

prevent their being a constant real and formidable menace to the tranquility, harmony and purity of homes.

They shall not be permitted to deceive and dominate the low classes, especially women, and distort all moral ideas by means of the confessional, which is nothing but a window open on every home and every conscience; nor will they be permitted to make any one believe they can absolve, and that by virtue of a power and in the exercise of a ministry which they have received from the Divinity, that they can wash and nullify merely by learning of them all sins, all crimes, even the most abominable, and excuse and tolerate the most absolute violations of the moral and written laws.

They shall not exploit the people in the future by means of their interminable religious and profane festivities, or by nevaines, processions, rogatives and masses subject to a tariff. Nor shall they continue selling spiritual and temporal grace, pardons, indulgences and the heaven.

They shall not maintain in the future the idolatry of the people, making it kneel before dirty pictures representing men, women and animals, which usurp the name and the idea of the Supreme Being, and distort, equivocate and prevent all high moral conception of the world system and of the destiny of man on earth.

They shall not make believe that the rain on the fields, the light of the sky, the good crops, the realization of purposes, the result of business and enterprises, the satisfaction of desires, epidemics, floods, earthquakes and other calamities, health of persons and of animals, the securing of lovers, the luck of marriages, the sterility in women and impotency in men, depend, not on human effort or well directed will, or natural causes, common to all times, to all countries, races and beings, but on the vain caprice of mysterious and absurd trinities, the changeable will of christs, virgins and saints, whose favor can be purchased by means of offerings, donations and alms to the Church, or by prayers, paid for, offered specially by priests.

They shall not be permitted to publish under the title of educative works, books and pamphlets in which they attack and outrage the memory of national heroes, the institutions of the republic, in which they disown and deny the conquests of science and experience, in which the triumphs of sociology and modern psychology are condemned, in which they place the object of human life outside of life itself, in which they counsel hate to beauty, to matter and to sexual love, and the poor and the oppressed are exhorted to persevere in it, and to become resigned to their poverty and their slavery, to live and desire it. And they shall not be permitted in their papers, circulars, pas-

toral letters and sermons, to attack all reputations, deride all virtue, when these merits, virtues and reputations are those of individuals who are not with them, or who combat them.

They shall not be able to continue enriching themselves with the censurable trade in relics, images, scapularies, saints, votive offerings, medals, crosses and waters, and blessed candles, to the evident detriment of the true spiritual welfare and especially the temporal welfare of their adepts.

They shall no longer attempt against public health by means of their dirty fountains of blessed water, their chants over corpses, their vigils, their large gatherings within half closed temples; nor shall they continue contributing to the impoverishment and degeneration of the race for the direct advantage of the *masters* and in flagrant violation of the law, granting to Indians and miserable dependents special permit to work on Sundays, and forcing them to imbecile fasts and abstinences, under the pretext that eating certain food on certain days is an offense and a sin against the Lord.

They shall not be allowed to build and open their churches, their chapels and sanctuaries to pursue thereby their work of exploitation, retrocess and lies, nor will they be permitted to found or maintain beneficent associations, or institutions, wherein, forgetting that Christian charity must be still blinder than justice, they demand that the sick one, the needy, the orphan, in order to get help, must show himself a Catholic, Apostolic Roman.

They shall not be permitted to place collection boxes in churches, nor demand, directly or indirectly, contributions, offerings or alms; nor adorn their temples, and images with precious metals and stones, not even with the excuse that the donations are expontaneous offerings from the people.

They shall not continue living in sumptuous palaces belonging to the Nation, under the pretext that these palaces were dependencies of the churches; nor will they be permitted to monopolize earthly goods, they whose kingdom is not of this earth.

Finally, it will no longer be tolerated that within the national organization there exist another organization constituted of foreigners and depending from the Roman Pontiff, for in the Republic, in order to practice as a catholic priest, it will be necessary to be of Mexican birth, to promise, under severe penalties, to comply strictly with our laws and to obey our authorities, besides possessing other requisites of instruction, morality and any others required by the corresponding by-laws.



By no means whatever will they be permitted to belong, directly or indirectly, individually or collectively, by word or by writing, to boards, brotherhoods, corporations, societies or parties which may even remotely, have a political object.

Because all that, which, in accordance with what has been said before, must be forbidden, is what constitutes the wicked, perverse, criminal work of the catholic clergy, and *should be destroyed*.

As we stated at the beginning of this work, unless the Americans take the Mexican standpoint, they are unable to understand and to judge the work of clericalism in Mexico, and the reason of the prosecution begun against it.

As we said before, the people of the United States, the immense majority of which is formed by individuals educated in the protestant religion, economical, simple, liberal, and based on the free examen, cannot even conceive to what extent the catholic fanaticism in a country almost absolutely analphabet as is Mexico and populated by individuals whose moral and religious conceptions remain on the same level they had at the time of the conquest, imply an obstacle to all purpose of real civilization and progress.

Protestant Americans cannot understand all the abomination enclosed within Mexican catholicism, since they have no priests from Rome who believe themselves superior to the other mortals, nor have they the idolatric practices and the so-called sacraments, especially that of confession, which is only an instrument to penetrate into the homes and the consciences and rule over them.

Neither can it be understood, by the educated members of the catholic part of the United States. Because there is an abyss of centuries and races between their cultured, discreet, moderate catholicism, modified and modernized, if we may call it so, and the catholic idolatry, of the Mexican masses, mediaeval and savage taught, propagated and applied by Spanish priests, exactly similar in intellect and in morality to those who, with the cross in one hand and the sword in the other, accompanied the ferocious conquerors of Anahuac; those who destroyed, breaking and burning, even the slightest vestiges of the aboriginal civilizations, those who preached christianism while discussing if the Indian had a soul or not; those who to the sacrificial stone of the Aztecs, whereon the victim's breast was opened to extract the heart and offer it to their sanguinary deities, substituted the frightful fires of the Inquisition wherein, in the name of a God of mercy and love, they slowly burned the trembling flesh of the heretics.

The great figures of Cardinal *Gibbons* and Archbishop *Ireland* the illustrious pre-catholic American prelates, who

have started democratic campaigns in favor of the workmen and the oppressed, with their modernist tendencies, with their vain attempts to conciliate catholic religion with the conquests of civilization and Science, attempts wherein they have not hesitated to stand firm against the papal power, have no counterpart, and can have no counterpart in Mexico. To these great men who vainly search an opening on the iron walls of the catholic dogmatism, the Mexican clergy can only compare the miserable figure of the traitor Labastida, archbishop of Mexico, who went abroad to beg for a foreign scepter to come and rule over Mexico, the repugnant personality of the notorious Plancarte, scandalously stealing the treasures of Sanctuary of Guadeloupe, the mean profiles of the Spanish priests of contemporaneous Mexico, ignorant, fanatical, ambitious, loafers and thieves, who on hearing of the triumphs of the Constitutionalism, fled carrying, not their miraculous images of clay and papier mache, which they left in the churches at the mercy of the enemy, but the rich jewels, the gold and silver, the dazzling gems with which the stupidity of a whole country had adorned the idols; jewels which were converted into dollars and have assured their possessors a life of ease and comfort in foreign countries.

The Constitutionalism, which has been exposed before the American people as being atheist and the systematic enemy of all religious idea, shows, therefore, that it only attacks the catholic clergy in Mexico, and that after so many lessons during more than a century of bloody fights, the latter will not be permitted to take refuge under the laws of the republic in order to attack it with safety.

The revolution does not oppose the religious idea; good proof of this is that no complaints have been made by the protestant clergy and parishioners, which, although in a reduced number, exist in the Republic. Furthermore, the liberals of Mexico would be pleased to see that the directing centers of American protestantism would send good and numerous missionaries which no doubt would help to defanaticize the people. No doubt they could count on the moral and material help of the Government which would let them use, free of rent, many of the temples which to date have been used by the catholics.

However it may be, the American public should not admit the interested and foul attacks which the reactionary party incessantly directs against the Constitutionalism, by reason of the religious question.

The descendants of the European people which four centuries ago, from Martin Luther and the king of England and the German Princes, opposed the power of the Catholic Church and knew how to vanquish it, upsetting



the enormous barrier of fanaticism and ignorance, tyranny and cruelty which obstructed the path of progress, and making possible the birth of the modern spirit and the formation of the vigorous and liberal people of the North of Europe, which since then have been the type and model of civilization for the whole world, *cannot and must not*, unless they are inconsequent with their own doctrines and ideals, condemn, but on the contrary, approve, help and favor the Mexican liberal intellectuality, fighting at the present time, the last fight, the decisive battle against the power of clericalism, and which wishes for its country the same advantage and possibilities of progress which so many years ago were achieved by their European friends, and which the latter legated to their children the North Americans of today.

They should consider the case of Mexico in what relates to the religious campaign, as a simple isolated episode in the history of the terrible struggle between liberalism and catholic dogmatism.

They should bear in mind that sooner or later, the same convulsions will shake the people in America and in Europe which still are under the rule of papism.

They must remember that the people and the press of the United States, who some years ago applauded the gigantic labor cleansing which, despite the protests of a great part of the people, was undertaken by the Government of the noble and cultured France in order to separate the Church from the State, to put an end to religious associations, to inventory as property of the nation, the property of the clergy, to put an end to the ignominious abuses of the catholic and liberalist parties, *cannot and must not*, without a shameless revolt forcing them, condemn the same undertaking when and because it is Mexico that is in question, despite the fact that in our Spanish-American people, the dominion and the despotism of the clergy reached a height never paralleled in history.

They should take into account that they themselves would be staggering under the weight of such an atrocious curse, if instead of being colonized by the children of free and protestant England, and of having developed by the affluence of immigration of other protestant countries of Europe, they had had the misfortune of having been colonized by the fanatical Spaniards of the time of Charles V and Philip II, whose inheritance of ignorance and obscurantism is still alive in the so-called Latin countries of the American continent.

Finally, they should fear to become involved in similar struggles, if the development of catholicism continues, and if the latter finally succeeds in organizing its so-called

*National Catholic Party*, similar to that which caused the terrible war which is still being waged.

In his famous speech at Indianapolis, President Wilson recognized the right of the Mexican people to spill their blood for the conquest of their political and social liberties, which have cost so much to all countries on earth. But this recognition must also relate to the campaign now being waged with the object that the Mexicans may secure liberty of conscience, without which their triumphs on the social and political fields however brilliant, would be void and ephemeral.

*Because the only man who is really free, is he who has succeeded in emancipating himself from the ominous yoke of dogma and tradition.*

RODLOFO MENENDEZ MENA.

Merida, January, 1916.



