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In his deposition to the court after his release the Spanish captain of the San Dominick, Benito Cereno, claims to have been forced to “[act] the part of principal owner, and a free captain of the ship,”¹ based upon “the fictitious story dictated to the deponent by” the negro ringleader Babo (p. 159). And afterward Don Benito repeatedly confides to Captain Amasa Delano, who had delivered him from captivity, “how hard it had been to enact the part forced on [him] by Babo” (p. 167). Not only that, but below the canvass wrapped about the ship’s bows, “along the forward side of a sort of pedestal... was the sentence, ‘Seguid vuestro jefe’ (follow your leader)” (p. 70). If we should help our interpretation of this passage by means of Mark 8 : 34, it would mean a command to take up your cross and follow Christ ; but we would rather judge from its independence that what Don Benito (as well as the author Melville) has to say is that you can imitate Jesus of Nazareth and not Jesus Christ. We shall deal with more of it later in this thesis.

The deponent takes his oath by the phrase “God, and our Lord, and a sign of the cross” (p. 150), which is referring purposefully to Acts of the Apostles 2 : 36. But Don Benito here takes it out of its true context, and carefully refrains from mentioning such a term as the Lord Jesus Christ or Jesus Christ or the Lord Jesus or the Lord or even Jesus. Clearly, it is a variation on the three Persons of the Trinity, e. g. “God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, and the Holy Spirit.” All that we do know is what the early Church believed Jesus to be, and secondarily, that he actually existed and was crucified. For Bultmann, “...we can know almost nothing concerning the life and personality of Jesus.”² Bultmann

also says that "*faith in the resurrection is really the same thing as faith in the saving efficacy of the cross*" (author's italics).³ And yet the cross and the resurrection form an inseparable unity according to New Testament Christology.

Already in Chapter 1 of Acts of the Apostles the apostles call Jesus "Lord" (1 : 6, 21-22, 24). On the basis of their experience of the resurrection, the apostles would see the life and death of Jesus in a whole new light. They would reinterpret everything that he had said and done, recalling and reconstructing it all. The message of the New Testament was always the message of the resurrection. Thus, Jesus is Lord and Christ (2 : 36), for he is now "exalted at God's right hand" (2 : 33). Indeed, that Jesus is Lord becomes the central confession of faith (11 : 20 ; 16 : 31). It is in the name of "the Lord Jesus" that Christians are baptized (8 : 16 ; 19 : 5). In using the title Lord, the Church was attributing divine status to Jesus. Once the Church acknowledged the divinity of Jesus, it began laying the foundations for the doctrine of the incarnation. From the doctrine of the incarnation the Church was led ineluctably to the pre-existence of Jesus.

When Don Benito deposes to having believed a sudden impulse to have come from God and his angels (p. 161), the mention of "from God and his angels" is a clear reference to the Mosaic Law of Galatians 3 : 19. It is so called because of its condition of "until the offspring should come." And the offspring is mentioned by name (3 : 16). According to New Testament Christology, "from God and his angels" should be replaced by "from the Father and the Son." But the New Testament does not specify the terms of the relationship between Father and Son, nor among Father and Son and Holy Spirit. It assumes only that there is some relationship.

Here, *Filioque* ("and from the Son") occurs to our mind. This word was added to the Creed of Nicea-Constantinople as recited at the Council of Toledo, 447. It gained popularity in the West and was inserted in most versions of the creed, contending that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. It was opposed by the eastern Greek churches, which preferred the words *per Filium* ("through the Son"), to emphasize the

primacy of God the Father in the work of salvation. Since Don Benito has no resurrection faith, he does not acknowledge the Holy Spirit to proceed from the Father and the Son (or through the Son). What are we to make of the whole network of doctrines developed by the Church in direct response to its faith in the resurrection : the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the Church, the sacraments, eternal life? If the resurrection is not something that really happened to Jesus, then what foundation do the principal doctrines of Christianity have?

If God had not raised him up from the dead, then Jesus would not have poured out the Holy Spirit to us (Acts of the Apostles 2 : 32, 33). Then we would not have died to the law through him. But now, we, dead to the law, "serve not under the old letter but in the new life of the Spirit" (Romans 7 : 6). Whenever Moses is read a veil has lied over our minds ; but when we turn to the Lord the veil is removed. "The Lord is the Spirit (Second Corinthians 3 : 17).

The descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Church at Pentecost did not inaugurate the Church. It already existed (Acts of the Apostles 1 : 15). But the Pentecost was the moment when the Church was specifically endowed with power from on high (1 : 1-4). The pre-paschal baptisms were no longer Jewish, but neither were they yet fully Christian. Not until the gathering at Pentecost is the outpouring of the Spirit associated with Baptism (2 : 1-39). The Spirit is the gift of God to all who believe and are baptized (2 : 38). The so-called apostolic life of the original Jerusalem Church is summarized in Acts of the Apostles 2 : 42-47 ; 4 : 32-35 and 5 : 12-16. The members found great joy in being called into the fellowship of the Spirit of the Lord. The Lord increased the membership of the community (2 : 41, 47 ; 5 : 14 ; 11 : 21, 24).

The Church is the Temple of the Holy Spirit (First Corinthians 3 : 16). Here again, the resurrection is central. The Spirit proceeds from the "Lord of the Spirit," who through his resurrection has become "a life-giving spirit" (15 : 45). The risen and exalted Lord releases the Spirit and with the Spirit builds his Church. The Church "takes shape as a holy temple in the

Lord ... to become a dwelling place for God in the Spirit (Ephesians 2: 21-22). Jew and Gentile alike have "access in one Spirit to the Father" (2: 18). The Spirit is manifested in various ways, witnessing to the presence and activity of God in the Church (Acts of the Apostles 2: 3-13; 10: 47; 11: 17; 15: 8). The Spirit is conferred upon all of the members at Baptism. By his or her union with the Spirit of the risen Lord, the Christian rises in a spiritual body and inherits the Kingdom of God (First Corinthians 15: 35-50).

Nothing seems to be able to break the bonds that unite Don Benito with Babo. At Captain Delano's suggestion that Don Benito should "dispense with Babo's attendance," Don Benito "changed countenance; which was imputed to his resenting the hint, as in some way reflection upon his servant" (p. 139). Don Benito refers to Babo as "his constant attendant and companion," and as "his confidant" (pp. 139-140). The conception of the Church as Body of Christ is grounded in the union that exists between the Church and the risen body of Christ. Just as the resurrection is central to New Testament Christology, so is it central to New Testament, and especially Pauline, ecclesiology. When the Christian shares in the bread of the Eucharist, he or she becomes one body with Christ (First Corinthians 10: 16-17). Thus, the one who eats and drinks unworthily profanes the body of the Lord (11: 27), and eats and drinks unto his or her own condemnation (11: 29). It is in one body that Christ has reconciled us to the Father by his death (Ephesians 2: 16-17; Colossians 1: 22). The Church has become one body, his own, in which the Holy Spirit dwells (Ephesians 4: 4). We are one because we, though many, are baptized by one Spirit into one body (First Corinthians 12: 13). There is but "one body and one Spirit" (Ephesians 4: 4).

Easter gave Baptism a completely new meaning. Jesus was now perceived as the risen Lord (2: 36). Even though Baptism is still a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, repentance is seen as a turning to Christ, and the forgiveness of sins occurs on the authority of Christ. Baptism is a Baptism into the death and resurrection of Jesus. Thus, the

normal sequence : proclamation of the Gospel, conversion in faith, water bath, and post-baptismal teaching, fellowship of the Spirit, breaking of bread, and prayers (2:42). After the resurrection, Christians gathered together daily for their breaking of bread and shared meals, but now with the conviction that the risen Lord was in their midst as they gathered in his name. It is important to note that the celebration of the Lord's Supper, or Eucharist, was not an arbitrary act on the part of the Church. The Church was convinced it was following the Lord's own injunction, and indeed it used the actions of Jesus at his last supper with his disciples as the pattern for what it did. Through the Eucharist the Church manifests its unity in Christ (2:46).

Don Benito's too much agitation disables him from speaking a word to Captain Delano when they are at the scene representing the Last Supper (p. 138). There is a mention of Judas Iscariot, a Jew who "refrained not from supping at the board of *him whom the same night he meant to betray* (my italics ; pp. 138-139). This is only a rewriting of First Corinthians 11 : 23 with the difference that Paul introduces the liturgical words with the sentence : "For I received from the Lord ...," and he adds : "... [the Lord Jesus] took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me'" (11 : 24). For Paul, the body and blood of Jesus distributed by him to his disciples are simultaneously the body and blood of the crucified Lord. Paul clearly indicates this in the sentence added by him : "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death" (11 : 26). And there is the confession of faith "that Christ died for our sins" (15:3).

And Jesus' redemptive work on our behalf is a mediating priestly work. The hospital, to which, when finally dismissed by the court, Don Benito, in his litter, is carried, is appropriately named the Hospital de Sacerdotes, that is, the Hospital of Priests or Priesthood (p. 166). Jesus Christ is designated as a "high priest" (Hebrews 3 : 1 ; 4 : 14 ; 5 : 10 ; 6 : 20 ; 7 : 11) or a "priest" (5 : 6 ; 7 : 11, 15-17 ; 7 : 21 ; 10 : 21). Every priest stands daily

at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins (Hebrews 9:12); but Jesus offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins (10:11, 12). Peter exhorts the exiles of the Dispersion to be "a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (First Peter 2:5). Through Jesus then "let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name" (Hebrews 13:15). This now points to the Liturgy of the Word recited at Eucharist. What is constant on Sundays and major feasts is the Nicaeo-Constantinopolitan Creed: "We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered, died, and was buried. On the third day he rose again..." Through Eucharist we are exhorted not to neglect to do good and to share what we have, for "such sacrifices are pleasing to God" (Hebrews 13:16).

Like "a shepherd's dog," the negro Babo mutely turns up his face into Don Benito's (p. 73). Jesus, after his resurrection, ordered Peter to feed his sheep (John 21:17). But it is not clear that anyone in particular was commissioned to provide over the Eucharist in the early Church. There is no explicit mention that any of the Apostles presided over the Eucharist. Indeed, there is no evidence that they presided, or that there was a chain of ordination from Apostles to bishops to priests required for presiding. Not until the year 1208 is there an official declaration that priestly ordination is necessary to celebrate the Eucharist (Innocent III, Profession of Faith Prescribed to the Waldensians), and then, more solemnly, by the Council of Florence (1439) and the Council of Trent (1563). The boat-swain Juan Robles, when thrown alive into the sea, in his last words charges Don Benito "to cause mass to be said for his soul" (p. 155).

The post-paschal Church was convinced that it was doing what Jesus

intended it to do when he said at the Last Supper: "Do this in remembrance of me" (First Corinthians 11 : 24-25). As an act of remembrance the Eucharist not only recalls to mind what Jesus did but also effectively makes it present again. Thus, Paul affirms the bodily presence of Jesus: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?" (First Corinthians 10: 16). As the bread and wine are an imitation of Jesus crucified, so it is true of Baptism: "You were buried with [Christ] in baptism, in which we were also raised with him" (Colossians 2: 12); being joined to the risen Christ means being baptized "into his death.... If we have been united with him through likeness to his death, so shall we be through a like resurrection" (Romans 6: 3-5); we become "dead to sin but alive for God in Christ Jesus" (6: 11). Although Don Benito is already free from having to imitate the crucified Jesus, yet he repeatedly lapses into melancholy over the negro Babo. Once he unconsciously gathers his mantle about him, "as if it were a pall" (p. 169).

The way in which Paul was drawing a brief sketch of his career shows that he had a histrionic disposition. He had parts to act in so much of succession as to say: "I was circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law a Pharisee, at to zeal a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the law blameless" (Philippians 3: 5-6). He repeats that he "persecuted the church of God" (First Corinthians 15: 9; Galatians 1: 13). He finally changed his part from a persecutor of the Church to an apostle of Christ. Paul expresses himself "unfit to be called an apostle" (First Corinthians 15: 9). He has become an apostle, because God "called me through his grace (Philippians 3: 12; Galatians 1: 15). Although Paul says: "By the grace of God I am what I am, ... It was not I, but the grace of God which is with me" (First Corinthians 15: 10), yet imitation agrees with him. As an apostle Paul declares himself to imitate the crucified Jesus, saying: "For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death" (First Corinthians 4: 9).

Again, to imitate Christ means to imitate his Passion, death, and resurrection. Paul struggles through life, in order "that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead (Philippians 3:10-11). Continually we carry about in our bodies the dying of Jesus, so that in our bodies the life of Jesus may also be revealed (Second Corinthians 4:10). By our own sufferings, we "fill up what is lacking in the affliction of Christ for the sake of his body, the church" (Colossians 1:24). Not only does Paul imitate Christ but he also exhorts the church members at Corinth to imitate Christ after his example: "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (First Corinthians 11:1). Whether Jesus had any awareness of his Messiahship we do not know; but Paul insists that it was "necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead," and asserts, "This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ" (Acts of the Apostles 17:3). And he argues "from the scriptures" (17:2). We cannot testify with certainty that Jesus said he "must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised" (Matthews 16:21; see also Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22). There is also found the term "scriptures" in the passage where Paul tries to demonstrate the fact of the resurrection by adducing a list of eye-witnesses (First Corinthians 15:3-8). Whether Jesus himself referred to his resurrection cannot now be ascertained. Rather, we may say the Church was placing in Jesus' lips the words of the one who "was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures" (15:4). The scriptures thus add credibility to the resurrection, as Paul involuntarily shows. The most that can be said is that Jesus had an example to follow, in the eyes of the Church, in the Servant songs of Deutero, or Second, Isaiah (Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12).

The mulatto steward Francesco is identified as Francis of Assisi by his pleasant voice and manners. His "manner evidenced his extreme desire to please" (pp.127-128). It is as if he were "to please the Lord" (First Corinthians 7:32). Francis established the observance of the three Rules

which were chosen from Jesus' words. Francesco making smiles and bows, Don Benito, without condescending to notice them, fastidiously remarks that he "relished not superfluous attendance" (p. 129). Francis and his disciples "[carried] with them nothing but Christ Crucified."¹ Captain Delano is wrongly imputing Babo's "jealous watchfulness" to "that peculiar feeling which the full-blooded African entertains for the adulterated one" (p. 127). Babo only watches that Francesco does not speak to Don Benito in person, but through him. When Francis had an interview with Pope Innocent III in 1210, the Pope gave his approval orally to Francis' movement. But then Innocent ordered Francis and his disciples to be tonsured and be ordained as priests of the Church, so that Francis' movement might be carried forward within the discipline of the Church; moreover, Innocent made Francis swear absolute obedience to him. "All the brethren shall be Catholics," Francis wrote in his first Rule, "and shall live and speak as Catholics. If any shall have erred from the Catholic's faith and life, either in word or act, and shall not repent, he is to be expelled from our Brotherhood." Don Benito deposes that Francesco had been "the creature and tool of the negro Babo" (p. 162).

Christ and the Church have equally a mediating priestly function to perform. Membership in the Church is for participation in the salvation of God, in Christ, through the Church. "Through [Christ] we both have access in one Spirit to the Father" (Ephesians 2:18); "We have boldness and confidence of access through our faith in him (3:12); "Through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be known" (3:10); "To [God] be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever" (3:21); "You became imitators of the Lord" (First Thesalonians 1:6); "You, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus which are in Judea" (2:14). When Captain Delano cries, "You are saved, ... you are saved. What has cast such a shadow upon you?" Don Benito replies, "The negro." (p.169) Don Benito thus rejects the sacramentalism of John and of Paul. Paul is referring to the liturgical formula as used in Baptism when he says: "If you confess with your lips

that Jesus is Lord and believes in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9). Don Benito therefore acknowledges neither Christ nor Church to be the sacrament of salvation.

Notes

- 1 Herman Melville, "Benito Cereno," *The Piazza Tales* (New York : Hendricks House, 1948), p. 159. Subsequent page references are to this edition.
- 2 Rudolf Karl Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word* (New York : Scribners, 1958), p. 8.
- 3 R. K. Bultmann, "New Testament and Theology," in *Kerygma and Myth*, Hans Bartsch, ed., (New York : Harper & Row, 1961), p. 41.
- 4 *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis*. trans. by Leo Sherley-Price (Harmondsworth, Middlesex : Penguin Books, 1959), p. 36.

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