

The Catholic Record

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THE ACTUAL QUESTION IN ISSUE NOW

Though the discussion of the alleged "scriptural ground" for divorce may have served a good purpose, it is unfortunate that to some extent at least it has obscured the real issue, the immediately practical issue, that confronts us at the present moment.

The issue is raised by the proposed divorce legislation. The question which in consequence confronts us is not primarily one of theology or scripture, but one of plain politics, or if you will, of Christian citizenship.

All other questions are ill-timed, academic, if not irrelevant. This is the question of the hour, this is practical and to the point.

Let our differences be what they may on grounds purely religious or scriptural, the practical, political question confronts each one of us; we cannot evade it even if we would.

If the Christian conscience of Ontario be aroused, as it is claimed, then intelligent Christian citizenship must speak clearly, emphatically, unequivocally. Public opinion when unmistakably expressed is quite as effective in procuring or preventing legislation as a placidate.

In a self-governing country it is at once our right and our duty to bring the force of public opinion to bear on legislation proposed without a mandate from the people.

And this is the inch before the saw just now. Society is not a collection of individuals, it is a group of families. In other words, the family, not the individual, is the unit of society.

Christian society rests on the Christian family. The indissolubility of marriage is the bed rock on which Christian civilization rests.

It is important to realize this basic truth. During the discussion which followed the publication of the Report of the Divorce Commission an English writer put it this way: "Man is born a member of society—the family; he grows up in that society; in his turn he founds a like society; and his children repeat his life's story. In the family the character is formed; in the family the truth is realized that no man liveth to himself, and the essential lessons of duty and responsibility are learned; the family is the school of authority and respect; the family weds the gains of the past to the hopes of the future—its office to link the generations each to each. It is the microcosm of the State which may be rightly viewed as the expanded family. But the first condition of family life is its stability; and the great instrument of that stability is 'pure religion'—breaching household laws, the first

of those laws being the indissoluble union of parents. Yes, for the vast multitude religion is the only curb of the egotism which ever threatens that union. 'Nothing,' said one who was not only a great master of romantic fiction but a great master of social science, 'nothing proves more conclusively the necessity of indissoluble marriage than the instability of passion.' These words of Balzac express a profound truth.

The foregoing was written by a Catholic; but in the same article in the Nineteenth Century and After he quotes the following extract from "The Sociological Value of Christianity." The author, Mr. Chatterton-Hill, is not a Catholic, nor, indeed, a Christian of any denomination.

"The family is a miniature society; and the disintegration of this miniature society cannot but produce the disintegration of the larger society—even as social disintegration in its turn points to a disintegration of the family. If the individual be not strongly integrated in the family, neither will he be integrated in society as a whole; if he be not conscious of his duties and responsibilities in the family, he will not be conscious of his duties and responsibilities towards society. No society can hope to be strong if the family is weak—even as no individual can hope to be strong if he be afflicted with a weak heart. For the family is by far the most efficacious of all the social subdivisions, such as the class, the profession, the syndicate, the corporation, etc., the function of which is to adapt the individual to social life by integrating him in a group to which he is attached by ties of special affection and interest—society as a whole being too large, too far removed from the individual to be able to influence him sufficiently. The family differs from other social subdivisions. For the members of the family are linked together by ties sui generis: ties at once of a physiological and psychological nature, which do not exist between members of any other group, of any other organization. Hence the supreme importance of maintaining intact the family structure, without which the family functions cannot be performed."

To this non-Catholic and non-Christian student, biased not at all by creed or dogma, quite as much as to the Catholic who quotes him, divorce, on purely sociological grounds, is a disintegrating influence which saps the very foundations of society.

But, it may be objected, we have divorce now. The proposed legislation merely alters the mode of procedure in securing divorce.

This presentation of the case for the proposed divorce courts and divorce law may entrap the unthinking. But we must wilfully, obstinately close eyes and ears to the clamant lessons of experience to be misled by such specious and dishonest argument. The proposed law, even if in the beginning the legal reason for divorce be limited to adultery, will speedily make divorce easier and cheaper; it will also familiarize everybody with facts of divorce court cases.

These are two tremendous evils concerning which we make no apology for requesting the Protestant Episcopal Bishop of Sacramento, Bishop Moreland in his solemn appeal to his fellow-countrymen says: "Easy divorce is the subtle poison which is corrupting the ideals of family life in the United States. Disguising its deadly character under the form of sympathy for misnamed individuals, the divorce poison gradually destroys the Christian conception of marriage as a permanent relation."

It is sheer evasion of the momentous question that challenges the Christian conscience to object merely to "extending the grounds for divorce." The Church of England Social Service Council meets the question squarely by declaring itself "opposed to any movement for making the facilities for divorce greater."

The movement behind the proposed legislation openly avows the object of making greater the facilities for divorce; but those who would induce us to take this sinister first step make no pretence that the first step will be the last.

Principis obsta is the only safe or prudent motto to adopt in a matter so fraught with dire consequences.

Again the Bishop of Sacramento: "Easy divorce even among the best intentioned people is a standing invitation to magnify trivial differences, an invitation to selfishness

and discord, an encouragement to hasty or impulsive unions. Experience shows that if divorce courts were abolished, as in South Carolina, or divorce made difficult as in Canada, New York, District of Columbia and elsewhere, the majority of those seeking divorces would not find it impossible to live together contentedly, and that many of them would find the full happiness and reward of faithful married life."

If Bishop Moreland with his American experience were here and now a bishop in Ontario when it is proposed that we should take this first downward step, what would be his attitude? Would he not fearlessly strip the issue of its camouflage of sophistries and show in all its naked ugliness the inevitable term of the course we are asked to enter upon?

Bishop Moreland speaking from actual experience curiously corroborates in every important detail the warnings of Leo XIII. in his encyclical on Christian Marriage given to the world forty-one years ago:

"Further still, if the matter be duly pondered, we shall clearly see these evils to be the more especially dangerous, because, divorces once being tolerated, there will be no restraint powerful enough to keep it within the bounds marked out or presumed. Great indeed is the force of example and even greater still the might of passion. With such incitements it must needs follow that the eagerness for divorces, daily spreading by devious ways, will seize upon the minds of many like virulent contagious disease, or like a flood of water bursting through every barrier. These are truths that doubtless are all clear in themselves; but they will become clearer yet if we call to mind the teachings of experience. So soon as the road to divorce began to be made smooth by law, at once quarrels, jealousies, and judicial separations largely increased; and such shamelessness of life followed, that men who had been in favor of these divorces repented of what they had done, and feared that, if they did not carefully seek a remedy by repealing the law, the State itself might come to ruin."

Similarly and almost in Leo's very words the Minority Report of the Divorce Commission says:

"The proposals of the majority if carried by legislation would lead the nation to a downward incline on which it would be vain to expect to stop half way. It is idle to imagine that in a matter where great forces of human passions must always be pressing with all their might against whatever barriers are set up, those barriers can be permanently maintained in a position arbitrarily chosen with no better reason to support them than the supposed condition of public opinion at the moment of their erection."

And later the Minority points this obvious moral:

"There are reasons at the present time which lead us to think that the State in England, or indeed anywhere else, is called rather to strengthen than to relax the strictness of its marriage laws."

There are in Ontario ten thousand happy Christian homes cheerfully assuming and discharging the all-important duties of the Christian family to the one shirker or slacker or honest case of marital unhappiness. There is a genuine and deep rooted antipathy to the proposal for making divorce easier amongst the non-Catholics of the Province. This is evident not so much from public pronouncement on the subject—though we thank God for those—as from the almost invariable attitude taken by Protestants in all walks of life when the subject comes up in private conversation.

In the circumstances if the advocates of divorce courts and divorce law have their way it will be because of the criminal apathy and moral cowardice of leaders who shirk the duty of leading.

THE LATE MONSIGNOR CASEY When, on Saturday last, the wires flashed the news that Monsignor Casey of Lindsay died suddenly there were few of the older generation who did not realize that the Church in Ontario sustained a loss in many ways irreparable.

The qualities that made Mgr. Casey loved and esteemed—the manly qualities and priestly virtues—live on in others whom the Holy Spirit of God calls to the sacerdotal state; but the invaluable experience of seventy-two years, with almost half a century in the priesthood, comes only in the evening of life to men as richly

endowed by nature and grace. The gentleness, the kindly and understanding human sympathy characteristic of Monsignor Casey were so attractive precisely because they were rooted in those virile qualities that go to make what all the world calls—a man. "He was simple-minded and Christ-like; he was a lover of the young and the weak; he was blameless and holy, modest and manly, patient and true. He was always a man and a priest of God. He was no man's man. He possessed his soul in patience, he was master of the man within."

Thus, Monsignor Hartigan, the preacher of the funeral sermon, in broad, clear lines sketched the character of the dead priest.

With a dignity of language, eloquence and forceful persuasiveness befitting the great subject, the preacher told of the origin and functions of the priestly office. Seldom have we listened to a sermon more impressive. And then we began to realize that seldom had a preacher been more favored by the occasion. For there was not one of his hearers, whether amongst the bishops and clergy in the sanctuary, or amongst those of all creeds who thronged the Church, to whom Monsignor Casey in the long years of his ministry had not shown forth by his life those very priestly attributes and qualities which the preacher so eloquently depicted. It all seemed, therefore, but the simple, truthful narrative of the daily life of their departed pastor.

The sound judgment, the wide reading, the serious study of problems of pressing moment, the culture and common sense of Monsignor Casey will make the absence of his counsel a distinct loss to the Church to which he rendered such modest yet such faithful and fruitful service for well nigh half a century; a loss, also, to Canada, his native country, to whose best interests he was ever loyally and patriotically devoted. May he rest in peace.

NOTES AND COMMENTS WHILE ONTARIO and other Prov. inces are committing themselves to drastic measures of prohibition the Dominion Government shows a disposition to foster the manufacture of beer "for export." Contrast with the prevailing sentiment the following excerpt from the British Board of Trade Journal, reprinted without comment in the Weekly Bulletin of the Department of Trade and Commerce, a periodical whose sole purpose is the fostering of Canadian industry.

"ADVISED RECEIVED from H. M. Legation at Havana report that there is at present a good demand for British beer in Cuba, as the local breweries are unable to cope with the great demand. It is stated that during the summer months, on account of the bad water supply, beer is a very popular drink, and last year in the eastern third of the island it was at times difficult to obtain supplies. The locally made beer, which sells in Havana for 20 cents the half-bottle, was sold in the interior of the country for 60 cents the half-bottle."

It is reported that Canada and Germany are now beginning to enter the Cuban market. The German beer exported since the termination of the War is, however, stated to be very poor in quality. Canadian beer is not well known, and sales will consequently be slow for some time. British beer, on the other hand, is well known and very popular in Cuba, and on that account it is an easy matter to place on the market any new brand, as those now being sold are so well accredited that a favorable impression has already been created."

If it is wrong to drink beer in Canada why be so assiduous in promoting its consumption elsewhere?

THERE IS apparently a regular epidemic of "faith-healing" in Canada just now. About a year ago a "healer" of repute among Anglicans came to Canada to demonstrate that miracles are not a thing of the past, and now an evangelist of wider denominational sympathies has come to Toronto in one of its periodical spasms of religious excitement. We forbear dwelling upon the peculiar psychological aspects of the affair, but cannot, nevertheless, help moralizing upon the extraordinary mental phenomena thus exhibited. This is done, we need hardly say, in no hypercritical spirit, or out of any disposition to be unympathetic toward those sufferers who have thought

themselves benefited by the preacher's ministrations. It is not so many years ago since the assertion; "the age of miracles is past" was a practically universally accepted axiom among Protestants. "To doubt it was feeble; to deery it was bigotry; to agree with it was the sign of emancipated intellect." And conversely, those wonders of healing which have all along through the ages been the invariable concomitant of Catholic faith and practice were held up to ridicule as but the veriest delusion born of grovelling superstition on the one hand, and maintained by priestly cupidity on the other. Now, it seems, all this is put aside and forgotten, and among the children of those who so emphatically repudiated all idea of such supernatural intervention are now found its most ardent exponents. Such is the ebb and flow of Protestant belief and sentiment—rejecting in one generation what is devoutly espoused in another, or as the Scriptures have it, "tossed about by every wind of doctrine."

THE VISIT of the Anglican healer, Hickson, to this country a year ago will be recalled in this connection, and our readers are witnesses that at the time we referred with respect and sympathy to the pathetic incidents connected therewith which were so graphically described in the daily papers. Since then Mr. Hickson in his peregrinations around the world has fallen on rather evil days. In the East Indies in particular he seems to have met with some opposition, and what one paper describes as "exposure." This "exposure," however, has to do with the matter of his alleged cures, and our contemporary, the Catholic Herald of India, appears to have been mainly instrumental in bringing this to public attention.

WE CANNOT do better than quote a sentence or two from the Herald. In effect it is declared that Hickson is simply a mesmerist; that he discovered his gift as a child and is being of a pious turn of mind resolved to "consecrate" this gift to the service of his Church. The Herald finds no fault with him for this, nor does it doubt the man's sincerity or piety. But what our contemporary does object to, and Catholics the world over will join hands with him, is that he claims to operate like Christ, and that, in consequence he makes out Christ also a mere mesmerist.

IT WOULD be beyond our purpose to pursue the subject further, beyond adding that when the Catholic Herald was accused of indulging in mere assertion, it produced from Hickson's own writings an admission of the truth of its charge. Here it is: "Those whom God has called to be channels of His Healing power are conscious of a force within them, which may be transmitted to others with curative effect. This gift must be given back to God, Who gave it, and consecrated to His service; then it becomes sacramental. When consecrated to God the power becomes in nature like to that exercised by Our Lord, and when thus used in conjunction with other spiritual means it becomes one with the healing power of Christ. If the natural gift, which God has bestowed as the instrument of the spiritual, be not consecrated, and no spiritual power be brought into it, it will work only on the physical plane as animal magnetism, and the work will fall far short of what God would have it to be."

Therefore, comments the Herald, if Mr. Hickson is but a mesmerist, acting through animal magnetism, and simply consecrated his power to his Church; and that, moreover, he holds that Christ operated likewise, and was a mesmerist; he therefore implicitly denies the miraculous power of Our Lord, which is the veriest blasphemy.

\$200,000 CLUB FOR CATHOLIC WOMEN (By N. C. W. C. News Service) New Orleans, May 16.—The Catholic Women's Club of New Orleans, which, it is claimed, has the most cosmopolitan air of any organization of its kind in the United States, and which was one of the few women's clubs to maintain a midday meal for fifteen cents through the entire War period, has completed plans for taking over a new \$200,000 home this fall.

A modern five-story building in the heart of the commercial district, with space available for two hundred rooms that will furnish homes for

employed girls, has been secured. Preparations are now being rushed so that it may be occupied in the fall. The daily luncheon service—at the same war-time price—will be continued and improved. In addition, there will be introduced special features of club life, now impossible because of lack of accommodations.

Three thousand Catholic women of New Orleans are members of the club, which is now endeavoring to extend its membership to thirty thousand in order to carry out its new program.

AMERICAN COMMISSION

ON CONDITIONS IN IRELAND

THE WITNESS, MR. GINNELL, M.P. I want to say that it will be observed from all this that the Financial Relief Commission, in agreement with its name, deals only with money, and not with all the money relations, as it might have done, but exclusively with taxation. And in 1918 alone England has robbed Ireland of £400,000,000 in excessive taxation from the Act of Union down to 1914.

There are various other ways in which Ireland suffers atrociously: the loss of manhood driven to other lands; the revenue from her land, which has been estimated by competent authority at £13,000,000 a year; and various other losses of that kind. This is not an academic matter for me. It is a matter of life and death for those who are dearer to me than life itself.

We lose enormously by the loss of our trade. We have been wiped off the seas by England. Ireland was once a rival of England on the seas. She has not a ship now. Pass along the Biscay Bay, a bay sheltered by a huge island from the waves of the Atlantic, so deep and so capacious that it is able to hold the whole British navy on its bosom. There is not even a fishing boat on it. Go down to Galway, which was a great trading center with Spain and other countries, even in Queen Elizabeth's time. There is not a boat on it. Even in that sheltered place of Galway Bay, there is not a single sail to be seen except England's men of war. That is an enormous loss of war. We of the Republican Government have made efforts to get boats to put the fishermen at work. And we are thwarted, and our boats are confiscated.

Q. COMMISSIONER MAURER. Is it the idea of your cooperation to develop along similar lines by which you develop the creameries? A. Our idea is rather to bring as much land as possible under tillage by resident owners. There are in many of the counties of Ireland large tracts of land which are unoccupied and unutilized—no owners reside there at all. One of our first works will be to break up those tracts and distribute them among working people. The Congested Districts Board was established by Act of Parliament in 1897, for dealing with what was called the congested districts. Its area of operation was limited at first to the western part of the Province of Connaught. Subsequent Acts increased the scope of the board, so that at present the congested areas comprise all of Connaught and western portions of Munster and Ulster, the whole western seaboard. This board was created for a temporary purpose, which was assumed and described to be completed within ten years—to solve the land question in the western counties where there was congestion in some districts, while there was good land untenantable in other districts. Its purpose was to slice up the land and put people upon it. That board has been in existence, not for ten years, but for twenty-three years, and in the very most congested county where its services were the most necessary, it has failed to act. If this will be relevant and agreeable to the Commission, I will just explain this. The County Mayo was like a running sore on the face of Ireland. All the people were crowded on gravelly, hilly and barren land, while large tracts of good land were without a resident on them.

Q. COMMISSIONER WALSH. Unfertile land? A. Unfertile land. I went down there in the autumn of 1917. I was invited down there because I have spent almost my whole life on the question of the land. I stopped at Westport town and drove out to a mountainous district to the southern part of County Mayo. I drove through plenty of good land without inhabitants. They were all covered with heather, which not even cattle will eat—it is used for bedding only. I drove on for miles, and came to the unfortunate village concerned. It was a village of fifty-two families up on a mountainside where nothing grew but heather and rushes. The people came down to meet me. The landlord also came down with them—a quite unusual thing, for he was a poor man too. There was not a thing growing that a horse could eat. There was a few sheep, a few asses, and a few goats. What was up in the cabins I do not know. The landlord, John O'Dowd, came up to me and asked me if I was going to attack him. I said no, I was not going to attack any man. I wanted only justice. He said, "I am willing to sell. There (pointing to the right) is a tract of good land purchased by the Congested Districts Board fifteen years ago for distribution, but it is held by the board and let out to graziers and to pasture instead of being distributed." On the right was Lord Lucan's estate and on the left was Lord Silgo's estate, bought up by this board. The board

bought up this good land and would not distribute it. He did not know why. I found out afterwards why it was not distributed. He said, "I want to sell my land and get rid of it, for it is a terrible worry. Otherwise I must turn the people out and burn their houses." "Very well," I said, "we will see what the board will do." I dictated on the mountainside to the shorthand writer, a memorial to the district board, a very respectful memorial but very strong in the facts. The landlord was the first to sign that memorial. It was signed by all the fifty-two tenants, one by one. Was not that a strong memorial? It called on the board for distribution of the land bought up and held by the board for fifteen years, and still held by the board. I went back to Dublin the next day and met two officials of the board. One was a towering bully named Henry Doran. He took up the attitude of a bully, of abuse and insult. He used the language of the old landlord class of the worst type. The other member of the board was Mr. Meeks, who stayed with me—a very pleasant man to speak with. But he said, "We cannot do what you want. The Government will not allow us. It will not give us cash for the purpose, although it is so by Act of Parliament to do it." So he politely told me that nothing would be done. Mr. Doran today is Sir Henry Doran, and Mr. Meeks is still Mr. Meeks. That is the way a kindly attitude toward the people is rewarded. The population on the mountainside is still without land.

Q. COMMISSIONER WALSH. What was the motive for non-action? A. Mr. Meeks told me the Government refused to advance the necessary money.

Q. COMMISSIONER MAURER. What were they using the land for then—grazing purposes? A. Yes, for grazing purposes.

Q. Whose cattle? A. The owners of the cattle in all probability did not live in the same county.

Q. CHAIRMAN HOWE. The land board bought the land for grazing purposes and turned it over to some friends of theirs for grazing. Is this the explanation? A. That is the explanation to some extent.

Q. COMMISSIONER MAURER. Then the land was lying idle? A. Yes, as far as tillage was concerned. Instead of benefiting the poor people in the congested districts, it was turned over to the friends of the board for grazing purposes. The excuse was that they could not slice the land up in small holdings because they had no more money. I should have said that in my memorial I offered on behalf of the poor tenants to take the land at its full value and not require houses to be built upon it, if that was the difficulty. And to work the land in their present cabins until they were able to make some money and build houses for themselves. I made it wholly unnecessary for the Government to advance money to build houses.

It is only just to these poor people to say that in all my travels through Ireland I never met a more sweet-mannered people than those people on this mountainside. They were beautiful in appearance and sweet and kind in manner, and they never asked me to put a thing in that memorial but what was strictly in accord with justice and equity. They, of course, have never been able to make a living from their mountain holdings at all. They have been migratory laborers to England and Scotland. That position becomes more difficult as the relations between the two countries become more strained. As migratory laborers they receive the least possible consideration. They are housed in a terrible way—in a way often exposed in Parliament as a violation of all sanitary laws. But they bear their treatment and make a little money and go back. What could they do but go out of that country, where they were denied an existence before their eyes, to another country where there was opportunity.

In that same visit to County Mayo I visited a district where I found a farm comprising the very best land in that part of the county, 5,000 acres, owned and grazed by one man named Carson. Not a solitary day's work given on that land to anybody. Five thousand acres in the possession of one man, after the Congested Districts Board has been more than twenty years in existence for the special purpose of solving that problem.

Q. CHAIRMAN HOWE. Are most of the owners of the large estates Englishmen? A. Oh, no, not necessarily.

Q. They are Irishmen as well as Englishmen? A. Yes, Irishmen as well as Englishmen. These ranches are usually rented.

Q. Who is the ultimate owner? A. Some corporation.

Q. Is it a case of alien landlordism? A. Oh, no. Alien landlordism is a thing of the past.

Q. How many acres are held in these big estates? Does it run into the thousands of acres? Or does it reach the hundred thousands? A. Oh, no, the land is not big enough for that. I should inform the Commission that there was no vacant spot in Ireland that was not occupied in days gone by. It was occupied, and then cleared off by each succeeding family.

Q. You have spoken about these large estates in County Mayo. What per cent of the land is held in this district in these large estates? A. I am afraid sir, that you have missed the point. The point was that the Congested Districts Board has existed to relieve congestion, and it has not done it. If you want to ask about the parts of Ireland that need such relief other than this particular dis-