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POPE LEO AND THE LABOR PROBLEM

Cincinnati, July 26.—At the Vine Street Congregational Church the pastor, Herbert S. Bigelow, took for his theme, Pope Leo and the Labor Problem. Text: "For the needy shall not always be forgotten; the expectation of the poor shall not perish forever." Ps. 9: 18.

Mr. Bigelow said in part: "The grateful and kindly expressions of love and praise which the death of the Pope has called forth from the men of all faiths are a tribute, not only to the Pope, but also to that growth of sympathy among men which makes the Protestant world proud of the glories of the mother church, and sincerely mournful of her loss."

It was the good fortune of our Catholic brethren to have had for their head of whom the world loved, and it is good to know that there is hardly a Protestant heart anywhere which does not cherish his memory as with filial affection.

This morning I desire to remind you of the Pope's contribution to the discussion of that all-important problem of our day—the social question.

Unfortunately we have some Protestant preachers who defend the existing social order as ordained of God, and denigrate as harmful any discussion of proposed changes. This is not the teaching of Scripture, neither was it the teaching of the Pope.

Protestants who have substituted the authority of the Bible for the authority of the church ought to be reminded by such words as these of our text: "They should be hospitable to every sincere effort to improve social conditions and should never be reconciled to the presence of widespread and grinding poverty." "For the needy shall not always be forgotten; the expectation of the poor shall not perish forever."

Of those for whom the Pope speaks as one having authority should be kept in mind these words of Leo: "At this moment the condition of the working population is the question of the hour, and nothing of the state that it should be rightly and reasonably decided."

These words were written twelve years ago in the Pope's famous encyclical letter on the "Condition of Labor."

This letter solemnly declares that it is not only the duty of citizens, but especially the duty of the church, to focus this most momentous of questions. The third paragraph of the letter begins with this emphatic sentence: "But all agree, and there can be no question whatever, that some remedy must be found for the misery and wretchedness which press so heavily at this moment on the large majority of the very poor."

Much is said to-day concerning the unjust distribution of wealth, which seems almost agitated talk of the street. "The rich man will say that such talk ought to be suppressed as calculated to set class against class. But listen to these words of the Pope: "A small number of very rich men have been able to lay upon the masses of the poor a yoke little better than slavery itself."

The spirit of this letter gives ample encouragement to those who would so change society that it shall not be possible for "rich men and masters" to use the language of the Pope "to exercise pressure for the sake of gain upon the indigent and the destitute, and to make one's profit out of the need of another."

It is true that in this letter the Pope failed to discriminate between the doctrine of Socialism and Single Tax men and those of Communists. And it was because of these misconceptions of the Single Tax movement that Henry George wrote an open letter to the Pope, setting forth in a reverent and forceful way the claims of his school of political economy.

There is no wanting evidence that the Pope was led to modify his views of the Single Tax movement. The man who persists in error after a light has been shown to him sacrifices truth to personal vanity. A great man will change his mind on occasion. This the Pope seems to have done. This seems to be a legitimate inference to be drawn from the history of the McGlynn case.

It will be recalled that Edward McGlynn had been excommunicated for publicly advocating the election of Mr. George as Mayor of New York. This was in 1887. Four years later the Pope's encyclical was published, which contained some strictures upon the Single Tax theory. Two years after this McGlynn went to Rome and had a personal interview with the Pope, in which he explained the opinions of Single Tax men. Previously to this the Pope had received a copy of Henry George's letter, and also through the papal delegate, Baskin, had received a statement of the Single Tax position which McGlynn submitted to Henry George for his endorsement before it went to the Pope.

With these statements before him, the Pope received McGlynn at the Vatican, and, hearing his case, he lifted the ban which had been placed upon him. There-

considered, but, alas! has the Senate been true to the text? It may be said with confidence that the rule has been honored much more in the breach than in the observance. So far as labor is concerned, the feeling abroad is that there is a solid phalanx of prejudice existing in the Senate against labor, and that no law having for its object the amelioration of the condition of the working classes can hope to receive a fair hearing in, much less to pass, that body. It is regrettable that such should be the case, but results have shown that, so far from the Senate being a useful body because freed from the wholesome fear of the ballot, it is an exercise upon our body politic, because it may, without fear, give way to the most unworthy feelings that can animate the human mind. Prejudice has been freed, not judgments. Surely, there is no such body in Canada. Alas! the shame is ours. Tell it not in Gath; mention it not in the streets of Ashkelon; that once more rest your eyes upon the Senate, the Home for the Aged and Infirm. In its treatment of labor it has not only denied labor's representatives a hearing, but adopted the most unfair methods against labor. Has labor done anything to deserve it? Yes; it has dared to hold views contrary to those harbored in the Senate. It has dared to think out its own salvation. It has had the front to exercise its right, under British laws and as British subjects, to take an active part in the government of the state. It had the coolness to esteem itself part of the body politic, possessed of the common right to work for the common good. In its blindness it thought that it was entitled to a part of the wealth it helped to create. In a word, it declared itself a citizen with a citizen's rights, and for its presumption the Senate has punished it.

Naturally enough, those who receive the lash will be the first to complain, but the consideration of the subject must have a wider scope. If a hearing be denied to labor, it may be denied to capital. If denied to capital and labor, it is denied to the people, and that means an oligarchy with the usual tyrannical accompaniments. Where is the end to come? Assume that labor became such a power politically as to have control of the appointing power. Assume it to exercise that power and to obtain a majority in the Upper House. Assume capital seeking to be heard and a hearing denied. Could anything be more dangerous to a society? So, too, in their perversion of British justice when any portion of the people is treated in that cavalier fashion, and, from the broad standpoint alone, labor protests against the shabby treatment accorded it in the Senate.

To crystallize the above, the following will show the type of British fair play meted out to labor by the Senate during the passage of the Loughheed bill through that body.

1. Labor's representatives, though opposing the bill, were forced to speak first. They were promised a reply, but the manufacturers were allowed a reply to the reply.

2. The chairman of the Banking and Commerce Committee, Senator Drummond, best his watch dangling in the face of the speakers and continued to enquire how much longer they would be. On the other hand, the watch disappeared and a respectful and happy silence pervaded the room during the addresses of the representatives of labor, and, on the conclusion of the latter speeches, a general invitation was extended by the chairman to any other who desired to say anything in support of the bill.

3. When the report of the sub-committee of the Banking and Commerce Com-

mittee was presented, Senator Kerr (Cobourg), who was a member of the sub-committee, appeared to the committee to hear the representatives of labor upon the amended bill, because it was radically changed from its original shape. The hearing was denied.

4. On the occasion when labor had to proceed first to state its opposition to the bill, the only thing remaining to be done at the hour of adjournment was to hear the reply of labor to the argument of the supporters of the bill. The latter had completed their case. Yet, on the resuming of the committee, a further invitation was extended to the manufacturer to address the committee, and the invitation was accepted, new allegations of fact presented, and no opportunity afforded labor to make enquiry into the statements made. Then labor was called upon for its reply, and, during the entire presentation of it, Senator Drummond kept enquiring how much more was to be said. The representative of labor presented a further reply which was then allowed to the manufacturers.

5. Finally, on the morning when it was expected a vote would be taken in the committee, Senator Drummond remarked that he supposed all had now been heard; that the committee desired to hear upon the subject, and he would therefore read some letters from some manufacturers upon the bill. This attempt to load up the committee with further material without an opportunity being given to labor was foiled, for the time being, but the animus of the chairman was shown by the incident. Ultimately he pulled a document from his pocket, read a portion of it to the committee, refused to give any information about it when asked, but returned it to his pocket with the observation that he would keep it for the private information of the committee.

6. When the deputations of manufacturers waited upon the Senate in April last, among other bills referred to was the Label Bill. At the conclusion of the speeches Senator Sir Mackenzie Bowell volunteered the information that "We will throw it out all right." This was before labor's side had been presented at all. Subsequently the Senate refused to hear labor's side of the case, but gave the Label bill the six months' hiatus.

Thus, though a hearing was vouchsafed to the manufacturers in every instance, the same privilege was denied to labor on two occasions.

A regrettable feature of the fight against the Loughheed bill was the breach of faith by Senator Loughheed. In the hearing of a dozen representatives of labor he promised that, if labor would present its case in the written shape in which it was presented, he would either withdraw his bill or do his best to secure its defeat. Instead of doing as he promised, he voted for it. It is not the first time labor has been taken in, but it made the mistake of looking for honor in high places. We suppose it is a long lane that has no turn in it.

The whole experience has been anything but elevating, but the wound has been healed by the support of some fair-minded and able, individual Senators. They have, unfortunately, wandered into evil company, but we hope their presence will act as a lever, and that in the course of time the wisdom of their utterances will be appreciated by those who have either withdrawn his bill or do his best to secure its defeat. Instead of doing as he promised, he voted for it. It is not the first time labor has been taken in, but it made the mistake of looking for honor in high places. We suppose it is a long lane that has no turn in it.

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LABOR IN THE SENATE

Senators Tools of Political Party in Power.—Original Intention of Fathers of Confederation Entirely Ignored.

The experience of labor in the Senate during the present session has not been such as to inspire confidence in the spirit of justice animating that august body as manifested by its attitude towards some of the bills introduced to its consideration. Originally intended as a wise check upon the deliberations of the House of Commons, it has so far fallen from its high estate as to have become a mere tool of the party in power in the lower chamber. The Fathers of Confederation dreamed of a senatorial power freed from party bias, self-seeking and the thousand and one foibles to which flesh is heir. But, like many other dreams, the awakening has disclosed to the eye a weak, vacillating, biased and irresponsible body with never a virtue for ornament or a feature that redeems. The prejudices of youth, it has been said, die hard, but the narrowness of mind that is the inheritance of some and the acquisition of others, though hidden for a time, springs forth luxuriant in the solemn atmosphere of the senatorial chamber. The public, in a sorrowful desire to find a name that will fittingly describe the popular idea of the Senate, has variously designated that body the Home for Incorables, the Refuge of Sinners, the Political Cemetery, the Head-quarters of the Faithful, and other names of the kind, but these appellations do no more than indicate that public faith in the wisdom of the fathers has become shaken, not because their theory was wrong, but because the exemplification of the theory has demonstrated that human nature is too frail and party attachments too strong to permit justice to be done to the faith that inspired the scheme of confederation.

Assuming, however, that the Senate exists for the purpose of legislating, what is one duty appertaining to that purpose? One imperative duty is that of weighing well the proposals made for the passage of laws, and the correlative of that duty is to hear what has to be said by those most interested in the proposed law. No considerations of time or convenience should be allowed to interfere with the performance of that duty, much less the influence of prejudice or dislike, but, on the contrary, personal feeling should be subordinated to the welfare of the public and a desire to do right invoked to surmount a wish to injure. That is the fringe of mind in which matters coming before a legislative body should be

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fore Single Tax men will cherish the memory of Leo XIII. because it was he who gave justice to their beloved McGlynn; for they feel that the church in America has had no more honored name since the days when the noble Las Casas pleaded for the West Indian slaves at the court of Spain.

It is my understanding of the Catholic doctrine of infallibility that it is not held that the Pope is above the possibility of error in secular matters, but that in church matters his authority is not to be questioned. Therefore, I assume that it is entirely consistent with orthodox Catholicism to admit that in the formation of his views on politics the Pope, like any other man, would necessarily be influenced by his surroundings. But when we remember the environment of a Pope, I think we may say that Leo XIII. was remarkably progressive, and to advanced ground in his discussion of the labor problem. It will be a great blessing to the world if the church should secure a successor to Leo who shall be as nearly abreast with the best political thought of the twentieth century.

As greeting to the new Pope, may we not repeat those words with which Henry George closed his letter to Leo XIII: "I call you by the strongest and sweetest of your titles. In your hands more than in those of any living man, lies the power to say the word and make the sign that shall end an unequal divorce, and marry again to religion all that is pure and high in social aspiration."

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