

EDITORIAL

LIKEWISE WITH SOCIALISM.

By DANIEL DE LEON

AFTER the leading officials of the Ultramontane wing of the Roman Catholic body in the land have long been warning against and even denouncing woman's suffrage—after the most prominent of these officials, Cardinal Gibbons, almost pronounced the woman's movement, and virtually branded it as indecent—after all this, the American Federation of Catholic Societies being in annual session in Milwaukee, Archbishop S.G. Messmer said:

“We will not declare for and we will not declare against it [woman suffrage]. Whatever personal opinions we may have, the church has not yet decided what its stand is.”

When the change of language? What has happened since then and now?

Economic evolution.

The decline of the income of the breadwinners together with the simultaneous rise of the cost of living, and the two moving obedient to the Marxian law of value, are economic phenomena that fatedly manifest themselves in an increase of proletarians. The changed material conditions manifest themselves in a change of opinion.

The process affects not men only; it also affects women. Many women who at one time, at the time when they were not forced into the shop, thought that voting was discreditable, drop the notion in the measure that material conditions familiarize them with ideas that they did not have before, and even did not think likely they ever would share. The effect spread, and presently a revolution has been effected in the minds of people that no amount of clerical mystification can overcome. Hence the language of Archbishop Messmer, who would have been more candid had he added—“and, the matter of woman suffrage not being a matter of dogma, the church

never will utter itself thereupon.”

Likewise with Socialism.

Material conditions will take charge of bridling the tongues of the Archbishops Messmer against Socialism. Of course the effect of these material conditions upon popular enlightenment will be greatly aided by Socialist propaganda, whence the animosity of the Archbishops Messmer against the Socialists—the same as the effect of the material conditions that make for Woman Suffrage upon popular enlightenment are being greatly aided by Suffrage propaganda, whence the old and expressed, and the present and suppressed detestation of the Suffragists by the Archbishops Messmer.

There is nothing like the benign power that Light generates to overcome the insolent power that Darkness breeds.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded February 2016

slpns@slp.org