

The Slaves of the Church

Introduction

MANUEL GONZÁLEZ PRADA (1844–1918), LIKE INCA GARCILASO DE LA VEGA, CÉSAR VALLEJO, JOSÉ MARÍA ARGUEDAS, AND MARIO VARGAS LLOSA,

ranks among the top Peruvian literary figures, but only in Peru, where his work is hotly debated by literati, social scientists, historians, politicians, and journalists. Outside Peru he rates no more than the inclusion in anthologies of one of his poems; his most famous essay, “Nuestros indios” (“Our Indians”); or the occasional critical article on his work. However, with the Cuban José Martí (1853–95), González Prada is a founder of Latin American modernism, a movement that critics generally accept as running roughly from the publication of Rubén Darío’s *Azul*, in 1888, to Darío’s death, in 1916. Gordon Brotherston notes that Darío coined the term *modernismo* the same year he published *Azul* (vii). There are many reasons there has been less interest in González Prada than in Martí and other modernists. To begin with, Darío, in an 1888 visit to Peru, met with Ricardo Palma but not González Prada (Castro). Palma, writing in a more traditional style—even though he invented a genre, *tradiciones*—was the establishment’s literary darling, while González Prada, always the innovator in style and an agitator in subject matter, remained largely unknown outside his native land. Thus, it made perfect sense that the maker of literary movements would visit the internationally known Palma but not González Prada, who could not add to his fame and expanding literary networks. Furthermore, when Darío later went to New York he turned his epistolary relationship with Martí into a personal friendship (Henríquez Ureña 93). In the United States there is much more interest in Martí, who lived here, than in González Prada, who did not. Hispanic modernism is typically understood to include the like-minded people whom Darío knew personally, such as Martí, Julián del Casal (Cuba), Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera (Mexico), Ricardo Jaimes Freyre (Bolivia), and Juan Ramón Jiménez (Spain), and to exclude those whom he did not, such as Adela Zamudio (Bolivia) and González Prada. Finally, González Prada’s anarchism, his feminism, and his tell-it-like-it-is essays did not endear him to many people.

Yet González Prada’s role as a deep thinker and consummate poetic innovator is indisputable. Peruvian intellectuals as diverse as Vallejo, José Carlos

MANUEL GONZÁLEZ PRADA

TRANSLATION BY CATHLEEN CARRIS

INTRODUCTION BY THOMAS WARD

CATHLEEN CARRIS, a PhD student in the Department of German and Romance Languages and Literatures at the Johns Hopkins University, coedited and contributed an essay to *Music at the Crossroads: Lives and Legacies of Baltimore Jazz* (Apprentice, 2010). This is the second of Manuel González Prada’s essays that she has translated.

THOMAS WARD, professor of Spanish and director of Latin American and Latino studies at Loyola University Maryland, has published three books: *La anarquía inmanentista de Manuel González Prada* (Lang, 1998), *La teoría literaria: Romanticismo, krausismo y modernismo ante la globalización industrial* (U of Mississippi, 2004), and *La resistencia cultural: La nación en el ensayo en las Américas* (U Ricardo Palma, 2004). Recently, he edited a volume of critical studies, *El porvenir nos debe una victoria: La insólita modernidad de Manuel González Prada* (Red para el Desarrollo de las Ciencias Sociales en el Perú, 2010).

Mariátegui, Victor Raúl Haya de la Torre, and the Nobel laureate Vargas Llosa have in one way or another been inspired by him. Additionally, like works by Martí and other turn-of-the-century Latin American essayists, his writing resonates through the decades, as noted by Alicia Ríos, since it was a forerunner of modern-day cultural studies. In a more hemispheric sense, his work also anticipates and broadens the decolonial theory developed by the Caribbean francophone theorists Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon.

While some recent feminist scholars have been disappointed with González Prada's vision of women's liberation, lamenting that, although progressive, it was still paternalistic (Peluffo, "Dandies" and "Anticlericalismo"; Tauzin-Castellanos), his feminism was arguably the most advanced of any man of his era. This brings us to "Las esclavas de la Iglesia," presented here for the first time in English translation, an explosive combination of anticlericalism and feminism that was delivered to the Loggia Stella d'Italia, a Freemason lodge in Lima, on 25 September 1904. In this speech he proclaimed the need for women to liberate themselves from the doctrines of the church and, more important, from the men of the church who held designs on their bodies—and minds. But despite an admittedly noticeable degree of paternalism, González Prada sees women not as passive receptacles but as social actors who can civilize men. He writes that women act in three ways: "they seek happiness where they believe they will find it, they show weak-spirited victims the path, and they offer the utmost example of morality." González Prada is aware that he is a sociologically oriented nation builder, social science understood here in the original positivist sense developed by Auguste Comte, not in the sense of later sociologists, contemporary to González Prada, such as Gustave Le Bon. In "Las esclavas de la Iglesia," he argues that social restructuring must begin with the family unit and work its way up to the republic. His holding up of Protestantism as a progressive model, much like his colleague Clorinda Matto de Turner's similar tactic, results from his observing the greater female emancipation in the United States and seeing that country and the "European nations of the Reformation" that came before it as countercultural

models for the pursuit of "science and liberty" in Latin America.

The essay has appeared in various forms over the years. After it was presented orally, it most likely circulated in Lima in pamphlet form, although no extant copy of that version has been found. The third and fourth parts were published in October 1904 in *Germinal*, the journal of González Prada's political party, the National Union. In December of that same year, three thousand copies were issued as a nineteen-page pamphlet bearing the title *El catolicismo y la mujer* ("Catholicism and Women") in Montevideo. It then appeared as a chapter in the second of the two famous collections of González Prada's essays published during his lifetime, *Horas de lucha* (1908; "Times of Struggle"). There have been many editions of *Horas* since then, published in Callao, Peru (1924 and 1930); in Barcelona; in Mexico (1943); in Buenos Aires (1946); in Caracas (1976); and, despite periods of censorship, in Lima (1960, 1964, 1969, 1972, 1977, 1978, 1981, 1985, 1986, 1989, and 2010). In 1986 "Las esclavas de la Iglesia" was published as part of *Obras*, González Prada's collected works. Various editions are now available on the Internet, offered by Loyola University Maryland's Web site, *Wikisource*, *Google Books*, and other sites. In 2009 Isabelle Tauzin-Castellanos published a philological edition, in which she compares the 1908 version of the essay with the two sections that appeared in *Germinal*. We are working from the 1908 edition, taking into account Tauzin-Castellanos's philological study.

The numerous editions of *Horas de lucha* attest to continued interest in this volume. Yet the work of González Prada, who is now well known in global Hispanic intellectual circles, remains largely unknown among non-Spanish speakers, aside from several poems translated into English, French, and Italian and Harold Eugene Davis's 1961 translation of the essay "Nuestros indios." This changed somewhat with the first book-length translation of his essays, issued by Oxford University Press in 2003. *Free Pages and Hard Times*, edited by David Sobrevilla and translated by Frederick H. Fornoff, selects essays from five volumes of nonfiction, two that appeared during González Prada's lifetime and

three that were published posthumously. Only four of the twenty essays that constituted the second edition of *Horas* are included.¹ *Horas de lucha* has still not been fully translated, nor has “Las esclavas de la Iglesia” appeared in any language besides the original Spanish until now. Here we present “Las esclavas de la Iglesia” in a translation by Cathleen Carris, who has tried to use current English without distorting the essay’s meaning to make the text more accessible to a twenty-first-century reader.

NOTE

1. The twentieth essay, “Nuestros indios,” was added by González Prada’s wife for the second edition (1924).

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The Slaves of the Church

Gentlemen:

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE MEMBERS OF THE Loggia Stella d’Italia for the honor they have been so kind as to grant me by requesting my presence at this ceremony in commemoration of the sack of Rome and the collapse of the papal throne.¹ Even though I am not a Freemason, I feel inspired by the spirit that stirred the passions of the ancient Freemasons in

their secular fights against altar and throne. Even though I was not born in the classical land of Machiavelli and Dante, I consider myself a compatriot of the good Italians gathered here to celebrate a triumph of Reason and Liberty. Beyond the small-minded homeland of mountains and rivers, there is the great homeland of like thought and mutual appreciation. Those born under the same

flag as we were are our fellow citizens; but our true compatriots, our friends, our brothers, are those who think as we think, those who love and hate all that we love and hate.

I will not consider 20 September and its relation to European politics, the unification of Italy, or the Freemasons but instead will take advantage of the free reign that I have been allowed for this speech.² I will expound upon *women and Catholicism* to show that female slavery persists in the Roman Catholic world, that women continue to be *the slaves of the church*.

[I]

Many people profess a very basic, very comfortable, and very simple theory that can be summarized in two lines: *although men can and should liberate themselves of all traditional belief, women still need a religion*. And since in Catholic nations religion translates as Catholicism, the theory implies that half of the human race enjoys the light of midday, the fine drinks and exquisite delicacies of Lucius, while the other half endures the darkness of midnight, the foul waters of the swamp, and the indigestible refuse of the convent.³ Let us laugh at this theory, declaring at the same time that there is nothing so abominable or shameful as when an honorable man imagines himself in possession of the truth and keeps it for himself, leaving everyone else in the dark.

Whether or not women need a religion, we should ask the following questions: Does Catholicism represent the noblest form of religion? Does it deserve to be praised as the only salvation for women's souls? Certainly, Balzac asserted that women were "neither pure nor innocent until they had experienced Catholicism."⁴ This statement, which does an injustice to most women, is proved false by the facts and refuted by other intellectuals just as influential as Balzac. Are we to ignore the elevated moral consciousness of Protestant women? Do we not know that in the United States and Eu-

ropean nations of the Reformation women excel in their education and their character? Do we not see that the ascent of the feminine soul coincides with the decline of Catholicism?

Although we don't belong to any religious sect, let us have the good faith to recognize that Protestantism elevates individuals and ennobles nations because it evolves with the spirit of the modern age, without openly contradicting scientific truths. Catholicism, by proclaiming a passive faith, keeps us imprisoned in dogma and cut off from the rest of the world, like a dead body inside a lead coffin. Even the most uncompromising and absurd Protestant denomination, by declaring free thought, always leaves a window open so that it may escape from itself and move toward rationalism. If, then, Catholic orthodoxy deserves to be called a religion of stagnation and ruin, let them tell you so in Spain, Ireland, Poland, and some South American countries.

However, instead of comparing nations with nations, we should compare families with families. In Protestant homes, while wives and children enjoy *the extensive right to interpret divine law* and constitute a truly distinct people, what happens in homes blessed by the church? There, fathers leave the family's moral instruction to a stranger and resign themselves to live forever under clerical tutelage. There, mothers, caught little by little in the gears of fanaticism, end up with minds dulled and destroyed by a cult's rancid and grotesque ceremonies. There, sons, forced to profess a faith that they instinctively reject, are compelled to choose between silent hypocrisy and incessant domestic struggles. There, daughters, before opening their hearts to a man's love, are left morally deflowered in the unseemly machinations of the confessional.

In a marriage between two devout believers, in addition to the corporeal union between husband and wife there is a spiritual communion between woman and priest. In Protestant nations, clergymen are content with simply calling themselves friends of the

family; but, among Catholic peoples, especially those of Spanish origin, priests consider it their right to name themselves heads of households: where they see a woman, they think they see a servant, a slave, an object that belongs exclusively to them. A priest will step in between a husband and his wife to tell the man, “Although your wife’s body may belong to you, her soul belongs to God, and therefore to me, since I am God’s representative.” Grounding his argument in such sound logic, this minister of God seizes the woman’s soul—that is, when he doesn’t also take possession of her body. Nevertheless, this is what so many liberals and freethinkers glorify when they maintain that “women need a religion.” They act like a pharmacist who makes a panacea, sells it as a fail-safe remedy, yet would never use it to treat himself.

[II]

It is repeated as an axiom that Christianity liberated women. But, as Louis Ménard affirms,

emancipation occurred long before the appearance of Christianity. By replacing polygamy with monogamous marriage, Hellenism elevated women to the rank of family matriarch—“mistress of the house,” according to Homer’s expression. Goddesses ruled alongside gods on Mount Olympus; women, the *Peleadas* and the *Pythias*,⁵ announced divine oracles in Dodona and Delfos. But the Christian god takes the form of a man, and women are excluded from the Trinity.⁶

The emancipation of women, like the freedom of slaves, is indebted not to Christianity but to Philosophy. In the mid-nineteenth century, slavery reigned among Christian peoples in South America, the United States, and Russia, when it had already disappeared from nations that never recognized the name of Jesus Christ. Can women from Catholic countries today call themselves emancipated? In those nations, women suffer

canonical and civil slavery. By establishing the indissolubility of marriage, by condemning the most legitimate causes that justify the annulment of that bond, by not allowing this annulment except in a very limited number of cases and under onerous conditions, ones that are drawn-out and even impossible to overcome, the Catholic Church fosters and sanctions the slavery of women. It snatches from them one of the few weapons they have to throw off men’s tyranny, forever imprisoning them inside a home where they find themselves obligated to show love, respect, and obedience to an unworthy companion who deserves only hatred, disdain, and rebellion. Instead of building a new family made pleasant by good faith, tenderness, and fidelity, Catholics prefer to maintain a home poisoned by hypocrisy, indifference, and adultery.

Let us take a look at Peru, a nation so Catholic in its laws and customs that it should rightfully be called a branch of Rome and the future convent of South America. Here we have codes of law that restrict women’s legal capacity without diminishing their culpability when they commit a crime, codes that do not judge them worthy enough to benefit from civil law but declare them deserving of the same penalties established for men. When treating the subject of matrimony, our *Código civil* [Civil Code] is a canonical law sanctioned by Congress. We will now quote some articles inspired by the purest orthodoxy:

“Marriage legally contracted is indissoluble: it can be ended only by the death of one of the spouses. Everything agreed upon contrary to this is void and judged as non-binding” (134).

“Impotence, insanity, or any mental incapacity that overcomes one of the spouses does not dissolve the marriage” (168).

“A woman is obliged to live with her husband and follow him wherever he decides to reside” (176).

“A man has the right to ask for the depositing of the woman who has abandoned their

common residence, and the judge should indicate the place of the deposit" (204).⁷

On the other hand:

"A woman cannot appear before a judge without her husband's authorization" (179).

But nothing should surprise us, given that an article from that same code, when referring to parental rights, equates married women with "children, slaves, and the legally incapacitated" (28). Not much analysis is required to assure oneself that in all these laws survive the vestiges of a barbaric age, when women were considered men's property.

The church venerates Mary and glorifies her to such a point that there is a tendency to incorporate her into the Trinity and establish a mystery of four persons. Nonetheless, it is impossible to deny Catholicism's disdain toward women. For many men of faith and experience the feminine soul is summed up in two archetypal figures: *Eve, representing humanity's ruin, and Delilah, a sick heart, twelve times impure*. Though we doubt that the members of a church council would deny that women have souls, we should remember that some holy fathers do not acknowledge honesty, noble character, or common sense in any woman. The diatribes with which priests have condemned women appear to be nothing more than fabrications. These men are so furiously misogynistic that they could be taken at times for lunatics, at other times for wretched beings that had either no mother or a very wicked one. Let us recall Saint Jerome, who neither lived nor died like Luis Gonzaga,⁸ and Saint Augustine, who began as a womanizer and ended up as a bishop. These canonized men, who are considered reservoirs of wisdom, call woman the "way of all evils, gateway to hell, arrow of Satan, daughter of the devil, venom of the basilisk, stubborn ass, scorpion always ready to sting," etc.⁹

Contempt for women and belief in men's superiority have so firmly taken root in the minds of peoples suckled by the church that many Catholics see in their wife not an equal

but rather the first among their servants. Besides treating their wives as sex objects, they see them as household tools. Such a belief in the social mission of one sex reveals the debasement of the other. A man's moral stature is measured by the way he thinks of a woman. To the savage and ignorant, she is nothing more than a mating partner; to the cultured and intellectual, she is an intellect and a heart.

While the moral value of an individual is calculated in this way, the advancement of a nation is measured by the humanity of its customs and the equity of its laws. Where egotism is tempered more with abnegation, where the dispossessed demand more rights, there flourishes a more advanced civilization. One cannot know a community without having studied the social and legal status of its women. It is necessary to see the considerations from which they benefit by custom and the rights that they enjoy by law. In Protestant nations, women's ascension has been realized so surely that already one can foresee their complete emancipation. In such societies that endorse the equality of both sexes, one can conceive that someday women will gain total control of their person and share with men the political direction of the world.¹⁰

Everything is conceivable, except the church's elevating women to the same level as men and granting them the right to familiarize themselves with God. By excluding them from the priesthood, the church judges them unworthy of the highest moral function: the female's untruthful lips should not read from the pulpit the doctrine revealed by a God of truth; the female's impure hands do not deserve to consecrate the sacrifice in which the victim, the immaculate lamb, is offered to the heavenly Father. What does Catholicism set aside for women? They whisper prayers and abide by its rites, without approaching the altar or even brushing up against the steps of the tabernacle with their dresses. They kneel down in the confessional, revealing their sins, repenting and humbly asking for the priest's

absolution. Females neither interpret the book nor debate Dogma; they obey and remain silent.¹¹

And so, women offer their love to Jesus, while men pour hate upon him; women follow him through sandy and rocky grounds to hear his saving precepts; women courageously confess to him, while one apostle sells him out and another renounces him; women wipe away his sweat and his blood as he walks the Via Dolorosa, as his executioners insult and spit at him; women accompany him and console him during the torturous ordeal, while the disciples abandon him and even renounce the Holy Father. But these women receive from priests little more than insults, anathemas, domestic servitude, and moral degradation.

This very day faith moves away from strong minds to take refuge in weak spirits. Who slows down the inevitable ruin of Catholicism? Who toils to construct a dam and stop the uncontrollable flood of religious skepticism? Who unselfishly renounces the glories of this world and pleasures of love, devoting themselves to the mystic husband with no lips to kiss but rather thorns that wound hearts? Who would offer all their soul, all their blood, and all their life so that the shadow of the cross could reach the four corners of the earth and priests could dominate its highest and most powerful rulers? “The scorpion, the basilisk, the daughter of the devil, the stubborn ass.”

[III]

No one has more reason than women to reject a religion that deprives them of so much that it keeps them in an everlasting state of childhood or indefinite guardianship. But they do not reject it. Instead, the unredeemed rise up against their redeemers and the victims bless the weapon and fight in favor of their murderers. Women do not give way to freethinkers or anarchists; they reject as an enemy the reformer who comes to save them from shame

and misfortune proclaiming the annulment of marriage not only by mutual dissent but also solely by the will of one spouse. Women side with priests, condemning free unions and sanctifying the legal prostitution of marriage.

Gentlemen, the saddest of injustices and abuses is in the blindness and moral decline of victims. They lose consciousness of their pitiful condition, not even entertaining the desire to shake off their shameful yoke. Slaves and serfs owe their personal dignity to the efforts of generous and self-sacrificing spirits. Likewise, Catholic women will be emancipated only by the vigorous action of men. Unfortunately, the efforts undertaken to decatholicize women and divorce them from the clergy did not produce fruitful results.¹² Why? It is because of the shortcomings of the very people who attempted the decatholicization and divorce. Some people try to redeem humanity when they can't even win over their own families. They forget that before giving speeches and writing books, they have to speak the most eloquent of languages—that is, they must lead by example.

What do powerful books and devastating speeches achieve, if while husbands dispel myths and bring down churches wives infect their children with the virus of Catholicism? Mothers demolish with sentiment what fathers try to build with Reason. Maternal affection instills beliefs at a place in the soul that cannot be reached later on by the lessons imparted by the rigorous instructor. Not only do women make our flesh of their flesh and our blood of their blood, not only do they nurture us at their breast and comfort us in their lap, they also fill us up with their suffering and their ideas. Like the Christian god of biblical legend, they mold us in their image and likeness. We may be named after our fathers, but we represent the moral character of our mothers. Inasmuch as politicians boast of the monopoly they hold on the direction of the world, women guide the progress of humanity. Society's driving force—its great

propulsion—does not operate boisterously in plazas or in the revolutionary parties; it works silently at home.

This is understood very well by the *ministers of the Lord*. They smile maliciously when their enemies rise up to hurl thunderbolts against Christianity, while angelic matrons run to swell the *coffers of Saint Peter* and endorse the manifestos of the Catholic Union. These priests sleep soundly, dreaming that great reforms die at birth or that they last only a few years if they aren't able to take root in women's hearts. If they can count on the mothers, they can count on their children. In other words, they own today and have secured tomorrow as well. But if they find out that just one of their innumerable believers has ripped off the blindfold of the faith and has returned to see with the light of her own reason, they lose that smile as they suffer the most bitter insomnia or terrifying visions. Losing their women is a horrible nightmare for the church! Catholicism, which moves only by an irresistible motor force gathered in other ages, revolves around two points: the bad faith of men and the ignorance of women. When the feminine center is lost, where will this ancient and complicated mechanism go, with its rusted wheels and unbalanced axles?

Many reformers do not understand, or pretend not to understand, these simple truths, leaving their wives under the humiliating domination of the clergy. These men embrace knowledge and skepticism, while abandoning their wives to ignorance and fanaticism. Do marriages based on such principles deserve to be called a union of rational beings? The sweetest part of a loving relationship is not found in the contact of one epidermis against another or in simultaneous spasms. The sweetest part resides in the beating of two hearts in unison, in the harmonious flight of two intelligences toward truth and good. Animals join together momentarily, but the two human genders should join forces to ennoble and perfect each other.

Do not argue that we are dreaming when we proclaim the possible assimilation of women to men; rather, acknowledge the negligence and foolishness of a husband in not knowing how to take advantage of his strength. Love is the most powerful aid in battles over ideas. Given that women in love want to be dominated and possessed, the men they love acquire an irresistible power of absorption: these men can reign with tenderness and truth, as opposed to priests, who dominate with fear and fallacies. Some husbands, for example, after a few years of intimate married life did not manage to convert them, dominate them, or absorb them in heart and mind. Although they possessed the animal instinct to seduce and fascinate their mate, they did not have the manlike capacity to rise up and redeem women.¹³

Let us pity the poor wretches who show themselves to be men by fathering children but not by performing manly duties of a higher order. When they open their homes to degradation and fanaticism, they are the first victims, deserving of pity as much as ridicule. Fanaticism causes no less damage than ether, morphine, alcohol, or opium. When men take control of women, they bring them down morally and intellectually, they strip them of all feminine seductions, they transform them into something asexual or without gender, something called a devout person. Husbands who during the first days of marriage handed over happy and attractive wives to their priest get back after a few years overly pious women of stiff and severe virtue, altar-obsessed, neglectful of personal hygiene and lacking tenderness in their souls, mystical and holy ogres that live by putting up immovable ramparts of ignorance and obstinacy against every rational impulse. When nothing more can be done by men of conscience, the home wreckers become convinced that when they make women love God so much, women will end up despising men.

[IV]

At the risk of falling into monotonous repetitions and tiring the people who have been so kind as to listen to me, I would like to specify and condense some ideas.

In every age and every country, women have been the victims and the weapons of priests. When masculine pride has attempted to eradicate priestly oppression, women's sensuality has intervened to weaken men, hypnotize them, and nail down the chain on them even harder. We can see this today close by: priests drag down women, women drag down men, and men allow themselves to be dragged down, transformed into Panurge's flock.¹⁴ Some appear to rebel as they cry out in the open air; but most give up and fall silent before the baldachin's shadow. Men have a two-sided nature: in the street they are wolves that devour clerics and friars; at home, they are sheep that lick the hands of monsignors and reverend fathers.

However, many lambs, clothed in the temporary street skin of a wolf, waste our time with the pretentious nonsense of evangelizing. They would rival Tolstoy.¹⁵ Let us not use the title *people's apostle* to identify those that never knew nor wanted to take effective action within their immediate family sphere. Let us be wary of propagandists who argue for excessive tolerance while their homes smell of a sung mass.¹⁶ It is like a rosebush growing acorns, or an eagle hatching ostriches. To cure our towns, we must start by cleaning up our homes—public hygiene is impossible without private hygiene. When we wish to secularize a town, we should begin with families, since total freedom cannot be constructed with fragments of slaves. It is up to individuals much more than to the state to achieve a secular life. If we banish priests from our homes, they will also be cast out of our schools. If our mothers can break away from priests, our children can be snatched away from them too.¹⁷ Then the future will be closed to them.

This is not about endorsing the decree of the Inquisitors and the Muslims, to *believe or die*,¹⁸ as a family rule. Those that reject the tyranny of a supreme being and deny the infallibility of a pontiff likewise reject the autocracy of a husband. In a truly humane marriage, there is no absolute head, but rather two partners with equal rights. There is no despot, but rather an older brother. The crude apostles that commit such brutal acts against the impressionable souls of women and children are like a donkey that sinks its teeth into a bouquet of flowers or an elephant that smashes the shelves of a glassware shop.

This is about effusing an atmosphere of goodness and justice, about resorting not to despotic intimation but to fraternal suggestions, and about not invoking authority without presenting substantiation. Mistakes are not like superficial herbs that we violently eradicate with the point of a plough, nor are truths like steel nails that, with a single blow of the hammer, reach the heart of worm-eaten wood. Deceit flees step by step; truth penetrates drop by drop. A sane man does not impose; one's imposition hurts another's pride and arouses resistance. He instead uses facts to show that the differences between a free spirit and a devout one are no credit to the latter. Believing without proof is worth as much as denying without reason. To be dogmatic about things is supremely ridiculous and vain. Secular inquisitors are truly laughable and hateful characters, as are sextons of free thought.

Let us mock those who practice tolerance out of laziness or convenience, just as we laugh at those who show intolerance because of ignorance, popular opinion, or a passing fad. Many times, we equate tolerance with lack of conviction, malleability of character, the humiliating hedging of one's mistakes, and cowardliness in denouncing injustice. Intolerance consists not of pitting platform against platform, books against books, or energetic rejections against brutal charges but

rather of silencing voices, breaking pens, and imprisoning or suppressing one's opponent. There is no tolerance in allowing the deformation of young minds by means of an antiscientific education, only reprehensible selfishness. We do not accept the traditional rights of the paterfamilias. Just as we protest the treatment of women as servants or their husbands' property, we also reject the idea that sons belong exclusively to their fathers. Children's souls do not belong to their father, mother, or their priest—they belong to the truth, to something so abundant that it has no limits. The soul cannot be confined to the barren creed of any religion. Furthermore, gentlemen, children do not belong to themselves: they are indebted to humanity. It is their obligation to clear the path for future generations. We have not come to this earth to drink water, to graze at pasture, and to leave only a skeleton behind.

In addition to tolerance misunderstood, let us add grievous pessimism. There is nothing *sweeter* than this *bitter* philosophy that encourages us to fold our arms and remain indifferent to the struggles of humanity. We repeatedly tell ourselves that, given that evil will forever triumph, getting involved in the service of good will accomplish nothing. But do we really understand life and the cosmos so well that we should assume the futility of all our actions? In the universe, nothing disappears without affecting something else. The displacement of an imperceptible grain of sand may alter the course of a large river. The disturbance of one microorganism in a drop of water could affect storms out at sea. The flutter of a butterfly's wings in the nectar of one flower might (who knows) come to reverberate in the twinkle of the farthest star. It could be that some of the truths stated here might proceed to shake off the lethargy of some spirit numbed in the bosom of superstitions. You must admit the degradation of a people and the stagnation of a generation. You cannot deny the advance of the collective toward a kingdom of truth and justice. Hu-

manity is an immense caravan or, rather, an army with its sloths and its cowards. While some sleep or desert, others march and fight. The level of the human species rises very slowly, but it does rise. This ascent takes place not because the masses ignite the movement but because a few good-willed individuals surface from time to time to condemn inhuman self-centeredness and to maintain that magnanimous feelings guided by lofty ideals should be placed over and above material interests. This is to say that, graphically speaking, the heart is higher than the belly, and the head is higher than the heart.

Let us predict, then, the great success of an energetic and reasonable campaign, initiating within the ranks of families and radiating throughout the entire republic. Someday, perhaps not so far away, our domestic enemies will become our greatest allies. Once women see the accordance of speech with action, once they perceive that free souls can go so far beyond handcuffed consciousnesses, once they affirm that a morality without obligation or sanction ennobles more than the stale theory of reward and punishment, only then will they abandon priests for philosophers, the church for the home, dogma for Reason. All naive errors, all feminine superstition will disappear in man's unalterable conviction, just as muddy rivers purify themselves in the ocean's incorruptible water.

But let these women, especially married women, cease to limit themselves to the humble role of catechumens, full of hope in the redeeming acts of their husbands. There are abundantly more domestic brutes and tyrants than we could imagine. Happiness does not await us in heaven, nor is it solicited from others; it is pursued by itself, and it is conquered by its own efforts. By violating canonical and civil laws, defying bourgeois concerns, establishing a free home when the Christian home contains shame, despair, and death, women carry out three acts equally praiseworthy: they seek happiness where they believe they

will find it, they show weak-spirited victims the path, and they offer the utmost example of morality. Yes, gentlemen, of morality, although dawdlers and hypocrites may protest. I direct my remarks toward emancipated people, and I am not afraid to call things by their rightful names: wives who give themselves to their husbands without love are prostitutes; children begot between quarrelling and snoring are bastards. Respectable are the adulteresses who publicly abandon their hateful husbands and constitute a new family sanctified by love; legitimate and noble are the bastards conceived in the rapture of passion or in the soothing tenderness of generous affection. For thinking people who do not evaluate the honor of one's home according to the amount of holy water sprinkled there, the insults *bastard* and *adulterous* mean nothing. In everyone's opinion, Shakespeare, the bastard born in the clandestine voluptuousness of nature, has greater substance and manly energies than the swarm of dandies or gallants begot between sleep and wakefulness in a miserable, dirty, and monotonous bed. When two young healthy bodies freely unite outside religion, the sanctimonious grumble but the earth smiles. The marriage of a young girl with an old man, of a lively and robust person with another who is sickly and weak, of impotence and death with fertility and life—here are the shameful and unforgivable crimes, because they represent a waste of creative force, fraud in love, theft of nature.

According to Tocqueville, “it is the American woman that has shaped the United States of America.”¹⁹ She would not only form one hundred Americas, she would create one million universes as well. Each fertile wife carries within her the seed of the future of humanity, called to expand in the conscious individuality or condemned to vegetate in religious gregariousness. In children, mothers have a block of marble from which to sculpt a Greek statue. Unfortunately, thanks to the intervention of nuns and *fathers*, the block

is transformed into a parody of the human form. We know the psychology of individuals suckled on servitude and fanaticism, even if we come to know only a little the mentality of children educated according to science and liberty. Those of us who are born under a layer of absurdities and superstitions, those of us who this very day are suffocating in an atmosphere of outdated junk and prejudices, those of us who wish to push the masses so that they might cover in just one day the path of many centuries will not watch the blooming of a race without ancient morals or prehistoric religions. Voltaire, old and close to death, exclaimed, “Fortunate are the young because they will see great things!”²⁰ In imitation of the tireless fighter of the eighteenth century, let us, his disciples, say: fortunate are those who will come tomorrow because they will live not in a *divine Jerusalem* but in a secular city, without temples or priests, with no gods other than Love, Justice, and Truth!

I shall conclude, gentlemen, by saying something that I would like to ingrain in the minds of all women and of many husbands as well: educators produce pedants, priests make hypocrites, and only real mothers create men.

EDITORS' NOTES

1. A mutinous revolt in 1527 by the troops of the Holy Roman emperor, Charles V.

2. As Isabelle Tauzin-Castellanos notes in her philological study of this essay, 20 September was the date the Garibaldians took Rome, and González Prada was invited to give this talk to La Loggia Stella d'Italia to commemorate that event (219n2).

3. Lucius was a Roman general known for his opulence.

4. It appears that González Prada inserted this quotation from memory. Although we could not verify the quotation, he faithfully represented Balzac's thought as expressed in *La comédie humaine*. Balzac was criticizing his fellow novelist Walter Scott, who was from a “hypocritical” Protestant country and therefore a false thinker. What Balzac maintained in this English-French (i.e., Protestant-Catholic) debate was that “[l]a femme protestante n'a pas

d'idéal. Elle peut être chaste, pure, vertueuse; Il semblerait que la Vierge Marie ait refroidi le cœur des sophistes qui la bannissaient du ciel, elle et ses trésors de miséricorde. Dans le protestantisme, il n'y a plus rien de possible pour la femme après la faute; tandis que dans l'Église catholique, l'espoir du pardon la rend sublime" ("the Protestant female is not the ideal. She may be chaste, pure, virtuous; it seems as if the Virgin Mary has chilled the heart of the sophists who have banished her from heaven, her and her treasures of mercy. With Protestantism, there is nothing for the woman who has transgressed; while in the Catholic Church, the hope of forgiveness renders her sublime"; 27). The ideas in this passage perfectly reflect González Prada's censure of Balzac's idea that women were "neither pure nor innocent until they had experienced Catholicism."

5. The *Diccionario de la lengua española* of the Real Academia Española explains that *Pitia* comes from the Latin *Pithius*, which in turn comes from the Greek Πύθιος, itself derived from Πυθώ, Delfos, a Greek city.

6. This supposedly exact quotation of Louis Ménéard, a nineteenth-century French poet, chemist, painter, and socialist theorist, appears to be a composite of Ménéard's thought. One clause, "la femme, élevée à la dignité de mère de famille, de maîtresse de la maison, comme dit Homère" ("a woman, elevated to the dignified position of mother, mistress of the home, as Homer said"), comes from *De la morale* (134). This treatise on Hellenistic thought makes little mention of Christianity. In one that does, *Du polythéisme hellénique*, Ménéard notes an evolution from polygamy to marriage among the ancient Greeks, "le passage de la polygamie patriarcale à la forme plus sainte du mariage grec" ("the passing from patriarchal polygamy to the most sacred form of Greek marriage"; 29; see also 161–62).

7. Women were actually deposited in a *beaterio*, a secluded place where a woman could get protection in cases of domestic violence. But, as Christine Hünefeldt explains, "a husband [could] petition . . . to put his wife in a *beaterio* on the grounds that she needed to improve her behavior. These women in turn were called *depositados*" (152).

8. Luis Gonzaga, an Italian Jesuit who lived from 1568 to 1591 and died helping the infirm, was canonized in 1726.

9. It is possible that this is another composite quotation. It was common during this period to collect misogynist quotations from Church Fathers. Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera did this in 1893 when she cited Tertullian, Jerome, Ecclesiastes, John Chrysostom, Pope Innocent I, Isidore of Pelusium, and Gregory of Nyssa (129–30).

10. González Prada's forecast is borne out by history, at least in Latin America, where countries as diverse as Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua have now had female presidents.

11. Again, González Prada attributes this idea to Ménéard.

12. González Prada may have been referring to any one of a number of failed initiatives. One such failure was the *Civil Code* of 1852, which, according to Pilar García Jordan, transferred the power to maintain vital statistics from the church to prefects, subprefects, and governors. Yet, caving in to the church's opposition, civil power backed down and by a resolution promulgated on 24 January 1859, the former measure was declared null and void (176).

13. Characteristics attributed to masculinity in González Prada's time included courage and steadfastness.

14. In François Rabelais's *Pantagruel*, Panurge is a witty rogue who takes revenge on a shepherd who overcharged him for a ram by throwing it into the sea, knowing that the shepherd's whole flock will follow it to their deaths.

15. Leo Tolstoy was of interest to González Prada for being an Anabaptist—that is, for his anarchism—and for his proto-Christianity in works such as *The Kingdom of God Is within You*.

16. "Sung mass" is a literal translation of the Spanish *misa cantada*, which also means a mass celebrated (sung) by a sole priest.

17. To understand this idea, one must take into account that during the early twentieth century the domestic ideal governed the education system. Women initiated the education of their children at home. Remove women from the priest's spell, and the women's offspring would grow up free from priestly influence.

18. The reference to Muslims is clear. The reference to Inquisitors means the men who made up the Inquisition that was reconstituted on the Spanish Peninsula in 1478. The first actual Inquisitor to arrive in the lands now known as Spanish America was Serván de Cerezuola, who came to Peru with the fifth viceroy, Don Francisco de Toledo, in 1569. González Prada alludes to the custom that those being tried by the Inquisition might be allowed to live if they recanted their error and accepted their sin.

19. We could not find this exact quotation in Tocqueville's writing, but the idea that women were integral to the formation of the United States could be inferred from two chapters in the third book of *Democracy in America*. Chapters 9 and 10, "Education of Young Women in the United States" and "The Young Women in the Character of a Wife," imply that American women as wives and mothers shaped the formation of the United States (198–203).

20. Voltaire expressed this idea about fortunate young people in a letter he wrote to Bernard Louis Chauvelin on 2 April 1764. Voltaire's original wording was "Les jeunes gens sont bien heureux; ils verront de belles choses" (174).

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