

The Christ of the Bolsheviks

(In a magazine called "The Voice of Tolstoy, and Unity," the following sketch, translated by Mr. Lawrence Miller, appeared in the issue of June, 1918. It is significant as an intimate picture of Russian life. In 1918 the Bolshevik Government was fighting for its life. Yet this magazine could frankly call the Bolshevik murderers with "soiled, bloody hands." The magazine was not suppressed.)

A MUDDY Moscow street warmed by the rays of the March sun. Before the entrance of a store a long line of people stretches for several blocks. Near a letter-box is a wall covered with announcements, advertisements, decrees of all sorts; and those in line, not having anything else to do, are reading them. A lad of about nineteen, who looks neither like a militiaman nor like a Red Guard, reads aloud:—

"On Thursday, March so-and-so, in the Moscow Military Academy, there will be a lecture in the interests of the children of the proletariat, on the theme: 'The Christ of the Bolsheviks—the Christ that lost His patience—Christ the forgiving.'"

"Who is that?" pipes up a poorly dressed old woman, huddled together with the cold. "Who will their Christ be: Lenin or Trotsky?"

"What do you mean, old grandmother? This is about the real Christ."

"Oh, yes. So now you are getting after Christ! First you got after the Church—now it is Christ!"

"Everything is yours!" a modestly dressed woman breaks in bitterly.

"Well, is it yours?" retorts the youth, provoked. "I guess you're a disguised bourgeois."

"But what's that got to do with Christ?" other voices join in.

A voice is heard from the back of the crowd. "Well, that's simple. Christ is for us, therefore He's for the Bolshevik. 'Come unto me all ye that labor. Certainly He was for the proletariat. Christ is the workman's God, the peasant's, the God of everyone that toils.'"

All look around. The man who is talking wears a soldier's overcoat. His face is young, but it bears the marks of suffering and hard experience. He has on new overshoes, and his head is covered with a fur cap. Stirred by his words, everyone begins to talk at once, and for a moment there is confusion in which nothing can be heard distinctly.

Suddenly a housekeeper, appointing herself chairman of the impromptu meeting, calls:—

"Hold on! We won't get anywhere this way. Let's go at this thing in an orderly way. Now who wants to say something?"

The soldier is asked to stand closer to the wall. A woman steps out, her appearance indicating that she is a servant.

"How is Christ the God of the laborer? Just think about it. The law of Christ is for everyone. Christ told us to love and forgive. Could Christ have told us to go out and do harm to anyone, even a bourgeois? And what kind of a Christ is this? . . . It's plain anarchism."

"Wait a minute, Annitz," says the soldier. "Don't be in a hurry. In the first place, even Christ said He didn't come to bring peace on earth but a sword—that means struggle. Second, from what you say you ought to know that He chased the business men out of the Church. Now, do you see who He directed His sword against? Against the bourgeois. And he called unto Himself all those who were toiling."

"But how about this? According to you, Lenin and Trotsky are from Christ and for Christ—or perhaps Christ is for them. How about the Red Guard and all their slaughter, then? Is that from Christ, too? Did you ever read even one of Christ's teachings? He forbade us even to injure a fly. He forbade us to curse. He forbade killing. And yet you say, 'The Christ of the Bolshevik!' Just a little while ago I heard some-

one, an anarchist or else a Bolshevik, say that if Lev. Tolstoy were alive he'd be for you, too. And the man had a revolver in his hand and a gun on his shoulder! I asked him whether he knew anything about Tolstoy. . . . Who was Tolstoy? Tolstoy was on the side of Christ. He, too, loved all men. He even refused to eat meat; and you, you make chopped meat out of people. So now it's Christ that's a Bolshevik! . . . Yes, He's forgiving. He will even forgive you murderers, when you repent your deeds. But just now He's certainly not with you—you've gone far away from Him. You can't get near Christ with your killing in secret. You ought to look around and think things over. Then only could you understand Him. But now don't dare touch Him with your soiled, bloody hands!"

The crowd is silent. For a time a quiet thoughtfulness settles over everyone; then there is a murmur here and there, while some cross themselves.

The soldier tries to speak again, but they are all against him. . . .

"Shame!"

"Enough!"

"We don't care."

"Go to your Bolsheviks and leave Christ alone."

In confusion, the soldier moves back to the end of the line.

Syrian Church of Malabar

The many friends of Bishop Abraham, of Travancore, India, will be interested in reading the following reference to him in an English newspaper, written by the Rev. Chas. Inwood, who is engaged at present in visiting the different Mission Stations in that part of our great Empire:—

"The Reformed Church numbers 100,000 members and the Jacobite 300,000. The relations between the two Churches have naturally been very strained, but I saw indications that a better spirit is appearing, and it was my joy to see Jacobite priests and people meeting in all the Conventions and taking part in them. An overflowing spiritual life in both Churches will unite them again. The Reformed or Mar Thoma Syrian Church is highly favoured in its leaders. The aged Metropolitan is a man of a kindly spirit, and deeply appreciates the sympathy and help derived from Keswick through the fruitful and fragrant ministry of the late Rev. Thos. Walker. The Suffragan Bishop, Bishop Abraham, is a rare gift of God to his Church. He is a born leader of men, deeply spiritual, first and foremost in every effort to lead his people into a deeper spiritual life, a wider outlook, and a real missionary passion. A distinguished graduate of Wycliffe College, Toronto, the degree of D.D., has just been conferred upon him by his college. He is a young man, one who has passed through the fire for loyalty to Christ, and will, if spared, lead the people he loves onward and upward in missionary endeavour and consecration to God. Not for many years have I met one who so utterly captured my heart."

A Prayer

for the forthcoming Lambeth Conference issued by His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, to be used in all Churches within the Diocese from July 1st to August 8th, 1920, inclusive.

O Almighty God, pour forth, we beseech Thee, Thy Holy Spirit upon Thy servants who shall come together from many lands, for counsel and mutual help in the work of Thy Holy Church. Grant unto them and unto us abundance of wisdom, and of zeal, that we may both know Thy will and fulfil it with all our powers, to the advancement of Thy Kingdom, and the blessing of all mankind; through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Bible Lesson

Rev. CANON HOWARD, M.A.,
Montreal, P.Q.

Fourth Sunday After Trinity, June 27th, 1920.

Subject, Review.

IN this review we go back to the first Sunday in Lent. The subject for that day was Our Lord's Temptation, St. Luke 4:1-13, in which is shown how, in our humanity, our Lord bore temptation sustained by the same powers that are available for ourselves. He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.

The four lessons following are taken, consecutively, from the Gospel according to St. Luke. They deal with works and words of Jesus. The man sick with a palsy, St. Luke 5:17-26, is an example of our Lord's healing power, and also shows that Jesus regarded sin as the greatest of all human ills. Moreover, it clearly sets forth His power to forgive sins as well as to heal diseases. The Sermon on the Plain, St. Luke 6:27-38, is our Lord's exposition of the Gospel law of forgiveness with His commendation of the merciful and His warning against austere judgment of others. The Raising of the Widow's Son at Nain, St. Luke 7:11-17, shows our Lord's Divine Power even over Death. The Anointing of Jesus in the House of Simon, the Pharisee, St. Luke 7:36-50, is an illustration of the deep gratitude of one who had been forgiven and, also, furnishes us with further evidence of the tenderness of Jesus towards sinners.

Palm Sunday and Easter. The lessons for these days, St. Luke 19:29-44, 23:13-25, 39-46, and St. Luke 24:1-43 deal with subjects appropriate to the season. The triumphal entry indicates the Kingliness of Jesus, and the Resurrection of Jesus shows Him as the Triumphant King Who has overcome the last great enemy of man.

Five lessons follow, taking up again the sequence of St. Luke's narrative. The Stilling of the Tempest, St. Luke 8:22-25, and the Feeding of the Five Thousand, St. Luke 9:10-17, manifest the miraculous power of Jesus together with His sympathy and desire to help us in all our needs.

The Transfiguration, St. Luke 9:28-36, brought to the three apostles on the Holy Mount a revelation of the Majesty of their Lord, and prepared them for the trials which were to follow. The Mission of the Seventy, St. Luke 10:1-20, was an application of our Lord's teaching in the practical work which His disciples were sent out to do. The Good Samaritan, St. Luke 10:25-37, is a general lesson on the subject, who is my neighbour?

Ascension, Whitsuntide and Trinity Sunday. These festivals have their appropriate lessons, St. Luke 24:44-53; Acts 1:1-14; Acts 2:1-11, and St. John 14:1-24. The teaching of these great truths about Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Holy Trinity is quite strongly and properly emphasized in these lessons.

Prayer and Seeking is the theme of the three lessons at the end of the quarter. The Lord's Prayer, St. Luke 11:1-13 gives us in our Lord's own words His understanding of the meaning of prayer and the spirit in which our prayers should be offered. The lesson on the Publican and the Pharisee, St. Luke 18:9-14, shows the contrast between false and true ways of approaching God in prayer. The final lesson, St. Luke 19:1-10, is the story of another Publican who sought to see Jesus and who found that blessing which made him a better man and brought him into true fellowship with Jesus.

Hard speech between those who have loved is hideous in the memory, like the sight of greatness and beauty sunk into vice and rags.—GEORGE ELIOT.

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