

The People.

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FIRST EDITORIAL

HE SEES A GLIMMER.

By DANIEL DE LEON

A meeting of anti-Catholic divines was held on the 29th instant in Masonic Temple. The gentlemen had come to celebrate the “inroads made into the Romish Church.” The celebrants might have deceived everybody were it not that they are mostly well-known pulpit lackeys of the capitalist class. One of them, however, a rather innocent one, said a thing that indicates that he sees a glimmer, that something or another has settled down on his mind and is taking root, and that the process tends to shake his confidence in the sturdy purposes of his fellow Protestant crusaders. Said he:

“Protestants need a little backbone.” What the gentleman meant was that his fellow Protestant crusaders don’t walk a steady road with firm step; that he has seen them wobbling, and often cave in quite completely. He ascribes that to lack of backbone. If he were better informed, if he had eyes to discern the trees in the woods, he would realize that it is not backbone that was lacking in the cases he may have in mind, but common honesty. Yes, common honesty.

It is not so long ago when a Roman Catholic priest in this city took a political attitude which, absurd though it was, and absolutely incapable of at all promoting the interests of the working class, sent such spasms of fear through the frame of the capitalist class, that he was promptly “disciplined” by the Roman curia. A long conflict ensued between him and his ecclesiastical superiors, extending all the way to the Roman See. His attitude, put in a nutshell, was the motto of DANIEL O’CONNELL of old, to wit: “All the religion you want from Rome, but no politics;” he claimed absolute freedom to exercise his sovereign citizen rights of political independence. As against this, his ecclesiastical superiors struck an attitude, which, in turn put into a nutshell, was a maxim uttered at that very time by Mgr. PRESTON, the *alter ego* of Archbishop CORRIGAN in this city, and which ran thus tersely:

“He who says, ‘I’ll take my religion from Rome, but not my politics,’ is a fool.” The issue was thus made very clear. And what was the attitude of the Protestant divines? What was the attitude of the A.P.A. laymen? With one accord they sided with the ecclesiastics who took their stand against political freedom.

The movement of the “anti-Catholic” Protestants is but one of the thousand and one manifestations of capitalist political and economic chicanery. It is but one of the many attempts to divide the working class; it is but one of the many attempts to conceal the fact that the Protestant capitalist will feast as readily as the Catholic or Jew capitalist on the flesh and marrow of the working class, and will enjoy the plunder levied on the Protestant workingmen not a bit less than the plunder levied on the Catholic or Jew workingmen.

Well may a green divine, who is not up in political economy and social science, wonder at the wobblings of his associates in their various “crusades against evil.”

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