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Miscellanea

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Miscellanea.

"Persecution" in Mexico.

In view of the frantic efforts made by Catholics to bring sufficient pressure to bear on our Government to protest against anti-Catholic measures in Mexico, it is well to remember a few things. In the first place, hear the other side. According to the Associated Press, President Lazaro Cardenas of Mexico declared that neither his government nor related institutions persecute Catholics "for the fact that they profess Catholicism or any other religion." In a review of the history of the Mexican Church he said it had retarded the social and economic evolution of the country. "The Church in Mexico," he went on, "only furnished services which contributed to maintaining its position as a privileged class and an auxiliary of exploiting classes. It is natural that the government program of social renovation had to clash with the strong interests of the social classes, which want to conserve the *régime* of exploitation." (*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.)

Secondly, admitted that the President of Mexico paints the policy of his government whiter than facts warrant, he is surely not telling us anything new in his characterization of Roman policy in that state. The history of all solidly Catholic countries presents the same picture. When the *Lutheran* in an editorial says: "The present administration in Mexico has determined to pursue an anti-Church course which closely resembles the Russian policy in dealing with religion," another parallel is suggested. In a recent lecture on conditions in Russia the fearful reaction against all religion in that country was explained in these words: "The Greek Catholic Church under the Czars was about the poorest excuse for religion the world ever knew." Was the Roman Church in Mexico much better? Under the heading "Four Centuries of Authority" the *Lutheran*, in another editorial, says: "Since the days of Cortez and the Conquistadores, Catholicism has been the sole form of Christianity enjoying complete freedom and authority in Mexico. Not only worship, but education, art, and great wealth have been under Church control. That the revolution should so completely win the people to opposition invites inquiry. A friend of ours 'spent his 1934 vacation' south of the Rio Grande River and visited the more important churches of Mexico City and other large places. He was impressed by the attitude of the people, which he describes as 'religious to the point of superstition.' In the cathedral in Mexico City he found two masses in process at the same time and people going in 'to say their prayers' at the numerous shrines. At another church, before the entrance to which, on the plaza of the city, there was a flower market, the Mexican women would sell a bunch of flowers and then rush into the church to 'buy a candle and place it before one of the altars.' In one church he noticed a peasant hang the clay image of a pig on a nail driven into a pilaster of the wall near a shrine, drop a coin into a box, then cross himself, and kneel before an image in the shrine. It was explained that he probably had a sick pig and came to invoke the saint's aid to cure it. The pilaster had hundreds of nails driven into it and numerous crudely made clay replicas hanging from them, some of them

representations of babies. He referred to the silver and gold, bejeweled furnishings of altars and shrines, in vivid contrast with the poverty and wretchedness of the peons. He was told that the native Mexicans are greatly dissatisfied with the former ecclesiastical authorities, who were aliens. We asked him categorically, 'Do you think the Catholic Church has done what it could and should have done to fit the Mexicans to do their part and have their share in the culture and productive agencies of the twentieth century?' He answered, 'Absolutely no. They had unconditioned opportunities, and they neglected them. Now the peasants have become deeply embittered against the Church's policies and representatives.'

We surely agree to this: "All Christians in America will be opposed to countenancing an atheistic state in the western hemisphere"; but also to this: "In joining our protests to those coming from Roman Catholic sources, we are not agreeing that the Church of Rome has earned the good will of those who entrusted their worship to her stewardship. A considerable portion of what is called persecution is in the nature of punishment—the reaping of the whirlwind because the wind was sown." T. H.

Zu Dan. 9, 24—27.

In der ersten Nummer des laufenden Jahrgangs von „Forschungen und Fortschritte“ bringt Prof. Oswald Gerhardt-Berlin eine Abhandlung über das Thema: „Wann sollte der Messias kommen?“ Er stützt sich dabei in seinen Ausführungen hauptsächlich auf die Stelle Dan. 9, 24—27, und zwar in der Fassung, wie sie sich in einem bisher völlig unbeachteten Text bei Tertullian findet. Dieser Apologet beschäftigte sich in seiner Schrift „Gegen die Juden“ eingehend mit dem neunten Kapitel des Buches Daniel. Gerhardt schreibt: „In seinem Exemplar lautete jene Stelle folgendermaßen: „Und du sollst wissen und vernehmen und verstehen, vom Ausgang eines Gesprächs bezüglich der Herstellung und des Wiederaufbaus von Jerusalem bis auf den Gesalbten, den Herzog (Christum, Ducem) sind 62 Wochen und eine halbe; und es wird wieder erstehen und gebaut werden in Breite und Umwallung, und die Zeiten werden erneuert werden. Und nach diesen 62 Wochen wird der Salbung ein Ende gemacht werden, und sie wird nicht mehr sein. Und die Stadt und das Heiligtum wird er vernichten mit einem heranziehenden Fürsten.“ Nicht weniger als siebenmal zitiert Tertullian diese Prophezie, einmal mit der feierlichen Beteuerung, daß Gott es vorausgesehen und durch Daniel verkündigt habe. . . . Alle Handschriften zeigen, daß der obige Danieltexst bei Tertullian einheitlich feststeht — von irgendwelcher abweichenden Lesart wußte dieser Verteidiger des Christentums nichts.“

Dieser Fund ist aus mehreren Gründen wichtig und interessant und wird jedenfalls zum rechten Verständnis der Stelle beitragen. Gerhardt weist auf Grund des Tertulliantextes nach, daß die Daniellsche Weissagung das Geburtsjahr Christi auf 7 vor unserer Zeitrechnung angegeben hat, nämlich 437½ Jahre nach dem Gespräch in Neh. 2, 1 ff., das im Jahre 445 v. Chr. stattfand.

B. E. R.