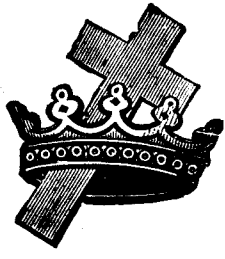


Northwest Review.



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CURRENT COMMENT

Last Sunday the Rev. J. B. Silcox, a well known Congregational minister of this city, delivered a sermon on "The Graves of 1903." He has been handling this grave subject at least twenty years in succession, as we gather from the Free Press "Twenty Years Ago" department. This affords him an annual opportunity to air his views on the prominent persons who are annually translated to the realm of everlasting realities. A discourse of this kind may not be distinctly apostolic or evangelical, but when a preacher has no divine message to deliver, he naturally falls back on the human race, because he knows more about it than about God and His ways. Besides, most Protestant sensational preachers are always on the lookout for some new revelation. The fragmentary view they have of the one and only true revelation does not satisfy their untrained minds. So they eagerly grasp at any further fragments of truth reflected in the lives of great men.

That this is Mr. Silcox's disposition may be seen from his own words as reported by the Free Press of last Monday.

"Nothing could be more inspiring than the study of the great men and women of the past with whose names is linked all revelations. Great movements of earth have been the resultant of the powers of strong personalities. The greatest teachers have been men and women who have embodied in themselves some great truth of purpose."

There is, of course a sense in which the above paragraph may be interpreted as true. Nothing, for instance, could be more inspiring than the study of such great men and women as Noah, Abraham, Deborah, Judith, Peter, Paul, John the Baptist, John the Evangelist, Mary the Mother of God, not to speak of the Divine Man, Jesus our Saviour, "with whose names is" truly "linked all revelation." But Mr. Silcox evidently means to be more comprehensive than we are. He evidently attributes some vague sort of revelation to all men and women of all times and places, provided they have made a stir in the world.

Full of this idea he proceeds to say: "Truths were shadowy things until embodied in some human soul." That is a strange assertion for a man who may be supposed to believe Moses when he says that "our God . . . is a God of truth" (Deut. 32; 3, 4). Truth is His very essence. In Him is all truth, not shadowy, but most definite and clear. The shadowiness comes in when men strive to grasp the truth and lay hold only of its broken reflections. Hence we are justified in reversing Mr. Silcox's high-sounding aphorism, and saying: Truths are shadowy things when embodied in some human soul that does not apprehend the whole truth as it is in God.

The Rev. J. B. Silcox, while reviewing the lives of many prominent men who died during the past year, devoted his attention more particularly to the late Pope Leo XIII., and to Herbert Spencer. We quote from the Free Press.

"Looking in retrospect at the great men, Spencer and Pope Leo, the preacher was inclined to a hopeful view of their lives in the passing. Comparing the two men, one a scientist, the other a ecclesiast, one wedded to nature, the other to the Church; one whose maxim was 'Investigate and think,' the other's 'Believe and Obey,' one devoted to the records of the past, to the diligent study of nature in the pre-

sent, to whom God and the future was "unknowable," the other devoted to "the life that is to come," the two seemed to be the very antipodes of each other. Both were pure in life, zealous for the welfare of man, for peace in the world, both were apostles of high ideals, living up to the highest in them. Both displayed unexampled consecration to their ideals, self-denial and sacrifice. With regard to the future the preacher doubted not it would be the same for both, for though all was mystery for Spencer, he dared believe that if he found not faith in God here, he would be beyond the veil which he has passed."

What a comfort it must be to Leo XIII. to know that Mr. Silcox inclines to a hopeful view of his last end! As for Herbert Spencer, he probably needs all the scraps of comfort he can pick up, and he is welcome to them. But how extraordinarily lop-sided must be the mind of a professedly Christian preacher who can draw up a hopeful, and to some extent plausible, parallel between a saintly Christian hero altogether devoted to God and Godly things, and a systematic antagonist of God and Godly things.

So curious is this psychological phenomenon that it is worth studying in detail. "One a Scientist." This is, to say the least, inaccurate. Herbert Spencer never made any original researches in science. He took all his science second-hand and idealized it. He was essentially a philosopher, not a scientist. He built his entire system of philosophy on the unproved and unprovable theory of universal evolution. Had he been a real scientist, he would have made sure of his foundation, he would have sifted the facts more thoroughly. Thus Mr. Silcox's parallel begins with a divergence from facts and all students of geometry know that lines that begin by diverging are not parallel. "One wedded to nature, the other to the Church." This implies that Leo XIII. could see nothing outside the Church. Yet we quoted in these columns not long ago the testimony of Rev. Charles Starbuck, a Protestant Theologian, to the effect that one of the most remarkable features of Leo XIII's life work was his sympathy with everything good outside the Church with the betterment of the working classes of all creeds, with the advancement of human society in all its phases, with every department of real science. In fact Mr. Silcox himself, further on implies the contrary of being "wedded to the Church" as contrasted with being "wedded to nature," when he says that "both" (Leo and Spencer) "were zealous for the welfare of man, for peace in the world."

"One whose maxim was 'Investigate and Think.' Was it? Read Spencer and judge for yourself. He does all the investigating and all the thinking for you. He is very fond of asserting dogmatically as first principles propositions that stand sorely in need of proof, for instance his axiom that feeling and thought are substantially the same. In his works there are scores, not to say hundreds, of fundamental propositions which the entire Catholic world challenges in vain for the semblance of a proof. On the other hand Leo XIII., of whom Mr. Silcox says that his maxim was "Believe and Obey," never claims belief and obedience without adducing irrefutable reasons for that belief and obedience. His encyclicals on liberty, the conditions of labor, civil government and other social questions have been before the world of investigators and thinkers a good many years, and we venture to say that they have met with

far less serious contradiction than have the dreams of Herbert Spencer.

"One devoted to the records of the past." This is precisely what Herbert Spencer was not. The "records of the past" mean either geology or history. Now geology is the most redoubtable of all the antagonists of evolution, because of the rarity of its transitional forms. And, as to history, Herbert Spencer's belief in the constant and inevitable moral progress of the human race flies in the face of numberless historical facts. He knew nothing of the moral history of the world because he knew nothing of its moral nerve-centre, the Church of God, which has existed, among the possessors of true revelation, from the days of Adam and Eve. Herbert Spencer took his historical data when and where they suited his theory, and shut his eyes on the other and vastly more important historical data.

"Both were pure in life . . . living up to the highest in them." Well, nobody knows anything of Herbert Spencer's inner life. He was probably a quiet, good sort of man, living by himself, exposed to few temptations, buried in his books, spinning and weaving systems for fifty years in the seclusion of his cabinet. As to "self-denial and sacrifice," we fail to see wherein he practised them. He was comfortably well off. He had none of the cares of government in a necessarily complex system as Leo had all his life. He had no worries of daily converse with all sorts and conditions of men as Leo had. He had no solicitude of the churches, no heart-burnings over eternal interests at stake all over the world. It was supremely easy for Herbert Spencer to lead an outwardly pure life. But to compare him in this respect to one whose whole life was consecrated to arduous and ever varying duties, and who "wore the white flower of a blameless life, before a thousand peering littlenesses, in that fierce light which beats upon a throne," and that throne more open to the public than any other, is like comparing the innocence of an infant to that of the veteran Sir Galahad.

Almost the only truth in Mr. Silcox's parallel is that Leo and Spencer were "the very antipodes of each other." Why then compare them except by way of contrast? Towards the end of his parallel sketch, Mr. Silcox seems to get a glimpse of the truth, when he says that Herbert Spencer's "philosophy made religion impossible, left no place for revelation, no place for Jesus Christ." How, then, can Spencer have been honest, he that is supposed to have been "devoted to the records of the past?"

From these contradictions we turn with pleasure to Mr. Silcox's estimate of the late Pope.

Enlarging upon the wonderful life of Pope Leo, the speaker said that the Pontiff had been held in reverence and affection by his own church and in esteem and veneration by the entire world. A blameless life, singular unspotted from the world, no one in whom the absolute power was vested exercised a more beneficent influence over so wide a field. Every department of world interest felt the power of his personality, whose counsels were formed in wisdom and with justice and charity. He, in common with great personalities of the past, belonged to Protestantism as well as Roman Catholicism, and his life was a worthy study for all. The Rev. Mr. Silcox traced the growth of the Pope's spiritual power from Leo I, called "the great."

Persons and Facts

Our sincere condolence is extended to Mr. G. W. Donald in his great bereavement, his young and beautiful wife having fallen a victim to diphtheria last week.

It is to be hoped that those who attended the pedro tournament between the Catholic Club and Young Conservatives at the rooms of the former, on Tuesday evening showed their good taste by appreciating the coffee and sandwiches which were served to them during the contest. The coffee was made by Mr. Wm. Jordan, who claims the Canadian championship in that line, and he labeled it his Standard Brand. The sandwiches were the result of the combined labor of Messrs. Dr. Raleigh, and Mr. J. Gladners and made a feast fit for the gods. It would have been an amusing spectacle for their respective wives to have witnessed their frantic efforts in the cuisine department.

It is rumored that the "Immaculate Conception Girls" are going to give a party at which they intend inviting a great number of the St. Mary's young men, as this is Leap Year, it would be advisable for the young ladies of St. Mary's Church to take the necessary precautions to protect their lawful property.

The greatest item of news this week apart from the war talk between Japan and Russia, is that the gentleman who wanders around the Catholic Club under the name of "The Man from Glengarry" has removed the ornament which had been decorating his upper lip from youth. He now wears an extremely guilty expression. It is not known what action the Catholic Club will take in this matter, but the "knowing ones" say that there will be "something doing," as it is understood he did not consult this great body before taking the extraordinary step.

Clerical News.

Rev. Father Bouillon, of Oak Lake, was here this week, a guest of the Fathers of St. Boniface College.

Rev. Father Robillard, O.M.I., is spending a few days with the Oblate Fathers of St. Mary's.

Rev. Father Proulx, S. J., is booked to lecture next Sunday at St. Jean Baptiste.

Rev. Father O'Dwyer, O. M. I., last Sunday preached in St. Mary's after vespers, a remarkable sermon against the infidelity of the age.

Regina Notes.

The ladies of St. Mary's Altar Society, have decided to celebrate St. Valentine's Day on Monday, February 15, by having a tea and entertainment. All arrangements have been made and as the ladies are determined to make the affair a grand success, we feel satisfied the appreciative public will do the rest.

A blizzard, of unusual severity, has been blowing here since Saturday noon and Sunday was really the stormiest day for many years. At High Mass at 11 o'clock celebrated by Rev. Father Suffa, O.M.I., there was quite a large congregation and one forgot the blinding storm and deep snowdrifts when listening to the dear Rev. Father's eloquent sermon. The music rendered by the choir was excellent. Miss Stubbings is ever in her place at the organ, and really she is indefatigable in her efforts to further

the interests of the choir. She certainly deserves the hearty thanks of every member of the congregation. For the first time Mr. Lyons was heard at the offertory in an "Ave Maria." His rendering of it was very fine indeed, and was much appreciated by those fortunate enough to hear him. Mr. Lyons has an excellent voice that shows careful training; he has been in Regina for some months past and is employed in the city post office. He comes to us from the "Land of Evangeline." We have during the past year had quite a few arrivals from those shores washed by the great Atlantic, and here, in our prairie capital, as they generally do elsewhere, they have proved their ability to hold their own and do credit to the land immortalized by Longfellow.

Rev. Father Kasper, O. M. I., spent Sunday in Moose Jaw, and Rev. Father Kim, O.M.I., spent Sunday in Rouleau.

GENA MacFARLANE, Regina, Jan. 18.

Home Column.

CONTENTMENT.

"My little world is very small,
Scarce worth your notice Sir, at all,"

The mother said,
My good, kind husband, as you see
And these three children at my knee,
Who look to us so trustingly
For daily bread.

For their sweet sakes, who love me so,
I keep the firelight in a glow
In our dear home.
That, though the tempest roar outside,
And fiercely beaten far and wide,
The cheery blaze may serve to guide
Dear feet that roam.

And as the weary kettle boils
We welcome him who daily toils
For us each day.
Of true love kisses full a score
He gets, I'm certain, if not more
When fond ones meet him at the door
At twilight grey.

"Ah, see! we are not rich or great,
The owners of a rich estate,"
The mother said.
But we have better far than gold,
Contentment, and a little fold,
As full of love as it can hold,
With daily bread."

A HEAVEN OF SANCTIFIED WOMEN.

One of the specific rights of woman is, through the grace of God, finally to reach Heaven. O, what a multitude of women in Heaven! Mary, Queen of Heaven is there; St. Elizabeth in Heaven, St. Anne in Heaven, St. Monica in Heaven; and besides these saints, a great many others who have never been heard of on earth, or known but little, have gone into rest and peace of Heaven. What a rest! What a change it will be, from small rooms, worrying to make "both ends meet" and aching sides and worn out eyes to the "Home of many Mansions." No more weary night-vigils, no more endless rounds or sweeping, dusting, baking, making. An end forever to the great sorrows which bow the shoulders and whiten the hair. An eternal farewell to the petty cares that carve the wrinkles across cheek and brow. Plenty of comfort, plenty of love, plenty of kind words at last. Heaven for aching heads; Heaven for broken hearts; Heaven for anguish-bitten frames. No more weary watching for the last breath that takes the loved form from you forever. No,