

The Catholic Record

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LONDON, SATURDAY, FEB. 7, 1925

THE NATION AND THE CARDINAL

The Nation is a high-class liberal weekly published in New York. Many of our readers will need no introduction to it. As a subscriber we read it regularly for some years; occasionally we read it still. It is usually well-informed and well-edited; but, above all, it glories in its liberalism, its freedom from vulgar prejudices and prepossessions, and its fearless fidelity to its convictions. In saying this it is hardly necessary to add that we sometimes find ourselves in essential disagreement with The Nation. Indeed this must be true of every thinking reader of any worth-while periodical.

But we are somewhat surprised to read in a marked copy—sent out presumably by The Nation itself—an editorial entitled "Catholics and Child Labor" which is anything but liberal, and which—unconsciously we believe—reeks with vulgar prejudice.

There is an agitation for an amendment to the federal Constitution which would give to the federal Congress the right to regulate the conditions of child labor up to the age of eighteen. Until such change in the Constitution is effected this is a matter that pertains exclusively to the individual States.

Now this is obviously a question on which opinions will differ. There need be no slightest difference as to what the regulation should be, and still one will be ardently in favor of transferring the right to regulate child labor to Washington, another vehemently opposed to this invasion of State rights. The Democrats in the United States have been the historic champions of State rights as the Liberals in Canada have in the past fought strenuously for Provincial rights. So a political tradition and a political principle enter into the decision with many. But let it be clearly understood that the question in issue is simply whether the individual States will retain their unquestioned rights in the premises or surrender those rights to the federal Congress.

Now for The Nation's editorial: "There can be no doubt that the activities of Cardinal O'Connell of Boston in opposing the Child Labor Amendment to the federal Constitution are fraught with the possibility of infinite mischief for the Church of which he is so distinguished a prelate.

"Whether one believes in the amendment or is opposed to it, there can be no question that in mixing into this matter as he did the Cardinal did his Church a great disservice. He thereby justified those who insist that the Catholic Church as such is active in politics in America and that its aim is the domination of our political as well as of our religious and social life." (The italics are ours.)

The Nation fails to see, or by implication denies, that Cardinal O'Connell is not only a distinguished prelate of the Catholic Church but also, and in every sense as truly, a distinguished citizen of the United States. As a citizen he has not only the right but the duty of any other citizen. Being a distinguished prelate does not deprive him of that right or relieve him of that duty as a citizen. If he believes, like many others, that the proposed amendment is fraught with danger he is in duty bound to oppose it.

How can the fact that Cardinal O'Connell exercised his undoubted right as an American citizen justly "the constant allegation of the Ku Klux Klan?" The trouble in the United States—and in Canada as well—is that half the people don't care a tuppenny darn how any political issue, no matter how grave its consequences, is decided. Half

the people don't vote at all. From one end of the country, to the other this apathy has been deplored. A former Minister of Education for Ontario, who is also a distinguished clergyman, branded this apathy and abstention from voting as destructive of democracy and approximating anarchy. Whether or not The Nation was an exception practically the whole American press deplored this very thing. One might expect it would be grateful to Cardinal O'Connell now for his good example.

We don't know whether Cardinal O'Connell was right or wrong. We have not seen his letter on the subject which was read in the churches of his diocese. But it is the mere fact that it was read in the churches that The Nation thinks was "ultra vires," "dictating to Catholics upon matters which lie outside his proper sphere."

But had he used the daily press would not The Nation condemn him just the same for "rushing into print?"

We venture to say that Cardinal O'Connell never intimated that this political question was within the sphere of faith or morals; that he did not "dictate" or command any course of action; that he felt strongly that the principle of centralization involved in the proposed amendment might have serious consequences in other directions; and that he advised or exhorted his people oppose it for the reasons he alleged. In any case The Nation quotes not a syllable in proof of its allegations.

When it comes to politics the Catholic layman is less susceptible to influence by priest or bishop or pope than is his Protestant fellow-citizen to the influence of his clerical leaders. Daniel O'Connell voiced their sentiments when he peremptorily refused to take his politics from Rome. And the pious and loyal Irish Catholic peasant acclaimed him then and quotes him yet.

Like others in all walks of life priests and bishops will have the political influence that they deserve. Like others it is their right and their duty to use it on occasion.

The Nation, as may have been inferred already, is an ardent advocate of the Child-Labor Amendment. Yet it says: "That there are many men of highest ideals and sound humanitarianism who differ with us on this issue we are increasingly aware. Among them are George Foster Peabody and Oscar T. Crosby, whose long records of public service and devotion to principle render it impossible to attribute to them any motive other than a high one."

So Cardinal O'Connell is in good company. But it is not at all impossible to impute a low and unworthy motive to him. The Nation psycho-analyses the Cardinal and discovers a politico-religious domination complex that singles him out from his high minded associates and casts him into outer darkness where there is neither liberalism nor high motive.

Just how inconsequent and illogical The Nation can be when swayed by latent unreasoning prejudice we must allow The Nation itself to demonstrate.

We quote: "Fortunately for all concerned Cardinal O'Connell stands by himself both in his general outbursts on political matters and on the child-labor issue in particular. His fellow-prelates, like Cardinal Hayes and Mundelein, have wisely refrained from any public utterances on the child-labor amendment. But more than that, Cardinal O'Connell's opposition to the freeing of children from too early toil is in direct contrast with the position taken by the Catholic Welfare Council. That body has unqualifiedly supported the amendment, and some of its members, like that far-visions, public-spirited teacher and leader, the Rev. John A. Ryan, have championed what they consider the cause of the children in the Catholic press, in the daily newspapers, and on the public platform. We believe that they voice the true spirit and conscience of the Catholic Church on this issue." (Italics ours.)

And yet The Nation says without qualification that Cardinal O'Connell has "justified those who insist that the Catholic Church as such is active in politics in America and that its aim is the domination of our political as well as our religious and social life!"

The National Catholic Welfare Conference is composed of the episcopate of the United States. For the more effective prosecution of its work it is divided into various departments. Each department is presided over by a bishop, with whom are associated other bishops. With them also are associated priests and laymen qualified for this special work. By episcopal appointment the Director of the Social Action Department of the N. C. W. C. is the "far-visions public-spirited teacher and leader," the Rev. John A. Ryan. The Catholic University of America is under the direct control of the hierarchy of the United States. With the consent and approval of the hierarchy, if not by their direct appointment, Dr. Ryan is Professor of Sociology in the Catholic University. Now it would be going too far to assume that every bishop necessarily agrees with every conclusion arrived at by any N. C. W. C. department. But they are given a free hand under responsible episcopal supervision. So that when the Department of Social Action of the N. C. W. C. pronounces on a question so clearly within its purview as the child-labor amendment it is safe to conclude that such pronouncement is the result of mature study and consideration by representative and competent Catholics. Not, however, the definitive pronouncement of the Catholic Church as such. The Nation, we are sure, would understand just what value should be attributed to the report of the Social Welfare Committee of the Protestant Episcopal Synod on such a question as the 20th amendment and though this report were received with at least the tacit assent of the other Episcopal bishops, should the learned Bishop Manning publicly dissent from any such conclusion, and even use his influence to the full in opposition to it, The Nation would not pillory the Episcopal Bishop of New York as it has pilloried the Catholic Archbishop of Boston.

And, above all, this liberal weekly would assuredly not proclaim that Bishop Manning had demonstrated that the Protestant Episcopal Church as such aimed at "the domination of our political as well as of our social and religious life."

No; that would be too inconsequential, too manifestly unfair not to say too transparently silly. Only where there is a dependable substratum of vulgar and unreasoning prejudice in writer and readers could such a charge have any chance to pass unchallenged. It would have to depend on a great deal of sub-conscious support to obscure its absurd self-contradiction.

But The Nation says that Cardinal O'Connell "justified those who insist that the Catholic Church as such is active in politics in America and that its aim is the domination of our political as well as of our religious and social life."

And immediately after making this wild charge itself The Nation continues: "This has been and is a constant allegation of the Ku Klux Klan and those fanatical anti-Catholics who really think that the Pope plans some day to leave the Vatican—to take up his seat in the White House!" (The note of admiration is The Nation's own.)

But this liberal periodical concludes its editorial with the same ominous note of prophecy with which it began:

"Cardinal O'Connell's actions will, as we have said, tend enormously to increase these attacks and will convince many people beyond the hope of reconversion that the Catholic Church is in politics for Church purposes." (No note of admiration but a sober period.)

Now just what is the difference between the Ku Klux Klan's charge and The Nation's to justify that sober not to say ominous and menacing period instead of a contemptuous note of admiration?

In credulity there is a difference—of degree. In the proportions in which reason and argument are mixed with traditional unreasoning prejudice a quantitative analysis would also probably show a difference. In literary form The Nation and the Ku Klux publications are in distinctly different classes. But, so far as the spirit and logic of the article under consideration is concerned, there is a striking family resemblance; though doubtless the liberal Nation will disclaim or deny the kinship indicated.

We think The Nation reveals the complex that makes Klans and Kliegles and invisible empires possible in democratic and liberal America.

WHAT SOCIETY OWES TO RELIGION

Leo XIII. in his "Christian Constitution of States" refers to "The City of God" where St. Augustine "set forth in so bright a light the worth of Christian wisdom in its relation to the public weal." And in the same Encyclical the great Statesman-Pope exhorted Catholics everywhere "to use their best endeavors to infuse into the veins of the State the healthy sap and blood of Christian wisdom and virtue."

That this is not exclusively the privilege of those who hold high office but the duty of the humblest in the land is shown very clearly by an American judge.

Supreme Court Justice Lewis L. Fawcett of Brooklyn, N. Y., has had more than 4,000 boys under twenty-one years arraigned before him in the eighteen years he sat on the bench in two courts. But of this large number only three were members of a Sunday-School at the time of the commission of their crimes. And "even these three exceptional cases were technical in character and devoid of heinousness, so that they are scarcely worth mentioning."

Mr. Justice Fawcett is thus further quoted in the New York Herald-Tribune:

"In view of this significant showing, I do not hesitate to express the conviction that attendance by young men at Sunday-School or other regular religious work, with its refining atmosphere, is signally preventive against crime and worthy of careful study by those who are dismayed by the increase of crime on the part of the young men of America."

Sometimes a plausible case is apparently made out for the abolition of the exemption from taxation of churches, parish halls, as well as educational and charitable institutions where religion permeates the work therein carried on. There is a sense in which such institutions might be considered private; but the benefits arising from their work are to all the people, of every religion and of no religion. While we include, as a matter of course, Catholic churches and institutions we have no intention of excluding those of any other religion.

In the next paragraph quoted Judge Fawcett makes it clear that all religious influences are of great value to the State:

"In 1,092 suspended criminal sentences, only sixty-two of the young men were brought back for violation of the conditions of their paroles. In each suspended sentence case I insisted upon the return of the youth, if he was a Protestant, to a Sunday-School; if a Roman Catholic, to attendance at Mass, and, if a Jew, to attendance at a synagogue or a temple. In each instance I had the earnest cooperation of the minister, the priest or the rabbi, and in each case I saw to it that the young man had a job to go to as soon as he was freed on parole. In virtually all of the suspended sentence cases the reform was quick and, I believe, permanent."

While the learned Judge is convinced from his wide experience of the necessity of religious influence in the period of character formation he holds it equally salutary for adults:

"The sustained, wholesome, moral atmosphere imparted through habitual attendance upon Sunday-School and church will expel criminal impulses."

"Any man not contributing to support some church or organized religious work is living on charity—riding on some other man's transportation. If he really desires abatement of crime he should ally himself with those agencies which prevent or abate crime."

"And this," as the Literary Digest, to which we are indebted for the quotations, remarks, "is not a platitude from the pulpit. It is an expression of belief of a judge who has had long experience."

In the light of that experience Judge Fawcett does not hesitate to say that society owes a great debt to religion; a debt so great that the man who fails to support some religious agency "is living on charity," contributing nothing to an essential social influence whose benefits he enjoys equally with

those who bear the burden of its maintenance.

Judge Fawcett pays a deserved tribute to the Sunday-School; but the trouble, as many are now asserting, is that its scope and influence is too limited. Religion relegated to the Sunday-School is by too many ignored altogether. This is implied in Justice Fawcett's statistics. Practically all of the 4,000 youths who came before him as criminals were without religious influence in their lives.

This is in keeping with the assertion of Father Cashin, for many years chaplain at Sing-Sing Prison, that not five per cent. of the inmates had any religious training.

If an hour or two of religious training on Sunday is good—and there is no doubt of that fact—religion every day of the week permeating all education and influencing the whole formative period of school life, is proportionately better.

That is a consideration that might well be taken into account in dealing with Separate Schools.

In any case all who are charged with the up-bringing of children and the formation of the characters and habits of the young may profitably read and reread the deliberate conclusions of Justice Fawcett and ponder them in their hearts.

NOT RELIGION BUT LIVES NEED RECONSTRUCTION

By THE OBSERVER

Reverend Albert Muentech, S. J., writes in The Fortnightly Review, of St. Louis, Missouri, a very cogent little article on the allegation that religion needs to be reconstructed. Quoting some of the thoughtless sayings of the day, such as, "the churches are not measuring up to their responsibilities in this era of social service," and that "they neglect to preach the social significance of Christianity," and so forth, Father Muentech gently calls attention to the fact that there has never been a time when the Church was doing more for the removal of human suffering than she is now doing; and that in fact some of the churches are overdoing the social service feature of their work to the cost of the more spiritual interests.

During the War, says Father Muentech, churches of all denominations launched drives, took up collections, and engaged in all sorts of war work for the maimed and the handicapped. These facts were the answer to the allegations that the social side of Christianity as preached by the various denominations is not sufficiently emphasized. So far is that from being the case that some denominations are in danger of giving themselves wholly to social service or what is so called.

Religion stands in no need of reconstruction. As Father Muentech points out, God's will is sufficiently known amongst us; the trouble is, that we do not want to do that will. We know a good deal of our duties towards God and our fellow men; the trouble is, that we are not at all eager to perform those duties. What is really meant by the people who talk of reconstruction of religion, is that men and women should reconstruct their lives and obey God's laws; the trouble is, that that is the last thing that men and women are willing to do.

It is not religion that needs reshaping or remodelling; it is the heart of man, the same fickle and perverse heart, that needs purification. It is not religion that needs reconstruction; it is the passions, the greed, the selfishness, the luxuriousness, the self-indulgence of corrupt human nature, that need to be repressed. And men and women know this well enough. There is not needed a new revelation, but a proper understanding and a more willing application, of the truths we already know.

Father Muentech remarks that so far as the Catholic Church is concerned, "a Church which has nearly two thousand years of continual loyal service for suffering humanity to her credit, needs not to be reminded of the necessity of falling in line with the demands of the age in respect of social service." Father Muentech quotes from an article by Bernard Iddings Bell in The Atlantic Monthly some years ago the following striking passage:

"When the Churches completely metamorphose themselves from supernatural agencies into natural agencies, at that instant they sign their own death warrant. They deny the only reason they have for existing.

There is not a single bit of so-called social service work now being attempted by the churches which is not being done more efficiently by someone else. . . . There is among us today a great soul-hunger. Let the churches cease their dilatory and minute concern with sociological minutiae, and, as did the prophets, as did the Christ, lift their mighty voices in a cry for spiritual regeneration and revolution."

That does not apply to the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church never forgets, never can forget, that her work is for souls first and always and that all other things are of secondary importance. The religious denominations which are separated from her fold are not so thoroughly set upon the spiritual as distinguished from the temporal; and in the years since Mr. Bell wrote as above, they have drifted farther from the position of supernatural agencies, and more and more into the position of mere natural agencies.

Yet, there is still enough knowledge of the truth amongst them to make this world a very different place if only their adherents would do as they know they ought to do. But human nature is not apt to do that. We never act in advance of our knowledge; but we most usually drag along far behind the standards we believe in. Catholics cannot, we are sorry to say, claim that they act as the Catholic religion commands them to act; and they lack the extenuation that others have who are sometimes confused by the uncertainty and the disputes that exist in their churches.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

INSPIRED by the recent Eclipse a Toronto daily paper moralizes upon the vast changes which have come over the world since the Eclipse of 1706, and upon the still greater changes which may overtake humanity when Western Ontario falls again into the path of a total eclipse in the year 2144. In this regard the future furnishes ample room for speculation and for that indulgence of the imagination which the achievements of science in the past two hundred years seem to warrant. It is to be feared, however, that this writer, following in the wake of so many others, brings the same faculty to bear upon the history of the past. For, if the past were as dreadful as it is sometimes pictured, humanity could scarcely have survived at all, and we of today would not be enjoying the privileges that, at least in the way of creature comforts, are certainly ours. But whether man's progress in the interval has been all for good may reasonably be questioned.

It would perhaps be hard to overstate the deplorable condition of the laboring classes, not to speak of the really poor, in England at least, in the eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth. The Star quotes an historian as saying that "they were ignorant and brutal to a degree which it is hard to conceive," and itself adds that "Canadians of today would be amazed at it all—amazed at the grinding of the poor, the utter profligacy of the rich, the unfair division of wealth and opportunity." One need but consult the novels of Dickens, Kingsley or Charles Reade to have this brought home to him. But, as independent investigators have shown, these unhappy conditions were largely a heritage from the Reformation of the sixteenth century, with special emphasis upon the suppression of the monasteries by Henry VIII.

It would be impossible to go fully into this in the space at our disposal. Those sufficiently interested might read with profit the books of F. W. Maitland, of his namesake, S. R. Maitland, author of the "Dark Ages," of Gardiner, the historian of Lollardism, or of our own Catholic historian Cardinal Gasquet. We content ourselves here with a quotation from Frederick Stokes, M. A., prefixed to the later editions of the "Dark Ages." It will suffice to show that there is another and brighter side to the history of medieval England than the general-ity of Canadians are conscious of and that a degree of modesty would not be unbecoming in estimating the conditions of today.

"ON THE whole," says Professor Stokes, a writer of unquestioned authority, "one is tempted to believe that the Dark Ages were

not so very dark, nor our own times so very full of light as some of the authors criticized by Maitland would have us believe. Men lived simpler and rougher lives, but it does not follow that they led less happy ones." And, contrariwise, "it is doubtful whether the influences of the nineteenth century do not tend to degrade men rather than to elevate them." The individual withers, and the State is more and more. There is scant opportunity for prayer and repose in the restless, commonplace age in which we live. The whole atmosphere of the times is fatal to that spirit of faith which is the motive power of all real progress."

ANOTHER QUOTATION from the same writer may be pardoned. "Whether the majority of men were better off under personal rule and simple civilization is a debatable question. It is doubtful whether any more terrible example of widespread suffering took place anywhere in the Dark Ages than the Irish famine of 1848. It is doubtful whether any population during the Dark Ages lived in more bitter and hopeless misery than do the sweated workers of East London. Civilization has done much for the few, but it is questionable whether it has really benefited the many. Shelter, food and clothing are the great bodily wants of men, and the poorer classes in olden times were at least as well supplied with these in the Dark Ages as they are now. They had no votes, nor third class carriages, nor cheap newspapers, but they lived for the most part in the open country, not penned together like swine in huge cities. They had at least fresh air, and pure water, and healthful environment, which is more than can be said of the bulk of our city populations nowadays. Nor was their ignorance so deep as is commonly supposed. In those days faith was a vivid reality, and the confessional and the services of the Church in themselves constituted an education in that which is the most important of all knowledge—the knowledge how to live;—and die."

IN BELGIAN CONGO

CHARGE AGAINST THE MISSIONARIES

By Rev. J. Van der Heyden (Louvain Correspondent, N. C. W. C.)

Louvain.—The actions and general attitude of English Baptist missionaries in the Belgian Congo are creating uneasiness in Belgian official circles, the suspicion being entertained that the proselytizing activities of these missionaries are cloaking a political purpose to discredit the Belgian administration in the eyes of the blacks. The situation is assuming a very disturbing aspect.

THE RISE OF KIBANGU

Four years ago the Belgian officials of the Lower Congo became aware of an insurrectional movement directed against the colonial authorities. It took the name of Kibangu, from Kibangu, the patronymic of its originator.

Kibangu is a negro whom the official reports describe as "particularly intelligent." Educated at the Ngombe-Lutete establishment of the London Baptist Missionary Society, he put the teachings of his masters into practice, by attributing the fancies of his individualism to the workings in him of the Spirit and proclaimed himself the chosen of the Lord to preach to the blacks a new religion. It is very much akin to the creed of the London Baptist Missionary Society, and Kibangu succeeded in making it acceptable to his people by coupling the condemnation of their idolatrous practices with the promise of freeing them from the oppression of the whites. His confidence in himself grew apace with the confidence the blacks accorded him, and it became unlimited. The roads leading to his home at Nkamba were covered with throngs of devotees, eager to do homage to the Prophet. With them the pilgrims dragged their sick, to be cured, and even carried their dead to be resuscitated. Under the insouciant eyes of the colonial officers the empire of the black Messiah over the natives was left to develop without let or hindrance. Notwithstanding veteran Catholic missionaries frequently warned them, the agents of the State remained blind to the brewing danger until at length a regular revolt broke out at Thyville. The troops called to the rescue summoned the mutineers to disperse, when forth from the crowds stepped two English preachers. At sight of them the Belgian officers ordered the guns lowered and no reprisals took place. The blacks were triumphant, repeating everywhere that their Belgian masters feared the English.

KIBANGU BANISHED

Kibangu, however, was arrested, tried, and sentenced to death for incitation to revolt. The Minister