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EDITORIAL

BISHOP MCFAUL'S ADMISSION.

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IN consecrating Charles H. Colton Bishop last Sunday, Bishop McFaul delivered an address. Of course, he touched upon Socialism adversely. It is now fully two years that it seems impossible for a member of the Roman Catholic hierarchy to perform any great ceremony without “paying his compliments” to Socialism. Fortunately in this instance there was a refreshing absence of the malignity and calumniousness that have hitherto characterized most of these utterances. In tackling and refuting Bishop McFaul's errors one need not first suppress his just indignation at malicious misrepresentation. One can approach the subject with full serenity.

The climax of Bishop McFaul's opposition to Socialism is found in this sentence:

“Most modern evils can be remedied only by a return to the principles of Christianity—‘do unto others as you would that they should do unto you.’”

This is a pregnant utterance, seeing the source it comes from. If the utterance means anything it is an admission that the great precept, “Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you,” is one more honored in the breach than the observance. Taking the utterance by itself and in its context, it is an admission that that sublime command is generally disregarded. And what else is the admission but a further admission of failure on the part of the ecclesiastics?

For two thousand years, in round figures, the ecclesiastics have had the field and been at work. At the end of that long period the situation is what Bishop McFaul now admits. In sight of so colossal a failure it would seem high time for the intelligent and well meaning among them to overhaul their canons.

“Human perversity” will not account for the state of things. At any rate, the

theory is here out of court. The attitude of Bishop McFaul were silly if he held to the theory. It were silly to insist upon preaching benignity if one proceeds from the theory of ingrained "human perversity." That man is not inhuman to man because it is indelibly in his nature to be so is a principle that lies at the foundation of the conduct of all those who, as Bishop McFaul, preach that man should be human to man. If, then, despite all such preaching, and for so long a period of time, and with such matchless opportunities and means to boot, a member of the ecclesiastical brotherhood feels constrained to admit failure, the conclusion is inevitable that man's disobedience of the precept "Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you," must flow from necessity—a necessity outside of himself.

What that necessity may be is obvious. Long before the actions of man are formulated in scientific form they are indicated by his acts. A notable act is recorded in a book that Bishop McFaul cannot rule out as unauthoritative. It is the New Testament. On the notable occasion when Jesus first fed with miraculous fish and bread the multitudes he was about to preach to, he did more than render homage to, he raised into conspicuousness a principle that has become cardinal in sociology—THE MATERIAL BASIS NECESSARY FOR MORAL ELEVATION. And coming down to modern times, and still drawing proof from the Bishop's own camp, what is the language of the Roman Catholic hierarchy on the head of the temporal powers of the Holy See—a temporal power that the hierarchy is made to swear to uphold "usque ad effusionem sanguinis," up to the shedding of blood? It is this: "The Church can not properly administer her spiritual functions without temporal power." What else is this declaration but a further recognition of the necessity of material bases for moral action? Shall the Church, said to derive her origin from divine afflatus, be less able to forego the material basis than man? Surely not. What she pronounces herself unable to, can assuredly not be demanded of man. Man's inhumanity to man cannot cease, he will not be in condition to do unto others as he would like to be done by until the material conditions enable him to.

This irrefutable conclusion takes the question of the "modern evils" from the domain of theology and plants it squarely within the domain of sociology. It does so as completely as the question of "clothing" is removed from divinity and belongs in a tailor's shop.

Now, then, sociology teaches, political economy demonstrates, that the private ownership of the land on and of the machinery (capital) with which to work perforce turns society into a jungle of wild beasts. Competition for material existence, under such circumstances, compels man's inhumanity to man. Insecurity of life being the law of such social conditions, not the precept "Do unto others as you would like to be done unto," but the curse "Do others or you will be done by them" is forced upon the race. The truth of these teachings, summarized in the term Scientific Socialism, are {is?}, true enough, disputed, but those who do are constantly "proving" better things while worse follows. The cracking of the social structure, and its collapse everywhere, corroborate their falsity and the justice of Socialism.

He who would have the sublime precept, "Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you," become the norm of human action must begin by laying the MATERIAL foundation for such SPIRITUAL superstructure. The Socialist Movement, with its avowed materialist and scientific basis, is the only organized force of the age that is making for that goal. All others have only failure to record, even where, less candid than Bishop McFaul, they are not honest enough to make the admission.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
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