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EDITORIAL

HELL COOLING OFF.

By DANIEL DE LEON

A SYRACUSE correspondent sends to this office a copy of the *Syracuse Journal* of last February 25th containing a sermon preached by the Rev. Joseph C. Krickser in which a blood-curdling, hair-on-end-setting authentic description is given of the tortures in hell and after hell that await the Socialist and other bold-bad folks. Whereat our correspondent is angry and indignant. He should be neither.

Father Krickser is quoted as saying:

“You all know that we must one day die, but just as certain as death, just as certain as the fact that you are here and I am here, so certain is it that we must one day be judged, and judged for our eternal weal and woe. And yet the worldling, the Socialist, the atheist and the philosopher decry, scorn and laugh at the idea of a judgment and an eternal hell-fire. Don’t laugh at truth. You may think that I would draw a picture to frighten you, but here we have the words of our Savior, Jesus Christ, prophesying a judgment, and who will go against them? Woe unto those who do not prepare for the day which is surely coming. . . . Then the trumpet will call ‘Arise ye dead and come to judgment.’ . . . The day of retribution is fast approaching. We can avoid the awful sentence condemning us to hell if we will but heed the warning now . . . what about the soul of the sinner who comes back from hell to resume his earthly body? He would perhaps wish to re-enter the body to obtain a rest from hell, but when he sees the miserable, rotting carcass which he must again inhabit, he would shrink from it if he could, but the angel of God is there to scourge him into it and there is no escape. Then on the right he will see the true Catholic man. . . . On the left he will see . . . the infidel and the Socialist—all these to the left . . . crying vengeance on those through whom their damnation came.”

Why, tho’ this be tough, it still is very mild—mild, compared to the pictures of hell one time painted. Lecky, in his *History of European Morals from Augustus to*

Charlemagne, quotes (Chapter IV., Vol. 11., p. 223, D. Appleton Co., Edition, 1906) a tract entitled *The Sight of Hell*, by the Rev. J. Furniss, C.S.S.R., published “permissu superiorum” [with the consent of the superior authorities] by Duffy, Dublin and London, which gives a detailed description of the dungeons of hell and from which, as a sample, Lecky cites the following sentences: “See on the middle of the redhot floor stands a girl; she looks about sixteen years old. Her feet are bare. She has neither shoes nor stockings . . . Listen! she speaks. She says, I have been standing on this redhot floor for years. Day and night my only standing-place has been this redhot floor. . . . Look at my burnt and bleeding feet. Let me go off this burning floor for one moment, only for one single short moment. . . . The fourth dungeon is the burning kettle. . . in the middle of it there is a boy. . . . His eyes are burning like two burning coals. Two long flames come out of his ears. Sometimes he opens his mouth, and blazing fire rolls out. But listen! There is a sound like a kettle boiling. . . . The blood is boiling in the scalded veins of that boy. The brain is boiling and bubbling in his head. The marrow is boiling in his bones. . . . The fifth oven is the redhot oven. . . . The little child is in this redhot oven. Hear how it screams to come out. See how it turns and twists itself about in the fire. It beats its head against the roof of the oven. It stamps its little feet on the floor. . . . God was very good to this child. Very likely God saw it would get worse and worse, and would never repent, and so it would have to be punished much more in hell. So God in his mercy called it out of the world in its early childhood.”

Compared with Father Furniss’s hell of only about three generations ago, Father Krickser’s is an ice-box. Hell is cooling off. There is hope for the Socialist. Science, of whom Socialism is a handmaid, is setting free the well-spring of those sweet waters that are destined to extinguish in the human heart the flames that are fanned by the brutish conflict of material interests, and that evidently already are cooling down the flames of hell.

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