

The Catholic Record

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LONDON, SATURDAY, SEPT. 5, 1925

THE STORY OF CHRIST AND PAPI'S PRAYER

Some silly things have been said, and some even written, about Papi's "Story of Christ." The author himself frankly declared that he wrote as a Catholic inspired by the Gospels and the doctrine of the Catholic Church. But he was inspired, too, by a love for Christ that is real, personal, and marvelously intense. And his "Life of Christ," he tells us himself, was written by a layman for laymen.

We have heard and we have read of doubts of timid Catholics as to the author's orthodoxy; or even the positive assertions of the dogmatized theologian, who loves to half-baked more than he loves Jesus Christ. We have spoken to a few such; not one of them had read the book!

It has no "Imprimatur," said one significantly. Well, no; it has no "Imprimatur." But it was first printed and published in Italian; and it made its first sensational impression in Italy. It was even commended from the pulpit in Rome. Evidently the Roman authorities shared none of the misgivings of our—happily few—timid souls who are more orthodox than the Pope.

Then again it was said that the English translation—that is the one made in and for England—is better than the American, which is the version we have given the readers of the CATHOLIC RECORD. (We bought the serial rights, of course; but we did not secure the right to publish Papi's concluding prayer which was left out of the American version.)

Well, we have both translations—and have read both. We have no hesitation at all in saying that the American translation by Dorothy Canfield Fisher is superior to the British translation by Mary Prichard Agnetti. The English is more idiomatic; it preserves better the virile force and strength, the torrential eloquence and depth of feeling that made Papi, before his conversion, the high-priest of the anti-Christian and atheistic intellectual world of Europe. His theology is the theology of love, intense personal love for Jesus Christ. It is the theology of St. John, the beloved disciple; of Mary Magdalen, who loved much. He knows, perhaps, but little of the theological distinctions and definitions made necessary by later heresies and false philosophies. Not more than St. Peter, when he said: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." But his love is the love of John and his faith is the faith of Peter.

We pity those whose understanding was not quickened, whose hearts did not burn within them as this writer, so wonderfully favored by God's grace, spoke in the way of the Master he had learned to love so intensely. The grace given to Papi is singularly like that which converted Saul of Tarsus into St. Paul.

Christ came to convince the world of sin and of judgment. Nowhere is that conviction of sin and its terrible consequences so vividly realized and so convincingly set forth in all its hideousness as in the "Prayer" which closes Papi's volume. Mrs. Fisher, as we have said, omits it altogether. Following is an extract from Mrs. Agnetti's translation:

"For four long years the world stained itself with blood to decide who should have the broadest lands, the greatest riches. The Servants of Mammon sent Caliban to rot in interminable trenches that they themselves might acquire still greater wealth and impoverish their enemies. But this awful experience has been of no avail. Poorer and more famished than before, all nations have returned to prostrate themselves before

the great clay-footed god whose name is Trade, upon whose altars they are ready to sacrifice their own peace and the lives of others. Divine Business and holy Money dominate the minds of men more strongly than ever before. He who has but little would have much; he who has much would have more; he who has the most would have all. Having learned to waste during those years that devoured all things, those who were once temperate are become gluttonous, those who were satisfied are become avid, the honest have taken to cheating, the most chaste are become impure. In the name of commerce, usury and appropriation are practised; under cover of great enterprises, piracy is exercised by a few against many; barrators and speculators hold the public moneys, and extortion is one of the principles upon which our oligarchies are based. Thieves, who alone obey justice, do not even spare their fellow thieves. The ostentation of the rich has convinced all that nothing counts in this world, which has at last broken loose from heaven, save gold and what may be purchased and spoiled with gold.

"On this infectious dust-heap all faiths fade and are dissolved. The world practices but one religion, that which recognizes the mighty trinity of Wotan, Mammon and Priapus: Force, whose symbol is the sword and whose temple is the barracks; Riches, whose symbol is gold and whose temple is the stock exchange; the Flesh, which is symbolized in Priapus and whose temple is the brothel. Such is the religion that reigns upon earth, which is devoutly practised in deed, if not always in word, by all the living. The family as it once was is broken up; marriage is abolished by adultery and bigamy; children are deemed a curse and child-bearing is avoided.

"There are no longer either republics or monarchies. Governments are become but hollow mockeries and counterfeit. Plutocracy and demagogy, sisters in purpose and in spirit, supported somewhat unwillingly by salaried mediocrities, contend with each other for control of the seditious masses, and meanwhile, above these two struggling orders, is caprocracy, an active and incontestible reality, which has subjected the higher to the lower, quality to quantity, the impure to the spiritual."

But Mrs. Agnetti omits—without the slightest indication that anything is left out—the following paragraph:

"Thou knowest these things, Christ Jesus, and Thou seest that again is come the fullness of time wherein this feverish and bestial world deserves either to be punished by a deluge of fire or saved by Thine intercession. Alone Thy Church, the Church founded by Thee on the Rock of Peter, the only one that deserves the name of Church, the unique and universal Church which speaks from Rome with the infallible word of Thy Vicar, emerges once more, strengthened by assaults, made greater by schisms, rejuvenated by the ages, from the furious and muddy sea of the world. But Thou who dost assist her with Thy Spirit, knowest how many, how very many, even of them that were born to her, live outside her laws."

Now why was this paragraph deliberately left out? It spoils the artistry of the author's eloquence. Without it the picture is one of unrelieved gloom, suggestive of despair.

It does more than that; it misrepresents Papi and falsifies his work.

For the Christ Papi portrays is the Christ that walked and talked with the Apostles and disciples. With St. Peter, Papi from the depths of his soul, everywhere proclaims Peter's faith: "Thou art the Christ the Son of the Living God;" the Christ who is the Redeemer of the world, with, today and always, the same infinite love and the same infinite power. It is his unquestioning faith that the Catholic Church, divinely commissioned, divinely sustained, divinely guided, carries on unto the consummation of the world that never-ending work of Christ's redemption.

Countless thousands outside the Church have read the "Story of Christ." Doubtless, countless thousands more will read it. The British version, beginning in March, 1925, had run through twelve editions by October, 1925! The Story has been

translated into nearly every language under the sun. It is a good thing, and a thing Papi himself desired, to have non-Catholics—even atheists—read the book. But why should his glorious message to his brother men be falsified?

Whether the fault lies with the publishers or with the translators, this unwarranted liberty of exercising such a paragraph as the one we have supplied above is too great—and too childish—a concession to Protestant sensitiveness.

Our cordial gratitude is due to the America Press, New York, which printed Papi's prayer as a separate copyrighted pamphlet, for their courteous permission to reprint it in THE CATHOLIC RECORD.

WE MUST HAVE FAITH

By THE OBSERVER

Faith is the foundation of the edifice of religion. Faith is the principle from which springs supernatural life. Our Lord constantly inculcated the necessity of faith as an agency in the reformation and salvation of the world. We are told that the just man liveth by faith. When our Lord sent His Apostles into the world, He told them to teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. "He who believeth and is baptized shall be saved. He who believeth not shall be condemned." He who believeth and is baptized shall obtain eternal life; but he who believeth not, be he baptized or unbaptized shall be condemned. In the one Gospel of Saint John, Our Saviour insists on this virtue of Faith in forty-five different and distinct passages.

To Martha in her grief Our Lord said: "He who liveth and believeth in Me will not die forever." To the man born blind Our Lord said: "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?" And when the man asked, "Who is the Son of God?" He said: "Thou hast both seen him and it is he who is speaking to thee." To the Scribes and Pharisees who brought to Jesus the woman taken in adultery, He said: "If you believe that I am He you will die in your sins." Now what is faith? What is this faculty or habit of mind which Our Saviour calls faith? We must proceed to faith through knowledge. We must first know something before we can believe. The supernatural is built on the natural. Now in the natural order we know by means of our reason. We understand in the light of reason the things that are in the range of our intellectual comprehension. Every man who has the use of reason knows something. Some know more than others, but all know something. This knowledge which we possess comes from the use of the faculty of reason with which we are endowed. By reason we know ourselves; we know each other; we know the relations which exist between us; we know the visible universe; we acquire the knowledge of the laws of nature; we study the sciences; and what we have ourselves learned, added to what we have received from others who have gone before us, makes up the heritage of knowledge which we pass down to succeeding generations.

Man is capable of knowledge, and he can improve his store of knowledge by study and application. The human mind is made for truth, and every man by an instinct of his nature must seek to acquire truth. But after we have studied all the sciences, when we have spent a lifetime in investigating the secrets of nature, when we have done trying to arrive at an equation between ourselves and all around us, we are very much like the great scientist Sir Isaac Newton, when at the close of his life he said: "I am like one who has reached the shore of knowledge; before me stretches out the infinite unknown."

Now it is precisely here at this shore of knowledge, that faith takes her spy-glass and looks across and beyond the ocean of the infinite. Everything we know points to something still unknown. All our knowledge must admit its limitations; yet beyond these limitations it is our ambition to go. Isn't there something beyond this life? Isn't there a world above and beyond this world we know? Is there not a life higher and vaster and richer than this life we live? Our mind tells us there is; our heart tells us there must be; therefore we would know something of the infinite beyond; we would learn something

of this unseen world by which we are surrounded.

We have souls that will not be satisfied with what they have and see. We have minds that would soar beyond the limits of the visible universe. Our whole being aspires to a knowledge of something higher and better than this transitory world; and our souls sigh for the possession of something grander, more durable and vastly nobler than anything they know here. How many people are completely content with what they have in this world, no matter how much or what that may be? The only way to reach beyond the visible world is to look through the telescope of faith. The only way in which we can see beyond this world is to look at things in the light of God, in the illumination of God's revelation. Also that is the only way in which we can properly estimate this world we live in; by its proportion and perspective with the world which is opened to our contemplation by faith.

Faith, then, is the knowledge that is in God imparted to the human mind. It is the light of God added to the light of human reason. It is a new faculty which we acquire and by which we are enabled to see things otherwise invisible; and to reach out and grasp verities otherwise unknowable and intangible.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

ONE of the significant signs of the times in Scotland is the ardor being displayed in Kirk circles in calling back the past. We all know how, at the instigation of Knox and his fellow "Reformers" the "rascal multitude" set out on its mad career of destruction in regard to those monuments of the faith and piety of their fathers—the cathedrals, parish churches and abbeys, which adorned the country from end to end, and which today, even in their ruins, proclaim the glory which once was. Melrose and Dryburgh and Elgin have been the inspiration of many a poet and historian, among them the great Bard of Abbotford, and have had no inconsiderable share in keeping alive through the dark ages of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that spark of faith which in our day seems expanding into flame.

ILLUSTRATIVE of this may be cited the interest being shown in the restoration of many ruined churches that remain, moss-grown and almost hidden from view as they are. Among those to which attention has especially been called is the old Norman church, of Aberdour, dedicated at its foundation to the "Saint of Bannockburn," St. Fillan. This church, which is in a comparatively good state of preservation, occupies a commanding site, amid beautiful surroundings in Easter Aberdour. The old chancel, north wall, pillars, and twelfth-century windows are intact, and the work of restoration, if undertaken by competent hands, will not be difficult.

THE EARLIEST reference to the building in ecclesiastical records is in 1178, when it was mentioned in a bull of Pope Alexander in connection with the monastery at Inchcolm. The ruins of the latter were referred to in these columns some time ago. The parish minister (Presbyterian) of Aberdour has been handed a sum of money for the restoration of the old Norman edifice, and it is gratifying to note the interest being taken in the work among his people. Every restoration of this kind is a gain, in that it turns men's minds to the study of the ages of a living Faith.

THE ROADS of Scotland, says a recent writer, display more of beauty and interest than is crowded into any space of the same extent in the world. Making due allowance for national bias, the statement is substantially true. Grim as its majestic peaks and dark as its gloomy forests, the history of Scotland with its record of turbulence and bloodshed, may be, there is a glamor over it all which appeals to the heart. It is the land of poetry and tradition, of chivalry and devotion. Elusive as the moonlight shimmer of its birches is the spirit that broods over and inspires it. Many of its gifted sons have sought for words to express this spirit, and a wealth of song of which any nation might be proud is the result.

"NO PART of Scotland," says the same writer, "is far from the sea, from the sound of its breakers and the salt tang of its fresh winds. It stretches its arms far inland, and in the perilous waters to the westward lie the Hebrides, golden and rosy in the sunset as the Isles of Greece. Everywhere there is water. North and south are rivers of surpassing beauty, each with a character of its own. Lochs lie scattered like jewels over all the land, and in them are reflected mountains winered with heather in early autumn, or russet with dying bracken as the season wanes. There are mountain-passes for the motorist where only the eagle and the shepherd on the hill shall mark his progress along the white road, and there are fertile glens and straths reclaimed and held by the toil of countless generations. In the south are ruined keeps and ivy-mantled abbeys innumerable, and in the north strong fortresses and towers long dismantled." And over all hovers the spirit of its Catholic past, at once invigorating and soothing to the reflective soul.

SOME THIRTY years ago one of the famous athletes of the world was Edward Payson Weston, the first pedestrian to popularize the six-day go-as-you-please race, which for a time dwarfed all other forms of sport. It has long since passed into the limbo of forgotten things, leaving only a memory of remarkable achievement in the way of human endurance. Mr. Weston, who is now eighty-eight, has walked over 100,000 miles during his career, and now, in the late evening of his life, is still walking.

WITHIN the past year or two, he states, he has walked 5,000 miles through Great Britain, lecturing against the evils of intemperance, and now, returned to his old home in Philadelphia, is to be, or has already been, received into the Catholic Church. He attributes his conversion to the new Saint, the "Little Flower," and may be said to have, under her patronage, literally "walked" into the Church.

RECALLING his tour in Britain, Mr. Weston in the glow of his new-found faith, says: "I now wish I could start that distance once again. I could find many a Nathaniel under the fig tree searching for light. Like Philip I could tell him how I found the Messiah, and relate to him a great miracle of grace—how the youngest of God's pure saints, my own little Teresa, took by the hand an old man, and at a little country shrine led him to the blessed feet of Him who, too, was a wanderer among men and had not a place to lay His head. Truly, I have finished my course, but I have found the Faith."

EARLY MARTYR HONORED

Council Grove, Kan.—A part of the celebration of this city's centennial was given over to memorial services honoring Father Juan de Padilla, O. F. M., one of the early Catholic martyrs of North America. The Rev. D. Reidy, pastor of St. Rose's Catholic Church here, delivered an address beside the rough heap of stones near here which marks the supposed site of the missionary's grave.

Father de Padilla, a Spaniard came to America with Coronado on the latter's search for fabulous riches in New Mexico in 1540. The priest accompanied Coronado when the latter, lured by tales of rich cities pushed on into the present State of Kansas. Later, when the explorer had given up in discouragement, Father de Padilla returned to this territory and was killed by the Indians as he knelt in prayer. The exact place and date of his martyrdom are subjects concerning which historians are not agreed.

"VIRGIN OF COAL" STILL HONORED

Paris, France.—The annual "fire procession" has just been held at Morhange, in the Department of Moselle. In this procession a group of young girls carry an ancient statue of the Virgin known as the "Virgin of the Coal."

This procession is a commemoration of a terrible fire which burned down the city in 1509. Nothing was saved but a group of three houses in the midst of which the statue of the "Virgin of the Coal" had been placed. The procession was instituted as the result of a vow made following this event, and has retained a character of great solemnity. One of the interesting features of the procession is the custom, carefully observed by the fire brigade of the town, of erecting on the Place de la Republique a magnificent Repository—composed exclusively of fire department equipment, such as pumps, ladders, etc.

MEXICO CATHOLICS LIVING IN FEAR

THE CONVENING OF CONGRESS WILL BE SIGNAL FOR NEW PERSECUTIONS

By Charles Phillips, Special Correspondent, N. C. W. U.

IV.

Mexico City, Aug. 20.—Fear is the ruler of Mexico. In this country the majority is the minority, and the minority lives in daily fear. Ninety per cent. of the Mexican people are Catholics, and for the Catholic people of Mexico life is a prolonged suppressed terror. There is no such thing as freedom or liberty; there is only apprehension, intimidation, fear. What will tomorrow bring? Almost to a man, one fear is general today among Mexican Catholics—that the convening of the new national Congress in September will be the signal for a fresh outburst of tyranny and anti-Catholic persecution.

September 16 is the Mexican national holiday. It marks both the annual opening of the Congress and anniversary of the "Grito de Dolores," the "cry" for Mexican independence set up for the first time, September 16, 1810, by Miguel Hidalgo, a Catholic priest, who unhappily, in his political zeal against Spanish misrule, became a renegade to the Faith. In that fact lies the source, perhaps, of all Mexico's subsequent tragedies. Certain it is, the freedom and independence for which Hidalgo fought might have had a blessing on it instead of a curse. But that it has had no blessing on it, the history of Mexico during the past hundred years amply proves. These years have been years of strife and bloodshed for all Mexico. For the Catholic Church, which Hidalgo turned against, they have been years of almost continuous persecution. The common fear and the general expectation among the Mexican people today is that this persecution will this year, on the anniversary of Hidalgo's "Grito," and on the convening of the new Congress, be renewed and intensified.

CONGRESS NOT REPRESENTATIVE

When the new national Congress of Mexico convenes September 16 it will present before the free government of the world a spectacle unprecedented in the history of republics. Of its three hundred members (to be exact, 240 deputies in the lower House, and 58 in the Senate) it will be difficult, if not indeed impossible, to find one man who is a bona fide representative of the supposed constituency. This deplorable condition has its source in the simple fact that there is no such thing as representative government in Mexico, no such thing as an honest election. The Congress is virtually subject to the appointment of the President, and is his absolute tool, in spite of the fact that the farcical gesture of election is made in putting this Congress into office. And the President holds his office, not by virtue of popular suffrage, but through outright seizure of that office, backed by military force. To a man, the Government of Mexico, according to the accepted standards of popular representative government is corrupt. It can hardly be called anything else when the fact is faced that in a country of some fifteen million Catholics there is not one Catholic representative in the entire legislature of the republic.

This does not mean, of course, that in the Mexican Government, that is, in the Mexican legislature, every man in his individual capacity is a crook. But politically, from the very nature of the power which puts them and keeps them in office, from the nature of the bogus constitutional law which erects them into the position of legislators, they cannot be and are not honest bona fide representatives of the people. Let me repeat, there is no such thing in Mexico as representative government. In the entire history of the Mexican republic there has been but one bona fide popular election. That was in the time of Madero, following the Diaz regime. In that election something like a majority of men representing the actual population was chosen for office. But they never took office. Such a condition as a government by a freely elected national legislature could not continue to exist in Mexico; apparently it could not even come into existence. Within a few weeks of the Madero reform, the old evil of one man power came into the ascendancy again. Ballot boxes were openly confiscated by the military and a new "election" announced even before the votes could be counted. There has never been a genuine election in Mexico since.

MORE PROSCRIPTIVE LAWS FEARED

Every Mexican knows these facts. And it is this knowledge today that gives rise to the fear that the new Congress to convene in September will create new disturbances and new scandals in carrying out the behests of the dictator Calles, who is publicly pledged to persecution of the Church. What will actually happen in the 1925-26 Congress is of course problematical. But all signs point to a new application of the proscriptive laws of the Constitution more vigorous than ever before known.

All signs, as I have said, seem to point to this. Certainly the signs of the times during the past few months have been well designed to confirm the fears of those who see a

new Church persecution in the offing. And what has happened during the past few months has been but a continuation of the happenings of years back, dating from the time when Hidalgo took the blessing from his patriotic ideal by robbing the Church of which he was a consecrated priest. Over one thousand churches and church buildings have been confiscated or despoiled by the Mexican Government since that time. And during the past year, and especially since the beginning of the present year, the same Mexican Government has more and more bent its powers to the robbing and proscription of the Church. More and more the State Governments (which, like the national legislature, are wholly subject to the will of the Chief Executive), have grown bold and unscrupulous in prosecuting the Constitutional laws against religious freedom. Catholic schools by the score have been raided and closed, churches have been confiscated, priests and religious expelled and exiled, the ringing of Mass bells prohibited, the administration of the sacraments restricted. Finally, the Calles Government has gone to the extreme of attempting the foundation of a schismatical "national" sect in the hope of creating a split in the Church. All these things have been done. Taking them as the signs of the times, it is not unnatural that Mexican Catholics fear that more and worse things will perhaps be done in the future. They certainly will be done if such be the desire of Calles the dictator. There will be no two ways about it for the Congress in such an event. For the Congress owes its very existence to his word. If such a thing could be found in the Mexican legislature as a deputy or a senator who did not approve of Calles' anti-Catholic persecution, and who had the courage to voice his disapproval, the political life of such a man would quickly be cut short. Dictators have many ways of working their will. The history of Mexico is full of demonstrations of that fact.

BOGUS CONSTITUTION CORE OF TROUBLE

All these things have been done, and they have been done in the name of and by the power of the Constitution. It is there that the core of Mexico's trouble lies, in the Constitution of 1917, an instrument which was foisted on the country by a handful of scheming anti-Catholic politicians, aided and abetted by American Protestant missionary agitators during the notorious Carranza regime. What this Constitution can't do to the Catholic Church and the Catholic people in Mexico would be hard to say. What it can do, and in all probability will do, beginning with the convening of the new Congress in September, is enough to put fear into the heart of any Christian. For one thing, it can drive hundreds of Catholic priests out of the country—or into hiding, as some of them have already been driven. For, according to Article 130 of the Constitution, State governments are empowered in every State in the Mexican Union to fix exactly the number of priests that shall be in any given district or diocese. In the great diocese of Guadaluajara, with a population of 1,200,000, and with some 600 priests—one priest to every 2,000 people—this sort of a restriction has already been begun, the State Government ruling that 200 priests, one to every 6,000 people—is sufficient!

More than this, according to the same Article 130, the government can exile every priest in Mexico who is not Mexican born. And still further, since Article 5 forbids all religious vows and prohibits monastic orders and religious communities, every priest in the country may be arrested, if Congress wills to apply the letter of the law. And further still, to return to Article 130, no priest so arrested would be allowed trial by jury. In the State of Tabasco at the present moment, every priest in the diocese is under ban and in hiding, and the Bishop is an exile, because of these laws.

But banning priests is only one way in which the Mexican Congress may proscribe the Catholic faith. There are other ways. Under Article 24 of the Constitution, for instance, the celebration of Mass, or of any other religious rite, might be stopped. According to this Article, no public religious act may be performed except exclusively under the supervision of government authorities. Cease to "super-vise," and public religious service must automatically cease.

NO SECURITY FOR SCHOOLS

All over Mexico today Catholic schools are functioning—parochial schools, convents, colleges, seminaries. But not one of them operates legally. Every one of them is under ban. In some cases they are winked at for the moment, or temporarily tolerated or overlooked. But they have no security. Let the new Congress give the word, and every one of them would be summarily closed. No religious body, no priest, according to Article 3, may establish, manage or direct a school, not even a primary school.

Mexico has also its quota of orphan asylums, refuges, hospitals and other charitable institutions established and operated by the church. But they are all illegal. If the new Congress should feel the inspiration of the dictator in this direction, every one of these institutions would suffer the same fate as the schools, as many indeed have already suffered. Benevolent insti-