ANIMISM, AGLIPAY'S CULT, AND CHRISTIANITY'S ECLIPSE IN THE PHILIPPINES.

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THE religious conditions in the Philippines are unique. Missionaries claim the average Filipino is a Christian in every sense of the word. Filipino politicians have seized upon this assertion to prove that their people have Christian ideals and are entitled to be called Christians. Against the assertions of the missionaries and the politicians I shall set facts, leaving readers to draw their own conclusions.

Magellan discovered the Philippine Islands in 1521, a date marking the dawn of Christian influence in the Orient. In 1565 the first Spanish settlement was founded and, in 1571, Mohammaden Manila became a Christian capital.

The arrival of the Spanish missionaries was timely. The Mohammaden faith was already permanently intrenched in Mindanao and a Moslem ruler reigned in Manila. But it is doubtful if the Crescent could have survived even if the Cross had not been raised. The Japanese had already planted thriving colonies on Luzon to be destroyed when their rulers plotted against the Christian conquerors.

In those parts of the islands conquered by Spanish arms, the Moslem faith was supplanted by the Roman Catholic but Animism, the primitive Malayan religion, was more difficult to uproot; its priests, witch-doctors, continued in every community notwithstanding as they do to this day.

A moral code is necessary to modern culture; no people ever got any where without one and, upon its tenets, depended the grade of that civilization. The Moslem missionaries gave the Filipinos no moral code. Animism had none, a code was unnecessary; the spirits determine every act of the individual believer.

When the Spanish missionaries introduced their code, the

Filipinos made their first step forward. Catholicism became the state religion of the Philippines. When critics complain of its influence in the affairs of the Spanish government in the Philippines, let them bear this fact in mind.

During the Spanish regime, progress did not make such great strides as under the American tutelage. There was a very simple reason—slender treasury as now under the autonomous government. Neither the island of Mindanao nor the mountains of Luzon were conquered by Spain. For the same reason that the Spanish government was unable to cover the Philippines, the missionaries could not extend their influence. I have heard Americans visiting the Philippines and Protestant missionaries harangue of the wealth of the old missions, pointing out as evidence, the great piles of masonry crumbling in the weather. Such thoughtless ones forget that the four crumbling walls may have been the work of fifty years of the two or three generations of priests sleeping within.

When Dewey thundered at the gates of Manila in 1898, the Roman Catholic priests were in their parishes. Revolutionary leaders imported from Singapore were given American rifles to harass and drive into Manila the few outlying garrisons. Finding few Spanish soldiers, the insurgents set upon the defenceless parish priests, subjecting them to imprisonment and atrocities too harrowing to relate. The European priests had been the moral police of the islands. They had kept in check Animism and its witch-doctors. Moral regression followed the disappearance of the opponents of the UNMORAL. Encouraged by bloodpacts of savagery and ceremonies brought back by the forces of revolt and the freedom of the witch-doctors, the people began to return to Animism. A few Malay priests had been left in the parishes but their voices were too weak to be heard above the tumult of revolt.

Civilization in the tropics is a delicate institution, requiring constant care and vigilance; the impermancy of things tropical makes it so. The material is as impermanent as the immaterial. Both must be guarded to avoid decay. One year a Philippine field my be green with corn while in the next it is a jungle of plumed cogon. Rivers change their courses with the season; in a single night the rivulet may become a raging torrent a mile wide. A day may change the green hill into a black seething crater-caldron. In a score of years a cove is turned into a harbor for a navy and within the lifetime of a man, a river may become a vast lake and a bay, and an inland sea. A night of rain may obliterate miles of roads

to turn the traveler to the jungle paths winding through creeks and over divides. Sometimes a storm of a single night razes ten thousand homes and lays low miles of cocoanut trees planted fifty years before.

Returning again to the historical thread—while the Spanish army was beleagured in 1898 by the American, the Archbishop of the Philippines sent Gregorio Aglipay, a Filipino priest, to Northern Luzon to inquire into the welfare of the Spanish nuns and priests captured by the Filipino insurgents who, instead of helping the Americans capture Manila, had scattered over the archipelago to implant their authority so as to be better able to defy America once the Spanish had capitulated.

Aglipay forgot his mission when once within the insurgent lines. He cast his lot with the rebels already planning to turn against America. His short vision lead him to believe that the Roman Catholic Church organization was about to be disrupted because of its connection with the Spanish government at war with America. On this same ground the insurgents excused their atrocities against the priests and nuns. Technically the Church dignitaries were representatives of the Spanish government. The insincerity of the excuse will be shown later.

The Filipinos claimed that all their ills had been caused by the union of the church and state. Although a priest of the state church of Spain, Aglipay accepted a commission of general-chaplain of the insurgent forces. A few weeks later, he assembled a few Philipino priests within the rebel influence to nominate himself a bishop of the Roman Catholic Church, and after two months archbishop of the Philippines. The Roman Catholic Church was proclaimed the state religion of the Filipino Republic organized while the American army kept the Spaniards shut up in Manila. With a child-like confidence, Archbishop Aglipay forwarded his nomination to Rome for confirmation.

During the heat of the Spanish-American War, all Americans were ready to believe the Filipino complaints against the Spaniards. Soldiers of all nations speak a common language. On August 13, 1898, the Spanish military capitulated and on the day following, the Spanish soldiers were showing their volunteer enemies of the day before, the sights of Manila. Their mutual respect for each other was too great to permit even an ordinary street fight. Of course it was embarassing for a volunteer captain from the mountains of Tennessee to have an old Spanish colonel to embrace him

like an old sweetheart but soon both nationalities understood each other. It was not long until the Americans had learned that the Spanish military and the priests had accomplished wonders with the slender resources at their disposal.

When the Filipino rebel leaders saw that the Spanish and American military were friends, they brought forward the claim that the Spanish priests had been their worst oppressors. Many Americans were ready to accept this claim, all but a few of the priests were prisoners of the Filipinos and the Roman Catholic Church somewhat unpopular because its authorities had been loyal to the Spanish government as the Episcopal Church in England is loyal to the English Crown.

It has taken years to convince Americans in America that the Roman Catholic Church was the greatest benefactor the Filipinos have ever known and that the charge that the church retarded education and progress is nothing more than the age-old custom of shifting responsibility to some other. No doubt that the Filipinos have since discovered that they themselves are to blame for their short-comings.

When the Filipinos openly revolted against the United States in February of 1899, Aglipay was already disillusioned. His betrayal of the Archbishop of the Philippines and his failure to secure the release of the nuns held in captivity, had lost him any sympathy he might have had from Americans.

With the disruption of the revolt against America, the Filipino State Church disintegrated. All but a few of its adherents crept back into their old fold.

Nothing more happened until 1902. The Spanish priests had been returned to Spain. Representatives of the American Bible Society and a few Protestant missionaries began to entice the people away from the only force that had stood between them and their old pagan beliefs. Their progress was slow and unsatisfactory. It was decided that the best way to strike the Roman Catholic Church would be to take up the renegade Aglipay with the idea that he would later deliver en masse his former adherents to the Protestant church. With Protestant advice and assistance, Aglipay was brought into prominence. He proclaimed himself pope of the Independent Filipino Church, popularly known as the Aglipayan cult. Aglipay denied to me that he was a pope but, nevertheless his photograph shows him garbed in a costume similar to that worn by the Catholic. He made a whirlwind campaign through the archipelago, appoint-

ing priests in every village. For a time it appeared that the Catholic Church was doomed to disappear both physically and spiritually.

As the Aglipayan church grew, plots against the government became more common but it was not until 1908 that the numerous local uprising were definitely traced to the new church. The names of the American advisors had served to disarm suspicion. Aglipay's secretary lead the famous Mandac revolt of 1908. For political reasons Aglipay himself was never tried but a number of his priests were given stiff sentences. Aglipay was compelled to move to Manila where he could be watched. He promised never again to incite an uprising against the government. Although he has kept his promise, his subordinates seldom pass-by an opportunity to incite sedition and fan race hatred.

The Aglipayan Church has many of the outward appearances of the Roman Catholic but its official rituals and teachings are little known to the millions who fill its churches for no other reason than its supposed loyalty to Filipino culture and beliefs as opposed to those brought by the white man.

When I last visited Aglipay in his Manila home, I found a pathetic old man whose face bore a wistful look. I went to get some first hand information of his aims and ideas as the head of the church. The old man had neither aims nor ideas but he presented me several rare books whose existence I found to be little known.

The first rare volume was *The Filipino Bible, the First Stone for a Scientific Genesis According to Corrections Made by Jesus Christ.* My copy has the official seal of Aglipay's office. This pathetic volume was adopted in 1908 as the official bible of the new church. It contains one-hundred-seventy-six pages with illustrations of church dignitaries running over the four pages of the covers.

The first one-hundred-twenty-four pages are a criticism of Christianity and its comparison with the folk-lore of the Filipinos. There is an attempt to prove to the reader that the Filipinos had a religion equal to Christianity before the arrival of the Spanish Fathers.

Several pages are devoted to a comparison of the Bible of Christianity with that made by the author, a Filipino named Reyes. A final thirty pages is devoted to a "Genesis" for the Filipino Church, copied from Herschel, Kant, Laplace, and Flammarion. It contains a picture of the canals of Mars, Halley's comet, the moon, and other illustrations to be found in any text-book of astronomy. The book

makes no mention of morals. I mentioned this phase to Aglipay. He explained that the bible was not yet complete but that he hoped to furnish me a complete copy incorporating my observations before he was called to the Great Beyond.

The second volume was *The Cathecism of the Independent Filipino Church.* My copy has a number of corrections made by the donor. The book contains one-hundred-fourteen pages. Many of the questions are quite unusual:

"Is God all-powerful? Perhaps, but we are not sure."

"Where did we get the pretended Trinity? From Plato."

"What was the famous theory of Darwin? Haeckel?"

"How will the earth end? The moon? The planets?"

Every question and answer is designed to weaken the faith of the Christian reader.

The third volume of interest is the ritual used by the priests. The second part is a mass service resembling that of the Catholic Church.

To illustrate how the organization of the Aglipayan cult was organized, I shall draw upon my own experience. In 1903, I was stationed in the island of Negros, Aglipay came there. In the town where I first met him, his party was given a dance. Aglipay did not dance but other priests of his party did. The dance lasted until morning. It was a funny scene, the priests dancing in their long black cassocks.

Aglipay appointed priests from every station in life to be assigned to the vacant parishes after three months training. Two appointed had been soldiers of my command. One a private was such a worthless individual that I refused to re-enlist him. I always refused him a recommendation, fearing he might use it to re-enter the service in another province. One day he informed me that Aglipay had promised him an appointment if he could bring a recommendation from me. After I had seen Aglipay's contingent at the dance, I did not have the heart to refuse my simple soldier. He was duly appointed and assigned near my station where I had a detachment of his former comrades. It is needless to add that I regretted my recommendation. He lead my soldiers into so much mischief that I was compelled to remove them to a station farther in the interior. The priest never lost his respect for me, always saluting me in a military manner. The second priest had been a corporal, a married man, made parish priest of the village in which lived the parents of his wife.

Of the many priests of the new church only a few possessed more than three months training, the exceptions would be those who had once been priests of the Roman Catholic church.

As explained in a previous paragraph, in my interview with Aglipay, I expressed doubt of the usefulness of his church in that it did not touch the moral life of the people. I mentioned the conduct of his priests. He explained to me his plans for betterment but I could not put out of my mind the fact that the prime object of his organization had been revolt.

After having read Aglipay's literature, I was at a loss to understand how he expected to teach the Christian code of morals and at the same time explain it away. It can not be done. The Filipinos are returning to Animism. The intelligence of the average Filipino is not such that he can view calmly the conflict of religions, the Catholic and the Protestant, each headed by aliens. What is the result of the conflict?

At the time of the American occupation of the Philippines, there was no island without its pope of Animism. At no time since the discovery of the archipelago by the Spanish was the island of Negros without a pope. America inherited Pope Isio who had an army of six thousand men with which he destroyed the Republic of Negros. He was finally subdued in 1908.

In Luzon there was Pope Felipe Salvador and the Colorum. In Leyte Pope Amblan ruled the peasants; in Samar, Pope Pablo; in Bohol, Pope Isco; and so on through the entire archipelago. Although the popes have been subdued or exterminated regression continues.

In 1915 the entire population of the town of Loang, Samar, stood in the streets ringing bells and beating tin pans to scare the dragon devouring the moon.

In a nearby village the people rioted because the new-comers had brought their grandfathers with them to their new home. The grandparents were the crocodiles infesting the river. The crocodiles had persisted in eating the old residents rather than the new. When I spoke to the new arrivals about the conduct of their relatives they disclaimed responsibility. I ordered a few sticks of dynamite thrown into the river. This brought relief.

In 1917 the din of bells and pans kept me awake in Sorsogon where I had gone to ascertain the causes of the severe epidemic of cholera. I was informed that the people were scaring away the evil spirits. In an adjacent town I found that the mayor had

prepared for the epidemic by compelling each householder to provide his home with a bamboo cannon for noise making.

In Laguna province I found the laborers of a large plantation planting rice with music and animistic rites. In the town of Tayabas every rice-farmer has an altar upon which he places rice as an offering to the gods.

Filipinos of the type now in control in the islands have always given as their reason for opposing the Catholic Church that the priests encouraged superstition. That such a charge was insincere, I shall cite as evidence only one of the many examples that came to my attention.

On June 8, 1910, a butcher of Santa Cruz, Laguna Province, cut a malauen tree for wood. The malauen generally has a black heart of irregular form. The heart of this particular tree resembled a triangle with one angle broken with a round figure, forming lines similar to the outlines of a picture of the Virgin. The circle represented the head and the triangle the vestments. While the butcher worked he was entertained by a crowd of loafers. One of the loafers remarked that the black heart of the tree resembled the Virgin Mary. It happened that the Aglipayan priest was passing. When his attention was called to the figure, he fell upon his knees in adoration. For a time the loafers thought the priest was suffering from the effects of too much wine. After some minutes of silent prayer he explained to the crowd that the figure was a miracle. He begged that he be given a block to be enshrined in the local church. During the excitement, the crowd forgot the remaining part of the log which the butcher carefully preserved and actually sold a block to a Chinaman for thirty dollars. The priest used his wits and a paint brush, the Chinaman's miracle was proven worthless.

The priest explained to his small congregation that he had found the miracle through a dream or vision. He assured his people that the picture would become more distinct each day and finally turn into a living image to become a Joan of Arc to lead the Filipino to independence.

A local artist joined church, his brush improved the work of the priest.

The local politicians of the anti-law and order clan joined in with the imposter to enshrine the block, mounted in a case costing more than three hundred dollars.

The fame of the shrine of the Santa Maria Malauen became

so great that the steamboat operating lake boats out of Manila was compelled to increase the number to five. Pilgrims to the shrine in Santa Cruz so increased the revenues of the church that the priest was able to build a large church and residence. A village sprang up around the church. More than one hundred small shops opened to sell lithographs of the miracle and food to the pilgrims.

A large pot of cocoanut oil was kept near the shrine to be sold to cure ills of all comers. Many stories of miraculous cures were circulated to be believed by the simple folk.

When the shrine was a year old, the Aglipayans prepared an annual celebration. During the week of the anniversary more than one-hundred-thousand pilgrims came to Santa Cruz to worship at the shrine.

On the evening of the anniversary of the discovery of the miracle, it was escorted through the streets with eight bands of music and ten thousand marchers. Thirty thousand spectators were in the street. As I was responsible for the order of the province of La Laguna, I became alarmed. The priest had announced that the miracle was to turn into a Joan of Arc on the eve of the anniversary, I decided that the imposters had gone far enough. I warned the priest and the local leaders as well.

Later I discovered that the local municipal council had voted the miracle the patron saint! The Patron Saint's Day is a legal holiday.

This is only one of many similar instances that came to my attention.

A number of years ago I had the opportunity to study the Ilongots for a period of six months. This small tribe inhabits the mountains east of the Cagayan river of Northern Luzon. They have been famous for the fact that they ate the heart of their fallen enemy instead of taking his head as the Igorots. Later upon my recommendation an effort was made to assemble the tribe so that its members might attend school and establish permanent homes. For a number of years I thought that I had been one of the first to make a detailed report of the Ilongot tribe. I chanced upon an old copy of a magazine devoted to missions to find that a Spanish monk had studied the tribe fifty years before. I said nothing to any one. I was chagrined.

In 1917 I was sent to inspect the work of the men in charge of the settlement projects of the tribe. Wishing to encourage the American in charge of the first settlement of my tour, I was very compli-

mentary of his work. I told him he was a great pioneer, but he laughed. I understood after he had lead me to a nearby hill and pointed out to me the ruins of a church and village. The Spanish had colonized the Ilongots years before to be driven out by the insurrection of 1896.

I continued across the island to a point near Baler to inspect another Ilongot settlement established but five years before. The report I carried informed me that the village I was to inspect contained one hundred and fifty houses. I finally located the town. All that remained to mark the settlement were twelve posts. The Ilongots had returned to the mountains. The American who had organized the village had gone. The wild men preferred the mountains to the village life. From my notes I might select a hundred similar cases.

I mention the incidents of the last paragraphs to illustrate a few of the difficulties to be encountered by him who would give the Filipiño people the Christian religion. I have dealt only in facts, I leave the problems suggested to be solved by the missionary.