

ary declaration. By the traditions of the past and the necessities of the present we are more closely bound to Mexico than to any other American nation, and we owe to her on many counts a pure faith and a Bible for all.

A pure faith for a corrupt—this is Mexico's need. Christ's Christianity was not brought here when the pious soldiers of Cortez subdued the land in "the holy war" of 1521, and his priests baptized four million people in a few years, one man baptizing about five thousand in one day, and not desisting until he was unable longer to lift his hands. The effect was inevitable. "The introduction of the Roman religion," declared Humboldt, "had no other effect upon the Mexicans than to substitute new ceremonies and symbols for the rites of a sanguinary worship. Dogma has not succeeded dogma, but only ceremony to ceremony." On such a church feasted a corrupt and crafty priesthood, the support and product of the tyrannical political system which lasted from Cortez's conquest for three centuries. In the struggle for freedom from the ecclesiastical bondage which lasted even after the yoke of Spanish authority had been thrown off, Señor Lerdo compiled, in 1850, as Minister of Public Works, a statement of the wealth of the Mexican hierarchy, showing that it owned 861 estates of the value of \$71,000,000, and 22,000 city lots valued at \$113,000,000. This was but a partial revelation. The yearly income of the priests was estimated at \$25,000,000, while the whole banking business, loans and mortgages, was in their hands, and a bankrupt government was helpless before them. Of nearly half the property in the City of Mexico the archbishop was the virtual owner. The Church possessed wealth in other forms. Three bejewelled petticoats of the Virgin of Remedios, a figure of the Virgin Mary, in the Cathedral of Puebla, were believed to be worth \$3,000,000. The profligacy and corruption consequent upon this wealth were fearful. Twelve bishops in 1793 had an income of \$539,000.

In this luxury and wealth Mexicans had but little share. The priesthood was a Spanish incubus, working ever toward the subjection of the native peoples and the maintenance of European control. From the beginning the Aztec had no part in it, and at the end of its supremacy it was alien to the people whom it had oppressed. It was a heavy oppression. There were at one time more than fifty monasteries and convents in Mexico City alone. Robertson says: "In the year 1644 the City of Mexico presented a petition to the King of Spain, praying that no new monastery be founded, and that the revenue of those already established might be circumscribed, otherwise the religious houses would soon acquire the property of the whole country." In Mexico City the monastery of San Francisco covered four large blocks, while at San Luis Potosi was another nearly as large, many of its walls still standing, six or eight feet thick. On one corner of the property is now a Presbyterian church, while in Mexico City the Methodist church and printing establishment occupy a part of the great monastery—the greatest in the New World, and peopled at the time of its confiscation by fourteen monks! The heavy walls of many of