

to the city alone, Mrs. Meade, Rose began, "so if your return is imperative, Bob will accompany you. Otherwise, I should be glad to have you share my one guest room with Aunt Hetty."

Mrs. Meade hesitated. "I wouldn't be putting you to a great deal of inconvenience?"

"No, indeed?"

"Then I'll stay. There's a lot of questions I'd like to ask Hetty, about the folks we used to know. There's another thing I'd like to know; you wouldn't consider parting with the candlestick?"

"Oh, no, we really couldn't," Rose explained; "it was a gift, you see, and—"

"I understand. Some day, then, I'm going to give you mine. Those two candlesticks belong together. By the way, young man—she turned to Bob—"I might as well tell you now, you're going to plan those houses for me and you're also going to help me remodel my own home."

"I shall be glad to assist you in it."

Mrs. Meade waited to hear no more. For her, the matter was satisfactorily settled.

In the blue and brown living room Bob and Rose stood before the green candlestick.

"Why didn't you get rid of it when you had the chance?" he teased.

"I couldn't—I simply couldn't part with it. It meant so much to Mrs. Meade to Aunt Hetty and I'm beginning to feel that it is going to mean very much to me. Perhaps if it hadn't been for the green candlestick Mrs. Meade would never have given you this big chance. Would you want to part with it now, Bob?"

"Indeed I wouldn't. Rosie-Poë, and I make the mention that it be given a permanent place of honor on the Gray's mantle."—The New Freeman.

THE STORY OF CHRIST

BY GIOVANNI PAPINI  
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THOU SHALT LOVE

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." A few bare, plain words! But they are the Magna Charta of the new race, of the third race, of men not yet born. The first race was that of the animal without law, and its name was War; the second were barbarians tamed by the Law, whose highest perfection was justice. This is the race living now, and justice has not yet conquered War, and the Law has not yet supplanted animality. The third is to be the race of real men, not only upright but holy, not like beasts but like God.

Jesus had just one aim: to transform men from beasts to saints by means of love. Circe, the enchantress, the Satanic consort of the old mythologies, converted men into beasts by means of animal pleasures. Jesus is the anti-Satan, the anti-Circe. He who saves from animality by a force more powerful than pleasure. This undertaking, which seems hopeless to all animals barely risen above animality and to beings just entering upon real humanity, must be based on the imitation of God. To approximate sanctity one must look toward divinity: "Be holy because God is holy. Be perfect because God is perfect."

This is not the first time that this appeal has been made to the heart of man. Satan said in the Garden: "You will be as gods." Jehovah said to His judges: "Be gods, be just as God is just." But now there is no question of being wise like God, nor is it even enough to be just like God. God is now more than wisdom and justice. With Jesus, He becomes our Father, becomes love. His earth gives bread and flowers even to the homicide; he who takes His name in vain sees the glorious sun every morning, the same sun which warms the clasped hands of the laborer praying in the field. A true father loves the son who turns from him as he loves the son who seeks him out; a father cherishes the child who obeys him in his house, or who vomits him out with his wine. A father can be saddened, can suffer, can mourn, but no sinning man is capable of making a father become like to himself. No one can induce a father to take revenge.

And we who are so much lower than God, poor finite creatures, who are scarcely capable of remembering yesterday, who do not know tomorrow, we unfortunate, inferior creatures, have we not many more motives to feel for our brothers in wretchedness than God feels for us? God is the supreme substance

of our ideal. To draw away from Him, not to be as we pray that He may be with us, is this not to draw away from our unique destination, to keep perpetually and despairingly out of our reach that happiness for which we are created, which we believe to be the aim of our lives, imagined by us, dreamed of by us, longed-for, invoked and followed in vain through all the false felicities which are not of God? "Let us be Gods," cries Bossuet. "Let us be Gods. He permits it, that we may imitate His holiness."

Who will refuse to be like God? Dii estle. Divinity is in us; animality hampers and constricts it, stunting our growth. Who would not wish to be God? Oh, men, are you in very truth content to be only men? Men as you are today, half-men, half-beasts? Centaurs without robustness, sirens without sweetness, demons with fauns' muzzles and goats' feet? Are you so satisfied with your bastard and imperfect humanity, with your animality scarcely held in leash, taking no step to win holiness save to desire? Does it seem to you that the life of men as it has been in the past, as it is today, is so dear, so happy, so contented that there should be no effort to make it otherwise, entirely different, the opposite of what it is, more like that which for thousands of years we have imagined in the future and in Heaven? Is it not possible to change this world to a world to more divine, at last to bring down Heaven and the laws of Heaven upon earth?

This new life, this earthly but celestial world is the Kingdom of Heaven, and to bring about the Kingdom we must transfigure and deify ourselves; become like God, imitate God. The secret of the imitation of God is love, the certain way of the transfiguration is love, love of man for man, love for friend and enemy. If this love is impossible, our salvation is impossible. If it is repugnant, it is a sign that happiness is repugnant to us. If it is absurd, our hopes of redemption are only absurdity. Common sense tells us that to love our enemies is insanity, and to count such love as a prerequisite of our salvation seems simple madness. Love for enemies is like hatred for ourselves; hence it follows that we can only earn beatitude by hating ourselves.

This conclusion should alarm no one, for it has been proved; all the experiments have been tried. It is not true that there has been no time to test it. For thousands of years we have been proving and proving it, over and over. We have tried the experiment of fierceness; and blood answered blood. We have tried the experiment of lust; and lust has left in the mouth the odor of corruption and a fiercer fever. We have forced the body into the most refined and perverse pleasures and found ourselves worn out and heavy-hearted, lying upon filth. We have tried the experiment of the Law, and we have not obeyed the Law; we have changed it and disobeyed it again, and Justice has not satisfied our hearts. We have tried the experiment of intellectualism, we have taken the census of creation, numbered the stars described the plants, the dead things and the living things, we have bound them together with the thin threads of abstract ideas, we have transfigured them in the magic clouds of metaphysics; and at the end of all this, things have remained the same, eternally the same; they were not enough for us, they could not be renewed; their names and their numbers did not quiet our hunger, and the most learned men ended with weary confessions of ignorance. We have tried the experiment of art and our feebleness has brought the strongest to despair, because the Absolute cannot be fixed in any form; the Many overflow from the One; the carefully wrought work of art cannot arrest the ephemeral. We have tried the experiment of wealth and have found ourselves poorer; the experiment of force and have come to ourselves, weaker. In no thing has our soul found quiet. We have found no welcoming shade, where our bodies can lie down and be at rest; and our hearts, always seeking, always disappointed, are older, weaker, and emptier because in nothing have they found peace, because no pleasure has brought them joy, no conquest, happiness.

THE LAST EXPERIMENT  
Jesus proposes His experiment, the only remaining possibility, the experiment of love, that experiment which no one has made, which few have even attempted (and that for only a few moments of their lives), the most arduous, the most contrary to our instincts but the only one which can give what it promises.

As he comes from the hand of Nature, Man thinks only of himself, loves nothing but himself. Little by little, with tremendous but slow efforts, he succeeds in loving for a while his woman, and his children, in tolerating his accomplices in the hunt, in assassination and in war. Very rarely is he able to love a friend; more easily he hates the man who loves him. He does not dream of loving the man who hates him.

All this explains why Jesus commands us to love our enemies. To make over the entire man, to create a new man, the most tenacious center of the old man must be destroyed. From self-love come all the misfortunes, massacres and miseries of the world. To tame the old Adam self-love must be torn out of him, and in its place must be put the love most opposed to his present nature, love for his enemies. The total transformation of man is such a sublime paradox that it can be reached only by fantastic means. It is an extraordinary undertaking, wild and unnatural, to be accomplished only with an extraordinary exaltation, opposed to Nature.

Until now man has loved himself and hated those who hate him; the man of the future, the inhabitant of the Kingdom, must hate himself and love those who hate him. To love one's neighbor as one's self is an insufficient formula, a concession to universal egotism. For he who loves himself cannot perfectly love others, and finds himself perforce in conflict with others. Only hatred for ourselves is sufficient. If we love ourselves, we admire ourselves, we flatter ourselves too much. To overcome this blind love, we need to see our nothingness, our baseness, our infamy. Hatred of ourselves is humility, the beginning of improvement, of perfection. And only the humble shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven because they alone feel how far they are from it. We are angered at others because our dear ego feels unduly offended, not sufficiently served by others; we kill our brother because he seems an obstacle to our good; we steal for the love of our body, we fornicate to give pleasure to our body; envy, mother of rivalry and of wars, is merely sorrow because another has more than we, or has what we have not; pride is the expression of our certainty of being of more account than others, of possessing more than others, of knowing more than others. All the things which religions, morals, and laws call sins, vices, and crimes begin in self-love, in the hatred for others which springs out of that one solitary, disordered love.

What right have we to hate our enemies, when we ourselves have been guilty of the same fault for which we think we have the right to hate them; when we ourselves have been guilty of hatred? What right have we to hate them, even if they have done wrong, even if we believe them wicked, when we ourselves nearly always have done the same wrong actions, have been defiled with the same pitch? What right have we to hate them if nearly always we are responsible for their hate? We, who with the endless errors of our monstrous self-love, have forced them to hate us? And he who hates is unhappy, is the first to suffer, the first to respond with love to that hatred, with gentleness to that harshness as reparation for the suffering of which we are often the real cause, immediate or distant.

Our enemy is also our savior. We ought every day to be grateful to our enemies; they alone see clearly and state openly what is ignominious in us; they make us conscious of our moral poverty, the realization of which is the only beginning for the second birth. For this service we owe them love. For our enemy needs love, and needs our love. He who loves us already has his joy and reward in himself. He needs no reward from us. But he who hates is unhappy; his hatred is the bitter outlet for his sufferings. We are partly guilty for this suffering, and even if, overconfident in our innocence, we do not feel that we are responsible, we ought nevertheless to comfort with love the unhappiness of the man who hates, to calm him, make him better, convert him also to the beatitudes of loving. We will know him better if we love him, and knowing him better, we will love him more. We only love heartily whom we know well. If we love our enemy, his soul will be transparent to us, and as we penetrate further into it, we will discover much more to call forth our pity and our love; because every enemy is an unrecognized brother; we often hate in him what resembles our own natures. Something of ourselves, unknown perhaps to us, is in our enemy and is often the cause of our hostility. When we love our enemies, we purify our spirit by understanding and lift his spirit upward. Hatred, instead of driving men apart, may thus engender a light that liberates men's souls. The worst of evil may bring about the highest good.

This is the reason why Jesus commands us to reverse the ordinary and customary relations of men. When man loves what he now hates, and hates what he now loves, he will be the opposite of what he is today. And if life now is made up of evils and despair, the new changed life being the opposite of what we now have, will be all goodness and consolation. For the first time we shall know happiness; the Kingdom of Heaven will begin on earth. We will find that eternal Paradise, lost because the first men wished to learn the difference between good and evil. But for absolute love like the love of God the Father, there is neither good nor evil. Evil is overwhelmed by the good. Paradise was love, love between man and God, between man and woman. The new earthly paradise, the paradise regained, will be the love of every man for all men. Christ is He who leads Adam back to the gates of the garden, teaches him how he can enter and live there always.



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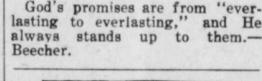
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