

FEATURES OF THIS WEEK'S ISSUE

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MESSAGE OF POPE LEO XIII. TO THE N.Z. TABLET.

Pergant Directores et Scriptores New Zealand Tablet, Apostolica Benedictione confortati, Religionis et Justitiae causam promovere per vias Veritatis et Pacis.

Die 4 Aprilis, 1900.

LEO XIII., P.M.

TRANSLATION.—Fortified by the Apostolic Blessing, let the Directors and Writers of the New Zealand Tablet continue to promote the cause of Religion and Justice by the ways of Truth and Peace.

April 4, 1900.

LEO XIII., Pope.



THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1921.

PRINCIPLES



AUL BOURGET, that great master of French prose, never achieved a more successful study of the soul of man than when he wrote *Le Disciple*, a terrible book which sets forth powerfully what dreadful results for humanity the metaphysical speculations of some benevolent and short-sighted attic philosopher may produce when followed out to their conclusions. The theme is an old one. St. James comprehended it when he spoke of the evils of sins of the tongue. The poet knew it when he wrote,

Principiis obsta: sero medicina paratur.

Shakespeare had it in mind when he said,

We have scotch'd the snake, not killed it,
She'll close and be herself, whilst our poor malice
Remains in danger of her former tooth.

It lives in the homely philosophy of the people who have a saying that a word cannot die. If we look round us for concrete examples, there are classic cases in abundance, besides those which every man can recall from the records of his own experience. Immanuel Kant undermined the foundations of rational religion by his *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*, and tried in vain to buttress them again in the *Kritik der Praktischen Vernunft*. He established the philosophy of scepticism to his own satisfaction; being a believer in God he saw he was wrong, and then, instead of admitting his error, made an irrational attempt to safeguard religion and morality by placing them outside the pale of pure reason altogether. His followers had no such scruples. They accepted his principles and pursued them logically. Fichte begot Hegel, and Hegel begot Nietzsche, and Nietzsche begot the Superman who was the incarnation of Lucifer who rebelled and said to God, "I will not serve."

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Protestantism made the avenue easy for such a welter of opinions. Protestantism dethroned authority, both divine and human, and made an idol of every man's reason. It preached the doctrine of private judgment, and no fool failed to avail himself of the privilege of measuring all things by the feeble light of his own intelligence. Kant became a recognised teacher in Protestant England. Carlyle glorified the other German progenitors of the Superman. The

Editor of the *Times* and Lord Rosebery rose to the occasion and prated of the divine mission of the Anglo-Saxon race and advocated what Brithuns call nowadays Prussianism, just as fiercely as any Nietzsche or Bernhardt of them all. The net result of the movement was that both England and Germany became godless, material nations, having no religion higher than Utilitarianism, Rationalism, and Pragmatism. Religion became a matter of individual concern, or perhaps a thing to be decided by a Referendum of a people who have for many years been "mostly fools." Out of such insanity were born to humanity the modern monsters of Malthusianism, Christian Science, Prohibition, Secular Schools, and such other foolish things as afford a common ground for fools and bigots who wish to enforce their views on sensible people. But it is Democracy, they cry! Democracy that disregards the rights of God and man, and establishes a tyranny worse than that of the Czar, if you please; but sound, honest Democracy, never! Religious opinions, the dictates of conscience no longer matter. Dogmas and first principles must be abolished because the milkman or the chauffeur does not agree with them, and makes noise enough to persuade the Government that it is safer to support him. The rights and liberties of mankind come from God, but if a gang that follows the lead of a horsewhipped cad who is notorious as a defamer of a dead woman, wishes to abolish rights and liberties, what does God matter? A parson who has one day walked from the plough or the cart into the pulpit, a fanatic old lady who has more cash than brains secure a following, and if they only ask loudly enough the sanest laws will be abrogated in order to please them and silence them.

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Elections are decided by the amount of pornographic literature a howling rabble can scatter among hysterical women; "literature" is equivalent to books that only a low blackguard would admit into his home; the mission of the daily press is to tell lies as boldly as Luther himself lied, and to manufacture calumny as fast as fools will swallow it. Dishonesty in trade, enormous profits, blood-money wrung from the workers and their wives and children, are the royal roads to high positions in the Empire. You can trade with the enemy in war time; you can be implicated in fraudulent companies and wild-cat schemes, but if you only make money enough you may sit at a Prime Minister's table and help him to fool the people for a short time yet. Truth does not pay; efficiency is a bar to advancement; humility is a millstone round one's neck. The liar, the perjurer, the profiteer, the brainless millionaire's sons, take the top places and eat and drink merrily at the cost of the nation over which they ride rough-shod. This is precisely the state of affairs to which Protestantism, with its German philosophy, has brought the world. To this a mad monk and a dreamer living apart from realities brought the Saxons of the Empire and their cousins of Prussia.

There is another stage in the evolution of modern society: it is the stage known as Revolution. It has come in Russia, as it came years ago in France. The conditions that led to it in both countries were exactly the same as obtain in every British country to-day. Anarchy, Bolshevism, and Reigns of Terror follow from injustice and oppression and profiteering just as inevitably as the latter follow from the denial of God and the suppression of human rights and liberties. Our Protestant parsons, our Protestant politicians, our publishers of "literature" have for the present given profiteering and plutocracy a new lease of life among us, exactly as a campaign of lies prolonged the political existence of the Monds and Speyers and Isaacs in England. But the example and the teaching of such divines also fertilised the mind of Democracy for such seeds as bore bloody fruit in France yesterday and in Russia to-day. As surely as unchivalrous foes have in the past poisoned wells of spring water, so surely have our blind guides poisoned the wells of thought, with the result that spiritual death abounds and spiritual madness is an endemic.

Chaos, cosmos, cosmos, chaos! Who can tell how all will end?

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