

FOUR

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RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE OVER LABOR UNIONS

Side by side in the newspapers last Thursday were two stories which must be read together in order to appreciate their full significance.

One of them is this cable report of a speech by Premier Lloyd George:

London, March 29.—A bitter attack on Socialism was made by the Prime Minister in a speech at a luncheon today of the new members of the Coalition group.

It calls itself 'Labor'. It is really Socialism. It is tearing the parties to pieces on its way to tearing society to pieces.

Those still inclined to regard the Labor party as a bogey should look at the bye elections of 1920 and 1921. The addition of four per cent. would put the Socialists in the majority.

It is not necessary to acquit Lloyd George of partisan bias, of exaggeration dictated by self-interest and party interest; bias and exaggeration doubtless there are.

Not alone in England but everywhere throughout the industrial world the same struggle is being waged between red radicalism and the restraining influences of conservatism.

The terrible fiasco made by Socialism—or in its name—in Russia has, for a time at least, pretty effectually stemmed the dangerous tide in other countries.

Now turn to the other story. It is a report from Ottawa of an outspoken warning by the Minister of Labor to

a deputation from the Catholic Labor Unions of Quebec that racial and religious strife may be the possible outcome of the Catholic labor movement in Quebec.

"If it once gets in the mind of the people that in your Province for a man to get along in his work he must accept a certain religious guidance," he told Abbe Fortin.

"You have charged discrimination by the department against your union, yet you make it necessary for a member of your organization to be of a certain faith.

Abbe Fortin charged the department with recognizing only the international trade unions, despite the fact that the Catholic federated unions in Quebec numbered between 40,000 and 50,000 members.

He explained that the provision in the Peace Treaty was that each country should recognize associations of employers and associations of labor, which would give each class the greatest representation.

On the one hand we have the recognized fact that dangerous tendencies, subversive of organized society, are striving for the control of Labor Unions.

On the other hand, can we find fault with Senator Robertson's stand on the question if, as he evidently implies, the Catholic Labor movement works injustice to non-Catholic workers of Quebec.

Capital Punishment. Petitions for the commutation to imprisonment of the death sentence of Norman Garfield for killing Ben Johnston, proprietor of a Woodstock restaurant, will be placed in circulation in London this week.

"Garfield's crime was accidental," said Mr. Westland. "We do not attempt to condone his intended crime of robbery, but the crime of murder was not deliberate on his part."

The news item quoted above, together with the facts and assertions contained therein, calls for consideration.

The wisdom of capital punishment may be called in question, and as a matter of fact there are those, sane and well-balanced, who advocate its entire abolition.

mutation of sentence and canvas for signatures on such grounds is mischievous. The influence that such individuals may have over the immature, the ignorant, the half-educated, is the measure of the harm done.

"Garfield's crime was accidental," said Mr. Westland. "We do not attempt to condone his intended crime of robbery, but the crime of murder was not deliberate on his part."

The abnormally developed egotism of the officious gentleman gives him a wonderful self-assurance. What he believes becomes a demonstrated fact or an incontrovertible doctrine; what he disbelieves has no existence.

For, he it remembered, the State, as such, has precisely the same authority, precisely the same right to be "supreme" in the matter of marriage, in Turkey as in Ontario.

Since Garfield was found guilty and sentenced we read in the newspapers of a negro who was found guilty of brutally murdering a young white girl. So judge and jury decided though the negro when committing his cowardly and criminal assault had no intention of committing murder.

Then if Mr. Westland is so absolutely certain that "Garfield's crime was accidental," would he explain why he covered his victim with loaded revolvers? Had he had very real objection to the commission of murder in the pursuit of his unlawful trade, would not revolvers unloaded, or loaded only with blank cartridge, have served his purpose?

All these things are taken into account by the framers of our criminal law, by the judge who interprets and applies it, by the lawyers who strenuously defend the accused, by the jury. And after full and fair trial, no reasonable doubt being established, the criminal gets his deserts according to the law of the land and the due process of administration of justice.

Interference in such a case should be based on some ground better than the assumption of mind-reading and heart-searching faculties on the part of officious meddlers with no knowledge of law, peculiar ideas of justice and perverted notions of the rights and duties of society.

Some of these had such incredibly wretched sense of what is decent that they interviewed the bereaved widow of the unfortunate victim to ask her if she wanted her husband murderer hanged!

Society has the right and the duty to protect itself. It is concerned not so much with inflicting condign punishment on the criminal for his particular crime; it is chiefly concerned with the deterrent effect of such punishment on others.

In the circumstances interference with the course of justice is particularly ill-advised and we trust that our readers will not be misled into signing petitions asking for such interference.

THE SUPREMACY OF THE STATE IN SPIRITUAL MATTERS

The following extract from a letter to the Globe shows how persistent is Protestant misconception of the Catholic position with regard to marriage:

To the Editor of the Globe:—The amazing statement made by Mr. J. McFortune, that the ecclesiastical courts of the Roman Catholic Church did not "annul" the Tremblay-Despatie marriage because "there was no marriage to annul," proves my main contention.

If marriage be considered as purely and merely a civil contract, then, of course, the writer's contention is well founded. The validity of the contract would depend on the conditions laid down by the civil law.

For, he it remembered, the State, as such, has precisely the same authority, precisely the same right to be "supreme" in the matter of marriage, in Turkey as in Ontario.

Protestants may refuse allegiance to the Catholic Church. That is their right. But before criticizing adversely the position of the Church on marriage or on any other question, reason and common sense, as well as the amenities of civilized life, demand that they should inform themselves of that position.

Marriage is a civil contract with civil consequences, and as such comes, and must of necessity come, under the provisions of the civil law. All Catholics concede that.

But Christian marriage is also a Sacrament instituted by Christ, and as such, is exclusively under the jurisdiction of the Catholic Church. No Catholic can yield a jot or tittle of this claim to Ontario, to Turkey, to the United States—or to "the highest tribunal in the British Empire."

Neither in the Tremblay-Despatie case, nor in any other case, has the Catholic Church ever annulled a valid marriage. After investigation if the marriage is found to be null and void from the beginning a declaration of nullity is judicially pronounced. That is poles apart from annulling a marriage.

Instead of Tremblay-Despatie let us substitute Jones Smith. John Jones married Mary Smith say in 1900. After they have lived together for twenty years it is found that John Smith was previously married to Jane Brown by whom he had three children.

The ecclesiastical courts do precisely the same thing when it is found that according to the provisions of Canon Law, the parties to an attempted marriage are not free to marry.

THE WORSHIP OF THE STATE

In a recent issue of The Farmers' Sun, I find the following letter: A STATE-EDUCATED RACE Editor, Farmers' Sun: To my mind the duty of educating the race should devolve upon the State; in other words, our aim should be a State-educated race.

it is, or should be, the duty of the State to see that every child receives proper education in whatever trade, calling or profession he or she showed the greatest aptitude.

Under our present system, poor people with large families very often find it a real hardship to give their children a very meagre education; while among these children there may be many capable of great things in life if they but had the opportunity and proper environment for the development of their faculties.

By a State-educated race, every one would, or should, be required to follow the trade or profession for which he could best qualify. Such a system would tend to produce a race of specialists, would greatly lessen the number of failures in life, and would give all minds of equal capacity the same opportunity to develop and excel.

What is the State? It is the whole people living in a nation or a dominion. Obviously the whole people can act only through chosen agents or representatives; and if the State is to take over the whole matter of education and to exclude the parents, let us recognize at least the fact that the work will be done by a government department, and by a few men, and not by the whole people.

In other words, Mr. Gordon's idea is, to put the supreme power and authority for a whole nation in the hands of a Bureau. He has got hold of the German State Bureau System, and imagines, no doubt, that he has found something new.

The State has now a good deal of control of common-school education; but our common school system has not, up to the present, involved the wholesale repudiation of parental and family rights which Mr. Gordon desires to bring about.

But Mr. Gordon is not content with compulsory attendance: he wants State dictation of occupations. This goes Germany one better; but even here he is not altogether an innovator; for the Soviets of Russia have tried that; and it is a basic principle of Socialism as taught by its founders and writers, that the child belongs to the State, and not to the family.

The Bolsheviks, who are merely practical Socialists logically carrying talk into action, have acted in this matter; they have proceeded, in some places, to take the child away from the parents and to educate and train him as a ward of the State.

These are a few little preliminaries which may seem important to him if he will reflect upon them. Has he considered the gravity of a shift from Canadian ideas of freedom to German ideas? "Everyone would, or could," he says, "be required to follow the trade or profession for which he could best qualify."

For, he has the German idea; the idea which gave us the War with all its horrors; the idea that men and women exist for the State; and not to carry out their individual and personal obligations and duties to God. The Prussian conception of the citizen is that he is a cog in the vast machinery of the State; utterly and wholly under the command of

the chief engineer in charge of that machine.

That is the direction in which some opinion in Canada is drifting. I say "drifting" because I do not believe those who hold and express such opinion have any clear idea of course or direction; they are veritably drifting.

The Catholic conception of society and of citizenship is wholly different. Catholic doctrine emphasizes the family, the parent, and their status and rights. This status must be preserved; those rights cannot be abrogated. Men are individuals before they are citizens; and their individual responsibilities to God cannot be lost sight of in some ill-dadned and hazy notion of citizenship which so merges them in the State that they no longer have any individual rights.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

THE UPPER CANADA BIBLE SOCIETY is appealing to the public for increased funds to carry on its work. "The distressed people of the world," says the appeal, "are crying to us for Bibles in unprecedented numbers," and, it is added, ten million were distributed last year.

THIS INDISCRIMINATE Bible-distributing mania is one of the psychological puzzles of the age. It certainly does not tend to give it sense or consistency to find some of its most ardent advocates undermining the Book's authority at home.

SO THIS Methodist minister (and he by no means stands alone) in regard to Prohibition—if the rational and legitimate use of fermented liquor is sanctioned by Scripture "So much the worse for the Bible." It is, on this principle, with the frail mind of man, not the written or spoken Word of the great Lawgiver, that is the ultimate appeal.

IN RESPONSE to the request of a correspondent the Toronto Globe gives, editorially, a sketch of the life of Sir Philip Gibbs. It is noteworthy, however, and perhaps not without significance, that no allusion whatever is made to the Catholic faith of Sir Philip.

LIKEWISE, in not one of the newspaper notices of the late Librarian of Parliament that we have seen there any allusion to the fact that Mr. Griffin was a Catholic.

Each year beholds an increase in the number of cities and towns where the three hours, from noon to three p. m., or Good Friday, are observed as a period of sacred quiet. In many places both Jews and non-Catholics have united with their Catholic fellow-citizens in offering this tribute to the Redeemer of the world on the memorable day of His death.

To the fact that Mr. Griffin never sought public applause, and that his writings were almost altogether anonymous it is entirely due that his fame is so circumscribed. Scholars, however, in both hemispheres knew him well, and he was a valued contributor to the Quarterly Review, and other leading periodicals.

While the marts of trade and the public forums may not see fit to stop the wheels of material activity for that brief space of time, every Christian should intern himself within the sanctuary of his own soul and there contemplate the world's most colossal crime; he should at the same time view the love of a God which permitted mortal man to hurl his burden on the shoulders of Divinity.

But it was an experience on the author's part not at all uncommon in these revenue worshipping days.

THAT THERE should have arisen a storm of protest in Scotland against the removal to London of one of the nation's oldest and most distinctive monuments in the shape of the celebrated Hilton-of-Cadboll stone, a sculptured relic dating back to the beginning of the eighth century, is eminently fit and proper.

In this contingency Scotland is reminded of another act of pillage, still regretted and resented, although it took place six hundred years ago—that is the carrying off by Edward I. of England, of the Lia Fail or Stone of Destiny, which for centuries had been the coronation seat of the Kings of Scotland, and which since Edward's time has in Westminster Abbey served a like purpose for the Kings of England.

FOR THE "Reformers" were to a man in the pay of England, Knox himself being in the forefront in this respect. From that on the successive steps—the union of the Crowns; the "revolution" of 1688; the surrender of the ancient Parliament of Scotland—were but successive steps in the nation's elimination.

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