

Neither shall we be always mournful, because we have the great hope of a blissful eternity, because Jesus Christ, our God, so loved us that He died for us and opened heaven for us. Joy and mourning, each has its place. You rejoice on your mother's birthday, but you do not feast and dance on the anniversary of her death. Christians rejoice on Christmas day, the day on which Christ was born, and on Sunday, the day on which He rose glorious and immortal from the dead, but they mourn on Friday, the day He died.

"Are not the sufferings of Christ sufficient to atone for all our sins?" demanded Bruce.

"More than sufficient," demanded the priest.

"It is foolish, therefore, for us to want to suffer for our sins, since the sufferings of Christ are more than enough to atone for them."

Father Casey gazed out the window at the vast sweep of the Kansas prairies stretching out and out for countless miles in every direction until they blended at last with the distant horizon.

"God," he said, as if repeating an act of faith to the picture of infinity before his eyes, "became man without ceasing to be God. Every smallest action He performed as man, had infinite value, because He was God. Therefore one tear that He shed, an infant in Bethlehem, was enough, and more than enough, to atone for all our sins. Would you say, then," he demanded brusquely, turning to his table companion, "that it was foolish for Him to want to suffer more for us? Would you say such a blasphemy?"

"No."

"Then do not say that, because Christ's sufferings were sufficient to atone for our sins, it is foolish for us to want to suffer, too, in union with Him."

But what earthly good can you do to yourself or anybody else by restricting yourself to a little insipid fish, when a real meal can be had for the asking?" Bruce queried testily. The steak was growing cold, but he really could not resist it until this disturbing question had been settled the way he wanted.

"Voluntary penance does us good in many ways," said the priest. "Christ made the statement: 'Unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish.' Besides, there are some things we know which we cannot explain. For instance, there is the matter of reparation, isn't there?"

A dissatisfied grunt was the only answer.

"In my first mission," he continued, "there were a number of poker fanatics. Since they played only among themselves and for low stakes, they suffered no great losses. Loss of time and loss of sleep were practically the only evils resulting from their indulgence. Now it happened that the daughter of one of these men fell ill. Nobody believed the sickness fatal. The father saw clearly enough that it was more fitting he should remain at home, still the habitual hankerer came upon him so strong that one evening he went out and joined his companions 'just for a few games.' About 11 o'clock word was brought in that his wife was on the phone; that she said the girl was worse and he should come home at once. He was in the act of playing an exciting hand, 'She just begrudges me a little relaxation. Ah, tell her I'm coming.' And the engrossing game went on. When he reached the house at 2 o'clock in the morning, his daughter was dead. He knelt beside the corpse and took a solemn oath never again to touch a card. We cannot explain just why good he did to himself or anybody else by giving up an innocent amusement, yet we all know it was the proper thing. It was an attempt at reparation."

"I know another case of a golf 'fan.' 'Don't be knocking that ball about the back yard, Bart, you'll do some damage,' his wife had warned. But Bart simply had to try that new shot, and the time was too short to drive out to the course; besides, he aimed every time at a brick in the middle of the garage wall, and so it was impossible to have an accident. But the impossible happened. By one of those fatal coincidences, his foot slipped while he tried a powerful drive, and at the same moment his wife stepped out the back door to caution him again. The ball struck her, injuring her skull and paralyzing the optic nerve. She was blinded for life. The faithful woman felt more for his remorse than for her own affliction and used every art to make him forgive himself. But one night after her return from the hospital, as the two were sitting before the open fireplace, he said: 'Listen to the crackling of the flames. Do you know what is burning? My entire set of golf sticks. I will never play again.' In vain did she and all his friends urge him to go out at least occasionally, to seek on the links the exercise so beneficial to him. He never struck a ball again. We cannot explain just what good he did to himself or anybody else by giving up an innocent amusement, yet we all know it was the proper thing. It was an attempt at reparation."

"Let me give just one more example. It concerns us all. On a never-to-be-forgotten Friday our best and truest friend was murdered. It was our sins that caused Him to die the bitter death of the cross.

We love Him and we deeply regret the wrong we have done Him. On each recurring Friday we impose upon ourselves a little voluntary suffering by abstaining from meat. It may not be easy to explain what good this does to Him or to us, but our own heart tells us it is just and proper. It is an attempt at reparation."

The dining car steward never realized how near he was to death that day when he bent over Andrew Bruce and blandly inquired:

"Was there anything the matter with the steak, sir?"—(C. D. McEniry, C. S. R., in The Liguorian.)

THE STORY OF CHRIST

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THE MYSTERY OF JUDAS

Only two creatures in the world knew the secret of Judas: Christ and the traitor.

Sixty generations of Christians have racked their brains over it, but the man of Iscariot, although he has drawn after him crowds of disciples, remains stubbornly incomprehensible. He is the only human mystery that we encounter in the Gospels. We can understand without difficulty the depravity of Herod, the rancor of the Pharisees, the vengeful anger of Annas and Caiaphas, the cowardly laxity of Pilate. But we have no evidence to enable us to understand the abomination of Judas. The Four Gospels tell us too little of him and the reasons which induced him to sell his King.

"Then entered Satan into Judas." But these words are only the definition of his crime. Evil took possession of his heart, therefore it came suddenly. Before that day, perhaps during the dinner at Bethany, Judas was not in the power of the Adversary. But why suddenly did he throw himself into that power? Why did Satan enter into him and not into one of the others?

Thirty pieces of silver are a very small sum, especially for an avare scoundrel. In modern coinage it would amount to about twenty dollars, and, granting that its effective value or as the economists say its buying power were in those days ten times greater, two hundred dollars seem hardly a sufficient price to induce a man whom his companions describe as grasping to commit the basest perfidy recorded by history. It has been said the thirty pieces of silver was the price of a slave. But the text of Exodus states on the contrary that thirty shekels was the compensation to be paid by the owner of an ox which had injured a slave. The cases are too far apart for the doctors of the Sandhedrin to have had this early precedent in mind.

The most significant indication is the office which Judas held among the Twelve. Among them was Matthew, a former tax-collector, and it would have seemed almost his right to handle the small amount of money necessary for the expenses of the brotherhood. In place of Matthew, we see the man of Iscariot as the depository of the offerings. Money is insidious and saturated with danger. The mere handling of money, even if it belongs to others, is poisonous. It is not surprising that John said of Judas the thief, that he, 'having the bag, took away what was put therein.' And yet it is not probable that a man greedy for money have stayed a long time with a group of such poor men. If he had wished to steal, he would have sought out a more promising position. And if he had needed those miserable thirty pieces of silver, could he not have procured them in another way by running away with the purse, without needing to propose the betrayal of Jesus to the High Priests?

These common-sense reflections about a crime so extraordinary have induced many to seek other motives for the infamous transaction. A sect of heretics, the Cainites, had a legend that Judas sorrowfully accepted eternal infamy, knowing that Jesus through His will and the will of the Father was to be betrayed to His death, that no suffering might be lacking in the great expiation. A necessary and voluntary instrument of the Redemption, Judas was according to them a hero and a martyr to be revered and not reviled.

According to others, Iscariot, loving his people and hoping for their deliverance, perhaps sharing the sentiments of the Zealots, had joined with Jesus, hoping that he was the Messiah such as the common people then imagined Him: the King of the revenge and restoration of Israel. When little by little, in spite of his slowness of comprehension, it dawned on him from the words of Jesus that he had fallen in with a Messiah of quite another kind, he delivered Him over to His enemies to make up for the bitterness of his disappointment. But this fancy to which no text either canonical or apocryphal gives any support is not enough to explain Christ's betrayer: he could have deserted the Twelve and gone in search of other company more to his taste, which certainly, as we have seen, was not lacking at that time.

Others have said that the reason is to be sought in his loss of faith. Judas had believed firmly in Jesus, and then could believe no longer.

What Jesus said about His end close at hand, the threatening hospitality of the metropolis, the delay of his victorious manifestation, had ended by causing Judas to lose all faith in Him whom he had followed up till then. He did not see the Kingdom approaching and he did see death approaching. Mingling with the people to find out the temper of the day, he had perhaps heard a rumor as to the decisions of the meeting of the Elders and feared that the Sandhedrin would not be satisfied with one victim alone, but would condemn all those who had long followed Jesus. Overcome by fear—the form which Satan took to enter into him—he thought he could ward off the danger and save his life by treachery; unbelief and cowardice being thus the ignominious motives of his ignominy.

An Englishman celebrated as an opium-eater, had thought out a new apology for the traitor which is the opposite of this theory. His idea is that Judas believed: he even believed too absolutely. He was so persuaded that Jesus was really the Christ that he wished by giving Him up to the Tribunal to force Him finally to show Himself as the legitimate Messiah. So wrong was his hope that he could not believe that Jesus would be killed. Or if He really were to die, he knew with entire certainty that He would rise again at once to sit on the right hand of the Father as King of Israel and of the world. To hasten the great day, in which the Disciples were at last to have the reward for their faithfulness, Judas, secure in the intangibility of His Divine Friend, wished to force His hand, putting Him face to face with those whom He was to cast out, to compel Him to show Himself as the true Son of God. According to this theory the action of Judas was not a betrayal but a mistake due to his misunderstanding of the real meaning of his Master's teaching. He did not betray therefore through avarice or revengefulness or cowardice, but through stupidity.

On the other hand others give revenge as the reason. No man betrays another without hating him. Why did Judas hate Jesus? They remember the dinner in the house of Simon and the nard of the weeping woman. The reproach for his stinginess and hypocrisy must have exasperated the disciple who perhaps had been reproved for these faults on other occasions. To the rancor of this rebuff was added envy which always flourishes in vulgar souls. And as soon as he could revenge himself without danger, he went to the palace of Caiaphas.

But did he really think that his denunciation would bring Jesus to His death or did he rather suppose that they would content themselves with flogging Him and forbidding Him to speak to the people? The rest of the story seems to show that the condemnation of Jesus unnerred him as a terrible and unexpected result of his kiss. Matthew describes his despair in a way to show that he was sincerely horrified by what had happened through his fault. The money which he had pocketed became like fire to him: and when the priests refused to take it back he threw it down in the Temple. Even after this restitution he had no peace and hastened to kill himself. He died on the same day as his victim. Luke in the Acts sets down in another way the evil end of Judas, but the Christian tradition prefers the story of his remorse and suicide.

In spite of all the unraveling of unsatisfied minds, mysteries are still tangled about the mystery of Judas. But we have not yet invoked the testimony of Him who knew better than all men, even better than Judas, the true secret of the betrayal. Jesus alone could give us the key to the mystery: Jesus who saw into the heart of Judas as into the hearts of all men and who knew what Judas was to do before he had done it.

Jesus chose Judas to be one of the Twelve and to carry the gospel to the world along with the others. Would He have chosen him, kept with Him, beside Him, at His table, for so long a time if He had believed him to be an incurable criminal? Would He have confided to him what was dearest in the world to Him, the most precious thing in the world—the prophecy of the Kingdom of God?

Up to the last days, up to that last evening, Jesus treated Judas exactly like the others. To him, as to all others, He gave His body, symbolized by bread. His soul, symbolized by wine. He washed and wiped, with His own hands, the feet of Judas, those feet which had carried him to the house of Caiaphas—with those hands which, through Judas' fault, were to be nailed to the cross on the following day. And when, in the red light of the flickering lanterns and the flashing of swords, Judas, under the dark shadow of the olive trees, came and kissed that face still wet with bloody sweat, Jesus did not repel him, but said, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?"

Friend! It was the last time that Jesus spoke to Judas, and even in that moment He would use none other than that worded word. Judas was not for Him the man of darkness who came in the darkness to turn Him over to the guards, but the friend, the same who a few hours before had been sitting with Him before the dish of lamb and herbs, and had set his lips to His

cup: the same who, so many times in hours of rest in leafy shade, or in the shadow of walls, had listened with the others like a disciple, like a companion, like a friend, like a brother, to the great words of the Promise. Jesus had said at the Last Supper, "Woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born." But now that the traitor was before Him, that the treachery was complete, now that Judas had added to the kiss laid on the lips of Him who has commanded love for our enemies, He answered him with the sweet and divine words of their habitual intercourse, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?"

Thus the testimony of Him who was betrayed increases our bewilderment instead of raising the veil of the dreadful secret. He knew that Judas was a thief and He gave him the purse. He knew that Judas was evil and He condescended to him a treasure of truth infinitely more precious than all the money in the universe: He knew that Judas was to betray Him and He made him a participant of His divinity, offering him the mouthful of bread and the sip of wine; He saw Judas leading His assailants upon Him and He still addressed him as at first, as He always had, with the holy name of friend.

It had been good for that man if he had not been born. These words might have been, rather than a condemnation, an exclamation of pity at the thought of a fate which could not be escaped. If Judas hated Jesus, we see no signs that Jesus was ever repelled by Judas, because Jesus knew that the base bargain was necessary, as the weakness of Pilate was necessary, the rage of Caiaphas, the insults of the soldiery, the thimbers and nails of the cross. He knew that Judas must needs do what he did and He did not curse him, as He did not curse the people who wished His death, or the hammer which drove the nails into the cross. One prayer alone broke from him, to beg Judas to shorten the dreadful agony, "That thou doest, do quickly."

The mystery of Judas is doubly tied to the mystery of the Redemption and we lesser ones shall never solve it. No analogy can give us light. Joseph also was sold by one of his brothers, who, like Iscariot, was called Judas, and was sold to Ishmaelite merchants for twenty pieces of silver, but Joseph, who prefigured Christ, was not sold to his enemies, was not sold to be put to death; and as a compensation for his betrayal, great good fortune was his and he became so wealthy that he could enrich his father, and so generous that he could pardon even his brothers.

Jesus was not only betrayed, but sold, sold for a price, sold for a small price, bought with coins. He was the object of a bargain, a bargain struck and paid. Judas, the man of the purse, the cashier, did not present himself as an accuser, did not offer himself as a cut-throat, but as a merchant doing business in blood. The Jews, who understood bartering for blood, daily cutting the throats of victims, and quartering them, butchers of the Most High, were the first and last customers of Judas. The sale of Jesus was the first business done by the merchant, just entering business; not very big business, it must be admitted, but a real, true, commercial transaction—a valid contract of buying and selling, verbal, but honestly lived up to by the contracting parties. If Jesus had not been sold, something would have been lacking to the perfect ignominy of His expiation; if He had been sold for more money, for three hundred shekels instead of thirty, for gold instead of silver, the ignominy would have been diminished, slightly, but still diminished. It had been destined to all eternity that He should be bought, but bought with a small sum. In order that an infinite, supernatural but communicable value should be made available to men, it was needed to buy it with a small sum, and with a sum of metal, which has no real value. Did Jesus bought by others not do the same, He who wished to redeem with the blood of only one man all the blood shed on the earth from the days of Cain to Caiaphas?

And if He had been sold as a slave, as so many living souls were sold in those days in the public places, if He had been sold as redeemable property, as human capital, as a living tool for work, the ignominy would have been almost nothing, and the Redemption put off. But He was sold as the calf sold to the butcher, as the innocent animals which the butcher buys to kill, to sell again, to distribute in morsels to flesh-eaters. The sacred butcher, Caiaphas, never in his most successful days had a victim so prodigious. For more than two thousand years Christians have been fed on that victim, and it is still intact, and those who feed are not satiated.

Every one of us has contributed his quota, an infinitesimal quota, to buy that victim from Judas. We have all contributed towards the sum for which the blood of the Redeemer was bought; Caiaphas was only our agent. The field of Acedama, bought with the price of blood, is our inheritance, our property. And this field has grown mysteriously larger, has spread over half the face of the earth:

whole populous cities, paved, lighted, well-ordered cities, of shops and brothels, shine resplendent on it from north to south. And that the mystery should be even greater, Judas' money, also multiplied by the betrayals of so many centuries, by the accumulation of interest, has become incalculably great. Nothing is so fruitful and fecund as blood. The statisticians, those soothsayers of modern days, can bear witness to the fact that all the courts of the Temple could not contain the money engendered from that day to this by those thirty pieces of silver cast down there in a delirium of remorse, by the man who sold his God.

TO BE CONTINUED

We must never forget that there are whole areas of culture, in literature and art, that are largely dependent upon the educational influence of the Catholic and Latin Church. All universities claiming a long history were created, and were developed by the Catholic

Church. The other day a graduate of a Scottish University, desiring to become a priest, placed in my hands the diploma of his degree. In that Scottish University the degrees are conferred by the rector to this day "in virtue of authority granted by the Apostolic See."—Card. Bourne.

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