisconsultes catholiques*, but included

other important economists and social thinkers in the tradition of Charles Périn. Under Freppel's leadership, the School of Angers represented conservative tendencies within social Catholicism, marked by the continued emphasis on charity, the promotion of Church-linked workers' associations, and a very limited role for the state reduced to "the protection of rights and the repression of abuse."

A closer look at the opposing congresses in 1890 reveals important differences between the two groups, but not as wide a gulf as sometimes portrayed by members of the schools. The rhetorical excesses at the Congress of Angers, beginning with Freppel's address, masked the fact that on many issues there was a good deal of commonality in their approaches and proposals. Charges of *statolâtrie* or state socialism aside, both sides agreed on several issues: that work should be regulated for women and children; that work should be prohibited on Sundays; that it was desirable to establish accident and sickness insurance funds on behalf of the worker; that the worker was owed a just wage. The differences were located in the preferred means of achieving these shared goals. The School of Angers was not absolutely opposed to state intervention, but they were certainly more restrictive of its use. They had a greater fear of legislative actions leading to socialism and were more skeptical of the state's ability to take action that would achieve its intended goal without inefficiencies or unintended consequences. It is also likely that they were reacting in large measure to the French context of the Third Republic. Freppel's experience both as bishop and deputy, along with the legal analysis offered by many Catholic lawyers, led them to the conclusion that advocating state

involvement in the regulation of work for adult men would be akin to opening a Pandora's box of measures whose ultimate and inevitable conclusion would be socialism.

The three issues of workday-length regulation, minimum wage laws, and mandatory insurance illustrate some of the complexities within the schools of social Catholicism. De Mun's valid observation that many members of the School of Angers had supported these types of measures in the past was a reminder that at one time social Catholics were fairly united on the issues. Similarly, de Mun's rejection of a minimum wage law and the Congress of Liège's decision to hedge on the issue of workday-length regulation in their final resolutions reveal that it is inaccurate to portray the School of Liège as enthusiasts for state involvement. In other words, neither side adopted positions as absolutist as their opponents charged. The core difference was the manner in which they sought to apply the principle, accepted by both schools, that the nature of the state's duties required it to intervene in the social question to promote the common good.

Chapter 7

Assessing *Rerum novarum* and the School of Angers

The ongoing debate among social Catholics is certainly an important element in understanding the impact of *Rerum novarum* in France.¹ However, another dynamic that must also be considered is the political situation of French Catholics. A great deal of attention has been given to the debate over the principles and application of state intervention in the social question. Yet it must be remembered that while occurring often at an abstract and generalized level, the experience of social Catholics in the Third Republic was undoubtedly influential in the formation of social doctrine. Further evidence of this is found in the careful attention paid to social legislation in other countries and historically in France. Social Catholics formed positions in light of their current situation. It is difficult to say how much social doctrine was shaped by events and contexts, but it is not unreasonable to posit that with the School of Angers this impact was significant. Their frequent appeals to the slippery slope of an action leading to socialism resulted from their analysis of the situation in Germany as well as their distrust of the anticlerical Third Republic. On the issue of state intervention especially, their experience with school legislation, the *budget des cultes*, expulsion of religious congregations, and other attacks almost certainly entered into their formulation of what the state should do to help the worker.

¹ Portions of this chapter have been adopted from a previously unpublished paper.

The political context of French Catholics in the years leading to *Rerum novarum* is important because it was a time of gradual but uneven progress toward accepting and working with the Third Republic. The death of the “Pretender”, Henri, Comte de Chambord in 1883 ended any remaining hopes of Legitimists for a restoration of the crown. Royalists were left with the Orléanist Comte de Paris, but were in no position to gather any political momentum.² Many Catholics began to reassess the way forward in politics, wondering whether more was to be gained through cooperation with than opposition to the Third Republic. The lingering preference for monarchy among Catholics was also an impediment. But a papal encyclical on the Christian Constitution of States clarified the Church’s teaching about forms of government, and by the end of 1890 the notion of “rallying” to the Republic was in open discussion.

From *Immortale Dei* to the Toast of Algiers

In November of 1885 the encyclical *Immortale Dei*, On the Christian Constitution of States, was issued by Pope Leo XIII. While traditional in many aspects in its understanding of Church, state, and the relationship of the two, among its noteworthy teachings were the acceptance of democratic forms as equal to other forms and the idea that the Church can exist in any political arrangement.³ The timing of this encyclical was

² Shortly after Henry V’s death, Freppel met with the Comte de Paris and reported a pleasant and positive conversation. This meeting drew the ire of the government, which considered it improper behavior for a deputy. See Terrien, t.II, pp. 449 -450. In an 1884 address to the Chamber, Freppel explicitly designated the Comte de Paris as the head of the House of France and successor of the Comte de Chambord, *O.P.*, t.VII, pp. 198 – 199.

³ Roger Aubert, et al., *The Church in the Industrial Age*, (New York: Crossroad, 1989), pp. 235 – 236.

important for French Catholics. Earlier the same year, Albert de Mun attempted to establish a new Catholic political party to oppose the Third Republic.⁴ Freppel was not receptive to this idea and neither was the pope, whose approach to politics was based on reconciliation not opposition.⁵ The pope's rejection of de Mun's plan was thus reinforced by the encyclical's acceptance of republican forms, making clear his preference that French Catholics participate in their government. However, the full implications of the encyclical and its doctrine on political authorities became the subject of a controversy in which Freppel played a significant role.

"L'Affaire de Rouen"

Shortly after *Immortale Dei* was released, Freppel issued a brief letter to the Catholics of Angers. He praised the encyclical's usefulness in the current situation, as well as its continuity with the teachings of Gregory XVI and, tellingly, Pius IX against the errors of the modern world.⁶ Freppel ends by saying he will revisit the teachings of the encyclical at a later time, "without a doubt," but no further commentary appeared in his capacity as bishop.⁷ Freppel did comment further on the encyclical, offering a few observations in *l'Univers* that was signed only from a "docteur en théologie." The focus

⁴ See Levillain, *Albert de Mun*, (Rome: École française de Rome, 1983), pp. 809 – 820.

⁵ De Mun made a written appeal for Freppel's support, but in vain. Terrien, t. II, pp. 514 – 515. See also, Aubert, p. 236.

⁶ *O.O.P.*, t.IX, pp. 321 – 322.

⁷ This is a telling point in light of two considerations: First, Freppel had given lengthy commentaries on other encyclicals of Leo XIII, notably on Socialism and again on Freemasonry. Second, the topic of the encyclical was of great interest and concern to Freppel, as demonstrated by his emphasis on explaining the proper conception of the state and the importance of voting. The lack of a commentary was notable in its absence.

of his comments was to reaffirm past papal condemnations of revolutionary ideology to show that *Immortale Dei* did not represent any type of acceptance of these ideas. From *Quod aliquantam* of Pius VI, to *Mirari vos* of Gregory XVI, and *Qui pluribus* and *Quanta cura* of Pius IX, the Church's rejection of the principles of the Revolution was clear.⁸ Leo XIII had continued in this tradition, warning of the dangers of Freemasonry in *Humanum genus*, and Freppel suggests that *Immortale Dei* is a continuation of the pope's critique of modern society. The key element in all of these condemnations was the rejection of a "society without God, authority without God, and freedom without God." There could be little doubt that the intent of Freppel's remarks was to implicitly condemn the Third Republic through the teachings of *Immortale Dei*. "It is a sacred duty for all Catholics to fight these monstrous errors. We are called to join this modern crusade, this holy war which has never been more legitimate or necessary."⁹ Freppel was silent on the encyclical's acceptance of modern forms of government.

There was concern among conservatives, however, that the encyclical could be the source of misguided interpretations. Cardinal Luigi Oreglia expressed as much to Freppel in a letter where he questioned not the teaching of the encyclical itself, but the "abuse that would result from the interests of party among those who would find in it the means to alter the *Syllabus* and unfortunately still be considered faithful interpreters of the Holy Father."¹⁰ It did not take long for Oreglia's concern to be realized. On December 1 the Congress of the Catholics of Normandy met in Rouen and the bishop of Rouen, Léon Benoît Charles Thomas, presented a discourse on the new encyclical. One

⁸ *L'Univers*, November 15, 1885, p. 1.

⁹ *L'Univers*, November 15, 1885, p. 1.

¹⁰ Terrien, t.II, pp. 516 – 517.

of the significant developments in the encyclical was that, for the first time, the pope had provided a definitive set of principles and interpretation for the issue of Church and state in modernity.¹¹ Thomas hoped that the battles among Catholics over governmental forms and the approach to modern political societies would be laid to rest as a result of the encyclical. Such hopes rested on the mistaken assumption that the teaching of the encyclical would be interpreted the same way by all Catholics.

Thomas turned to earlier generations of French liberal Catholics to explain the importance of the encyclical. Lacordaire had written of the distinction between “new governments” and the *ancien régime*, the latter of which rejected the three principles of civil equality, political liberty, and freedom of conscience. *Immortale Dei* maintained that Catholics did not have to favor only the *ancien régime*, but could also support new governments.¹² He also cited the words of Dupanloup and other prelates that encouraged Catholics to accept and participate in modern political systems. He then concluded, “all of these declarations, all of these sentiments, all of this guidance, we find it all covered by the majesty of the supreme pontiff in *Immortale Dei*.”¹³ This linking of Leo XIII to liberal Catholics like Lacordaire and Dupanloup, and the claim that the encyclical supported their political views greatly troubled conservatives like Freppel.

Freppel wrote Thomas a lengthy private letter in which he expressed his concerns over the discourse. He argued that the pope was more cautious in his acceptance of

¹¹ *Annales catholiques. Revue religieuse hebdomadaire de la France et de l'Église*, December 12, 1885, p. 567. Thomas mentioned the works of previous popes, but was arguing that for the first time the issues were treated in a comprehensive and definitive way.

¹² *Annales catholiques. Revue religieuse hebdomadaire de la France et de l'Église*, December 12, 1885, p. 568.

¹³ *Annales catholiques. Revue religieuse hebdomadaire de la France et de l'Église*, December 12, 1885, p. 568.

modern liberties than Thomas had explained, and prior papal condemnations of modernity should not go unnoticed. Furthermore, Thomas had stated that the Church did not need any special privileges, only freedom. Freppel responded that there were several issues on which the Church deserved privileges from the state, offering the issue of mandatory military service for priests as an example.¹⁴ Freppel believed that the interpretation offered by Thomas was not a fair reading: “It seems to me that you yielded too easily to the desire to explain this magnificent pontifical document according to the sense of liberal Catholics.”¹⁵ Freppel explained further that he could not let this “disastrous” tendency go unchallenged.

Freppel decided to send his observations on the discourse to the pope in response to the favorable publication of Thomas’ address in the *Moniteur de Rome*. However, it was the issue of publication closer to Freppel that generated the most controversy. Freppel learned that *l’Union de l’Ouest* of Angers was planning to publish the address in its entirety. Freppel wrote the director and demanded he not go forward with the publication. In a short explanatory letter, he stated that the address had “caused a certain reaction” among his clergy, and in the interests of avoiding polemics and maintaining peace, he prohibited “discussions that I deem adverse and inopportune.”¹⁶ The *Union de l’Ouest*, almost certainly aware of the uproar that would follow, published Freppel’s interdiction and letter, which quickly spread throughout the press. In response, several letters in support of Thomas from other bishops were published, including from Cardinal

¹⁴ Terrien, t.II, pp. 518 – 519.

¹⁵ Terrien, t.I, p. 519.

¹⁶ *Annales catholiques. Revue religieuse hebdomadaire de la France et de l’Église*, December 19, 1885, p. 629.

Joseph-Hippolyte Guibert of Paris.¹⁷ Rather than end divisions among Catholics, the Thomas-Freppel issue only exposed the persistent tensions, as prelates sympathetic to both men expressed their support.

The final outcome of *l’Affaire de Rouen* was mixed in several ways. A great deal of political maneuvering occurred on both sides, as everyone realized a larger issue was raised by Freppel’s criticism of Thomas’ doctrine. The Abbé Pierre-Edouard Puyol, superior of *Saint-Louis des Français* in Rome, reported to Freppel on the status of the situation. There was a general sense that Freppel was correct on doctrine, and that Thomas had overreached in his interpretation. However, Freppel’s interdiction of Thomas’ address was unwarranted, especially since Thomas was an archbishop and Freppel’s superior in the hierarchy. Furthermore, Puyol said, Italians favored an approach of accommodation and conciliation, thus making them unlikely to do very much about the situation.¹⁸ In January of 1886, Cardinal Oreglia wrote Freppel again to warn him that while Rome was not supporting the complete interpretation of Thomas, it was also faulting Freppel for an error of form. Soon after, Freppel received a secret communication faulting him for publicly denouncing one of his superiors in the hierarchy. He wrote the pope to express his apologies and reaffirm his loyalty to the pontiff’s authority.¹⁹

¹⁷ Freppel was especially stung by Guibert’s support of Thomas’ address. He wrote Guibert, who had been ailing, to ask if perhaps his illness had prevented him from a careful reading. Guibert responded that he did not find any fault with its doctrine. Against Guibert’s wishes, this letter to Freppel was obtained and published as well, causing further embarrassment for Freppel. Terrien, t.II, pp. 521 – 522.

¹⁸ Terrien, t. II, pp. 525 – 526.

¹⁹ Terrien, t. II, pp. 533 – 536.

The story did not end there, for the question of Thomas' interpretation still remained. He had angered some in Rome by trying to obtain a copy of Freppel's reprimand and send it to the rest of the French bishops, an attempt that was blocked in the interest of quieting the situation. In addition, Thomas had been asked to revise his discourse, but his revisions still did not satisfy Rome. Finally, Leo XIII asked that all the bishops of the Normandy province make a public adhesion to the pope in a letter that he corrected himself. Although there were no public condemnations, the effect of these steps was clear: Rome did not fully approve of Thomas' original interpretation. However, upon the intervention of Cardinal Lavigerie, the pope sent Thomas a letter congratulating his efforts and thanking him for his devotion.²⁰ This development boosted Thomas and his allies, and Thomas wrote soon after that his doctrine had never been faulted or censured by the pope. In a telling letter to Freppel, Puyol indicated that officials in Rome were unhappy with Thomas' continued comments on the issue, but "there is only one word on the mouth of the pope when it comes to France: religious pacification."²¹ There was no desire to see this issue prolonged any further, and the final result, at least publicly, seemed to vindicate Thomas more than Freppel.²²

The *Affaire de Rouen* was important for several reasons. First, it demonstrated the continued factionalism within the French episcopate, even after *Immortale Dei* sought

²⁰ Upon publication of this letter, Cardinal Pitra wrote Freppel, "We are living in unusual times, for what are we to make of this situation that is becoming increasingly bizarre? After the extravagant charges at the Congress of Rouen, Mgr. Thomas receives congratulations and Mgr. Freppel receives blame." Terrien, t. II, p. 542.

²¹ Terrien, t. II, p. 546.

²² The pope's letter to Thomas was decisive in the public debate. However, the bishop of Montpellier, Anatole de Cabrières wrote the following to Freppel: "You have achieved a true victory over the bishop of Rouen. Rome has been for you despite his (Thomas') desire, and probably those of his friends as well, that they not oppose Thomas. All of the revisions are evidence of a very uncertain theological perspective." Terrien, t. II, p. 547.

to end these quarrels. It also showed the manner in which the reception of an encyclical could become quite contentious. The argument between Freppel and Thomas was largely over the way that Thomas linked the encyclical to the thought of earlier liberal Catholics. Lost in most of the debate was the actual text and importance of *Immortale Dei* itself. In addition, the pope's actions also highlighted his desire to, as Puyol indicated, maintain peace within the French Church and between the Church and the Third Republic. This policy of conciliation naturally led the pope to rely more on those prelates who were inclined to his vision of accommodation. Cardinal Lavigerie had been instrumental in securing the pope's letter to Thomas as a way of resolving the conflict. A few years later Lavigerie played the central role in a far more significant political development.

The Toast of Algiers and Conservative Resistance

After 1885 and Albert de Mun's failed attempt at founding the *Parti catholique*, others on the Right attempted to find a way to unify conservatives within the framework of the Republic. The following year, Edgar Raoul-Duval established *La Droite Républicaine* and argued that the best way conservative ideas could be advanced was by accepting the Republic.²³ This movement did not last long, as many conservatives still favored restoration as the ultimate goal, which was not Raoul-Duval's intention. The failed alliance of some conservatives with General Boulanger further demonstrated the

²³ Alexander Sedgwick, *The Ralliement in French Politics, 1890 – 1898* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 18 – 19.

difficulty of mobilizing an effective political coalition on the Right.²⁴ The next attempt was headed by Jacques Piou, who in early 1890 led the new *Droite constitutionnelle*, which presented a complete political program and accepted the existing republic.²⁵ However, like previous efforts the *Droite constitutionnelle* suffered from a lack of coherence and unity among its members.

In October of 1890, Lavigerie met with the pope and discussed the difficult political situation for French Catholics. He proposed that it could be useful for a leading voice in the Church to suggest Catholics support the Third Republic. The pope agreed in principle, but did not want to be connected to the idea for fear of being seen as meddling in internal politics.²⁶ On November 12, 1890, Lavigerie raised a toast to the French navy that was stationed in Algiers, saying that Catholics should “adhere without reservations,” and noting “I am certain that I will not be contradicted by any ecclesiastical authority.”²⁷ Many conservatives believed Lavigerie was acting without the support of the pope, but Leo XIII’s Secretary of State, Cardinal Mariano Rampolla, sent a letter to the bishop of St. Flour in which he revisited the teachings of *Immortale Dei* and suggested that French Catholics would be performing a “useful and salutary work” by supporting the existing government. The *Ralliement* was underway and was boosted quickly by the support of de Mun and others.

Freppel was among the conservatives who resisted Lavigerie’s call. He found it ironic that Lavigerie urged Catholics to support the Republic the same day that the

²⁴Benjamin F. Martin, *Count Albert de Mun: Paladin of the Third Republic*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978) pp. 73 – 83.

²⁵ Sedgwick, pp. 33 – 34.

²⁶ Sedgwick, pp. 39 – 40.

²⁷ Sedgwick, p. 39.

Chamber was moving to force seminarians into military service without any immunity. Freppel was also troubled by Lavigerie's seemingly complete acceptance of the Republic, preferring instead that he at least express reservations or conditions to the acceptance. Lavigerie had argued that accepting the Republic was a step toward achieving social peace, but Freppel responded that it was precisely because of the actions of the government against Catholics that there was not social peace.²⁸ Catholic support would amount to capitulation. As Lavigerie continued to build support and Rome remained officially silent, the sympathies of Leo XIII on this issue became unmistakable.²⁹

Freppel departed for Rome in February of 1891 to meet with the pope to discuss the situation in France. The meeting lasted approximately two hours, with Freppel describing the situation in his diocese before moving to the overall political situation. The problem for conservatives was not just their historical attachment to the monarchy, Freppel said, but that their experience with the "atheist republic" that was currently in power made it difficult to accept "without reservation."³⁰ Furthermore, he argued that it was a political miscalculation to think there were enough moderate Republicans interested in working with Catholics to affirm and support the Church's freedom in France. Lavigerie's plan was based on the notion that by rallying to the Republic, Catholics would be able to effect political change in their interests. This hypothesis was

²⁸ Terrien, t. II, pp. 701 – 702.

²⁹ In a letter to the bishop of Angouleme, Freppel remarked ruefully: "It is the equivocation of the Holy See that is the cause of all these ills. It began at the Vatican by the approval of Lavigerie's toast, then, seeing the negative consequences among Catholics and the prophetic announcements of a Universal Republic, they retreated, causing confusion among everyone. The nuncios have not been helpful throughout this mess. One has been removed, but not without causing great trouble. The course is set for the rest of Leo XIII's pontificate. We cannot change anything; we must allow things to unfold as they will." Terrien, t. II, pp. 712 – 713.

³⁰ Terrien, t. II, p. 715.

“absolutely imaginary,” as was the general idea of forming a republican Catholic party, which Freppel called “a pure chimera.” He summarized his conclusions to the pope: Lavigerie’s toast had created further division among Catholics; the recommendation of complete adherence to the republic troubled many consciences; the formation of a Catholic party would unite all anticlerical forces against the Church; the intervention of the Holy See on the political terrain in support of a particular government had reawakened Gallican sentiments; the best solution was to maintain a loose alliance of conservatives united in defense of religious and social interests.³¹ Freppel met again with the pope a few days later as well; he assessed the outcome of the meetings as positive, though it is very likely that the die was already cast on Leo XIII’s approach to French politics.³² It was within this political and religious context that *Rerum novarum* appeared.

The Background and Release of *Rerum novarum*

A papal encyclical on the social question was a project that developed over many years and with many influences.³³ As Leo XIII’s response to the political situation in France demonstrated, his goal was to position the Church in modernity in such a way that it could be effective and not just adversarial. At the same time, Leo XIII was not a

³¹ Terrien, t. II., pp. 716 – 717.

³² Terrien relates an anecdote that upon his arrival in Rome, Freppel encountered Secretary of State Rampolla, who said to him “I am afraid that you have arrived too late... You will not succeed in changing his mind.” t.II, p. 713.

³³ Some of the best analyses of the influences on the encyclical are found in *Rerum novarum: Écriture, contenu et réception d’une encyclique*. (Rome: École française de Rome, 1997), hereafter *Rerum novarum*...

theological innovator but rather someone who relied heavily on traditional explanations of doctrine. He was not the “liberal” antithesis of Pius IX’s reactionary conservatism, he simply approached the practical concerns of the Church throughout the modern world from a different perspective. The result, as *Immortale Dei* demonstrated, was the adaptation of traditional Catholic teaching to the conditions of the modern world. This approach was especially helpful when it came to the social question. The pope considered traditional principles of charity, justice, and the social order in light of the exigencies of the industrialized economy. *Rerum novarum* was and remains influential in part because of its ability to balance the sometimes-competing claims of tradition and modernity.

Events Leading to Rerum novarum

During the 1880’s, a number of people across Europe were involved in projects to bring about social reform. In France, this included figures such as Albert De Mun, René de La Tour du Pin, Henri Lorin, and Léon Harmel. In Austria, the Baron Karl de Vogelsang and prince Aloys of Liechtenstein were influential. Other key social thinkers included the Italian Counts Medolago-Albani and Giuseppe Toniolo, and Gaspard Decurtins, from Switzerland. These men, and others, were often in correspondence with each other and the pope and tried to convince him to take action on the social question.³⁴

³⁴ Levillain, in *Rerum novarum: Écriture, contenu et réception d’une encyclique*, p. 117. For further background information on these figures, see Misner. Also see Robert Talmy, *Aux Sources du Catholicisme Social: L’Ecole de La Tour du Pin* (1963); Joan Coffey, *Léon Harmel: Entrepreneur as*

Though developments began slowly, in 1882 Leo XIII created the Roman Committee of Social Studies and named Domenico Jacobini, who was Prefect of Propaganda Fide, as president. Members of this committee included Bishop Mermillod, who had been bishop of Geneva but was exiled to Rome, La Tour du Pin, and the Baron Kuefstein of Austria. Two years later, the pope made Mermillod bishop of Fribourg, ten years after his exile from Geneva. This laid the groundwork for what would later become the Fribourg Union.³⁵ A constitution was established in October of 1885, and this provided for yearly meetings at which such topics as work, private property, commerce and credit were discussed. This group grew in influence and in 1888 Mermillod had an audience with the pope, accompanied by nine members of the Fribourg Union. During this meeting he asked Leo XIII to produce a document on the social question as soon as possible.

Also in 1888, Albert De Mun made the same request of the pope in a long Memoir he wrote. It seems likely that Leo XIII himself had asked for various opinions on the matter, for in addition to De Mun's work, Gaspard Decurtins, the Swiss national counselor, recommended international legislation which would make Sunday rest obligatory. He received praise for this idea in a letter by Jacobini.³⁶ Thus Leo XIII was interested in getting various opinions from leading thinkers about the social question and how it should be handled.

Catholic Social Reformer (2003); Alec Vidler, *A Century of Social Catholicism: 1820-1920* (1964); and Henri Rollet, *L'Action Sociale des Catholiques en France: 1871-1901* (1947).

³⁵ Talmy, 53-58 and Misner, 202-208.

³⁶ Levillain, 118-119.

Another factor in the drafting of *Rerum Novarum* was the decision by Emperor William II, in February of 1890, to call for a Congress at Berlin to discuss ways to improve the situation of the workers in Germany. The emperor invited the pope to attend, but he declined. However, it may be that the Berlin Congress provided Leo XIII the initiative to produce the encyclical and show that the papacy was interested and involved in an official capacity. The pilgrimages of French workers to Rome, led by Harmel were also likely key moments.³⁷ The pope was able to see large groups of workers and learn about the conditions in which they worked; his addresses to them signaled that he understood action needed to be taken.³⁸ It is reasonable to think that the encyclical was decided upon towards the end of 1889 and that the invitation of William II to the Berlin Congress expedited its publication. The increasing attention of social congresses to the worker question also undoubtedly demonstrated the importance of the issue among Catholics.

The Writing of Rerum novarum

Much is known about the process which occurred to prepare *Rerum novarum* because when Domenico Tardini, who was Under-Secretary of State during World War II, looked in the Secret Archives he found in the papers of Msgr. Alessandro Volpini, Secretary of Latin Letters, the original drafts and corrections of *Rerum novarum*. These

³⁷ Coffey, pp. 145 – 192.

³⁸ Vidler, 123-127; Levillain, 120.

were published in 1957 by Giovanni Antonazzi.³⁹ Thus the three drafts of the encyclical can be examined to see which ideas were changed, omitted, and so on.⁴⁰

Several authors have speculated about the specific influences used in the preparation of *Rerum novarum*. Many think that Leo carefully oversaw the drafting of the encyclical, which seems quite likely. Furthermore, some argue that the thought of various social thinkers was incorporated in the text, along with the statements of the Fribourg Union and the Memorandum which Mermillod had written on the social question.⁴¹ The only definitive thing which can be said is that the drafting itself was left to some of the pope's closest advisors. He recognized that he needed to be careful not to be too specific about endorsing certain social theories or currents of thought, because these often come and go while the Church remains. Also, he did not call upon the aid of economists, and he sought to align the papacy with the working masses through the use of the Gospel and Tradition, as well as experience and observation, for there was no precedent for any type of social teaching like this. Leo XIII was also aware of many of the debates going on within Catholic circles about the role of the state, corporations, workingmen associations, and the just wage. It was important that he not appear to take one side or another too strongly.

Tardini's observation of the drafts he found led him to conclude that Leo did not write any part of the drafts. The first draft was written by the Jesuit Matteo Liberatore

³⁹ Under the title, *L'Enciclica Rerum Novarum: Testo Autentico e Redazioni Preparatorie dai Documenti Originali* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1957).

⁴⁰ John Molony has provided analysis in English in *The Worker Question* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1991), and "The Making of *Rerum Novarum*: April 1890 – May 1891." In *The Church Faces the Modern World: Rerum Novarum and its impact*, ed. Paul Furlong and David Curtis (Winteringham: Earls Gate Press, 1994). The following section relies on Molony's account.

⁴¹ See Levillain, 121.

who taught Ethics in Rome and had recently written his *Principles of Political Economy*. It appears that he began working on it in April of 1890; he was 80 years old. This first draft, titled “The Worker Question”, was relatively short at only six thousand words, and outlined many of the main themes that would eventually be included. He connected social disturbances to hunger and economic turmoil, excoriated usury which he saw as linked to capitalism, rejected socialism, and even condemned birth control and called on bishops and priests to speak against this.⁴² He also argued for state intervention in a fairly strong manner, including the aspects of wages and working conditions. The state had a duty to intervene because of both public morality and justice, and these issues could not be left to supply and demand and freely-entered contracts. He provided the standard view on Sunday rest and also thought one of the best remedies for the social problem was the corporation. On the wage issue he argued from justice and equity and he tied it to the idea of a family wage, the idea that one worker was due a wage that would allow him to support his family.⁴³

This first draft then went to a Dominican, Cardinal Tommaso Zigliara, for review. The resulting second draft was more focused on the Church and the pope as the head of the Church rather than identifying with the poor. He strengthened the condemnation of socialism, and was more cautious about the just wage. He did not rely on corporations like *Liberatore*, but rather advocated associations and professional communities. The state was “by its nature not superior but subject to the laws of God and His Vicar on earth,” in shades of Innocent III and Boniface VIII. This draft was twice the length of

⁴² This aspect was eliminated, with the remark ‘is it inappropriate to remark upon such depravity.’

⁴³ Molony, “The Making of *Rerum Novarum*,” pp. 29-32.

Liberatore's, and went to Volpini for a Latin translation. On October 28, Volpini was ordered to stop his work, presumably by the pope, so that matters could be discussed.

After this meeting, the third Italian draft was written by Camillo Mazzella, a Jesuit who was fairly conservative and had been involved in Rome's handling of the case against Edward McGlynn with Henry George and the Knights of Labor. Liberatore seemed to influence Mazzella's draft, as old sections on corporations were once again included. He struck out the reference to birth control and eliminated the family component to the just wage, which Molony speculates may have been at the direction of Leo XIII.

This Italian draft seemed satisfactory, so from Mid-November to the end of January Volpini worked on the translation. Leo XIII viewed the document and was satisfied with the content but told him to start over from the beginning with the Latin translation.⁴⁴ Gabriele Boccali was then brought in to work on the document. The Church was given a more prominent role and there was a refusal to use the word corporation. By May 10, Boccali's draft was in Latin and it was released on May 15.

General Reception of the Encyclical

An important question that is raised with many documents, including *Rerum novarum*, concerns the matter of reception. This became a more popular scholarly exercise after World War II and in the 1960's. The idea of reception is to trace the

⁴⁴ Molony, "The Making of *Rerum Novarum*," p. 35. The pope is reported to have said, "Yes, the material is all there, but it lacks tone. You have to throw it all away and begin from the beginning."

development of a work, from its intention to its production, and then see how it actually functioned or impacted a society after it was produced. How did readers respond to it? Did it achieve its goal? An important measure of this for an encyclical would be to determine the popularity of the work among the people. The public opinion expressed could be an especially important way of evaluation.⁴⁵ An interesting feature of *Rerum novarum* is that it seemed to create favorable reactions in many non-Catholic circles as well as in Catholic circles. However this was not unanimous, as criticisms were made and certain groups were disappointed.

The encyclical was well-received in several areas across Europe. In Belgium, most of the major Catholic newspapers and journals published the text of the encyclical shortly after it was produced. Though different views were offered as to its meaning, most reactions were positive.⁴⁶ The interpretations of the encyclical offered by various newspapers and journals reflected the ideology of the person or organization offering it. For example, in Belgium, where a great deal of debate had occurred, the division which existed over state intervention heavily impacted interpretations.

The reception of the encyclical in France was also divided according to ideology. Jean-Dominique Durand examined how the reaction of the French bishops to *Rerum novarum* was merely a continuation of the battle between sides which existed before it was published.⁴⁷ Many bishops were pleased with its publication, believing that there

⁴⁵ A more recent example of the issue of reception is Pope Paul VI's *Humanae vitae* in 1968. Levillain, p. 109.

⁴⁶ Paul Gerin, "Les Ecoles Sociales Belges et la Lecture de *Rerum Novarum*," in *Rerum Novarum...* pp. 276-280. For several articles dealing with the reactions in specific parts of Europe, see chapters in *Rerum Novarum...*

⁴⁷ "La Reception de *Rerum Novarum* par les Eveques Francais," in *Rerum Novarum...*, pp. 291-318.

had been a need for this type of papal pronouncement. In several dioceses efforts were undertaken to spread the teaching of the encyclical and make it more accessible to the workers.⁴⁸ Lay Catholics interested in the social question and young priests viewed the encyclical as a call to action, and sought ways to actively implement its principles.⁴⁹ Industrialized areas praised the encyclical while focusing on its rejection of socialism and ignoring its critique of economic liberalism. So while much of the response was positive, the divergent points of emphasis revealed some slight differences in interpretation.⁵⁰ As this selective method of interpretation expanded, a tendency of several conservative publications, some began to question whether the encyclical was being faithfully received or distorted.

Unfavorable Response

Though many people responded favorably to the encyclical, this was not uniformly the case. Some were put off by the encyclical's condemnation of capitalism, and secularists rejected the notion that the Church should play any role in public affairs.⁵¹ It was also not received favorably by those Catholics who wanted the power of the state to be very limited. The School of Angers falls into this group, though it was publicly very supportive of the encyclical, as will be seen shortly. However, a few examples show

⁴⁸ For example, in Bordeaux, where Bishop Lecot framed the encyclical as a series of 136 questions and answers for the workers to read.

⁴⁹ For more on this, see Yves-Marie Hilaire, "Rerum Novarum dans France," in *Rerum Novarum...*

⁵⁰ A general study of the reaction of various French newspapers to *Rerum novarum* is Rene Poirier's *Les reactions à Rerum novarum dans la presse française* (M.A. diss. The Catholic University of America, 1968).

⁵¹ See Poirer for more on this aspect.

that the teaching was not just half-heartedly supported by some, but in some cases it was ignored or rejected.

The bishop of Nancy, Charles Francis Juring, issued a pastoral letter after the encyclical was published. The archbishop of Rheims, Cardinal Langénieux, claimed that the pastoral letter was an attack on De Mun and his school, and had created a sizable reaction and confusion in France and Belgium. Langénieux's point was that Juring was attacking the very people who were most in line with the encyclical's teaching, and in fact, anticipated its teaching by their actions in the years leading up to the encyclical. Thus the attack on de Mun and his school was an attack on the principles laid out by the pope. Langénieux was not impartial, as he had made the pilgrimage to Rome in 1887 with de Mun and Léon Harmel, and had spoken to Leo XIII and the papal court along with de Mun. Thus Langénieux wrote to Rome to determine how he should act, as he did not want to enter into a public dispute with another bishop. Rampolla and the pope agreed that a public response was unwise, and told Langénieux to discuss the issue with the Papal Nuncio in France, who would advise him.⁵²

Juring also wrote to Rampolla, as he was upset that Georges de Pascal, whose views will be mentioned shortly, had written a pamphlet responding critically to Juring's pastoral.⁵³ Juring viewed this response as part of an effort on behalf of those associated with de Mun to undermine the true teachings of the encyclical. Juring had previously written the pope two years before the encyclical was issued to alert him of the errors he thought de Mun was advocating. He believed that de Mun wished to form politicians

⁵² Molony, pp. 124-125.

⁵³ For more on de Pascal, see below, p. 287ff.

who would act against the interests of the Church.⁵⁴ Rampolla replied to Juring on July 31, and indicated that Leo XIII had seen his letter, as well as his pastoral letter and Pascal's response. However, the pope was not pleased with the polemical nature of the debate and did not want things to get out of hand. Rampolla then referred Juring to the Papal Nuncio who advised both sides to act prudently and avoid public disputes. It is not clear what else was said, but it did not seem to do much to resolve the problem.⁵⁵

That the interpretation of the encyclical continued to be debated in the years after *Rerum novarum* is evidenced by ongoing disputes over which side was accurately representing its teaching. In Germany, workers read a family component into the encyclical's teaching on the just wage, and 65,000 of them thanked the pope for saying that their wage should be "ample enough to provide comfortably for themselves, their wives and their children."⁵⁶ However, in France the reaction was not always as favorable. By July of 1894, Léon Harmel decided he needed to visit Rampolla in Rome because the opposition in northern France had become troubling to him. Rampolla encouraged him to continue his work and to promote his interpretation of the encyclical, and sent a letter back in the pope's name praising the work being done by those involved with the paper Harmel supported, *Démocratie chrétienne*.

Yet this encouragement did not help the problem. Harmel sent another letter to Rome in which he reported on a controversy in Cambrai. The archbishop, Monsignor Etienne-Marie-Alphonse Sonnois, would not allow priests who held teaching positions to write publicly without his permission. Thus a professor of philosophy, Father Bataille,

⁵⁴ Presumably by supporting the Republic, which he viewed as opposing the Church.

⁵⁵ Molony, pp. 125-126.

⁵⁶ Molony, p. 126.

petitioned the archbishop to write an article so that he could inform the workers of pope's teaching, lest they become socialists. He said he would only include Leo XIII's teaching from *Rerum novarum*, as well the interpretation from the Congresses of Liège and Malines, which were both viewed favorably by the pope. Sonnois refused to allow this and sought to silence voices that stood against the conservative outlook. This was an example of conservatives, many of whom were in northern France, blocking publication of works which promoted papal teaching. While none of these examples included members of the School of Angers, one might surmise that they were disappointed with the encyclical's seeming agreement with many principles of Liège. Turning now to the specific responses of both groups, it is interesting to see how each side marshaled support for their positions from the text of the encyclical.

The School of Liège on *Rerum novarum*

Analysis of the encyclical came quickly in many journals. After publishing the text of *Rerum novarum* in June, *L'Association catholique* offered a brief commentary on it the following month. The article was written by Georges de Pascal, a doctor of Theology and Missionary Apostolic who also served on the editorial board of the journal.⁵⁷ He introduced the encyclical in grandiose terms, saying that in a century that

⁵⁷ The article in *L'Association catholique* is a summary of the main points of a larger work published by de Pascal, *L'Église et la question sociale. Étude sur l'encyclique 'De la conditione des ouvriers'*, (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1891). One notable point made in the longer work was de Pascal's argument that *Rerum novarum* is an exercise of the pope's *ex cathedra* teaching authority and is therefore infallible (pp. 3 – 8). He does qualify this, however, saying "the teaching of the pope *on the principles of a solution conformed to justice and equity* constitute an *ex cathedra* teaching that is infallible and binds the conscience of all

questions the truth like Pontius Pilate, Pope Leo XIII's work was like a "voice crying out in the wilderness" to direct society toward the answers it needed. He then proceeded to demonstrate how the doctrine of *Rerum novarum* was in accordance with the positions of the *Cercles* and *L'Association catholique*.

The first important point highlighted by de Pascal was the encyclical's condemnation of economic liberalism. "We have always thought and even said, sometimes so strongly that it offended some of our friends, that the evils of the present time are not a result of this or that *regime*, but rather sprung from the current social system. In particular...that capitalism has created the isolation of the worker, that individualism has fatally led to the control of a heartless plutocracy upon all aspects of human activity."⁵⁸ While capitalism was seen as the problem, the solution could not be found in any form of socialism. The pope was clear that private property was an essential right that must be protected because, among other reasons, it was a key component of a stable family life. The Church had an important role to play, teaching about the importance of work, of justice toward the poor, and the general acceptance of one's state in life. However, the pope himself admitted that it was "doubtful" that the desired result could be achieved without recourse to "human means."

De Pascal then turns to the encyclical's treatment of the role of the state. In a swipe at his opponents from the School of Angers, he points out that Leo XIII is neither a state socialist nor guilty of *statolâtrie* as a result of his teaching. Rather, like many social Catholics had been saying, the state must have a role in the resolution of the social

Catholics." The same authority did not apply to the pope's particular arguments, suggested methods, or use of facts, though Catholics should consider all of these very seriously as well. p. 8.

⁵⁸ *L'Association catholique*, Vol. 32, July 1891, p. 21.

question. De Pascal argues that the encyclical supports state action to maintain justice in the following areas: protection of the worker against dangers that threaten themselves, their souls, or their families; promotion of the moral welfare of the worker, especially through Sunday rest; defense against unjust exploitations of health, strength, or any other action that demeans the worker by treating him like merchandise; regulation of the length of work based on the nature of the job, age, and gender.⁵⁹ He acknowledges that any intervention must be “measured and discrete,” but the duty of the state to be involved is definitive, “we cannot question this without challenging the primary function of authority.”⁶⁰ Furthermore, those who had previously attacked their writings and actions on this issue no longer had any reason to continue; their agreement with the doctrine of the encyclical was clear.

A major consequence of the principle of state intervention in the social question was its implications for the issue of wages. This section of *Rerum novarum* generated the most debate among social Catholics, as will be detailed below. One of the key lines stated, “the salary ought not be insufficient to support a frugal and well-behaved worker.” De Pascal argued that this justified, in principle, the idea of a minimum wage, and aligned almost verbatim with the views of the *Cercles*.⁶¹ A more complex question, however, was the practical application of how to implement a minimum wage. The encyclical spoke of the danger of the state acting inopportunistly as a result of the

⁵⁹ *L'Association catholique*, Vol. 32, July 1891, p. 25.

⁶⁰ *L'Association catholique*, Vol. 32, July 1891, p. 25.

⁶¹ *L'Association catholique*, Vol. 32, July 1891, p. 26. The French translation of the encyclical states “le salaire ne doit pas être insuffisant pour faire subsister l’ouvrier sobre et honnête,” while *Avis VIII* of the *Conseil des Etudes*, the intellectual branch of the *Cercles*, said that the wage should allow the worker “les moyens de satisfaire aux conditions d’une vie honnête selon son état.”

variations of wages according to time, place, and other factors, and said that *in principle* it would be best if the minimum wage was established by corporations or other intermediate bodies. However, if it could not be achieved through these means, “the aid and support of the state” could become necessary. De Pascal summarized the logic as follows: since the state is the guardian of justice, and a minimum wage for the worker is a matter of justice, “the state should avoid intervening inopportunistly, instead relying on corporations or other means. But if this action fails or is insufficient, an appeal must then be made to the public authority.”⁶² He was clear that corporations had an important role to play and that the ideal scenario was the corporations determine the rates and the state approves of them.⁶³ De Pascal thinks this system is the only reasonable reading of the pope’s intentions, which, he adds, significantly resembles the program of the *Cercles* and that outlined by Cardinal Manning in his letter to the Congress of Liège.⁶⁴

The final issue examined by de Pascal was the encyclical’s treatment of associations. It envisions corporations that are autonomous, hierarchical, and animated by religion and the Christian spirit of justice and fraternity. All of these were characteristics of the system promoted by *L’Association catholique* and its allies for many years, giving them additional support and vindication. They had also argued that although they should be autonomous, the state should support and encourage them though legislation, a view de Pascal finds consonant with the pope’s thought. In all,

⁶² *L’Association catholique*, Vol. 32, July 1891, p. 27.

⁶³ *L’Association catholique*, Vol. 32, July 1891, p. 28. “Bref, la corporation fait les règlements necessaries et l’Etat les homologue.”

⁶⁴ *L’Association catholique*, Vol. 32, July 1891, p. 28. In another reference to Freppel and the School of Angers, de Pascal comments that the letter “made a lot of noise and was, as we recall, attacked or misinterpreted, even by lofty and educated people.”

Rerum novarum is seen as a complete vindication of their social doctrine, with no discord identified. As one might expect, the same conclusion was reached by proponents of the School of Angers.

The School of Angers on *Rerum novarum*

In the June issue of the *Revue catholique des institutions et du droit*, the encyclical was published in its entirety, both in Latin and French. There was only a brief comment at the end of the issue which praised Leo's work as helping to put an end to "many evils, many injustices and deplorable violence." The praise continued, "it is superfluous to say that all sincere Catholics ought to take from now on the papal word as the rule of conduct from these teachings."⁶⁵ Indeed, *Rerum novarum* was praised as a "great work" of Leo XIII. The next direct mention of the encyclical came in the August issue, when Auguste Onclair began a series of articles on the "Duties of the State." The article was prepared before the release of *Rerum novarum*, and Onclair happily announced in the introduction that the positions in the article were "in perfect conformity with the teaching of the Holy See."⁶⁶ He indicated that had the study been out of line with the pope's teaching they would have not published it until it was revised. But the

⁶⁵ *Rev. cath.*, (June 1891), pp. 568-9.

⁶⁶ *Rev. cath.*, (August 1891), p. 97.

Revue was very proud of its Catholic title and “jealous of its perfect orthodoxy.” Onclair wanted to make it perfectly clear that the School of Angers was in complete agreement with Leo XIII’s teaching, placing *Rerum novarum* first in his list of sources, even before Thomas Aquinas. In an interesting remark at the end of the introduction he said that after the encyclical their adversaries either no longer existed or ought not exist for much longer given the affirmation of their position by the pope.⁶⁷ To the extent that he was referencing the School of Liège as adversaries, this comment did not contain the prescience Onclair believed it did.

Revisiting the Three Issues in Light of the Encyclical

Four months after the encyclical was published, Theo Schyrgens wrote a follow-up to his article comparing the School of Angers and the School of Liège, this time incorporating the encyclical as the principal reference. This article is very useful, for he selected quotes from the encyclical to justify the position of the School of Angers. Thus one gets a sense of how they approached the interpretation of the encyclical by using certain passages and reading them in the light most favorable to their position.

Schyrgens began by stating that he believed the School of Angers had been vindicated by the pope’s teaching and that the two sides should come together in support of the encyclical.⁶⁸ He laid out “the magnificent encyclical *Rerum novarum*, which we

⁶⁷ *Rev. cath.*, (August 1891), p. 98.

⁶⁸ *Rev. cath.*, (September 1891), pp. 229-238.

admire with our entire heart and without reserve.” Both sides were rushing to claim perfect adherence to the encyclical, and Schyrgens proceeded under the assumption that *Rerum novarum* more or less reflected the complete view of the School of Angers on the social question. Those who disagreed with this interpretation were still attached to the concept of state socialism, so they tried to read the document in such a way that would justify their own beliefs. He then revisited the three issues which divided Catholics and were discussed in his first article: fixing the length of the workday for adults, the minimum wage, and the provision of mandatory insurance. The two positions are familiar: one side believed the state should regulate these areas, the other side argued the state has very little or no place in resolving these issues. Schyrgens argued that *Rerum novarum* was decisive in favor of his views, and that socialism had been dealt a mortal blow.

The first issue was whether the length of the workday should be fixed by law. He cited the part of the encyclical that dealt with this matter:

42. If we turn not to things external and material, the first thing of all to secure is to save *unfortunate working people from the cruelty of men of greed, who use human beings as mere instruments for money-making*. It is neither just nor human so to grind men down with excessive labor as to stupefy their minds and wear out their bodies. Man's powers, like his general nature, are limited, and beyond these limits he cannot go. His strength is developed and increased by use and exercise, but only on condition of due intermission and proper rest. Daily labor, therefore, *should be so regulated as not to be protracted over longer hours than strength admits*. How many and how long the intervals of rest should be must depend on the nature of the work, on circumstances of time and place, and on the health and strength of the workman. Those who work in mines and quarries, and extract coal, stone and metals from the bowels of the earth, should have shorter hours in proportion as their labor is more severe and trying to health. Then, again, the season of the year should be taken into account; for not infrequently a kind of labor is easy at one time which at another is intolerable or exceedingly difficult...In these and similar questions, however - such as, for example, the

hours of labor in different trades, the sanitary precautions to be observed in factories and workshops, etc. - in order to supersede undue interference on the part of the State, especially as circumstances, times, and localities differ so widely, it is advisable that recourse be had to societies or boards such as We shall mention presently, or to some other mode of safeguarding the interests of the wage-earners; the State being appealed to, should circumstances require, for its sanction and protection.⁶⁹

Schyrgens then analyzed this excerpt to determine the pope's view on the matter. He noted that the public authority could intervene when workers were being mistreated at the hands of greedy men and were being abused as if they were a machine. The pope also said that the length of the workday should not exceed the strength of the worker. So there were situations in which state intervention was justified. The question then became the proper nature of the state's involvement. Should the length of the workday be fixed at eleven or twelve hours? Schyrgens interpreted the pope to be answering this question in the negative, for he said that there were a number of different circumstances which must be considered that would make this type of law impractical, and the state would be acting inopportune.⁷⁰ Furthermore, the pope mentioned the "societies or boards" which would act as intermediate bodies as the preferable means of working out this issue. The lack of a specific mention of establishing maximum workday lengths by law and the concern over the inopportune of specific interventions provided sufficient evidence for Schyrgens to conclude that the encyclical did not support such legislation.

This obviously led to the conclusion that the School of Angers was more in line with the pope's teaching than de Mun and the School of Liège. He renewed his criticism of de Mun on this issue, pointing out that workers at certain jobs which were only done

⁶⁹ Emphasis as it appeared in the original article. The English translation of the encyclical reads differently than a direct translation of the French version. Therefore, some discrepancies may appear in terminology, for the English translation is the version quoted.

⁷⁰ *Rev. cath.*, (September 1891), p. 232.

part of the year may work for more than twelve hours at no danger to themselves or their families. The pope was “prudent and circumspect” on this issue, according to Schyrgens, because he realized that several factors impacted the issue. Indeed, Schyrgens claimed that the pope was echoing the thought of Périn and Freppel by allowing state intervention in the cases of abuse which harmed the worker’s well-being.⁷¹ The pope did not say, as the Congress of Liège had, that it ought to remedy the problem by legally fixing the length of the workday. Schyrgens suggested that the state could use its police force to eliminate abuses, and provide legal support and protection for intermediate organizations that would act on behalf of the worker. However, general laws fixing the maximum length of the workday were not the solution. He did not see the encyclical allowing for any other position than that which followed the principles articulated by the School of Angers.

The second issue of contention was the minimum wage. Although de Mun had rejected such action himself, many social Catholics still advocated a legislative solution. Schyrgens returns to the encyclical, beginning with the pope’s rejection of a strictly capitalist view of wages:

...Wages, as we are told, are regulated by free consent, and therefore the employer, when he pays what was agreed upon, has done his part and seemingly is not called upon to do anything beyond. The only way, it is said, in which injustice might occur would be if the master refused to pay the whole of the wages, or if the workman should not complete the work undertaken; in such cases the public authority should intervene, to see that each obtains his due, but not under any other circumstances. To this kind of argument a fair-minded man will not easily or entirely assent; it is not complete, for there are important considerations which it leaves out of account altogether.

⁷¹ *Rev. cath.*, (September 1891), p. 232.

The reaction to this excerpt is interesting because he claimed that the School of Angers had actually adopted a more severe understanding than the pope. The pope was condemning a view that held that “strict justice” was merely the free consent of both parties to a wage. However, Onclair⁷² had studied theologians and believed that strict justice mandated not only the wage agreed upon by the two parties, but should be based on “the customs of the place, according to the estimate of an honest and prudent man, and in agreement with the value of the work accomplished.”⁷³ The School of Angers was outlining a broader definition of strict justice, which alone was insufficient to guarantee the just wage. In other words, the School of Angers had a more rigorous conception of strict justice than the pope himself seemed to be articulating, meaning that they included additional considerations as the minimum, though insufficient, basis for a wage. As he had remarked in earlier articles, a society where wages were based on strict justice alone would be miserable. Schyrgens argued that no one could be satisfied with such a limited conception of wages that would inevitably result in exploitation.⁷⁴

Schyrgens continued by tracing the pope’s argument that work was both personal and necessary for survival, and for this reason there was more to the wage than the simple agreement between parties. Again, citing the encyclical:

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

⁷² *Rev. cath.*, (April 1891), pp. 289-304.

⁷³ *Rev. cath.*, (September 1891), p. 234.

⁷⁴ *Rev. cath.*, (September 1891), p. 234.

Thus the encyclical claimed that the subsistence salary was not a matter of strict justice, but of natural justice. Saint Thomas had said that natural justice was a larger species of justice that incorporated the obligations of benevolence and charity. In most cases the “sober and honest”⁷⁵ worker was able to earn a wage sufficient to support himself. If for some reason, perhaps weakness or another factor, the sober and honest worker could not produce a value of work sufficient to support himself, he was still entitled to a subsistence wage. The additional amount paid by the employer to provide a subsistence wage would be an act of charity dictated by natural justice.⁷⁶ Schyrgens also pointed out that the pope did not speak directly on the wage being sufficient to support the worker and his family. However, like Charles Périn argued in his analysis⁷⁷, they believed that it was a matter of natural justice that the worker support himself and his family. This is an example of what was meant by the often-repeated idea that “charity completes justice.” There was a broad species of justice, natural justice as the pope indicates in *Rerum novarum*, or complete (*pleine*) justice as articles in the *Revue* had described it, that included the practice of charity as a requirement of its fulfillment. Because they also argued that charity could not and should not be legislated, issues involving this type of justice were not suitable for state involvement.

Schyrgens then examined the encyclical’s position regarding state intervention in this matter. As with the previous issue, the pope did not mention legislation fixing a minimum wage as the solution to this problem. Rather, as cited above, he preferred that the societies or boards handle this issue, lest the state intervene inopportunately as a result

⁷⁵ “Sobre et honete” in the French translation, rendered in the English as “frugal and well-behaved.”

⁷⁶ *Rev. cath.*, (September 1891), p. 235.

⁷⁷ See below, pp. 306 – 310.

of the various circumstances. He also mentioned in passing a point that Périn emphasized and which would later become magnified, that the encyclical's teaching only applies to specific situations when the worker is coerced in some manner.⁷⁸ Even in those instances the preference is for intermediate bodies to resolve the problem. Schyrgens finds similarities in the encyclical's reasoning and arguments by Freppel, which rejected fixing the minimum wage by law because wages were subject to various factors such as localities, products, and standards of living, which would not make it feasible to establish an effective wage without potentially harming some group. As Freppel had often said, "The minimum wage is not a matter of legislation."⁷⁹

Next, Schyrgens addressed the third point of disagreement, which was obligatory insurance. He did not provide any extensive excerpt, for the pope did not directly address the issue. He speculated that the reason for this was that the notion of a law requiring insurance "was so evidently socialist" that the pope need not mention it. Yet he did see evidence that the pope opposed this idea and supported the School of Angers in the encyclical. The pope did not mention the issue when he was discussing legitimate forms of state intervention, and furthermore, he placed it within his discussion of corporations. These free associations, advocated by the School of Angers, had been responsible for providing aid to workers who were sick or injured or elderly, and the pope affirmed this system in the encyclical. This was proof enough to Schyrgens that the pope agreed with

⁷⁸ See below, pp. 307 – 308.

⁷⁹ *Rev. cath.*, (September 1891), p. 236.

them and that the solutions practiced in places like Germany were not envisioned by the pope.⁸⁰

In conclusion, Schyrgens viewed the encyclical as reaffirming their views of the social question which flowed from the tradition of Thomas Aquinas and rejected the solutions of state socialism. The pope made no direct indication that the state ought to fix the length of the workday, establish the minimum wage, or mandate insurance. The encyclical was also seen as upholding the views of the school on justice and charity, and the notion that “neither laws nor the state are enough to achieve justice, above all else must be charity.”⁸¹ Thus the School of Angers maintained its analysis of minimizing the role of the state and continuing to emphasize charity as the best means of solving the social problem.⁸² One of the intellectual leaders of the school also weighed in with a commentary that interpreted the encyclical in a manner that was similar, though not exactly alike.

Charles Périn's Brochure on the Encyclical

Not long after *Rerum novarum* was released, Charles Périn published an interpretation of the encyclical, *L'Économie politique d'après l'encyclique sur la condition des ouvriers*. The brochure was not presented as representing the School of Angers or any other school, but Périn's involvement with and influence on the School of

⁸⁰ *Rev. cath.*, (September 1891), p. 237.

⁸¹ *Rev. cath.*, (September 1891), p. 238.

⁸² See Talmy for more on this, 59-72.

Angers makes it a useful work to examine. It was not overly polemical, but also signaled the type of reading given by those sympathetic to the positions of the School of Angers.

The first point Périn makes in examining the encyclical is that it is not the product of a “school,” but rather is a “synthesis of the economic order that follows from the divine laws which govern human conduct.”⁸³ Though he argues that the exclusive concerns of any school will not be found in the encyclical, he begins by pointing out the document’s emphasis on sacrifice and renunciation in the life of a Christian, which he also highlighted throughout his own works. In addition, charity is one of the central manifestations of sacrifice and the primary force for social action. He does note, following the encyclical, that charity is not enough to resolve the social question and must be joined together with justice. Realizing the importance of these two ideas, Périn warns that they are linked but distinct, and their proper roles must be acknowledged. He finds support for this in the encyclical’s discussion of the use of wealth by the rich and their obligation to help the poor: “It is not a duty of justice, except in cases of extreme necessity, but of Christian charity, and this duty cannot be enforced by the way of law.”⁸⁴ Later, when mentioning the charitable works of the Church, the encyclical says that human law cannot be a substitute for Christian charity. Périn’s focus on the role of charity, which he says is more powerful than justice, was an implicit criticism of those who characterized much of the worker question in terms of justice.

Périn turns next to the crucial question of the role of the state in the social question. He finds in the encyclical principles for state intervention which amount to a

⁸³ Charles Périn, *L’Économie politique d’après l’encyclique sur la condition des ouvriers*, (Paris: Librairie Victor Lecoffre, 1891), p. 6. Hereafter abbreviated *L’Économie politique d’après l’encyclique*.

⁸⁴ Périn, *L’Économie politique d’après l’encyclique*, p. 9.

clear rejection of both socialism and economic liberalism.⁸⁵ The encyclical was direct in its condemnation of socialism, but Périn notes that it also rejects the idea of a “Providential State” in which the state guides most of the actions of its citizens. The state is posterior to man, and man had already received the right to live and protect his existence. Thus the state should not be an obstacle in any way to human fulfillment but rather support it by protecting the rights of its people.⁸⁶ Furthermore, the state must be founded upon the precepts of natural law and divine teachings as expressed in *Immortale Dei* in order to be truly effective in its action. The key section of the encyclical on the role of the state clearly allows for intervention, though it should be carefully limited, and requires a special concern for the workers since they were among the weaker groups in society.⁸⁷ Catholic support of *laissez-faire* could no longer be justified in light of the

⁸⁵ “On the function of the state the encyclical contains a clarity that makes it impossible for Catholics to have any attachment to either state socialism or economic liberalism.” *L’Économie politique d’après l’encyclique*, pp. 10 – 11.

⁸⁶ Périn, *L’Économie politique d’après l’encyclique*, p. 11.

⁸⁷ Périn includes this lengthy excerpt (from the official English translation): 36. Whenever the general interest or any particular class suffers, or is threatened with harm, which can in no other way be met or prevented, the public authority must step in to deal with it. Now, it is to the interest of the community, as well as of the individual, that peace and good order should be maintained; that all things should be carried on in accordance with God's laws and those of nature; that the discipline of family life should be observed and that religion should be obeyed; that a high standard of morality should prevail, both in public and private life; that justice should be held sacred and that no one should injure another with impunity; that the members of the commonwealth should grow up to man's estate strong and robust, and capable, if need be, of guarding and defending their country. If by a strike of workers or concerted interruption of work there should be imminent danger of disturbance to the public peace; or if circumstances were such as that among the working class the ties of family life were relaxed; if religion were found to suffer through the workers not having time and opportunity afforded them to practice its duties; if in workshops and factories there were danger to morals through the mixing of the sexes or from other harmful occasions of evil; or if employers laid burdens upon their workmen which were unjust, or degraded them with conditions repugnant to their dignity as human beings; finally, if health were endangered by excessive labor, or by work unsuited to sex or age - in such cases, there can be no question but that, within certain limits, it would be right to invoke the aid and authority of the law. The limits must be determined by the nature of the occasion which calls for the law's interference - the principle being that the law must not undertake more, nor proceed further, than is required for the remedy of the evil or the removal of the mischief. 37. Rights must be religiously respected wherever they exist, and it is the duty of the public authority to prevent and to punish injury, and to protect every one in the possession of his own. Still, when there is question of defending the rights of individuals, the poor and badly off have a claim to especial

pope's teaching, a point on which Périn seems to feel vindicated, as he had long been a critic of it in its pure form. Another common argument made by Périn, and nearly all social Catholics for that matter, that economic issues could not be separated from religious concerns, was also expressed in the encyclical.⁸⁸

While acknowledging the role of state involvement in the social question, Périn sees the encyclical as promoting charity as the primary means of action. Two important components of this effort were *patronage* and association, the same features highlighted by Freppel in some of his earliest reflections on the social question.⁸⁹ Périn again emphasizes the importance of charity over justice in *patronage*, which he characterizes as “the complete fulfillment of the obligations of a Christian patron toward the workers he employs,” and these obligations were dictated by charity as much as by justice, “and that which charity inspires is very often more effective than that which justice imposes.”⁹⁰ In addition, the encyclical sought to inspire a greater sense of charity on behalf of the rich, who were often arrogant, as well as inspire in the poor a greater sense of resignation to their current situation. As a result, there were mutual obligations between the patron and worker, and the fulfillment of these duties on both sides was essential.

consideration. The richer class have many ways of shielding themselves, and stand less in need of help from the State; whereas the mass of the poor have no resources of their own to fall back upon, and must chiefly depend upon the assistance of the State. And it is for this reason that wage-earners, since they mostly belong in the mass of the needy, should be specially cared for and protected by the government.

⁸⁸ From paragraph 16: But We affirm without hesitation that all the striving of men will be vain if they leave out the Church. It is the Church that insists, on the authority of the Gospel, upon those teachings whereby the conflict can be brought to an end, or rendered, at least, far less bitter; the Church uses her efforts not only to enlighten the mind, but to direct by her precepts the life and conduct of each and all; the Church improves and betters the condition of the working man by means of numerous organizations; does her best to enlist the services of all classes in discussing and endeavoring to further in the most practical way, the interests of the working classes; and considers that for this purpose recourse should be had, in due measure and degree, to the intervention of the law and of State authority.

⁸⁹ See above, pp. 156 – 162.

⁹⁰ Périn, *L'Économie politique d'après l'encyclique*, p. 15.

This connection between patron and worker was also aided by the principle of association. In the areas of *patronage* and association, *Rerum novarum* laid out “general rules” to guide their arrangement. The worker was obligated to perform his job honestly and to the best of his abilities, not to harm his employer’s property or engage in any form of violence toward him, and avoid association with “men of evil principles.” The patron was to give his employees the respect and dignity they deserved as persons, see that their religious needs were met, not tax them beyond their strength, and pay them what they are owed in justice.⁹¹ The encyclical later mentions private initiatives such as mutual aid societies and other associations comprised of patrons and workers that seek to ameliorate the difficulties of industrial life. Périn argues that the bond of association, found in these societies and in the *patronage* system itself, helps both sides to fulfill their duties toward each other and foster a harmonious working relationship.

The primary embodiment of the principles of *patronage* and association was the corporation.⁹² The corporation was the “supreme remedy to our economic troubles,” according to Périn, and *Rerum novarum* lent support to the prevailing view that corporations should incorporate religion and seek the moral reform of the worker. The state should not mandate that all workers join them, for this would result in a weakening of religious identity. But laws could be implemented to support and protect the functioning of corporations.⁹³ Thus the encyclical promoted “free” corporations, which should also be “adapted to new conditions.” By focusing on these issues Périn was

⁹¹ Périn, *L'Économie politique d'après l'encyclique*, pp. 15 – 16. Périn is quoting paragraph 20 in the English translation.

⁹² The English version calls them “working men’s associations.”

⁹³ Périn, *L'Économie politique d'après l'encyclique*, pp. 18 – 19.

identifying the broad principles upon which nearly all social Catholics agreed, thus avoiding much of the controversy that preceded the encyclical's release. The final issue examined by Périn was the view of the encyclical on wages, a question that quickly saw a great deal of disagreement and debate over the meaning of the pope's words.

Debate over Interpretation: The Just Wage

In September of 1891, Georges de Pascal published a brief article commenting on the issue of wages in *L'Association catholique*. He was responding in part to a recent address by Ciriaco María Sancha y Hervás, the bishop of Madrid and future Primate of Spain, at the General Assembly of the *Conférences de Saint-Vincent de Paul*, at which the bishop reflected on the question of salary according to *Rerum novarum*. A key feature of the encyclical was that it presented the conditions that were necessary to make a wage conformed to justice. The central point was that work was necessary in order to live, thus making it a matter of justice that the worker be able to live as a result of his work. De Pascal notes that even Adam Smith had acknowledged man's right to live from his work, saying that at times the salary should be raised above the level of "strict necessity" in order to allow the worker to support his family.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ *L'Association catholique*, Vol. 32, (September 1891), p. 280. De Pascal does not provide a citation of Smith on this point.

The bishop of Madrid, following Matteo Liberatore's work, argued for a family wage, which de Pascal reports with approval. Rather than follow the "heartless economists" who establish wages through supply and demand as if it were merely merchandise, the patron should consider all the needs of a worker in his capacity as a man, a citizen, a husband, and a father. Therefore the cost of food, clothing, shelter, and other basic necessities should be considered when wage levels were established. Moreover, it was not the cost of these needs for the worker alone, but for his entire family that must be considered.⁹⁵ De Pascal views this interpretation, which also coincided with one offered by Cardinal Manning in the *Dublin Review*, as an authoritative reading of the "central point" of the encyclical.

Cardinal Manning's commentary on *Rerum novarum* followed the text of the encyclical itself, summarizing the central points of each section. Manning was very pleased by the document, which he found compelling and also aligned with his own views.⁹⁶ On the issue of the just wage, the encyclical, "has given a very explicit and definite answer." As he renders it, the wage must be sufficient to support "the wage-earner in reasonable and frugal comfort," which Manning says is clarified by the explanation "sufficient to enable him to maintain himself, his wife, and his children."⁹⁷ Only the minimum can be established, not the maximum. Manning anticipates objections by saying that the just wage should support "a man and his home" but need not be set by

⁹⁵ *L'Association catholique*, Vol. 32, (September 1891), pp. 280 – 281.

⁹⁶ To provide a sense of the rhetoric that welcomed the encyclical, consider Manning's opening paragraph: "Since the divine words 'I have compassion on the multitude' were spoken in the wilderness, no voice has been heard throughout the world pleading for the people with such profound and loving sympathy for those that toil and suffer as the voice of Leo XIII. This is not rhetorical exaggeration, but strict truth. None but the Vicar of our Divine Lord could so speak to mankind. No Pontiff has ever so spoken." *The Dublin Review*, (July – October 1891), p. 153.

⁹⁷ *The Dublin Review*, (July – October 1891), p. 162.

a variable measure or sliding scale according to the number of children. Rather, it should be a fixed average sum, though Manning does not specify how this amount would be determined in his commentary. As a minimum, it would apply to everyone including single men without homes, making it unjust to pay a lower wage to such a worker. Manning concludes, “Beyond this it is impossible to go. Every kind of industry and of labour, skilled and unskilled, in all the diversities of toil or danger, will have its special claims; but the lowest line is the worker and his home.”⁹⁸ Manning and others thus saw the encyclical’s teaching on the just wage as an important contribution. However, Manning’s view and similar perspectives from adherents to the School of Liège were not universally accepted.

Charles Périn on the Doctrine of the Just Wage in the Encyclical

An interpretation quite different from these prelates was suggested by Charles Périn in his commentary on *Rerum novarum*. One area of agreement was the primary importance of the wage issue to the overall social question. As seen above, the pope rejected the idea that justice was fulfilled merely by paying the agreed-upon wage. Périn concludes that “current rate” of wages cannot serve as an absolute rule to determine the just wage. This principle was shared by many Christian economists, who had noticed that sometimes the current rate did not match the “necessary wage”, or “normal wage”, which was the “wage sufficient for the worker and his family to live.”⁹⁹ These

⁹⁸ *The Dublin Review*, (July – October 1891), p. 163.

⁹⁹ Périn, *L'Économie politique d'après l'encyclique*, p. 20.

economists had advocated ensuring that the current rate was at least as high as the normal wage, though the means of bringing this about was left unclear.

Périn interprets the encyclical as ushering in a “new day” on the question of wages, one which eschews both liberal and socialist interpretations. As he explains:

By basing the notion of a just wage, on the one hand on the principle that the worker has an obligation to maintain his life and that of his family, something that can only occur with a sufficient wage, and on the other hand the principle that the patron has the duty to pay the worker, when he is able, a wage that assures him and his family the conditions of the life of a frugal and well-behaved worker, the pope has inaugurated a theory that gives complete satisfaction to the just claims of the worker without interfering with the rights of the patron and without ignoring the needs that result from the general conditions of work on certain occasions.¹⁰⁰

There are two interesting elements to this view. First, Périn does not contest that the encyclical intends the wage to support both the worker and his family. On this basic point he is in agreement with Cardinal Manning. Second, his inclusion of the phrase “when he is able” in reference to the duties of the patron is a deliberate qualification of the encyclical’s principle.

Périn argued that, in general, the patron should pay his employer the “normal wage” to support the worker and his family, but this duty could be mitigated by conditions in the “general state of the market.” When the patron is able to pay a wage higher than the current rate that provides for the needs of the worker and his family, “according to the principle given by the encyclical, the patron would be required to obey the law of justice and to pay his workers the higher wage while forgoing additional profit that could be made by keeping the difference between the current rate of wages and the normal wage, for this would necessarily come at the expense of the worker.”¹⁰¹ The

¹⁰⁰ Périn, *L'Économie politique d'après l'encyclique*, pp. 20 – 21.

¹⁰¹ Périn, *L'Économie politique d'après l'encyclique*, p. 22.

patron who enriches himself by keeping the difference would be following the understanding of wages explicitly rejected by the encyclical. However, in times of crisis or a general depreciation of prices, if the patron could only pay the normal wage by depleting his capital, he would not be obligated to do so. This was because the patron himself was a worker who was impacted negatively by harsh economic conditions and who was entitled to the legitimate compensation for his work as an entrepreneur. Therefore any action that would deprive him of his due or force him to unevenly bear the brunt of unfavorable market conditions would also be an injustice. In such an example the patron could decide to continue paying his workers the normal wage and incur an overall loss, but this would be an act of charity, not a duty of justice.¹⁰²

Périn was concerned that the teaching of the encyclical on wages would be misapplied by people who did not fully understand the limitations of the principles dictated by the encyclical itself. It did not intend to present an absolute rule for wages, but only one that governs specific conditions outlined in the text. According to Périn, the encyclical supposes that there is some element of force or coercion by the patron against the worker in the making of the contract which is the source of suffering for the worker. If that is the case, the worker has the right to seek recourse from the public authority to correct this injustice. However, if the worker was not coerced, or, more importantly, if the patron himself was forced by economic conditions to offer only a lower wage, “both have been constrained in a manner that impacts all of society, and everyone will admit that the hypothesis given by the encyclical has not been realized and the reason to apply

¹⁰² Périn, *L'Économie politique d'après l'encyclique*, p. 21.

the principle does not exist.”¹⁰³ This interpretation creates an ambiguity about the actual cause of low wages and the impact of market forces on the patron that Périn argues the pope was not attempting to resolve. The encyclical merely defined the just wage to serve as a guide for both temporal and spiritual powers, who were then charged with the application of the principle in diverse circumstances.

The public authority should not attempt to implement the just wage by law, an action that was both socialistic and counterproductive in Périn’s view. A law establishing a certain minimum wage that corresponded to the just wage could not account for the fluctuations that occur in prices and wages, sometimes forcing the patron to pay more than he could without depleting his capital and risking his profitability. As Périn already noted, this itself is an injustice and since the obligations of justice were not being protected, the result was the legal redistribution of wealth from the patron to the worker, which was “obviously socialist.”¹⁰⁴ Périn does not expand on the use of corporations or syndicates to establish wage rates called for in the encyclical, except as a way to demonstrate the limitation of legislative action.

Périn concludes by affirming, in light of all his qualifications, the value of the encyclical’s doctrine on the just wage. Many workers were living in conditions of misery brought on by the abuse of patrons, but also by a societal failure to instill virtue in the habits of workers. The pope’s treatment of the just wage recalls the moral aspect of work and reinforces the necessity of both patrons and workers to fulfill their duties toward each

¹⁰³ Périn, *L’Économie politique d’après l’encyclique*, p. 23.

¹⁰⁴ Périn, *L’Économie politique d’après l’encyclique*, p. 24. In other words, the worker was not “owed” the difference between the current rate and the legal minimum if difficult economic conditions would entail forcing the patron to incur losses. In those situations the conditions for the just wage did not apply, according to Périn’s interpretation of the encyclical, but the law would not reflect these contingencies.

other in the interests of justice and charity. He sees it as an especially powerful message to patrons to be cognizant of the moral and material welfare of their workers and to avoid acting only in self-interest: “To the patrons who listen the Church says: profit less, but profit honestly; you will progress less quickly on the road to fortune but you will do so without trampling on your brethren who, while less successful than you in worldly affairs, are still always your equals as children of God.”¹⁰⁵ Although Périn greatly limited both the application of the teaching on the just wage and the state’s role in enforcing it, this quote makes clear that he was also not interpreting *Rerum novarum* as an endorsement of Adam Smith.

The Revue catholique des institutions et du droit on the Just Wage

There were two important articles that treated the issue in a direct manner in the *Revue catholique des institutions et du droit*. Auguste Onclair, who was responsible for an earlier series of articles on wages in the theological tradition of the Church, examined the question in light of the encyclical. He wished to answer two questions: What was the exact notion of natural justice and of commutative justice which was laid out in *Rerum novarum*? What combination of these two elements was present in the solution given by the encyclical to the question of wages?¹⁰⁶ He believed that these two questions would address the central elements of the papal teaching on wages.

¹⁰⁵ Périn, *L'Économie politique d'après l'encyclique*, p. 28.

¹⁰⁶ *Rev. cath.*, (March 1892), pp .253-257.

He began by referencing the passage in question where the encyclical discussed natural justice. It should be recalled that this was mentioned in the encyclical after it had stated that labor was both personal and necessary to live. The dictate of natural justice in question is that “that wages ought not to be insufficient to support a frugal and well-behaved wage-earner.” But was there another way to express natural justice? And what was its relation to commutative justice? This quotation from *Rerum novarum* was the cause of confusion and debate between the schools. Onclair tried to clarify the issue by saying, “all that is of natural law is also of natural justice.” Thus, natural law and natural justice were synonymous, but natural justice and commutative justice were not. On this point, he said, everyone should agree.

Returning to the dictate of natural justice that mandated subsistence wages, a few points were made. First, it was a principle of natural justice because it presupposed that the worker had a natural right to obtain what he needed to live from his work. This right was imposed on all men to preserve the existence of themselves and others. “Thus when the employer pays his worker, independently of the value of the work provided, a wage sufficient for his well-being, he fulfills a duty not of charity, but of natural justice.”¹⁰⁷ The same type of duty mandated that the employer give his workers Sunday rest, as well as that children help their parents. The natural law required that everyone receive the rest prescribed by religion, and that parents should receive the assistance of their children. Second, “the obligations of charity are not under natural justice.”¹⁰⁸ In effect, the poor do not have a natural right to receive alms from anyone, except in cases of extreme necessity

¹⁰⁷ *Rev. cath.*, (March 1892), p. 255.

¹⁰⁸ *Rev. cath.*, (March 1892), p. 255.

when their right to self-preservation makes it a matter of natural justice. Otherwise, charitable obligations are separate from natural justice.

The final point about this first question was that one should not forget the importance of commutative justice in the question of wages. This was because commutative justice was that which governed exchanges, so it logically would be included in this issue. It mandated that the exchange of goods be equivalent.¹⁰⁹ From this perspective, then, the just wage was the wage in which the payment was equivalent to the work provided. No one denied that there should be a connection between the wage and the work provided according to commutative justice.

The second question posed at the beginning of the article was now ready to be addressed. What was the relationship between natural and commutative justice in the question of the just wage? The wage should equal the value of the work provided in light of commutative justice, and the wage should be able to provide subsistence for an honest and sober worker in light of natural justice. Onclair laid out the manner in which these two were combined in this general rule: “that the ordinary daily work of an ordinary worker ought generally to have a value sufficient to procure for the worker that which is necessary for his well-being.”¹¹⁰ The determination of this value was not left to the “selfishness of either the patron or worker,” but to “the common estimation of fair, honest, and intelligent men.”¹¹¹ Any issue of distinguishing the two types of justice or placing them in tension was avoided, as the requirements of both were met. Onclair thought that this was what the pope intended in the encyclical and that the School of

¹⁰⁹ *Aequalitas rei ad rem*, in the words of Aquinas.

¹¹⁰ *Rev. cath.*, (March 1892), p. 256.

¹¹¹ *Rev. cath.*, (March, 1892), p. 256.

Angers was in accord with papal teaching on this matter. He also viewed it as superior to two competing theories of the basis of wages, one of the capitalists, which relied on supply and demand, the other of socialists like Louis Blanc, which said that wages should be based on the needs of the worker.

Lest anyone remain unclear about his position, he provided a helpful example. Imagine a worker who was sober and honest, but physically weak or incapable in some way. The value of his labor in terms of that which he produced for his employer was one franc. But he needed two or three francs to live. How much was the employer obligated to pay him? By virtue of commutative justice he should pay him one franc. But “by his duty out of charity, if the worker is in the case of ordinary necessity, or by duty of natural justice, if the worker is in the case of extreme necessity,” the employer should pay him that which he needed in order to live.¹¹² Onclair indicated that this would be a rare situation, and that normally natural justice was satisfied by wages that were established by common estimation. Onclair argued that his interpretation of the encyclical was more reasonable and based on the sound reading of the text than alternatives.¹¹³

However the question was still unresolved, as articles from around the same time in *L'Association catholique* provided a much different perspective.¹¹⁴ Thus the question of the just wage was once again treated by Gustave Théry. He did not wish to revisit the old battles, but rather discuss certain aspects of the question which may not have been totally clarified and specifically address the position that the just wage was based on the

¹¹² *Rev. cath.*, (March, 1892), p. 257.

¹¹³ Onclair closed by inaccurately commenting on the rumor that the issue was being appealed to Rome: “As far as the reports of a few months ago about decisions from the Holy Office, it is good to know that they do not exist and never have.”

¹¹⁴ For example, (September 1891), 279-282. See above, p. 304.

needs of the worker.¹¹⁵ He started by presenting a hypothetical situation that he would revisit throughout his argument. He considered the situation of an employer who paid his employees the usual wage for a given job and did not think to inquire about the size of their families before paying them. He later learned that one of his employees had ten children, and it was clear to the employer that the prevailing wage was not enough to provide for this employee and his family. As he read certain commentaries on *Rerum novarum*, his conscience was troubled because some had said that the encyclical taught that the just wage included providing for this employee's family. As a result, the employer would have to pay him much more to meet the needs of his family. When the employer went to confession and explained the situation to his confessor he asked, "Am I obligated in justice to pay that worker enough to support the well-being of his entire family?" The answer to this question, essentially the question of the "family wage," was to be examined by revisiting the teaching of *Rerum novarum*.

Even before *Rerum novarum*, Théry believed that Catholic thinkers had already provided the answer to this question. From Aquinas to the present day, many theologians addressed the question of the wage and said that a family wage was not necessary.¹¹⁶ Most had argued in some manner that the wage is a function of, or connected to, the work performed. Théry was confident that the theological tradition was clear enough on this issue to resolve the problem posed above. The employer did not sin against justice by paying the worker with ten children the normal wage since he was not obligated in justice

¹¹⁵ *Rev. cath.*, (April 1892), pp. 321-338.

¹¹⁶ See Onclair's survey of these positions cited above, upon which Théry relies, or Théry's summary in the present article, *Rev. cath.*, (April 1892), pp. 323 – 324.

to provide for the well-being of the worker's family. But since the main issue concerned the interpretation of *Rerum novarum*, Théry turned next to the document itself.

Interpretations had been so varied that Théry remarked that four commentaries on the issue of the just wage according to the encyclical would result in four different opinions. The view that he was seeking to disprove was that the just wage was determined by the needs of the worker. The passage in question was the statement of the encyclical that the worker had a right to self-preservation and since everyone had a role in this, the wage should be enough for the worker to live. Did this mean that the wage was based on the worker's needs? Théry granted that if one isolated this portion of the encyclical and read it literally it was possible to interpret it to mean that the just wage was based on the needs of the worker. However, in the larger context the pope mentioned other factors to be considered in the establishment of wages. Furthermore, the pope was not examining the just wage *ex professo*, but only treating the specific circumstance when some form of prejudice was involved in the contract.¹¹⁷ Théry believed that those who had interpreted the just wage to be based on the worker's needs were reading from the encyclical something it did not say. He gave three reasons for this: First, precedents established by theologians; second, the consequences which follow from this interpretation; and third, the recent words of the pope to the French workers.

On the first point he had already cited several sources that did not base wages on need. He said that for the pope to claim this would be a break with the theological tradition and a new development. He doubted highly that this was the intention of the pope. In addition, Théry argued that one must ignore the specific circumstances to which

¹¹⁷ *Rev. cath.*, (April 1892), p. 325.

the encyclical's teaching applied and instead make it a general rule. He again rejected the claim that the pope's analysis of the dictates of justice when the worker was coerced in some way should be presented as a definitive theological novelty.

He also argued that the consequences of this position would be absurd. In order to prove this, Théry stepped back to lay out more fully the position against which he was arguing. The encyclical presented the principle that "to preserve existence is a duty imposed upon all men." A second uncontested principle was that "nature imposes on the father of the family the sacred duty to provide for the well-being of his children." The combination of these two principles created the reasoning for a family wage: a) a man must preserve his existence but also sustain that of his family, b) the manner in which this provision occurs is through work, therefore, c) the fruit of his labors is the means by which a man supports himself and his family. Since the encyclical states that a wage must be sufficient to support the living of a man, by extension one would conclude that the wage must be sufficient to support the man *as provider for his family*, thus including the needs of his wife and children.¹¹⁸

Théry returned to the example of the worker with ten children to show why this led to an untenable position. One would have to accept that the average wage paid to workers that could support three or four children would then be unjust to the worker who had ten children because it would fail to meet the requirements of natural justice since it did not account for the needs of this worker's family. In other words, the number of children would directly impact the requirements of natural justice for the wage. To avoid this, proponents of the family wage offered different methods, as with Cardinal

¹¹⁸ *Rev. cath.*, (April 1892), pp. 329 – 330.

Manning's argument above, of calculating an average that covered the needs of a worker throughout different periods in his life.¹¹⁹ Théry viewed any such system as being naturally problematic, because it supposed that "the unmarried worker will earn more than he needs but will save for the time when he will not earn enough, and the patron of a single man will pay in advance the debt of a patron of a married man."¹²⁰ He also thought the reliance on averages was a dubious method to ensure justice. If the just wage is held to correspond to the needs of the worker and his family the only useful meaning of this notion is that it corresponds to the worker's needs *at the present moment*, not as a result of an abstract calculation.

The third piece of evidence was the discourse of Leo XIII to the French workers given in September of 1891, after *Rerum novarum* was released. Before the address it was reported in the press that the pope would use the opportunity to further explain the encyclical. In the address he stated that the solution to the social question was related to the precepts of perfect justice, "which calls for the wage to adequately correspond to the work."¹²¹ It seemed clear from these words that the work provided and the wage were the two things that must be equilibrated to satisfy justice. There was no mention of inquiring about the relative needs of each employee. The pope's own words, offered perhaps in further explanation of the encyclical's teaching, suggested that the just wage

¹¹⁹ For example, the amount of income needed to live during various periods of life would be considered: bachelorhood, married life with children, and old age when he could no longer work. These amounts were then added to calculate a total sum of payment necessary for the worker, which would then be divided by the years of work to establish the just wage.

¹²⁰ *Rev. cath.*, (April 1892), p. 331. Théry cited the system proposed by Pottier to the Congress of Liège as an example.

¹²¹ *Rev. cath.*, (April 1892), p. 332. The text of the address can be found in *l'Univers*, September 22, 1891.

was not determined by considering the needs of the worker. The final step, then, was to examine the manner in which the just wage should be established.

The best way to determine the just wage, according to the School of Angers, was the common estimation. This was a position that merely echoed that of the scholastics. Théry did not say that the common estimation was the just wage, but that it was the best way to determine “the value of work in the general opinion of workers and employers.”¹²² The common estimation took into account all of the variables present in a locality as the employers and workers agreed on a wage. It would likely vary across industries, but would provide a range within which wages in a given location should fall. This general opinion should be considered just in most cases, for it was only if the workers submitted to an injustice without protesting that the wage would likely be unjust. “The common estimation freely established would thus be the practical measure for knowing if the salary is just.”¹²³ Returning once more to the practical issue of the employer who was concerned about paying his employees justly, the confessor would tell him that he was paying his employee with ten children justly so long as the wage fell within the general payment for similar work in that region.

Lastly, Théry returned to the method of calculating a just wage by averages proposed at the Congress of Liège and elsewhere by those who favored a family wage. Partisans of this view argued that either the employer himself or, preferably, the employer and workers together might make the necessary calculations to establish the wage. Théry argued that eventually the oversight of the state would be needed to guard

¹²² *Rev. cath.*, (April 1892), p. 336.

¹²³ *Rev. cath.*, (April 1892), p. 336.

against abuses or settle disputes. The state would then legislate their calculation as the just wage, removing any possibility of dispute. Once again the problem of a slippery slope was invoked. Even if the state did not involve itself in the issue Théry still found this proposal infeasible. No employer or committee or state could make such a long-term calculation with any reasonable degree of accuracy. It was based on the calculation of the average or ordinary worker, but it was not clear how this would be precisely determined. Different regions, different industries, different familial needs would all be difficult to account for in this type of method. Furthermore, the nature of modern economies was that prices were dynamic, and costs of living could rise or fall. All of these variables would be nearly impossible to calculate, even if revisited on a periodic basis.

The common estimation of the value of the work was therefore the most reliable starting point in establishing a just wage. Other factors must be considered, and obligations were not satisfied through commutative justice alone. However, any other method of establishing a just wage was subject to a number of problems and inaccuracies. In the worst-case scenario for Théry, the state would be called upon to resolve what would quickly become an intractable problem, with the almost-inevitable result that the difficulties would be compounded. In summary, the teaching of the encyclical did not change or add anything to the tradition. The wage of the worker was not based on familial need, but primarily on the value of the work done.

Response of the Holy See on the Question of Just Salary

Returning to the encyclical itself, it is interesting that historians now have the benefit of looking at the three drafts of *Rerum novarum* and seeing how ideas developed or were discarded. Such seems to be the case with the question of the just wage. In the first draft, Liberatore maintained that there was a family component to the just wage. However, after this first draft it was weakened so that it was not possible to claim that a family wage was based in justice. The encyclical emphasized that labor was both personal and necessary because people work in order earn what they need to live. Though the encyclical also said that a free agreement on wages did not necessarily relieve the employer from injustice, it was generally accepted that wages would be set by a contract between employer and employee. Though it mentioned the dictate of natural justice for a subsistence wage, there was no explicit reference to family, so it was difficult to see how this statement from the encyclical could be applied beyond supporting the wage earner himself. The next paragraph pointed out that if a worker was paid sufficiently, he should be able to support his family and eventually save enough to buy a piece of property. But, as Molony states, “while implying the relationship between the worker and his family, the fact remains that the encyclical nowhere stated that justice obliged an employer to pay a wage which took into account the need of the worker to provide for his family as well as himself.”¹²⁴

It is obvious that there was disagreement over the position of the encyclical on the question of a just wage. To resolve this problem, Cardinal Pierre-Lambert Goossens

¹²⁴ Molony, pp. 117-118.

sought clarification from Rome. Before a Congress was to be held in Malines he petitioned Rome, for he believed that the issue would be debated and disagreement could weaken support for the encyclical. Thus, on August 10, 1891, around three months after the encyclical was published, he wrote a letter to Rome asking for guidance on the issue. Cardinal Rampolla received the letter and discussed it with the pope so as to produce an authoritative clarification on the issue.

It was decided that the response would not be given by Liberatore, who had already displayed a bias in favor of the family wage out of justice. Similarly, Cardinal Zigliara had shown a bias in the opposite direction, but it seemed to be most consistent with the tradition, so he was selected to write the response in his capacity as Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Studies. However, there was hesitation about how these responses should be promulgated. Goosens wanted to publicly state that he had proposed the questions to the pope. He also submitted to Rome an introduction in French which indicated that he had asked Leo XIII these questions and received an answer through Rampolla. However, Molony notes that there was a black wavering line by the introduction which was normally the pope's indication that he wanted the material reconsidered. Zigliara told Goosens that the reply should be published as having been from a consultant, not the pope. Goosens was instructed by Rampolla not to indicate that Leo XIII had been asked to clarify the matters, but, "given the gravity and delicacy of the argument, a consultant had been engaged to examine the doubts raised and give his opinions on them."¹²⁵ Goosens response to this was a slightly different approach in which he said that he presented the Holy See with these questions, and a consultant had

¹²⁵ Molony, p. 122.

then been asked to reply. This solution absolved the pope from a direct connection to the matter and the answers. Because the response was not seen as a papal directive, both sides could be satisfied with their positions on the issue. Despite all this maneuvering, the replies were not published first until March 22, 1892 in *Science Catholique*, as Goosens did not make them public.

Aware of this situation, the *Revue* obtained a copy of the documents and printed the letter and response in its entirety, without any analysis.¹²⁶ The first question was, “By the words “natural justice,” should one hear commutative justice, or rather, natural equity?” To which the response was “Strictly speaking, one ought to hear commutative justice.” This was followed by a lengthy explanation. Certainly, the labor of a worker was extremely different from merchandise, and the wage was different from the price of a good. This was because labor proceeded from human freedom and was meritorious in itself, which made it more noble than merchandise. Nevertheless, in the interest of clarification, labor and wages should be considered like a type of merchandise and price. This exchange of goods was then governed by commutative justice, which required that equality regulate the contract of labor for wage. The answer goes on to discuss that the common estimation had a role to play in this as well. The employer might consider the common estimation alone or the common estimation along with other factors such as the standard of living in paying a just wage. Finally, in a situation where the employer had earned a sizable profit from his work, he could give part of this surplus to his employees, but doing so would be a matter of benevolence, not justice. Thus the natural justice described in *Rerum novarum* translated into the application of commutative justice.

¹²⁶ *Rev. cath.*, (May 1892), pp. 97-101.

The second question dealt directly with the issue of the familial wage. “Is it a sin for an employer to pay a wage sufficient to sustain his worker, but insufficient for the well-being of his family?” It also asked which virtue he had sinned against if this was the case. The answer, “He would not sin against justice, but he could sometimes sin either against charity or against natural equity.” The explanation was based on the answer to the first question and the role of commutative justice in determining the wage. Also, the labor of the worker was personal to the worker himself primarily, and only secondarily involved his family. So the employer did not have an obligation in justice to pay the family wage, but he could sometimes sin against charity if he did not pay the worker enough to sustain his family. The employer also had a greater obligation out of charity to his worker than to the poor in general, because his worker helped him and allowed him to make a profit. Therefore he should be especially aware and willing to help employees in need as an obligation of charity.

The third question asked if employers sin, and for what reason did they sin, when, without the use of either violence or fraud, they paid a wage less than the value of the work provided. In this situation it was also supposed that the workers freely agreed to the terms of the contract, as might happen in a difficult labor market where laborers preferred any job to no job at all. The response, predictably, was that employers who did this sin against commutative justice. It would also be a sin against natural justice, though this may be redundant, because the wage was not enough to provide sustenance. The fact that it was freely entered did not remove the requirements of justice. Therefore, on these

contested aspects of the encyclical's teaching on the just wage the arguments of the School of Angers was generally vindicated.

The text of the clarification was not reproduced in *l'Association catholique*. However, the periodical review section of the June issue commented on the article by Théry in the *Revue catholique des institutions et du droit* on the just wage. The author objects to the analysis as too limited and thinks that the plain sense of the pope's claim that the wage "not be insufficient for a frugal and well-behaved earner" does not support Théry's view. The author then dismissively mentions the response from Rome, which was relegated to a footnote. After summarizing the response's clarification on commutative justice, he remarks, "It must not be forgotten, however, that this document is the mere view of a Roman congregation, or even perhaps just one of its members, and it cannot in any way be compared to the doctrinal authority of the encyclical."¹²⁷ While perhaps a tacit admission that Théry's analysis coincided with the clarification, despite Théry's ignorance of the response at the time of publication, *l'Association catholique* saw no need to concede their overall interpretation. Indeed, while on this issue their counterpart's arguments were more successful, the overall direction of French social Catholicism after *Rerum novarum* was increasingly allied more closely with the School of Liège than the School of Angers.

¹²⁷ *L'Association catholique*, (June 1892), p. 748.

Conclusions

Freppel did not issue any pastoral letter or public comment on *Rerum novarum* in the seven months between the release of the encyclical and his death. It is quite striking that he would not offer any reaction to a document that was of such clear significance and so directly related to the issues which had absorbed much of his energy in the last years of his life. This suggests that he viewed silence as the best response to an encyclical that he found disappointing. It is also perhaps evidence that Freppel had learned from the aftermath of *Immortale Dei* that it was better to say nothing than to risk creating controversy. In the case of *Immortale Dei*, Freppel said relatively little but involved himself squarely in the debates over interpretation. He refrained from any such interventions after *Rerum novarum*, leaving the analysis to others in the School of Angers.

There are other connections which can be made between the responses to *Immortale Dei* and *Rerum novarum*. First, the content of the encyclicals themselves did not entirely agree with the tendencies of Freppel and the School of Angers. This is not to suggest that the encyclicals were repudiations of their views; the generalized nature of an encyclical allowed the School of Angers to maintain that they shared the same principles as the pope both with respect to politics and the social question. However, as the congresses demonstrated, the differences were often less on principle than in application. For example, the teaching in *Immortale Dei* that the Church does not prefer one form of government over another and can exist in any form was not at odds with any formal

position of the School of Angers. Freppel's continuous support for the restoration of the monarchy and relentless attacks on the Third Republic indicated that his objectives for political arrangements in modernity were not the same as those of Leo XIII. The pope's conciliatory approach, demonstrated in the aftermath of *l'Affaire de Rouen* and, more importantly, in his implicit backing of the *Ralliement*, signaled that the French Church was moving in a direction vis-à-vis the government that Freppel was unlikely to support. Therefore, in circumstances that were increasingly dismaying to Freppel and others in the School of Angers, the limited but definitive acceptance of state intervention in the social question offered by *Rerum novarum* was another indicator that Leo XIII was outlining a different vision for the Church in modernity.

Interpretations of *Rerum novarum* aligned with existing views on the social question. Given the complexities of the social question and the variety of economic circumstances in different countries throughout the world, it was difficult for the encyclical to be overly specific. The general agreement on social principles allowed each school to claim that their views had been endorsed. As with *Immortale Dei*, debates over the interpretation of *Rerum novarum* sometimes risked losing sight of the broader implications of the encyclical for social Catholicism. These would include its rejection of both socialism and *laissez-faire* capitalism, acceptance of mixed or separate associations, and permission for recourse to the state on issues of regulation when problems could not be resolved by intermediate bodies. On this last point, the encyclical's teaching on the just wage became a flashpoint for debate.

The issue of the just wage was important because it involved two of the foundational issues of social Catholicism: the relationship between charity and justice, and the role of the state. The School of Angers repeatedly argued against an overly expansive notion of justice that might diminish the obligations of charity. They worried that the encyclical's mention of "natural justice" could lead to a distortion of the understanding of the duties of justice in wages. Their focus on commutative justice as the primary species of justice involved in wages was important because it represented continuity with the tradition and was a way to respond to those arguing that the pope was offering a theological novelty with respect to justice and wages. Furthermore, by clarifying that commutative justice was the operative principle in wages, they were able to reinforce the idea that natural justice included a charitable component. This allowed the School of Angers to then address the issue of state involvement, for the state was properly concerned with justice but should not intervene to enforce charity. The encyclical's warning about the state acting inopportune further reinforced their earlier argument about the infeasibility of minimum wage legislation. The School of Angers remained confident that wages, like many other elements of the social question, should be handled by intermediate bodies and without the involvement of the state. While the clarification from Rome may have favored their interpretation on this issue, the overall current of social Catholicism, guided by Leo XIII, was moving toward engagement with public authorities as a means of aiding the plight of the workers. From this point on the influence and visibility of the School of Angers, for various reasons, began to recede.

Epilogue

The Fading of the School of Angers

The release of *Rerum novarum* and the ensuing debate confirmed the existing divisions among social Catholics. There was little evidence that by the end of 1891 much movement had occurred between the various groups as a result of the encyclical. Throughout 1891 Freppel's health had been poor, as he endured some severe difficulties and made a personal pilgrimage to Lourdes in hope of relief. His busy travel schedule, filled with trips between Paris and Angers to fulfill his duties as bishop and deputy, had taken their toll. He died on December 22, 1891, not long after presiding over priestly ordinations. Support and condolences were expressed from many sides, and thousands of his diocesan flock came to see his body.¹ A notice in the *Revue catholique des institutions et du droit* summarized his life and praised the accomplishments of this "incomparable fighter" for the Church and France.² Freppel's death did not mark the end of the School of Angers, though the loss of his leadership was undoubtedly significant.

Five years after his death, at the end of 1896, one could question whether it was meaningful only to speak of the School of Angers in the past tense. Several reasons may be suggested to explain its fade from significance. The first is the loss of leadership due to death. Shortly after Freppel's death, one of the founders of the *Revue catholique des institutions et du droit*, the Jesuit Jules Sambin, died in February of 1892. Sambin was also the chief organizer of the congresses of the *Société des jurisconsultes catholiques*,

¹ See Terrien, t.II, pp. 759 – 765 for an account of the aftermath of Freppel's death.

² *Rev. cath.*, (January 1892), pp. 74 – 75.

and as a result the 1892 congress was canceled. Claudio Jannet died unexpectedly in 1894 at the age of fifty. Finally, though not a death, Charles Périn's final work, *Premiers principes d'économie politique* was published in 1895, in which he indicated his intention to end his long and distinguished career as a scholar.³ Within just a few years of the Congress of Angers and the creation of the Catholic Society of Political and Social Economy, several of its most prominent contributors were absent from the landscape of social Catholicism. The School of Angers represented a perspective shared by more than just a few social thinkers, so one would not expect some untimely departures to bring on its demise.

In some ways the public expressions of the School of Angers continued. The Society over which Freppel presided from its inception continued to function for a few years after his death. The last report of any meeting was published in January of 1896; no formal announcement of its dissolution was made. In 1907 the *Congrès des jurisconsultes catholique* was once again held in Angers, and in its report of the proceedings, the *Revue* recalled Freppel's role in the Society, which it said "survived him only slightly."⁴ Both the *Revue* and the *Société des jurisconsultes catholiques* continued, as did their annual congresses.⁵ Their focus tended to be more strictly on legal analysis from a Catholic perspective. The dynamics of social Catholicism after *Rerum novarum* and the clarification of Leo XIII's view of the French political situation in *Au milieu des*

³ *Premiers principes d'économie politique*, (Paris: Victor Lecoffre, 1895), p. vii. Périn did not exactly retire from intellectual endeavors after this work, but it was his last book.

⁴ *Rev. cath.*, (November 1907), p. 400.

⁵ The *Revue catholique des institutions et du droit* ceased publication in 1939 in the midst of the Second World War.

sollicitudes were two additional developments that contributed to the waning of the School of Angers.

Though *Rerum novarum* was met with resistance in some areas, its overall impact on social Catholicism was undeniable.⁶ The fact that the Church was speaking out on the social question and in the interest of the worker was itself significant. It demonstrated a willingness to engage the features of modern society not only through condemnations, but by establishing social principles to encourage and inspire positive social reform. However, one must be careful not to view Leo XIII's encyclical as a work of sharp discontinuity with his predecessor. Ultimately Leo XIII envisioned a re-establishment of Christianity's influence throughout society not unlike the Church's pervasive influence in previous eras.⁷ This was a feature common to all the schools of social Catholicism, with the differences arising from competing views of how to best achieve this end, especially as it related to the use of the modern state as a means. After *Rerum novarum* it became increasingly clear that the pope accepted and favored the views of those who, like the School of Liège, envisioned a solution to the social question that involved a level of state involvement beyond the limits offered by the School of Angers. Bishop Doutreloux of Liège issued a commentary on *Rerum novarum* in 1894 in the form of a pastoral letter that was reportedly praised by the pope as the best interpretation of the encyclical.⁸

Leading French social Catholics like Albert de Mun and Léon Harmel both welcomed the

⁶ On this issue, the summaries of Misner (pp. 218 – 222) and Coffey (pp. 136 – 144) are helpful and are followed here.

⁷ Misner, *Social Catholicism*, p. 220.

⁸ This was also published in brochure form as *Lettre Pastorale de sa Grandeur Mgr Doutreloux, Evêque de Liège, au clergé de son diocèse sur la question ouvrière suivie de l'encyclique 'Rerum novarum' et de plusieurs documents pontificaux*, (H. Dessain: Liège, 1894).

encyclical and sought to incorporate its teachings into their respective social efforts.⁹

Perhaps as important as these developments was the continuity of the social vision outlined in *Rerum novarum* with Leo XIII's general approach to modernity, especially as it pertained to modern political regimes.

In February of 1892, despite the earlier pleading of conservatives like Freppel, the pope issued *Au milieu des sollicitudes*, in which he himself echoed Lavigerie's call of Catholic support for the republic. The document's release was preceded by a newspaper interview in which Leo XIII said,

I hold that all citizens should join in respect for the legally constituted authority. Each individual has the right to his personal preferences, but when it comes to acting, he can deal only with the government France has given herself. The republican is as legitimate a form of government as others.¹⁰

The interview previewed the contents of the encyclical, which held that the political regime in France should be accepted and its actions against religion did not invalidate its authority, which ultimately originated with God. A letter to the French cardinals in May was even more direct:

Accept the Republic. Be submissive to it as representatives of the power that comes from God. These changes are often far from being legitimate at the beginning. It is indeed difficult for them to be legitimate. Nevertheless, the supreme criterion of the common good and of public order makes it necessary to accept these new governments when they are in fact established in place of governments which no longer exist. Thus the normal rules for the transmission of power are suspended and it may even be that, with the passage of time, they are abolished. Those who will do nothing until they have succeeded in bringing about the triumph of their party would in such circumstances be guilty of preferring...politics which divide to religion which unites, even if the party seemed to them the best adapted to defend religion.¹¹

⁹ See Coffey, pp. 136 – 144 for an overview of the encyclical as it relates to Harmel's views and his response.

¹⁰ Quoted in Dansette, vol. 2, p. 86. This interview is sometimes referred to as the "halfpenny encyclical."

¹¹ Quoted in Dansette, t.2, p. 87.

One could argue that Freppel's own statements on the nature of political authority and his encouragement of political engagement through voting were not all that far removed from what the pope was saying. However, the actions of the Third Republic against the Church and their goal of instituting, in Freppel's words, an "atheist state", undermined any claims of legitimacy.

These political pronouncements of the pope were met mostly with silence by the School of Angers. The encyclical and the pope's letters were printed in the *Revue catholique des institutions et du droit* without comment, and no subsequent commentaries were offered on them. If the opposition of the School of Angers to most state intervention was influenced in part by their experience with the Third Republic, as it has been suggested here, the call to "rally" to the Republic struck a blow to this rationale. In this context, opposition to the regime alone would seem to be a less acceptable reason to oppose state action in the social question. Though there were other reasons for their opposition, such as the fear of sliding into socialism and the preference for social institutions to be Church-oriented rather than administered by the state, one of their primary arguments was no longer as effective.

The social doctrine of Charles Freppel and the School of Angers illustrates a tendency within social Catholicism before *Rerum novarum* that drew less consideration in the encyclical's aftermath. However, as Paul Misner pointed out, *Rerum novarum* in some ways reflects the "mitigated liberalism" of the School of Angers, while ultimately striking a balance between the schools of Angers and Liège.¹² Therefore it is appropriate for the contributions of Freppel and the School of Angers to be counted among the

¹² Misner, pp. 216 – 217.

influences on *Rerum novarum*. For this reason and for the broader insight they provide into the outlook of conservative French social Catholicism in the nineteenth century, Freppel and his collaborators are an interesting and worthy topic of study.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

L'association catholique. Paris: Bureau de L'Association Catholique, 1876-1908.

Doutreloux, Victor-Joseph. *Lettre pastorale de Sa Grandeur Mgr Doutreloux, Evêque de Liège, au clergé de son diocèse sur la question ouvrière suivie de l'encyclique Rerum novarum et de plusieurs documents pontificaux*. Liège: H. Dessain, 1894.

Freppel, Charles. *Commodien, Arnobe, Lactance et autres fragments inédits*. Paris: Victor Retaux, 1893.

_____. *Cours d'éloquence sacrée fait à la Sorbonne*. 10 vols. Paris: Ambroise Bray, 1868.

_____. *Oeuvres oratoires et pastorales*. 12 vols. Paris: Roger & Chernoviz, 1896.

_____. *Oeuvres polémiques de Mgr. Freppel, évêque d'Angers*. 10 vols. Paris: Ancienne Maison Ch. Douniol, 1898.

_____. *La révolution française à propos du centenaire de 1789*. Paris: Roger & Chernoviz, 1889.

Jannet, Claudio. *Le capital, la speculation et la finance au XIX^e siècle*. Paris: Plon, 1892.

_____. *Les États-Unis contemporains, ou les mœurs, les institutions et les idées depuis la guerre de la sécession* (2nd edition). Paris: Plon, 1876.

_____. *Les faits économiques et le mouvement social en Italie*. Paris: L. Larose et Forcel, 1889.

_____. "French Catholics and the Social Question." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* Vol.7 No.2 (1893): 137-161.

_____. *Les grandes époques de l'histoire économique jusqu'à la fin du XVI^e siècle*. Paris: Delhomme et Briguet, [s.d.].

_____. *L'Organisation du travail d'après F. LePlay et le mouvement social contemporain*. Paris: Secrétariat de la Société d'Économie sociale, 1890.

_____. *Le socialisme d'état et la réforme sociale*. Paris: Plon, 1889.

Mun, Albert de. *Discours et écrits divers*, 4 vols. Paris: Ch. Poussielgue, 1895.

_____. *Ma vocation sociale. Souvenirs de la foundation de l'Oeuvre des cercles catholiques d'ouvriers (1871 – 1875)*. Paris: Lethielleux, 1908.

Périn, Charles. *Les doctrines économiques depuis un siècle*. Paris: Victor Lecoffre, 1880.

_____. *L'Économie politique d'après l'encyclique sur la condition des ouvriers*. Paris: Victor Lecoffre, 1891.

_____. *Les économistes, les socialistes et le christianisme*. Paris: Jacques Lecoffre, 1849.

_____. *Les libertés populaires*. Paris: Jacques Lecoffre, 1871.

_____. *Les lois de la société chrétienne*, 2 vols. Paris: Lecoffre Fils et Cie., 1875.

_____. *L'Ordre international*. Paris: Victor Lecoffre, 1888.

_____. *Le patron. Sa fonction, sa devoirs, ses responsabilités*. Lille: Desclée, de Brouwer et Cie., 1886.

_____. *Premiers principes d'économie politique*. Paris: Victor Lecoffre, 1895.

_____. *De la richesse dans les sociétés chrétiennes*, 2 vols., 2nd edition. Paris: Jacques Lecoffre, 1868.

_____. *Le socialisme chrétien*. Paris: Victor Lecoffre, 1879.

Rimbaud, Joseph. *Histoire des doctrines économiques*. Lyon: Auguste Cote, 1899.

Rerum Novarum, in *Leonis XIII Pontificis Maximi Acta*, Rome: Ex Typographia Vaticana, Vol.11 (1892), 97-148.

Revue catholique des institutions et du droit. Paris: V. Lecoffre, 1872-1912.

Secondary Sources

Antonazzi, Giovanni. *L'enciclica Rerum Novarum: Testo autentico e redazioni preparatorie dai documenti originali*. Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1957.

Aubert, Roger. *Catholic Social Teaching: An Historical Perspective*. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2003.

_____. *The Church in a Secularised Society*. [The Christian Centuries, 5]. Translated By Janet Sondheimer. New York: Paulist Press, 1978.

_____. *Le pontificat de Pie IX (1846 – 1878)*. Paris: Bloud & Gay, 1952.

_____. *Vatican I*. Paris: Éditions de l'Orante, 1964.

Benoist, Charles. "Le congrès de Liège et le catholicisme social." *Journal des Economistes*, 5th series, vol. 4 (Oct.-Dec. 1890): 67-73.

Beretta, Francesco. *Monseigneur d'Hulst et la science chrétienne: Portrait d'un intellectuel*. Paris: Beauchesne, 1996.

Bigo, Pierre. *La doctrine sociale de l'Église*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965.

Bressolette, Claude. *L'abbé Maret: Le combat d'un théologien pour une démocratie chrétienne, 1830 – 1851*. Paris: Beauchesne, 1977.

_____. *Le pouvoir dans la société et dans l'Église: L'ecclésiologie politique de Mgr Maret, doyen de la faculté de théologie de Sorbonne au XIX^e siècle*. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1984.

Brooks, John Graham. "The Papal Encyclical Upon the Labor Question." *Publications of the American Economic Association* Vol.9, No.5 (1894): 71-82.

_____. "The Social Question in the Catholic Congresses." *International Journal of Ethics* Vol.6, No.2 (1896): 204.

Calvez, Jean-Yves, and Jacques Perrin. *The Church and Social Justice: The Social Teaching of the Popes from Leo XIII to Pius XII (1878-1958)*. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1961.

Les catholiques libéraux au XIX^e siècle. Actes du Colloque international d'histoire religieuse de Grenoble des 30 septembre – 3 octobre 1971. Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1974.

Coffey, Joan. *Léon Harmel: Entrepreneur as Catholic Social Reformer*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003.

Corbiau, Jean. *Le congrès de Malines et les réformes sociales*. Brussels: Société Belge de Librairie, 1892.

Cornut, Étienne. *Monseigneur Freppel d'après des documents authentiques et inédits*. Paris: Victor Retaux et Fils, 1893.

Curtis, Sarah A. *Educating the Faithful: Religion, Schooling, and Society in Nineteenth-Century France*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2000.

Dansette, Adrien. *Religious History of Modern France*. Vol. 2. Translated by John Dingle. New York: Herder and Herder, 1961.

Duroselle, Jean-Baptiste. *Les débuts du catholicisme social en France, 1822 – 1870*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1951.

Fèvre, Justin. *Charles Périn. Créateur de l'économie politique chrétienne*. Paris: Arthur Savaète, 1903.

Fox-Genovese, Elizabeth. *The Origins of Physiocracy: Economic Revolution and Social Order in Eighteenth-Century France*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976.

Furlong, Paul and David Curtis, eds. *The Church Faces the Modern World: Rerum novarum and its Impact*. Winteringham: Earlsate Press, 1994.

Gadille, Jacques. "Freppel," In *Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie Ecclésiastiques*. Vol. 18. Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1977.

_____. *La pensée et l'action politiques des évêques français au début de la III^e République: 1870-1883*. 2 vols. Paris: Hachette, 1967.

Gadille, Jacques, and Jean-Marie Mayeur, eds. *Histoire du christianisme des origines à nos jours*. Tome XI: *Libéralisme, industrialisation, expansion européenne (1830 – 1914)*. Paris: Desclée, 1995.

Gargan, Edward T., editor. *Leo XIII and the Modern World*. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961.

Gérin, Paul. *Catholiques liégeois et question sociale (1833-1914)*. Brussels: Études sociales, 1959.

Ghazale, Jean Paul Abou. *La Franc-maçonnerie en soi et dans la vision de l'église*. Rome: Pontificia Università Lateranense, 2004.

Gibson, Ralph. *A Social History of French Catholicism, 1789 – 1914*. New York: Routledge, 1989.

Gough, Austin. *Paris and Rome: The Gallican Church and the Ultramontane Campaign, 1848 – 1853*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.

Grégoire, Léon. *Le pape, les catholiques et la question sociale*. Paris: Perrin, 1895.

Grévy, Jérôme. *Le cléricalisme? Voilà l'ennemi!: Une guerre de religion en France*. Paris: Armand Colin, 2005.

Holland, Joe. *Modern Catholic Social Teaching: The Popes Confront the Industrial Age, 1740 – 1958*. New York: Paulist Press, 2003.

Hoog, Georges. *Histoire du catholicisme social en France: 1871-1931*. Paris: Editions Domat Montchrestien, 1946.

Jammet, Jacques. *Mgr Freppel de A à Z*. Versailles: Éditions de Paris, 2006.

Kale, Steven D. *Legitimism and the Reconstruction of French Society, 1852 – 1883*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992.

Keane, John J. "The Catholic Church and Economics." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 6 No.1 (1891): 25-46.

Kothen, Robert. *L'Enseignement social de l'Église*. Louvain: E.M. Warny, 1949.

_____. *La pensée et l'action sociales des catholiques: 1789-1944*. Louvain: E.M. Warny, 1945.

Lebrun, François. *Le diocèse d'Angers*. [Histoire des diocèses de France, 13], Paris: Beauchesne, 1981.

- Levillain, Philippe. *Albert de Mun. Catholicisme français et catholicisme romain du Syllabus au Ralliement*. [Bibliothèque de l'École française de Rome]. Rome: École française de Rome, 1983.
- Martin, Benjamin F. *Count Albert de Mun: Paladin of the Third Republic*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1978.
- Maugenest, Denis, ed. *Le mouvement social catholique en France au XX^e siècle*. Paris: Cerf, 1990.
- Mayeur, Jean-Marie. *Catholicisme social et démocratie chrétienne. Principes romains, expériences françaises*. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1986.
- _____. *La vie politique sous la troisième république, 1870 – 1940*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1984.
- McManners, John. *Church and State in France, 1870 – 1914*. London: SPCK, 1972.
- Meek, Ronald L. *The Economics of Physiocracy: Essays and Translations*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963.
- Misner, Paul. *Social Catholicism in Europe: From the Onset of Industrialization to the First World War*. New York: Crossroad, 1991.
- Mitchell, Wesley C. *Types of Economic Theory: From Mercantilism to Institutionalism*, 2 vols. New York: Augustus M. Kelly, 1967.
- Molette, Charles. *Albert de Mun, 1872 – 1890. Exigence doctrinale et préoccupations sociales chez un laïc catholique*. Paris: Beauchesne, 1970.

_____. *L'Association catholique de la jeunesse française, 1886 – 1907. Une prise de conscience du laïcat catholique.* Paris: Armand Colin, 1968.

Molony, John. *The Worker Question: A New Historical Perspective on Rerum Novarum.* Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1991.

Moulinet, Daniel. *Laïcat catholique et société française: Les Comités catholiques (1870 – 1905).* Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2008.

Pascal, George de. *L'Église et la question sociale. Étude sur l'encyclique De la condition des ouvriers.* Paris: P. Lethiellieux, 1891.

Phillips, Charles S. *The Church in France, 1789 – 1848: A Study in Revival.* New York: Russell & Russell, 1966.

Plongeron, Bernard et al., eds. *Catholiques entre monarchie et république: Monseigneur Freppel et son temps.* Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1995.

Poirier, René. *Les reactions à Rerum Novarum dans la presse française.* M.A. thesis., The Catholic University of America, 1968.

Poulat, Émile, and Jean-Pierre Laurant. *L'Antimaçonnisme catholique: Les Franc-Maçons par Mgr de Ségur.* Paris: Berg International, 1994.

Renault, François. *Le Cardinal Lavigerie, 1825 – 1892. L'Église, l'Afrique et la France.* Paris: Fayard, 1992.

Rerum Novarum: Écriture, contenu et réception d'une encyclique. Actes du colloque international organisé par l'École française de Rome. Rome: École Française de Rome, 1997.

Rollet, Henri. *L'action sociale des catholiques en France: 1871-1901.* Paris: Boivin, 1947.

_____. *Sur le chantier social: L'action sociale des catholiques en France (1870-1940).* Lyon: Chronique Sociale de France, 1955.

Schumpeter, Joseph. *History of Economic Analysis.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1994 (original edition, 1954).

Sedgwick, Alexander. *The Ralliement in French Politics, 1890 – 1898.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965.

Talmy, Robert. *Aux sources du catholicisme social: L'école de la Tour du Pin.* Tournai: Desclée & Co., 1963.

Terrien, Eugene. *Monseigneur Freppel: Sa vie, ses ouvrages, ses oeuvres, son influence et son temps d'après des documents inconnus et inédits 1827-1891.* 2 vols. Angers: En vente chez l'auteur, 1931.

Turmann, Max. *Le développement du catholicisme social depuis l'encyclique Rerum novarum.* Paris: Ancienne Librairie Germer Baillière et Co., 1900.

Viaene, Vincent, ed. *The Papacy and the New World Order: Vatican Diplomacy, Catholic Opinion and International Politics at the Time of Leo XIII.* Louvain: Louvain University Press, 2005.

Vidler, A.R. *A Century of Social Catholicism: 1820-1920*. London: SPCK, 1964