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EDITORIAL

A BOOK TO BE READ.

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THERE is no little danger of what may be called “intellectual Socialist inbreeding.” So intense are the convictions of the Socialists, and so arduous is their toil in the field, that there is a natural tendency among many to circumscribe their reading to Socialist and strictly economic subjects, rejecting all others as so much useless stuff. This is a harmful policy. Socialism is the great ocean into which all departments of science, art and literature are tributary. It is no exaggeration to say that there is no economic or sociologic principle but a knowledge of history illumines, and the arts and sciences exalt. The Socialist who shuts himself out of these fields by so much cripples his grasp of Socialism, or cramps his Socialist horizon.

No intelligent man, even if he be not a Socialist, will deny the significance in history of the apparition and work of Luther in the sixteenth century. Such a re-apparition our century is witnessing in the Modernist Movement in the Roman Catholic Church. Not as theology, but as sociologic manifestations, and not as causes, but as results of social development, the two apparitions are worthy of study. Luther and his work have an ample history by this time. The Modernists and their work are now beginning to make history. A great work has already been produced by this latter movement. It is *The Programme of Modernism* issued by some ten distinguished Italian Roman Catholic prelates in answer to the papal encyclical that was fulminated against them. The “Programme” alone would be enough to arrest attention. The book, however, which G.P. Putnam’s Sons of New York and London have issued upon the subject, contains what may be called “all sides,” surely “both sides” of the question. The book contains the “Programme,” it contains in full the encyclical to which the programme is an answer, it reproduces both translated into English by the Rev. Father George Tyrrell, thereby showing

that Modernism is no local affair, and finally, it is introduced by a review of the lay of the land by the Anglican vicar of St. Mary's, Paddington Green, London.

No review of either the encyclical or the "Programme" could here be attempted. Just three quotations should suffice to induce the reading of the book—aye, its study.

The first quotation we shall take from the papal encyclical itself:

"If we take in the whole system [of Modernism] at one glance no one will be surprised when we define it as the synthesis of all heresies."

The following two quotations are from the "Programme" itself—the first from the "Explanation" with which the Modernists introduce their "Programme":

"Through a series of causes into which we need not here enter, Catholics seem to have lost every elementary sense of responsibility and personal dignity. Instead of being met with a service of reasonable and therefore discerning obedience, the acts of their supreme rulers are received with the unconscious acquiescence of irresponsible beings. This reacts unfavorably on the exercise of authority itself which loses sight of its proper limits and its true function, and transforms itself into an absolutism inconsistent with that reasonable spiritual government instituted by Christ 'in whom we have passed from servitude to freedom.'"

Finally, the following passage from the "Conclusion" of the "Programme" will be found to amplify the passage quoted from the "Explanation":

"A great spiritual crisis, which did not begin to-day, but has to-day reached its culminating intensity, troubles all the religious bodies of Europe—Catholicism, Lutheranism, Anglicism. For the most part it is due to the new orientation of the public mind, which is adverse to the traditional formulation of the religious spirit; it is due to the easily popularized results of science, which diffuse an instructive distrust of those metaphysical and historic titles on which the dogmatic teaching of the Churches rests its claims. Catholicism, by reason of its greater antiquity and of the more tenaciously guarded elements of mediævalism within its system, and, at the same time, by reason of its more direct opposition to the affirmations of science and to the will of the democracy, feels the pain and distress of the profound crisis more acutely. But manifestly it will not be able to eliminate science or to stifle democracy with the barren words of its condemnation or with the noisy terrors of its anathemas. The movements of thought in an age like ours, where culture is so deep-rooted and widespread, is no slender rill to be easily dammed and arrested in its

course. It is an irresistible tide whose advance authority should wisely direct and not foolishly try to obstruct. If the successor of Peter condemns, with such unwonted asperity, the science and the apologetics of our times, we ask ourselves whether this may not be due to some understandable ignorance of the tendencies that characterize the moral evolution of to-day, as well as to a radical inability to foresee the success which inevitably must crown the progressive efforts of the modern world.”

Not since Luther did any utterances, clad in theological garb, possess the worldwide historic significance of the Modernist utterances that now go up from the camp of the Roman Catholic Church itself. That Luther is an economic landmark we all know. It is unquestionable that Modernism is a second landmark, a symptom of re-impending social transformations.

The price of the book is \$1.50.

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

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