

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 12, NO. 86.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1911.

TWO CENTS.

EDITORIAL

THE CHURCHES AND SLAVERY.

By DANIEL DE LEON

IN line with the recommendation recently made—when two chapters from *The Book of Daniel Drew* were reproduced in these columns—that the militants in the Movement broaden their horizon by the reading of classical works on great historic epochs of this and other countries; furthermore, impelled thereto by the increasingly loud and increasingly doubly false howl on the part of the clergy of all denominations against Socialism, there is reproduced in this issue Chapter X, entitled, “The Churches and Slavery,” from Horace Greeley’s great work, *The American Conflict*.

The Present is best understood through the Past. This is especially so with regard to institutions and their placemen whose existence has been prolonged into our own days.

A profession, like that of the clergy, which, assuming to speak in the name of the deity, thunders against Socialism as “immoral,” “unjust” and “subversive of the sanctity of the home”—a profession, accordingly, that is holding itself out as the time-everlasting pillar of Morality, Justice and Family Sanctity—such a profession will be best “appreciated” by turning to its record.

What, as a whole, the record is of the clerical profession, at the great critical epoch in this country’s experience when it travailed to abolish chattel slavery, is sketched in Chapter X of Greeley’s work. As a prelude to that chapter, a passage from Chapter VI of the same work will here be in place:

“The simple and notorious fact that clergymen, marrying slaves, were accustomed to require of them fidelity in their marital relation, until separated by death, or by inexorable necessity [by ‘inexorable necessity’ was meant when husband and wife were separated by sale, being sold to different masters], suffices of itself to stamp the social condition thus photographed with the indignant reprobation of mankind. And when we add that

slave-girls were not only daily sold on the auction blocks of New Orleans, and constantly advertised in her journals, as nearly white, well educated, and possessed of the rarest personal attractions, and that they commanded double and treble prices on this account, we leave nothing to be added to complete the outlines of a system of legalized and priest-sanctioned iniquity more gigantic and infernal than heathenism and barbarism ever devised.”

No better, and no worse, than any other political agency of Class Rule, the clergy is an agency, condemnation by whom, like condemnation of any other of the many political agencies of the Capitalist Class, is a badge of honor to Socialism and the Socialist.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded July 2012

slpns@slp.org