

spread of modern unbelief and indifference. Christ's complete victory through His Divinity over the faculties of the soul of man is not a mere theory constructed by the subtle imaginations of men. It is the real and sweet experience of many devout disciples of Christ. If, as yet, we have not felt it, we should seek those measures at the Church's command for its realization. It will lend much rest and comfort and will prepare us for that unspeakable life which is to come after death.—The Missionary.

THE STORY OF CHRIST

BY GIOVANNI PAPINI

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SIMON, CALLED THE ROCK

Peter before the Resurrection is like a body beside a spirit, like a material voice which accompanies the sublimation of the soul. He is the earth which believes in Heaven but remains earthy. In his rough man's imagination the Kingdom of Heaven still resembles rather too closely the Kingdom of the Prophets' Messiah.

When Jesus pronounced the famous words: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God," Peter thought this sweeping condemnation of wealth very harsh. "Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" He acts like a money lender inquiring what interest he can expect. And Jesus, to console him, promises him that he will sit upon a throne to judge one of the tribes of Israel, that the other eleven will judge the other eleven tribes, and adds that every one shall have a hundred times what he has given up.

Again Peter does not understand what Christ means when He asserts that only what comes from man himself can defile man. Peter then answered and said unto him: "Declare unto us this parable, and Jesus said: Are ye also without understanding? Do ye not yet understand?" Among the disciples so slow to understand, Peter is one of the slowest. His surname "Cefa," stone, piece of rock, was not given him only for the firmness of his faith, but for the hardness of his head.

He was not an alert spirit in either the literal or the figurative meaning of the word. He easily fell asleep even at supreme moments. He fell asleep on the Mount of the Transfiguration. He fell asleep on the night at Gethsemane, after the last supper, where Jesus had uttered the saying which would have kept even a Scribe everlastingly from sleep. And yet his boldness was great. When Jesus that last evening announced that He was to suffer and die, Peter burst out: "Lord, I am ready to go with thee both, into prison, and to death. Although all shall be offended, yet will not I. If I should die with thee, I will not deny Thee in any wise. Jesus answered him: 'Verily I say unto thee that this night before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.'"

Jesus knew him better than Peter knew himself. When he stood in the courtyard of Caiaphas, warning himself at the brazier while the priests were questioning and insulting his God, he denied three times that he was one of His followers.

At the moment of the arrest he had made, against the teaching of Jesus, an appearance of resistance: he had cut off the ear of Malchus. He had not yet understood after years of daily comradeship with Christ that any form of material violence was repellent to Jesus. He had not understood that if Jesus had wished to save Himself, He could have hidden in the wilderness unknown to all, or escaped out of the hands of the soldiers as He had done that first time at Nazareth. So little did Jesus value this act, contrary to His teaching, that he healed the wound at once and reproved His untimely avenger.

That was not the first time that Peter showed himself unequal to great events. He had like all crude personalities a tendency to see the material dress in spiritual manifestations, the low in the lofty, the commonplace in the tragic. On the mountain of the transfiguration, when he was awakened and saw Jesus refulgent with white light, speaking with two others, with two spirits, with two prophets, the first thought which came to him, instead of worshiping and keeping silence, was to build a tabernacle for these great personages. "Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles: one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." Luke, the wise man, adds to excuse him, "not knowing what he said."

When he saw Jesus walking in all security on the lake, the idea came to him to do the same thing. "And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord save me." And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him: "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Because he was familiar with the lake and with Jesus, the good fisherman thought he could do as his master did, and

did not know that the storm could be mastered only by a soul infinitely greater, a faith infinitely more potent than his.

His great love for Christ, which makes up for all his weakness, led him one day almost to rebuke Him. Jesus had told His disciples how He must suffer and be killed. "Then Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." No one ever pronounced such a terrible judgment on Simon, called Peter. He was called to work for the Kingdom of God, and he thought as men do. His mind, still occupied by the vulgar idea of the triumphant Messiah, refused to conceive a persecuted Messiah condemned and executed. His soul had not yet kindled to the idea of divine expiation, the idea that salvation cannot be secured without an offering of suffering and blood, and that the great should sacrifice His body to the ferocity of mean men in order that the mean, after being enlightened by that life, may be saved from that death. He loved Jesus, but although his love was warm and potent, it still had something earthy in it, and he grew angry at the thought that his king should die. And yet he was the first to recognize Jesus as the Christ; and this primacy is so great that nothing has been able to cancel it.

SONS OF THUNDER

The two fishermen, the brothers James and John, who had left their boat and their nets on the shore at Capernaum in order to go with Jesus, form together with Peter a sort of favorite triumvirate. They are the only ones who accompany Jesus into the house of Jairus, and on the Mount of Transfiguration, and they are the ones whom He takes with Him on the night of Gethsemane. But in spite of their long intimacy with the Master, they never acquired sufficient humility. Jesus gave them the surname of "Boanerges—Sons of Thunder," an ironic surname, alluding perhaps to their fiery, irascible character.

When they all started together towards Jerusalem, Jesus sent some of them ahead to make ready for Him. They were crossing Samaria and were badly received in a village. "And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples, James and John, saw this, they said: Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them? But he turned, and rebuked them." For them, Galileans, faithful to Jerusalem, the Samaritans were always enemies. In vain had they heard the Sermon on the Mount: "Do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." In vain had they received instructions for their mission among the peoples: "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet." Angry at an affront to Jesus they presumed to be able to command fire from Heaven. It seemed to them a work of righteous justice to reduce to ashes the village guilty of inhospitality. And yet far as they were from that loving rebirth of the soul which alone constitutes the reality of the Kingdom of Heaven, these men had the pretension to claim the first places on the day of triumph.

"And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldst do for us whatsoever we should desire. And he said unto them: What would ye that I should do for you? They said unto him: Grant unto us that we may sit one on thy right hand and one on thy left hand in thy glory. But Jesus said unto them: Ye know not what ye ask. And when they heard it, they began to be much displeas'd with James and John. But Jesus called them to Him and said unto them: Whosoever will be great among you let him be your minister; and whosoever will be the chief among you, let him be your servant, for even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister."

Christ, the overturner of the old order, took this occasion to repeat the master word to which all magnanimous souls respond. Only the useless, the petty, the parasites, wish to be served, even by their inferiors (if any one in the absolute meaning of the word can be inferior to them), but any superior being is always at the service of lesser souls precisely because he is superior.

This miraculous paradox is the proof of the fire of genius. It is repugnant to the egotism of the self-centered, to the pretensions of would-be supermen, and to the poverty of the avaricious because the little that they have is not even enough for themselves. He who cannot or will not serve shows that he has nothing to give, is a weakling, impotent, imperfect, empty. But the genius is no true genius if he does not exuberantly benefit his inferiors. To serve is not always the same as to obey. A people can be served better sometimes by a man who puts himself at their head to force them to be saved even if they do not wish it. There is nothing servile in serving.

James and John understood this stimulating saying of Jesus. We find one of them, John, among the nearest and most loving of the disciples. At the Last Supper he leans his head on Jesus' breast; and from the height of the cross Jesus, crucified, confides the Virgin to him, that he should be a son to her.

THE OTHERS

Thomas owes his popularity to the quality which should be his shame. Thomas, the twin, is the guardian of modernity, as Thomas Aquinas is the oracle of medieval life. He is the true patron saint of Spinoza and of all the other deniers of the resurrection: the man who is not satisfied even with the testimony of his eyes, but wishes that of his hands as well. And yet his love for Jesus makes him pardonable. When they came to the Master to say that Lazarus was dead, and the disciples hesitated before going into Judea among their enemies, it was Thomas alone who said: "Let us also go, that we may die with him." The martyrdom which he did not find then came to him in India, after Christ's death.

Matthew is the dearest of all the Twelve. He was a tax-gatherer, a sort of under-publican, and probably had more education than his companions. He followed Jesus as readily as the fishermen. "And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom, and he said unto him, follow me. And he left all, rose up, and followed him. And Levi made him a great feast in his own house." It was not a heap of torn nets which Matthew left, but a position, a stipend, secure and increasing earnings. Giving up riches is easy for a man who has almost nothing. Among the Twelve Matthew was certainly the richest before his conversion. Of no other is it told that he could offer a great feast, and this means that he made a greater and more meritorious sacrifice by his rising at the first call from the seat where he was accumulating money.

Matthew and Judas were perhaps the only ones of the Disciples who knew how to write, and to Matthew we owe the first collection of Logia or memorable sayings of Jesus, if the testimony of Papias is true. In the Gospel which is called by his name, we find the most complete text of the Sermon on the Mount. Our debt to the poor excise-man is heavy: without him many words of Jesus, and the most beautiful, might have been lost. This handkerchief of drachmas, shekels and talents, whom his despised trade must have predisposed to avarice, has laid up for us a treasure worth more than all the money coined on the earth before and after his time.

Philip of Bethsaida also knew how to reckon. When the famished multitude pressed about Him, Jesus turned to him to ask what it would cost to buy bread for all those people. Philip answered Him: "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them." He was later to become a proclaimer of his Master's fame. He it was who announced to Nathaniel the coming of Jesus, and it was to him that the Greeks of Jerusalem turned when they wished to speak to the new Prophet.

Nathaniel answered Philip's announcement with sarcasm: "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" But Philip succeeded in bringing him to Jesus, who as soon as he saw him, exclaimed, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." Nathaniel said unto him: "Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathaniel answered and said unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou that thou shalt see greater things than these?"

Less enthusiastic and inflammable was Nicodemus, who, as a matter of fact, never wished to be known as a disciple of Jesus. Nicodemus was old, had been to school to the Rabbis, was a friend of the Jerusalem Sanhedrin, but the stories of the miracles had shaken him, and he went by night to Jesus to tell Him that he believed that He was sent by God. Jesus answered him: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus did not understand these words, or perhaps they startled him. He had come to see a miracle worker and had found a Sybil, and with the homely good sense of the man who wishes to avoid being taken in by a fraud he said, "How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answers with words of profound meaning, "Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

But Nicodemus still did not understand. How can these things be? Jesus answered, "Art thou a master of Israel and knowest not these things?" Nicodemus always respected the young Galilean, but his sympathy was as circumspect as his visit. Once when the leaders of the priests and the Pharisees were meditating how to capture Jesus, Nicodemus ventured a defense: "Doth our law judge any man, before he hear him, and know what he doeth?" He took his stand on a point of law. He spoke in the name

of "our" law, not at all in the name of the new man, Nicodemus is always the old man, law-respecting, the prudent friend of the letter of the law. A few words of reproof were enough to silence him. "They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet!" He belonged by right to the Sanhedrin, but there is no record that he raised his voice in favor of the accused when He was conducted to Caiaphas. The trial was set at night and probably to avoid the contempt of his colleagues and his own remorse for the legal assassination, Nicodemus remained in his bed. When he awoke Jesus was dead, and then, forgetting his avarice, he bought a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes to embalm the body. He who brought others to life was dead, but Nicodemus, although not literally dead, would never know that second birth in which he could not believe.

Nicodemus is the eternal type of the lukewarm who will be spewed out of the mouth of God on the day of wrath. He is the half-way soul who would like to say "Yes" with his spirit, but his flesh suggests to him the "No" or cowardice. He is the man of books, the nocturnal disciple who would like to be a follower of the Master, but not to appear as one; who would not mind being born again, but who does not know how to break the withered bark of his ageing trunk; the man of inhibitions and precautions. When the man of his admiration was martyred and killed and His enemies were satisfied, and there was no more danger of being compromised, then he comes with balsams to pour into those wounds which were inflicted partly by his cowardice.

But the church to reward his posthumous piety has chosen him to become one of her saints. And there is an old tradition that he was baptized by Peter and put to death for having believed, too late, in Him whom he did not save from death.

TO BE CONTINUED

CHRIST IN THE WORLD

The comment that "there is nothing more uncommon than common sense," finds confirmation in the bewilderment, sometimes indeed resentment, shown by many worldlings when they hear of young Catholics "leaving all things" in order to devote themselves as handmaids to the service of God. Though such sacrifice is inspired by sublime purpose and fraught with eternal consequence, yet frequently it meets with either callous indifference or contemptuous pity from the very people who cheer enthusiastically the quick response of youth to patriotic appeal notwithstanding that following the flag may break hearts and lead to loss of life. Such ignoble critics loudly voice their admiration of the adventurous spirit which moves many upon hazardous expeditions in quest of discovery or renown; they favor the financial instincts which prompt men to seek fortune far from home amid the hardships of the gold or diamond fields, and they highly commend the unquestioned courage of those scientists whose research is accompanied by daily risk. These chieftain mundane and inevitably transient projects are held in honor but, constantly, the Apostles whose mission is Divine, of highest worth, everlasting value, are ignored or despised. What a perversion of right reason!

The Religious state is the incarnation of Christian idealism—the continuation and extension of the life of Christ. As a sacrifice it is an admonition to a selfish world: "If thou art willing to be perfect, go sell what thou hast, give to the poor." "I would," declared Saint Paul, "that all men were even as myself. I would have you to be without solicitude. He that is without a wife, is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please God. . . . The unmarried woman and the virgin think on the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit." And the Divine Exemplar humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross! Conformity with Christ is the outstanding feature of the Religious state. To be united with Him, influenced by His Spirit, and to co-operate in making Him known and loved, is the noble ambition of each sincere Religious. The motive is a reciprocation of the Love instanced at Bethlehem and Calvary. Such persevering consecration is already blessed with an assurance of the hospitality of Heaven: "Jesus said, Amen: I say to you, there is no man who hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother or lands, for My sake and for the Gospel, who shall not receive an hundred times as much now in this time, and in the world to come, Life Everlasting."

Although soul welfare is the essential concern of Priests, Brothers, and Sisters, yet in varying degrees and directions they strive for "the perfection of the whole man" which is the very meaning of civilization. The teachers therefore cultivate the mind; some make their pupils skilled in agriculture and handicraft as well as letters. The nursing Sisters portray Our Lord's own kindness to the sick by ministering to their needs and the outcast leper finds in them a

gentle friend. The insane are cared for by the noble Brothers of St. Alexis and St. John of God. Various Sistershoods provide comfortable and healthy homes for the homeless. Hundreds of children and the aged are thus saved the bitter experience of destitution. The Good Shepherd Sisters, whose convents number about three hundred, tenderly carry on Christ's mission of mercy. Thus does the Church, like her Founder, go about doing good all day long: Educational establishments, industrial schools, hospitals, asylums, orphanages, home-to-home visitation of the poor sick, colleges for the deaf-dumb, etc., form object lessons in Christlike charity. The pulpit, the confessional, the press are further outlets for the ministry of sanctification. The hidden years of Jesus and His long nights of prayer survive in the spirit and practices of the wonderful Contemplative Orders:

"Do you esteem me highly" (asks an elderly priest practicer) "the mercy which helps the body than the mercy which heals the soul? Hospitals, schools, almshouses, asylums; yes! That is all blessed work. But have you ever thought of the contemplatives, of what use are they? Use? Silent in the gloom of the solemn chapel or in the bare chill cell, silent, yet glowing in a most heroic of endurance, the Carmelite nun prays. In her girlhood, forswearing the pride of beauty and the pomp of wealth, the ambition of talent and the hope of heart, she laid her life upon the Altar of the Sanctuary to atone for the sins of men. All through the hours of the monotonous years, while her thin face grew pale with fasting, as her weak limbs faint for watching, her prayer illumined by the loveliness of her purity and kindled by the burning of her zeal, in fragrant faith and cleansing charity, mounted like incense to the throne of God. That prayer is heard. When in distant wilds, in the fever swamp, or fetid jungle, with the scream of the vulture for his death rattle and the howl of the wolf for his last good-by, the poor prodigal boy lies quivering in his death agony, his mind darkened, his will powerless, his soul steeped in sin, the prayer of the Carmelite brought him salvation, and he sobbed forth his spirit in penitence to God. Or when in the dark and lonely street of the city the woman of shame paused for an instant as she heard the faint chapel bell, and thought of her innocent childhood, the prayer of the Carmelite softened her heart and made her weep like Magdalen.

"O, what would the world be without the prayer and penance of our unknown saints? Should not fire from heaven smite the giddy quail of voluptuous Paris, or earthquake engulf the Godless greed of London, did not the sacred sound of midnight choir from Carthusian church remind God that there are still angels upon earth; did not Claretian silence bind pure lips, and fierce discipline of bleeding hair shire of Trappist leucate innocent shoulders in order to expiate the sins of their guilty brothers?"

Finally, not through any hatred of the world nor because of bitter disillusionment but through stronger preferential love for God and His creatures, Catholic youth freely and joyously goes forth to college or to convent. Such candidates are as a rule from really happy homes, they know each other's purest pleasures, the charm of companionships, and the innumerable domestic, social, mental, manual interests which captivate the young heart. During early days of their religious career they may indeed experience a reaction for "the would-be saint is weary of the world; but by the time he is a true saint he loves it. There are three stages in the life of love, as in the life of faith; love without much knowledge, love shaken and embittered by unexpected knowledge, and the steadfast love that has merged knowledge into wisdom."—The Southern Cross.

A crooked path is always longer than a straight one. "The heart of every boy is worth while. There's not a boy under the sun who, when approached by a kindly sympathetic man, cannot have his feet put on the path of Christian righteousness. You men would do more to save the soul of one boy by putting his feet on the right path than if you erected a lamp-post in this city."—Archbishop Curley.

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