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Senate R. Room.



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CURRENT COMMENT

We begin this week the publication of a most remarkable paper on "Socialism" by Mr. Charles S. Devas, read on Sept. 27 at the annual conference of the Catholic Truth Society, at Blackburn, Lancashire. Mr. Devas is the author of "Political Economy," one of the Stonyhurst series of text-books on philosophy, and those who have used that work in their teaching know how far it excels all other manuals of political economy. The author states fairly and solves, as far as may be done, more social problems than any two or three of the many text-books on these questions written by non-Catholics. His power of clear condensation, so noticeable in the manual mentioned above, is a marked feature of the paper we are now reproducing, and often takes the form of epigram, as when he says: "The essential dignity and rights of man were affirmed to good purpose by Christianity eighteen centuries before they were affirmed to little purpose by the French Revolution." This monograph will no doubt appear in pamphlet form; but meanwhile we gladly seize this opportunity of furnishing our readers with the most complete short antidote we have yet seen to the spreading craze of socialism. We believe it to be a craze which can find lodgment only in the brains of men who have lost touch with historical Christianity, and who, having learnt nothing of human nature because of their ignorant contempt of the great thinkers of the past, dream vain dreams of an earthly future, which the most elementary knowledge of their own souls and a cursory view of the progressive moral deterioration of the non-Christian world in direct rebuttal of the shallow theory of constant social progress would suffice to brand as impossible. We are convinced that the good sense of mankind, leavened as it is, consciously or unconsciously, by sane Catholic teaching, will make short work of socialism, wherever and whenever the latter may threaten to take everything into its hands, except, perhaps, in very small communities, where it may flourish for a short time until the novelty of it wears off and reveals its antagonism to the fundamental and most legitimate tendencies of human nature. But there will very likely come, before many years, a sharp life-and-death struggle between Socialists and other Utopians on the one hand and Catholicism and all the saner elements of society on the other; and the better informed the latter are beforehand, the shorter and more decisive will be the struggle.

The Free Press of last Saturday had the following judicious editorial comment on a letter which we reproduce elsewhere.

"The letter addressed by Hon. J. A. Calder, Minister of Education in the Saskatchewan Government, to the Northwest Baptist, and published in the Free Press of yesterday, presents a speaking contrast to the article which called it forth. In that article, the religious paper in question uttered one unwarranted imputation against Mr. Calder—an imputation which less characterized Mr. Calder than the utterer of it—and followed it up by eleven questions. The imputation and the questions are reproduced in Mr. Calder's letter, and are all answered by him. The letter is in every way a most enlightening one. No one who reads it can be left in any doubt as to which side of the controversy has the advantage of enlightenment and courtesy, and which side the disadvantage of bigotry and lack of knowledge of the matter under discussion."

The Northwest Baptist vainly strives to dissociate itself from Protestantism in general, the only real difference being one of degree, not of kind: it protests more ignorantly and offensively than any other of the protesting bodies, that is all. But no really learned Protestant, who is not a Baptist, credits its pet fable about the Baptist religion having existed in any corporate and

continuous form before the so-called Reformation of the sixteenth century. The attempt to build up a continuous pre-Reformation history of the Baptist body is an afterthought intended to cover up a discreditable origin, like the ambitious upstart who concocts for himself a pedigree to make himself appear respectable.

The Prince Albert Advocate contrasts in the following effective way the noisy political interference of several Protestant clergymen in Mr. Haultain's interest with the silence of all Catholic priests.

"Some incidents of the present campaign remind one of the illustration of the ox that was gored. It was a terrible, a monstrous thing, that Mon. Sbarretti should be suspected of meddling in politics—but what about the clergymen on the other side who are now stumping and writing inflammatory letters in support of Mr. Haultain? No Roman Catholic priest has spoken one word or written a line in favor of or against any candidate, and we have not seen or heard a syllable against any Protestant church or creed from priest or layman. What a tempest there would be if a Catholic priest came out stumping in favor of Government candidates! But there is not a word of disapproval when Rev. Mr. Marshall travels around with Mr. Donaldson, or when Rev. Mr. Lawson writes columns of abuse of the Roman Catholic church in support of Dr. Munroe. Oh, that's different."

As an illustration of this political canvassing for votes by Protestant ministers, we have received a letter published in the Saskatoon Phenix of Oct. 19, by the Rev. S. G. Lawson, with a request that we should reply to it. But as it is a hotch-potch of ignorance, misrepresentation and malevolence, we consider it a waste of time to enter upon a detailed refutation of its slanders against the Church. The very title "An Intolerant Old Sinner," applied to the Province of Quebec, reveals the animus of the writer. While hypocritically professing his own tolerance, and his standing up "for equal rights to all denominations, Romanist (sic), and Protestant alike," he delights in using insulting language, as when he speaks of "Romish schools, Romish teachers and Romish books." That he uses this abusive language purposely is apparent from his using elsewhere "Roman Catholic" and "Catholic," the only names we recognize as our own. His ignorance appears in his crowing over the expression "confessional schools," used by a Catholic Bishop, as if the adjective confessional referred to the sacrament of penance, when it is merely a too literal translation of the French phrase, "écoles confessionnelles," the proper English equivalent of which is "denominational schools." His malignant misrepresentation, noticeable in the entire drift of his letter, is especially noteworthy when he says: "Rome is, and always has been, conscientiously opposed to 'education as the cause of infidelity' and she believes that 'ignorance is the mother of devotion'." His two short quotations, which are the stock-in-trade of shameless blatherskites like Chiniquy and S. G. Lawson, are, of course, unaccompanied by any reference, because they are pure inventions, diametrically opposed to historic truth. What Rome has always believed, with Alexander Pope, is that a little knowledge, like Lawson's, is a dangerous thing and often leads to heresy or infidelity, but that, as Francis Bacon wrote, deep draughts of knowledge bring back the erring mind into the paths of truth. As to devotion, Rome has always taught the exact contrary of Lawson's lawless lie, viz., that true learning is the mother of devotion.

What are we to think of the culture of a man who writes: "From the ninth to the sixteenth century Rome had all control of the world—600 years" (queer arithmetic, 9 from 16 generally leaves 7)—"and history calls them the 'Dark Ages'?" What history? The conspiracy-against-truth history which poisoned the Protestant mind for three hundred years, but which has been for

the last fifty years making way for the history written by really learned and unprejudiced Protestant historians, who are gradually accepting the Catholic view of the Middle Ages. Mr. S. G. Lawson has evidently never read any of the modern history based on official documents, or he would not start Rome's control of the civilized world at the ninth century, but at least at the fourth, and better still at the first. Were it not for that control, Mr. Lawson and all his friends would now be Huns, or Goths or Mohammedans. If they can read at all, however wrongheadedly, they owe it to the Church of the Ages of Faith.

However, we cease to wonder at Mr. Lawson's ignorance of the history of the remote past when we observe the kind of authorities he relies upon for his reading of recent and current events. Thus he pins his childlike faith to the following passage from the Presbyterian Record: "The results of the control of public education by the leaders of the Church of Rome are seen in France, among a Roman Catholic people where for centuries education has been in the hands of the church. The State found it absolutely necessary, not many months ago to take the education of the country into its own hands. Its safety and independence were imperilled." Could there be any worse travesty of history than this? The education of the French people has ceased to be in the hands of the Church for more than a hundred years, ever since the French Revolution of 1789, and even before that time the evils of that revolution were prepared by anti-Catholic education. Throughout the first fifty years of the nineteenth century the Church struggled in vain to obtain freedom of education and when she finally did obtain it she staved off for the next fifty years, not by a monopoly of education, but by free competition, the despotic rule of an atheistic oath-bound minority which derides the very idea of independence. And yet the ingenuous Mr. Lawson, who, bigot though he is, would abhor the infidel rulers of France at the present time, if he only knew them as they are, believes that "the State found it absolutely necessary to take the education of the country in its own hands." Necessary for its own tyrannous and vile purposes, in order the more safely to corrupt the people, yes; necessary for the best interests of the State itself, no.

Another authority Mr. Lawson relies upon is the infamous Michael J. F. McCarthy, whose writings against the priests and Catholic people of Ireland are a tissue of discredited falsehoods. Whatever illiteracy there may be among the poorest inhabitants of Ireland is due to their poverty, and that poverty is due to the oppressive misrule of a government which refuses to grant them equal educational facilities, as in their oft-rejected claim to a Catholic University.

Illiteracy is one of Mr. S. G. Lawson's favorite bugbears. But wrong education is worse than illiteracy. It is infinitely better to be an illiterate Catholic with a fair knowledge of Catholic doctrine and a general idea of true history, as every Catholic child must have even if he know not how to read, than to be wrongly educated as Mr. Lawson is and to have false views of the larger half of Christendom. Illiteracy is no proof of ignorance or paucity of ideas. The people of Attica were desperately illiterate, according to the Lawson standard, even in the days of Pericles; but they were far from ignorant or uncultivated. So, in our day, even if Mr. Lawson's allegations of illiteracy in Catholic countries were true, that would not prove that these illiterates are as ignorant or as unchristian as S. G. Lawson. There is more real enlightenment and more earthly happiness in the poorest Catholic country than in the richest non-Catholic empire. Catholic nations are the cleverest, the most sensible, the most cheerful, in the world, and they spend precious little of their time criticizing Protestants, while the entire religion of stupid firebrands like Lawson consists in blackguarding Catholics.

But it is not even true, as Mr. Lawson asserts, that there is much illiteracy in the Province of Quebec. The latest statistics show that there is less illiteracy in Quebec than in Ontario. Mr. S. G. Lawson cannot get one single fact right. Thus, while, with the help of the Presbyterian Record, he manufactures imaginary grievances against the school situation of Protestants in Quebec, Mr. Arty, chief executive officer of the Protestant Board of Education in Quebec, loudly proclaims that Protestants are quite satisfied with their educational status.

It is not a little surprising that the only paper published in Saskatoon should open its columns to the vapors of a third rate fanatic like S. G. Lawson. Haultain must be hard pushed when he uses such disreputable aids. Lawson calls Quebec "an intolerant old sinner." We know nothing of his age, though he is certainly ignorant enough to be very young and wicked enough to be very old; but he is undoubtedly an intolerant sinner. Intolerance is the very breath of his nostrils. It completely blinds him to the absurdity of charging with ignorance the Church which educated Europe, and which has nothing but kindly pity for the sciolism of the majority of its clerical antagonists.

In a paper on "The Rights of Minorities," read by Father Joseph Rickaby, S.J., at the Blackburn meeting of the Catholic Truth Society, we find the following excellent reply to a common objection against separate schools.

"It is not within my province, nor within my purpose either, to deal with the rule continually quoted against us, that public money involves public control. Public money, as our opponents are always telling us, is given for secular education. We too undertake to provide secular education; and for all the details of that secular education for which alone public money is given, we challenge the most unlimited public control. We do not take away from education, but we add. We add one whole subject, religious Catholic education; and that subject we claim to have taught in our own way, not in other men's way who do not understand it. Our education is secular, but not secularist: that is to say, it is not exclusive of those three articles of the Christian creed, God, Jesus Christ, and the life of the world to come. We contend that our children will not grow up less worthy and less efficient citizens of this world for being trained over and above that in the duties of a citizenship that is in heaven. I am aware that M. Combes and the Grand Orient Lodge think otherwise. But are they really Liberal? Are they a model for English politicians?"

The "Scientific American" is evidently not in touch with the vilifiers of the Province of Quebec from whom we hear so much just now; for our New York contemporary, in its issue of Oct. 28th, has the hardihood to say that "the great cantilever bridge which is now being built across the St. Lawrence River at Quebec will include the largest single span ever erected in the history of the world. It is well understood among engineers that the true test of the magnitude of a bridge is not its total length as made up of many individual spans, but the length of the individual span itself, and in this respect the Quebec bridge is pre-eminent. It reaches across the St. Lawrence River in a single span of 1,000 feet. This is nearly 100 feet greater than the spans of the Forth Bridge cantilevers, which measure 1,710 feet in the clear. Next in length is the Williamsburg suspension bridge, which is 1,600 feet in the clear, and then follows the Brooklyn Bridge, 1,595 feet, and the new Manhattan Bridge adjoining it, which will be 1,470 feet in the clear." Not only will the Quebec Bridge have the largest single span in the world, but to quote the "Scientific" again, it "will be a structure relatively lighter and cheaper to build, and of unquestionably more graceful appearance than the far-famed bridge across the Firth of Forth."

The Tribune is not only—as, without any proof, it accused us of being—"glaringly unfair," it is simply dishonest. After having had three full days to read what we published last Saturday, when we affirmed that we had witnesses to prove the insults of Carberry hoodlums, the self-appointed champion of truth and honesty and equal rights said, on Wednesday last, that we invented the whole grievance. We invented nothing. In fact, it was the unsolicited story of our witnesses that first suggested to us the advisability of making it public. We did so, and have attained our object, which was to shame the bigots. For some time at least there will be no more jeering at the priest when he visits Carberry, except, perhaps, when no one is looking on or listening.

Clerical News

The death of Father Strubbe in Montreal removes one of the most eloquent and zealous Redemptorists in Canada. Edward Stubbe, born Sept. 22, 1848 at Bruges, Belgium, was ordained priest June 7, 1873, and was for several years professor and principal of the college of Thielt. He afterwards entered the Redemptorist order and made his profession therein Oct. 15, 1883. The following year he was, at his own request, sent to Montreal, where, in St. Anne's parish, he labored strenuously and preached with uncommon eloquence, soon mastering the English language. He preached equally well in both French and English. In 1902, his superiors recalled him to Belgium to put him in charge of apostolic work among the soldiers of Liege, for whom his virile manner of speech was especially suited; but his departure from Montreal had left such a void that he was restored to his old parish in 1904. His return was hailed with demonstrations of popular enthusiasm. But in spite of his robust constitution and stout appearance, he soon wore out his large frame by responding to all the calls on his priestly zeal, never counting the cost, if only he could help on the salvation and perfection of souls. At the beginning of last September he was obliged to enter the Hotel Dieu hospital for diabetes, which afterwards developed into cancer of the stomach. At his last moments he was assisted by Rev. Father Lemieux, visitor of the order, by Father Rioux, local Rector and by many other of his brother Redemptorists. The funeral took place on Monday last at St. Anne's church amid a great concourse of sympathizing clergy and heart-broken people.

Rev. G. Fraser, parish priest of St. Anne de Lapocatiere, Que., came here last Saturday with Father Cloutier, when the latter returned from a visit to his aged mother. Father Fraser, who, although of Scotch origin, speaks French much better than English, is visiting some of his friends in Manitoba.

Rev. Father Lorieau, F. M. I., was here last Monday.

Rev. Father Lecompte, S.J., returned last Saturday from his visit to California, where he was present at the golden jubilee celebration of St. Ignatius college, San Francisco. This celebration lasted a whole week and was fittingly crowned by a splendid discourse from the eloquent lips of Mr. Bourke Cockran, the greatest living orator in the United States. Father Lecompte, while paying a great tribute to the oratorical powers of the illustrious New York congressman, said that what struck him most was the fearlessness with which he and other Catholic speakers affirmed Catholic principles, and practically manifested their faith. Thus, on the Sunday he spent with his Jesuit brethren in San Francisco, he witnessed in their church a monthly communion of the Women's Sodality, in which seven hundred women of all ages and conditions received. The previous Sunday eight hundred members of the Men's Sodality had made their monthly communion. Each sodality has its own