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LONDON, SATURDAY, JULY 10, 1915

THOU ART PETER

M. Latapie, a French newspaperman, published in La Liberté a sensational account of an interview with our Holy Father Benedict XV. There is probably not a single newspaper in the world which did not reproduce this interview. It was the subject of comments of all sorts. From the point of view of the average journalist the "interview" was a great success.

We know now that many of the statements attributed to the Pope in the famous interview were pure inventions, and some of them very stupid inventions. Certain assertions were intrinsically absurd. According to the veracious M. Latapie he also discussed with the Cardinal Secretary of State the resumption of diplomatic relations between France and the Holy See. M. Latapie may belong to that class of journalists who would revel in the sensational success of his great scoop regardless of all other considerations. Nevertheless despite his short lived triumph there will be few even amongst the yellow reporters who would envy him when he reads the scathing rebuke with which Cardinal Gasparri dismisses M. Latapie:

"With regard to what concerns me personally I saw M. Latapie only a few minutes. In that time the diplomatic relations between the Holy See and France were not mentioned. M. Latapie would have done better had he maintained the promise he formally gave me not to publish anything without previous authorization. But as that formal promise was not sufficient to preserve the Holy See from such deplorable indiscretions, M. Latapie will have the honor of being the last journalist to be received by the Holy Father during the war."

Exit Latapie. In another column will be found the Cardinal Secretary of State's repudiation of Latapie's absurd interview.

The incident, however, suggests some very interesting considerations.

How was it that an obscure French journalist suddenly has the entire world eagerly reading his words? Because these words were attributed to the Pope. Amid the clash of arms, above the boom and crash of battle, when the mightiest of the nations are locked in a life and death struggle, the most interesting figure in the world is not Kaiser nor King, not the military genius whose will dominates vast armies, not the statesman nor the diplomat, but an individual unknown a year ago, as yet but little known, who by the virtue of his office is the Vicar of the Prince of Peace. Unwitting and often perhaps unwilling testimony is borne to this great fact by Jew, Turk, Sahismatic, Protestant and Catholic.

The world is sick, but even a sick world is still more or less dominated by the spirit of the world. And the spirit of the world is the antithesis of the spirit of Christ. Hence the world scoffs at the words of the Pope—words which he never uttered or which have been distorted into those half-truths which are ever the blackest of lies. But the solemn message of the great encyclical of the Father of Christendom does not lend itself to scoffing, it breathes the spirit of Christ, it is irritating to the spirit of the world—so it is ignored. Hence we have the dignified protest of Observators Romano.

"The ideas of the Pope must be sought in official pontifical documents and not in words never uttered, but which were attributed to the Pontiff and which were reproduced with fantastic interpretation in the newspapers without respect for the august dignity of the Pope."

Christ's Vicar may be mocked, scoffed at, traduced; his spiritual power derided as a failure; by those

who deny his divine commission; he may be feared, mistrusted as scheming for political power; but he is also loved as the spiritual father of millions, revered and obeyed as the Vicegerent of Christ.

One thing stands out clear as the noon-day sun. The world cannot regard the Pope with indifference.

In spite of miracles of mercy and love that stirred human hearts to their depths, and a divine message that illuminated and still illumines the darknesses of the human intelligence, Jesus Christ, also, was mocked, scoffed at and traduced. He was suspected as scheming for political power; the friends of Caesar and the friends of Herod feared and mistrusted Him. But He was weak as the world judges of power; therefore the Jews in their pride of race, and Romans in their pride of world-embracing imperial power scorned the humility and powerlessness of Jesus. He was crowned with thorns and in derision, hailed as King; He was crucified.

"And they that passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads, and saying: Vah, thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days buildest it up again! Save thyself, coming down from the cross, in like manner with the scribes one to another: He saved others; himself he cannot save."

Need we emphasize the parallel? The spirit of the world has not changed, and this spirit it is that chafes at the humility, the powerlessness—says and the power—of Christ's Vicar so strangely, so disquietingly like His Master.

To the ordinary, common-place men whom He charged with the mighty commission of binding and loosing in His name, of carrying on to the end of time His divine mission He said: "They have persecuted me, they will persecute you."

In His own life time those imbued with the spirit of the world did not believe in Jesus Christ. They regarded Him as worldlings, modernists and disciples of German rationalists regard Him now; who even in His name through press and pulpit explain away everything that proclaims the tremendous mystery of the Son of God made man and leave Him bereft of Divinity, an interesting human personality, founder of a system of ethics useful to mankind, but which, of course, must be modified to suit modern progress.

Insistently comes to our mind that deathless scene nineteen centuries ago:

"Jesus saith to them: But who do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ the Son of the living God. And Jesus answering, said to him: Blessed art thou Simon Bar Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father Who is in heaven. And I say to thee: That thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven."

There is no association possible between darkness and light; there is no partnership, no sympathy, no understanding, between those who regard Christ as merely human—even though they acknowledge Him as the greatest Teacher of the race—and Peter who answers:

"Thou art Christ the Son of the living God."

And Peter never dies. He lives now. Peter's mighty commission is now entrusted to Benedict. The world chafes at such a claim; but it rests on Jesus Christ's plain words of unmistakable meaning. The world is conscious of a baffling sense that its pride and its power shrinks and shrivels before the humility and powerlessness of the Vicar of Christ. And never more so than at present when the world's pride in its boasted progress and enlightenment is humbled to the dust; and its power is strained to the breaking point in fratricidal strife.

Again a scene in the life of Christ comes to the mind of those who believe.

"And have you not read this scripture, the stone which the builders rejected is made the head of the corner."

Striking is the application of these words to the world to-day when the work of the builders is crashing to the ground.

"And they sent to him some of the Pharisees and of the Herodians; that they should catch him in his words." Yes, and the same spirit inspires those who would catch Benedict XV. in his words. The world does not discuss his great encyclical; but the world is alert, gives all its attention when it thinks that the Pope has

been entrapped into some indiscretion of speech.

Suppose Peter's successor did say something as indiscreet, as foolish as the contemptible inventions and malicious distortions which the French scribe attributes to him. Did not Peter himself after he had built His Church, deny with an oath that he knew the Master whom he loved? Every Catholic child knows that neither in personal conduct nor in personal opinion is Peter's successor clothed with infallibility.

The glimpse of the world's spirit which is given us by its reception of the alleged interview and by other things suggests still another passage from Holy Scripture. The XIIth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles tells us of Peter in prison, bound with chains and guarded by soldiers.

"But prayer was made without ceasing by the Church unto God for him."

And the Lord sent His angel who delivered Peter out of the hand of Herod.

Oh, now above all times, when the shams of the world are being exposed, when the need of Christ and His Church is stirring the very heart of mankind, now by the Church and by each individual Catholic prayer should be made without ceasing unto God for Peter's successor. Peter was in prison. The world of that day scorned the old fisherman. But Peter lives and the magnates who filled the world's eye of that day have passed into oblivion.

Peter's successor is in prison. The spirit of the world is unchanged. But the arm of God is not shortened; and though heaven and earth shall pass away the words of Christ and His sacred promises endure forever. Remembering that God uses the weak things of this world to confound the strong let us pray fervently, pray for our Peter in prison that in God's own way and in His own good time the chains may fall from his hands, and under the light and guidance of the Holy Spirit he may be free to fulfil the great mission which Jesus Christ the Son of the living God gave with the name of Peter to Simon the son of Jona.

THE BELGIAN "PEOPLE" AND CLERICALISM

Though Belgium is in the gaze of the world since the War very few English speaking people knew anything about this progressive little country before that time. Only twice in recent years has Belgium occupied much space in the press. The so-called Congo atrocities campaign of which even moderately well-informed people now have the grace to be ashamed, created an unfavorable impression which the press accounts of the Belgian strike tended to deepen. To the intelligent reader, therefore, information about the real Belgium before the War is of peculiar interest at the present time.

In the discussion referred to last week the Citizen says:

The general strike, the almost unanimous withdrawal of labor from the industrial occupations of Belgium, followed because the common people demanded the abolition of plural voting. Failing to win their rights in a constitutional way—because, they said, of the alliance between conservative Liberals and Clericals—deprived of political equality, they turned to the workers' more direct method of industrial action, the general strike: practically a peaceful revolution organized by the labor and co-operative unions of the country.

There is no doubt the Citizen is quite honest, but it accepts as facts impressions which chime in with anticlerical prejudice.

To understand the question in issue requires an intelligent appreciation of the facts of the case.

A little over three years ago there was a general election in Belgium. The press had heralded the prospect of a Socialist and Liberal victory and the downfall of so-called Catholic or Clerical government.

The actual result was the election of 101 Catholics, 44 Liberals, 39 Socialists and 2 Democrats; a majority for the Government of 16 over all other groups combined. That in a country where proportional representation obtains was a very emphatic endorsement of the policy of the party which had made Belgium one of the most prosperous and progressive countries of the world. The press despatches grudgingly acknowledged that the Government had been sustained by a "slight" majority. Following the election the Socialists or a section of them gave democratic expression to their progressive principles by rioting and smashing the

windows of churches and convents. This outbreak of hooliganism did not lose them the sympathy of our press; they were anticlerical, therefore the champions of liberty and the hope of enlightened progress. There was not a word of honest condemnation in our press comments. Had the elections gone differently, however, and the defeated Catholics indulged in rioting, rowdiness, window smashing and pillage, it is safe to say that the comments of our papers would make good Sunday reading for the friends of order and progress.

With regard to plural voting the Prime Minister, Charles de Broqueville, offered in January, 1913, to submit the whole question of the Belgian Franchise to a committee which after serious study should report to the Parliament which would then consider any suggested improvements. M. Vandervelde, the Socialist leader, rejected this proposal.

Some weeks afterwards there was a general strike called. This was the press despatch that appeared in all our papers including the Citizen:

Brussels, April 15, (1913).—Over a third of the total number of workmen in Belgium have struck work and joined the Socialist protest against the system of plural voting, which effectually prevents them from obtaining a majority at the polls, and which has permitted the clerical party to remain in power for the past twenty years.

International Socialism, sure of anticlerical sympathy throughout the world, backed the Socialist strike in Belgium; but not even the sympathetic press agencies made any such claim that it secured, as the Citizen puts it, "the almost unanimous withdrawal of labor from the industrial occupations of Belgium." As a matter of fact the strike was a fiasco. It was kept up for a week, when M. Vandervelde was glad to accept as a "compromise" the Prime Minister offer which he had rejected less than two months previously. His colleague in the opposition, Mr. Masson, the Liberal leader, moved that the question of revision of the franchise be referred to an extra Parliamentary committee composed of deputies, eminent jurists, scientists and others who after mature study of the question would report to Parliament in 1916 in order to give Parliament an opportunity of acting on their suggestions before the next general election.

Deputy Liebaert moved in amendment that a clause be added disapproving and condemning the general strike. The first part was passed unanimously; the amending clause by 124 to 39, the Socialists alone voting against it. The strike ended.

Then we were told in flaring headlines of the great "victory" of the "people" in forcing the Government to yield to their demand for universal suffrage. Which was about as accurate as anything that appeared in our papers during the several weeks in which Belgian politics were a prominent feature in the daily papers.

But it was inaccurate. Universal suffrage was not in question; it was for equal suffrage the Socialists struck. They got neither equal suffrage nor any promise of equal suffrage, but a promise to consider a revision of unequal suffrage as at present in force. There is not even a suggestion that the report of the eminent Belgians who were to consider the matter would depart from either unequal suffrage or proportional representation.

The Citizen says that "the people" had to engage in a general strike before the Government would even promise to bring in a bill to abolish plural voting. No such promise was ever made. No such bill was introduced.

Alas, the great War intervened and the Clerical Government chose honor, independence, heroic resistance and national martyrdom rather than submit to mighty (but unclerical) Germany's demands. And by so choosing it saved Europe, but for a time, at least, interrupted that political development which placed Belgium in the forefront of enlightened democracy.

It is too small and unsatisfying whatsoever Thou bestowest upon me apart from Thyself, or revealst to me whilst Thou art not seen, or promittest whilst Thou art not obtained.—Thomas a Kempis.

Many persuade themselves that they have no true sorrow for their sins if they do not practice many and great corporal austerities. Let us learn, nevertheless, that he does a good penance who studies to please God alone, at all times and in all things. This is a very perfect thing and of great merit.—St. Francis de Sales.

ARE CATHOLICS LOYAL

A despicable Toronto publication has been assailing the loyalty of Canadian Catholics. The journal in question is so utterly beneath contempt that to be censured in its columns is really to be complimented. Aspersions upon our loyalty from such a quarter do not call for a denial. The expert logician who fills the editorial chair of this journalistic disgrace argues that Quebec is disloyal because it is priest-ridden. When someone rises to object that the Belgians are patriotic he dismisses the objection by saying that the Belgians are not priest-ridden. Being gifted with good memories we reply that not so very long ago, during the Congo Atrocities Campaign, the Belgians were reputed to be the most hopeless slaves of Rome. Our objector persists. Have not Irish Catholics flocked to the colors? And Solomon answers yes, but they are not priest-ridden. Oh ye shades of the generations of dead and gone Orangemen? After an admission like that we may now confidently look forward to seeing Horatio Hooker walking in the next Corpus Christi procession. If we remember aright the publication in question opposed Home Rule precisely because the Irish were priest-ridden. But who would expect to find any respect for the rules of logic in the pages of this miserable rag? One might as well expect a little respect for the elementary principles of Christian morality. And by the way, is it not high time a stop was put to its weekly outpouring of filth and immorality? Or does the freedom of the press signify immunity to spread broadcast much that is absolutely immodest and more that is openly and brazenly suggestive? How long will outraged public opinion permit it? And how much longer will the powers that be continue to ignore it?

We are not going to pay this journalistic outrage the compliment of answering its ridiculous charges. Our loyalty is not a thing of yesterday. A good Catholic must necessarily be a good citizen, for, as Cardinal Mercier so well puts it in his famous pastoral, "the religion of Christ makes of patriotism a positive law; there is no perfect Christian who is not also a perfect patriot." The Catholic Church does not pick and choose. For nine thousand years she has taught her children to observe all things that Christ commanded her to teach. So she teaches her children to-day. And Christ commanded us to render to Caesar the things that were his. In other words we are bound not only to obey the Divine law but also to uphold the civil laws of the nation. "Let every soul," says the Apostle, "be subject to higher powers, for there is no power but from God and those that are, are ordained by God. Therefore, he who resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God, and they who resist purchase to themselves damnation. Therefore, be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake." The Apostle here argues that disloyalty is a sin, and a sin that incurs the punishment of damnation. Patriotism is therefore more than a natural virtue. It is a Christian virtue. And Cardinal Mercier goes so far as to say that the patriot who consciously gives his life for his country, by that very act secures the salvation of his soul.

Catholicity then, since it teaches everything that Christ commanded should be taught, teaches this virtue of Patriotism. Indeed we will go farther and say that the profession of Catholicity makes for loyalty. The Catholic Church is founded upon Authority. And how can he who has been trained from his tenderest years to respect Authority be anything but loyal, since Loyalty is begotten of reverence for Authority. Protestantism is the negation of Authority. We do not say, it would be absurd to say, that Protestantism does not breed patriots. But we do say that its inculcation of patriotism lacks the weight that is necessarily possessed by Catholicity. For the lessening of respect for Authority of whatsoever kind must react on our sense of obligation.

We, Catholics, do not parade our loyalty. We cannot understand why we should do so. It is so much a part of our every day life that many of us would as soon think of going about proclaiming "I believe in God." We think it would be just as reasonable to accuse a Catholic priest of not believing in Christ because, forsooth, he does not proclaim his belief at the street corner, like the

Salvation Army, as it is to accuse us of being disloyal because we do not parade it behind the swalling drum. We know and believe that Christianity must be accepted as a whole, and since Christianity inculcates patriotism we cannot but be loyal. Christ was a patriot. His enemies accused him of disloyalty, and they, the meanest crew of anti-patriots that history has ever seen, brought about His crucifixion and death. From which it follows that they who prate most of loyalty are not always the best patriots.

COLUMBA.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

THERE HAS come to our editorial desk a little periodical called "The American Catholic," published in California. This is not, as its title might indicate, a Catholic publication, but the organ in the United States of that little advanced group of Anglicans who, embracing almost the whole cycle of Catholic doctrine, and yielding even a degree of primacy to the Roman Pontiff, would persuade themselves that they are thereby entitled to the sacred and venerable name.

AN EXAMINATION of this little magazine affords some instruction and not a little diversion. It is not without a measure of edification also. For, putting aside for the moment the grotesqueness (we can designate it by no other word) of the claim to Catholicity on the part of an organization which, in its origin and antecedents is distinctively Protestant, and whose latitudinarianism has ever been its proudest boast, it is impossible to shut one's eyes to the deep undercurrent of earnestness which has borne so many serious men far upon their journey to their true home, the One, Holy, Catholic Church, founded by Christ and built upon the chief of the Apostles. And when we look back upon the host of earnest and devout spirits who, from just such surroundings, have found their way into the True Church, we cannot regard the present tendency of the section of Anglicanism represented in the pages of "The American Catholic" but with hope and encouragement for the future.

ANYONE READING this periodical will be struck with the great development in the matter of Catholic doctrine and practice which has taken place, we will not say in the Church of England, but in the souls of individual Anglicans within the past twenty-five years. Belief in the Real Presence, worship of the Blessed Sacrament, devotion to the Blessed Virgin and to the Saints, care for the souls of the dead, fasting and other penitential exercises, the adoption of the conventional life, and even, though in a very restricted sense, reverence for the person and office of the Vicar of Christ, have all come to be accepted tenets of the advanced or ritualist party. The celebration of the Eucharist is bluntly called the Mass; guilds are established for the promotion of prayers for the departed and Confession is coming to be regarded as indispensable to the practice of the Christian life.

THE DEGREE of advancement along these lines may best be seen in the advertising columns of "The American Catholic." The Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament states its objects to be "The honor due Our Lord in the Sacrament of His Body and Blood. Mutual and special intercession at the Holy Eucharist. Promotion of the observance of the fast before Sacramental Communion." The objects of the Guild of All Souls are, "intercessory prayer for the Deceased Members and all the Faithful Departed, and to provide furniture for burials according to the use of the Catholic Church, so as to set forth the two great doctrines of the Communion of Saints and the Resurrection of the Body;" while the Guild of the Love of God "admits to membership only those who go to confession." Another advertisement includes "Meditations for Holy Week" and "The Peoples' Mass Book for the use of American Catholics."

THE ASSUMPTION of the name Catholic as herein shown may from one point of view be characterized as cool and presumptuous. We have more than once had occasion to comment upon this present-day tendency of the sects of Protestantism, which in defiance of logic and history would arrogate to themselves a name which a generation or two ago they affected to despise. But as regards

the advanced "Catholic" movement in the Church of England, it is not necessary to say more than that the name is there as much out of place as are the doctrines which have been named and that while Catholics may regard the whole tendency as hopeful and encouraging they can but pray that the many earnest and devout souls who thus strive to assuage the inward craving with shadows and substitutes may be brought into the full light of truth where all Catholic doctrine, without uncertainty, misgiving or hostile criticism, will be their unfailing heritage. Until such souls realize they are but wanderers groping in the dark.

ONE OF THE amusing features of this Anglican "Catholic" movement is the care that is taken to direct travellers to "safe" churches in strange cities, and the "American Catholic" publishes a directory of such, giving the hours of Sunday and week-day "Masses," confessions when heard, and "Notes." These "Notes" are curious and to the Catholic have a tinge of humor. The initial "V" stands for "vestments"; "V. I. Rp." for "Vestments, Incense, Perpetual Reservation"; "R. O." for "Occasional Reservation," and, under the head of "confessions" the initial "A" for "By Appointment." This list covers the United States and Canada, there being in Canada but ten churches, apparently, that are in full sympathy with the "Catholic" movement. None of these Canadian churches have got beyond the "Occasional Reservation" stage. In the United States the "Perpetual," which with "Incense" may be taken as the most forward stage of the "movement," seems to have reached its highest development in the States of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania with Wisconsin in the Middle West not far behind.

A SINGULAR phase of this singular movement in the Church of England is that the bishops have all along been either indifferent or actively hostile. That the Anglican episcopate can never prudently commit itself to anything has come to be its most marked characteristic. When any dispute arises in the Church, such as the Kikuyu affair or as recently the validity of prayers for the dead, a show is made of appealing to the Archbishop of Canterbury. As well might an appeal be made to the King of Timbuctoo. The "head" of the English Church takes refuge always in the non-committal. Of this and the general attitude of the bishops the "American Catholic" has this to say:

"For many years the question as to prayers for the dead has been argued and now at last, in face of the great needs of the English nation in the distress caused by the numerous deaths on the battle field, the Archbishop has been obliged to declare his mind and he tells us that the English Church has nowhere (sic) declared it unlawful or erroneous to believe in the propriety and efficacy of such petitions. This being so, it would have been a graceful act if the Archbishop had also given a hint of some kind of regret for the way the officials of the Church of England have treated the matter in the past.

For more than fifty years they have persecuted those of the clergy and laity who have practiced what the Archbishop of Canterbury now preaches."

THIS, to say the least, is a very optimistic view to take of His Grace of Canterbury's deliverance. Outsiders have been able to see in that document nothing but a characteristic and traditional evasion of the issue. But that is a simple necessity of his position. He must keep the peace between two opposing factions and to him a careful steering between the Scylla and the Charydis is the law of safety and of life. He can make no more of a decision than to say, as he and his immediate predecessors have so often in effect said, "there is much to be said on both sides." No Bishop of the Church of England can do more. Teaching is no part of his office. He is the mere creature of the State, and the popular voice is his master. "Popularly speaking," says the "American Catholic," "our bishops should be our leaders, but the whole strength of the Catholic movement has always been in the fact that the pressure has been upwards." In other words, they are obliged to say what is popular, not necessarily what is true. And the strangest thing of all is that serious men, such as we assume these Anglican "Catholics" in the main to be, can shut their eyes to so indubitable a fact.