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THIRD EDITORIAL

Parson Vs. Parson.

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Socialists are not in the habit of breaking a lance in favor of our own home parsons. Nor do we propose to do that now. We know that, with hardly an exception, our American parsons, whatever trade mark they may be of, look at their church only as a shop and at their pulpit only as a retail counter,—just as any dealer in shoes, or lard, or stationery, or lager beer. We know that, animated by that view, our parsons' class, as a whole, proceeds strictly upon business principles. Just as the retailer will deal only in such goods as the wholesale firm, that "has a sinch upon him," allows, so our parson class deals only in such theories—political, economic, social and moral—, as the mortgagee capitalists, who hold a mortgage upon its "shop" and pay its wages dictate. Hence it is no cause for surprise to hear our parsons, in numerous instances, just now echoing the interests of the capitalist in the prospective United States bonds that the war may require, pronouncing the war a holy thing, and contributing their best in aiding their paymasters to conceal the sordid motives, nay, the inhuman motives, still worse, the traitorous motives, that lie at the bottom of this war. Nevertheless, felonious though the conduct of these American war parsons is, it almost pales before that of the war parsons in Spain.

The Bishop of Madrid, Spain, has just issued a pastoral letter, to be read throughout his diocese, in which he denounces the American people in these words:

"The Americans have trampled justice under foot, have twisted the Pope's words awry, have spurned intervention with arrogance, have barred the road for peace and forced on the horrors of war."

There is no defence possible of our own capitalist Government; but condemnation can not be uttered upon it without falling with equal force upon the capitalist-feudal Government of Spain. Had not the brigand class, that, in Spain, holds the reins of power, and for which that Madrid bishop prays, being his mortgagee, committed cruelties untold at our very doors, the brigand class, that in our own country, holds the reins of Government, would have had no pretext behind which to conceal the murderous

instincts that drive it to seek wider markets over the corpses of thousands of our citizens and athwart the turbulence of war; had a Queen Regent, for whom that Madrid Bishop prays, not shouted with joy at the murder of Maceo, and virtually adopted the sons of the Spanish officer under whose command that sinister act was committed, our own “Syndicated President” would have had one pretext less to push for war, and would have been by so much weaker in his push; had the “Christian” Government of Spain, whose spiritual adviser that, Madrid Bishop is, been trained by that precious “Child in Christ,” not, as he found it to his profit to do, in the teachings of Satan, but in those of the “Prince of Peace,” then our “pious” McKinley and his Sugar, Armor and other Trust fellow-saints would have found their way a rougher one to travel, and the peoples of the two nations might not now be at each other’s throats.

But profitless it is to establish, among rotten apples, the relative rottenness of each. We shall spend no time in the vain attempt to weigh the wickedness of the two sets of parsons. Suffice it to point out, that “religion,” like “patriotism,” is, under capitalism, not different from any merchandise—everything is for sale.

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