

The Path to Peace

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URING the past four centuries, but especially in this last, the cry for peace has grown ever louder and more constant, until now it resembles the scream of a world in despair. The nations of the world, still staring in stupefaction on the spectre of the Great War, are working earnestly, feverishly to preserve the future from the repetition of such a calamity. Conferences have been called one after another, privileges and prerogatives that were long jealously guarded have been given up. Disarmament agreements involving the sacrifice of national strength and pride have gone into force. A universal court has been formed. All with one end in view—to obtain peace.

Individuals are in no better plight than nations. The reformation effectually destroyed religious concord and peace; rationalism added its bit of dynamite to blast man's foundation, his bed-rock of self-confidence, and to leave in its place the gaping hole of scepticism and unbelief. As a result, men have begun to despair of all religion, so that where there is not a positive animosity towards it, there is even more deadly indifference. Robbed of the consolations of spiritual life, man has been half dead. The selfishness and pride, which were the parents of the reformation and rationalism, have seen a fine family surround them: capitalism from the greed of the employer, commercialism from the greed of the government, class war from the greed of the laboring man. While men desired peace!

Men and nations have been like children blindfolded in a great sun-flooded room, but they can see nothing, they are afraid to venture from the walls along which they feel their way, which, after all, yield them nothing. Unlike such children, the men and nations of the world can see, but will not; there is no rule of the sport of life holding them to the blinding of their eyes. They have little enough time to find what they seek, without wasting any of it wandering about in darkness of their own making. There, in the middle of the world, around which they grope, stands the representative of the Prince of Peace, the

Catholic Church, guarding in its treasury the principles, the truths that alone will solve the problems that confront individuals and states. Not religious truths in the narrow sense they are usually understood; but in the sense every Catholic understands them—truths that originate in religion, but like it, flow into every stream of life, conferring peace, not only on the souls of men, but on them in their family relations, political, social and economic life. Such are charity, justice, obedience, applied in particular and practical cases of human trials.

At the door of this storehouse of peace stands a Pope who is preeminently the Pope of peace. From the day of his coronation until today, his one thought and word has been for peace; as his motto he has adopted, "The peace of Christ in the reign of Christ." Announcing the intentions they are to pray for to those who make the Jubilee, he mentions three—religious peace, peace in the Holy Land, peace among nations. Yet men obstinately refuse to see these things, refuse to look for peace in the home of peace and in the teachings of the guardian of peace. But, confounding men with His mercy, the God of peace allows a year of pardon and amnesty, just when the crisis of a civilization has been reached. What effects will the Holy Year have upon the peace of the individuals and nations of the world?

The benefits and advantages to those who make the Jubilee are most evident and, for the most part, have been thoroughly outlined in religious periodicals. What other advantages can be anticipated? It will be plain, as we look into this mirror of a world, that the gathering at Rome will be a most fervent, intensely religious multitude. Most of them have been looking forward to the pilgrimage for a long time, planning for it as the event of their lives; besides a great number have a journey of many miles added to fan the flames of their eager anticipation. A full understanding and appreciation have been given them of the meaning of the Jubilee through the press. On arriving at Rome, they will assist at a Ceremonial that far surpasses their fondest dreams; they will be tiny waves in a great sea of praying men—before them, behind them, around them will surge fellow mortals all aflame with their duty to their God.

A man in prayer is an inspiring sight; a great number of men kneeling in supplication to their Maker, is an overwhelming sight; what will be the effect of seeing, of being a part of, a

countless multitude of men, flocking from every part of the earth, humble and repentant before their God, their souls pure after a good confession, Christ Himself in their hearts from a good Communion. If this were not enough to burn the memory of this year and its meaning on the mind of every man present, think of the other offices they will perform while in Rome. Consider their visits to the four great churches of the Eternal City: St. Peter's, St. John Lateran, St. Mary Major's and Sts. Peter and Paul's outside the walls; see them treading the ground hallowed by millions of Catholics throughout the ages, sanctified by the blood of martyrs, by the holiness of confessors and virgins who appreciated their faith, who knew it was a thing to live and die for. They will pray before altars which have seen the miraculous answers to the prayers of saints, have witnessed the conversion of the sinners of the centuries, which have felt the heart throbs of man talking to God for hundreds of years. The pilgrims will go about Rome, visit the places that have made it dear to the heart of Christians, that have consecrated it forever as the Eternal, the Holy City.

And through it all they will be praying for peace. With peace all about them, the relics of martyrs of peace before their eyes, peace in their hearts, they will still be driving into their very beings the thought, the hope of peace. Can any man do all this, feel all this, see all this, and come away indifferent, uninfamed with the lessons that have been so constantly before his mind during his visit? This is the first great effect of the Jubilee—on those who make it.

There will of course be many idlers, lookers-on, the merely curious who may even make the journey to indulge in a mocking laugh. There will be many who will go in this disposition; but it is improbable that, after witnessing what will take place, all will return in the same frame of mind. The great majority of those who "came to laugh will remain to pray." Peace will steal upon them in the quiet of other's prayers, to overwhelm the cowardly hirelings of indifference and scepticism. Unknowingly, even unconsciously perhaps, they will experience the glorious victory they have so long sought; for after all they are men, creatures of reason and emotion, and surely here is proof

enough, love and devotion enough, to win over sceptic and stoic: truth attested by the greatest of human minds, policy confirmed by two thousand years of trial, an object of love and devotion to every branch of the human race.

With the clouds of internal war dissipated, the people of the world will look upon one another and find themselves brothers, human, with faults, but also with virtues. From contact and observation, men will learn for themselves the natures of other peoples; and with this knowledge must infallibly spring up understanding, sympathy, friendship; for "all hatred, all quarrels, are well said to be misunderstanding." Returning home they will be able to teach others what they have learned, the knowledge will spread, and a nation may be turned from an enemy to a friend; at least, the politician will find that he can no longer hold up a caricature before an innocent public, and expect to have it hissed at and fought with. Certainly there will be a reaction in the policies of government, if, as we believe, public opinion plays the part assigned to it in the universal drama. Then will a great step be taken towards the goal of peace, with men at peace with themselves, and nations willing and eager to understand and sympathize with one another.

The influence of the returning travellers will go far deeper than this skimming along the surface of a nation's life; it will plunge down to the very depths of the nation's soul, to gather the pearls of the spirit, that have lain hidden there for so long. The pilgrims will have learnt well the lesson of values. They will have seen just what part the spiritual things take in man's life; will have been impressed with their power, antiquity, their immutable nature. And, perhaps subconsciously, will have contrasted the luxuriant growth of peace and happiness they produce, with the pitiful desert weeds of materialistic teaching. Naturally they will put these truths into practice, will influence those around them, will demand that their government incorporate them into its plan of action. For if any man really obtains such benefits, and can share them with his fellow men, without loss to himself, he will certainly not hesitate to expose his secret; and if he be a true patriot, he will not be satisfied to sit back in quiet happiness and see his country writhing in the agonies he has just been free from, and for which he has the remedy.

In general, the Jubilee will be a powerful restorative to a battered and badly shaken world, for a year of prayer must be a great check to atheism, scepticism, radicalism and selfishness in all things. The chief weapon of atheism and scepticism is a laugh, and because men have never enjoyed being laughed at, it is an efficient one; that of radicalism is silence, which as the proverbial garment of wisdom, has also proved its worth in cloaking the sinister. These systems will see a school of thought that is not afraid to bare its doctrines to the gaze of the world, which, in fact, invites such inspection. This offer alone, will give them a serious blow; while the acceptance of it, if general, will result in crippling, if not destroying, their claim to prominence, since error, no matter how well attired, cannot pass itself off for truth, when the truth is standing before men in all its simplicity.

The champions of secularism, looking on the Jubilee, will see that, after all, religion does play an important part in the lives of people of every nation, that it has a firm hold on their affections; what they probably will refuse to see, is that it will continue to play this part, and maintain this position in the hearts of the people, as long as men are men—in all likelihood for some considerable time. At any rate, they must appreciate the fact that, since it has its supporters in every corner of the globe, it is not a thing to be banished at the word of a petty minister, or to be frightened away like a bothersome fly on a nation's sleeve. Perhaps they will exhibit enough wisdom to inquire into the history of the Church that so intimately directs men's lives, and see there the story of its influence for good in things civic, of this and other ages. They may conclude, if they are in earnest in their concern for the state, that it would not be altogether disastrous to give again to the Church, a voice in the debates of the nations. They might even look in at the Mission Exhibit, and see liberty, equality, and fraternity understood and practiced in their only true sense . . . far different from the interpretation they have forced upon these words.

Communism and Bolshevism may turn, for a moment, from the contemplation of its own idea of itself, to discover that a real brotherhood of men really exists somewhere that is not the tyranny of one class and the terror of another, though it has the son of an artisan at its head, succeeding the fisherman and the

carpenter's Son. It may realize that, the brotherhood it contemplates would be nothing but an illegitimate brood, since it has denied its common Father; while the communism it contemplates, is "a dream made impossible by the cupidity of man," and that the one on which it gazes, in this Jubilee, is the only true and honest one possible. The leaders of this latest movement may recall the Church's teaching on labor, and remember the picture history has drawn for us, of the times she had the power to put this teaching into practice; when the workman enjoyed his golden era, when he was the slave neither of the employer nor the state, but honest, independent, the "king o' men." They cannot but be struck by the absence of that festering sore that is eating the heart out of their own movement, class hatred, in spite of the fact that this institution they are looking upon, really accomplishes what they have set before them, theoretically, as their only end—the common good.

Perhaps, the most astonished of this world's devotees, will be the military men of extreme views, the lovers of empire and conquest, for before their eyes will be unfolded the vision of an empire, ruled by love, including within its borders every part of the world. What Cyrus, Alexander, Augustus, and others have failed to do with the best of military equipment and genius, Christ has accomplished by love. Perhaps this will bring home the truth, which has been known to man from the beginning, but which is so easily and frequently overlooked; that man is really intended by his Maker for a spiritual end, that consequently, things spiritual are his greatest interest, and occupy the first place in his thoughts. Dreams of dominion and power may lull this realization to sleep for a time, but for a time only; empires must be built of more than stone and mortar to withstand the assaults of time.

During this time of prayer, the whole world will turn its eyes to Rome; what will it see there? An institution that is Catholic, which sight will be further confirmed, not only by the cosmopolitan gathering, but by the wonderful exhibit of the doings of Catholic missionaries. A permanent institution, whose claim to perpetuity is based on the rather convincing evidence of twenty centuries of previous existence. An institution that is primarily one, of closest union, though including the ends of the earth. Finally, a holy institution, whose holiness is not a thing

of history, as can be seen by the canonization of six saints, which will take place during the year of Jubilee. All the Catholic Church has ever desired is to have men investigate her, inquire into her teachings; the truth she guards will be sufficient to accomplish the rest. With a world looking on, in more than mere curiosity, what forecast of the effects of this Jubilee would be too sanguine?