

EDITORIAL

FATHER VAUGHAN'S "THIRD TO THE CORINTHIANS."

By DANIEL DE LEON

IN his third Lenten sermon—that is, his third political harangue from his pulpit, “drum ecclesiastical” at St. Patrick’s—the Jesuit Father Vaughan summarized Socialism as “a policy of grab.”

Upon reading such a declaration—it can be understood only as a direct pronouncement against “grab”—the question forces itself to one’s mind, Can Father Bernard Vaughan, an emissary of the Vatican, hence a bitter adversary of the Modernist Movement within the Roman Catholic hierarchy,—can the Father have gone back upon Rome and turned Modernist?

One of the most telling passages, one bearing directly on “grab,” in the programme promulgated by Modernism is this:

“What sort of sympathy is the Church likely to win from the best spirits of the age by these wretched remnants of a power that she has lost [political power and material havings to back up political power], or by her vain efforts to re-acquire it? What sort of popularity can these dwindling and decrepit aristocratic oligarchies confer upon her which, in exchange for a little paltry grandeur, would tie her to customs in open discord with modern tendencies? One thing we know, and we say it openly: we know that we are weary of seeing the Church reduced, for all practical purposes, to a bureaucracy jealous of its surviving scraps of political power and hungering [what is that but grabbing?] to get back all it once had—to a group of idle men who, having dedicated themselves to a priestly and apostolic calling, and having afterwards attained the highest ecclesiastical grade, enjoy the most fabulously wealthy benefices [if that is not grabbings, what is it?] as absentee incumbents. We are weary of seeing her reduced to a sterilized force, which, notwithstanding an apparent grandeur that wins the facile and unintelligent adulation of the multitude, acts as a brake on social progress.”¹

¹ [Source, etc.]

Considering the steady ravages that the steady progress of Modernism is making in the vitals of the Roman Catholic political machine; considering, furthermore, that the translator into English of the Modernist document that the passage, quoted above, is taken from, is the Father George Tyrrell, himself a member of Father Vaughan's Jesuit Order;—considering all this, the question becomes insistent, Has Father Vaughan been redeemed by Modernism? How else could he dare to attack “grab”?

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