

"I'm sure there's a leak. Miss Ruth—the water's running so," or "The milk is sour," or "Could you run and get some bread—it got low on me, and the irons will get cold," or—so many other unpleasant things.

Then there was her daily formal menu be today, Miss Ruth? (And she always pronounced it as if it were "me an' you.")

One day Ruth, throwing her book with a bang and flinging her pencil across the room, cried irritably: "In Heaven's name get what you please! What do I care?—crackers and milk—or—anything? Why, mother never bothered me like this!—she did everything so quietly and without question! And the bell does not ring, you say? Well, then, perhaps it needs a rest, like others of us—Oh dear, I miss my mother so!"

And then Ruth the self-reliant burst into a storm of tears.

At that, Miss Pilcher, who was beginning to bridle, picked up the book and pencil and said gently: "Don't cry, dear—you have indeed a wonderful mother and some folks thought you did not appreciate her—but I see you do. Besides, I do not pretend to be like her, and am only here to accommodate, you know."

Ruth humbly begged her pardon, and then sobbed unrestrainedly again, calling herself a cheat and failure, and other hard names. And to Miss Pilcher's kind plea that she was a "genius" at school and that we could not be perfect in everything, Ruth replied that she was far from being a genius and did not have brains enough to keep a house in order, or make a home for anybody! She guessed, she said, that God had permitted all this, just to let her see what an ordinary, selfish little person she was.

That night, Ruth would never forget. It was storming and she was alone—Miss Pilcher retiring early—her brother, obliged to be away on business. The wind howled about the house, the rain dashed against the windows as if trying to break in. It was October, and Ruth, Rosary in hand, was striving to fix her thoughts on her beads—for she never forgot to repeat them daily, during that month of prayer.

In front of her in a glass of water, was a fading rose, given her by the hand of a dying child who had passed away a few hours later. A neighbor's child, the little fellow had been fond of Ruth and this was the last mark of his affection. The thought of it now tinged her feelings and her prayers, and induced in her a mood that was rarely present with the young girl. How fleeting and evanescent the rose and all the lovely things of life!—and then came fresh fears and upbraidings.

When she came to think of it—how foolish and selfish her requests had ever been, and how God, in patience with her—how often she had prayed that an Easter bonnet should not be late!—that she might be invited to some exclusive entertainment!—that she might win a certain prize!—Alas! She feared that her prizes had all been fleeting, material ones—like this rose, now—

She had not heard from her parents for a week and she suspected that her mother was ill—perhaps dying—and her own weakness, absorption and extravagance, had undoubtedly hastened the end. Yes, the flower in front of her was wilting rapidly, yet giving out sweetness to the end.

And her mother's name was Rose.

Ruth's Rosary was splashed with bitter tears and she was about to put it aside and prepare for bed, when a new noise broke on her startled senses above the roar of the elements—as if someone was trying, though cautiously, to break in down stairs, and banging it. She listened with blanched cheeks and beating heart, scarcely able to move. There had been several burglaries in the neighborhood, of late, and William had been reluctant to leave her. Then footsteps seemed to be coming up stairs carefully and slowly. Could it be William back again, after all? Summoning her courage and self-control, Ruth stepped across the threshold—only to be clasped in her father's arms!

After expressing his surprise that a telegram sent a week ago had failed to reach her, he explained that not hearing from her in relation to a great event, he had feared that she or William was ill, and had come as soon as he could, not wishing to upset her mother. He had been able to find no conveyance, because of the storm, after leaving the train, and had decided to walk home. Finding no answer to repeated ringing and knocking, he had broken a pane of glass in order to manipulate a lock, and—here he was!

Now, here was his side of the story. What about hers? Could she stand a great piece of news? All this time Ruth had been clinging to him—her head upon his shoulder. Now she lifted her tear-stained face to nod, emphatically. "Well, there's another baby Rose—a perfect little darling—born Rosary Sunday. I never saw your mother so well and so happy—and somehow I think we are all going to love and appreciate each other more."

So, the night that had begun in storm and darkness, ended with stars and moonlight in which Ruth and her father stood side by side—gazing into the future, one in heart and purpose.

In the days that were to come, Ruth would know no nobler or more congenial task than that of moulding the budding growth of Baby Rose and that of other children, while watching the leaves of their sweet lives unfold into the Flowers of God's Garden.—Young Catholic Messenger.

THE STORY OF CHRIST

BY GIOVANNI PAPINI

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SHEEP AND GOATS

Jesus knew the weakness of the Disciples, weakness of the spirit, and perhaps also of the flesh, and He puts them on their guard against two great perils: fraud and martyrdom.

"Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For false Christs and false prophets shall rise and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. Go not after them, nor follow them."

But although they are to flee from the frauds of the false Messiahs, they cannot escape the persecutions of the enemies of the real Christ. "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten; and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them."

Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and the children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. . . . And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. . . . and because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved.

Then shall begin the signs of the imminent punishment. "And when ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginnings of sorrows."

These are the preliminary warnings: the order of the world shall be disturbed, the world, peaceful at the time when Christ pronounced these words, shall see man set against man, nation against nation, and the earth itself soaked with blood shall rise against men; shall trample under their steps; shall cast down their houses; shall vomit out ashes, as if it cast out from the mouth of its mountains all its dead, and shall deny to the fratricides the food which ripens to gold every summer in the fields.

Then when all this shall have come to pass, the punishment will come upon those people who would have been born again in Christ, who did not accept the Gospel; on the city which nailed its Lord upon Golgotha and persecuted His witnesses.

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel, the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains; and let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take anything out of his house: and let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment. But woe to them that are with child, and to them who give suck in those days! And pray ye that your flight be not in winter. For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. There shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

This is the end of the first prophecy. Jerusalem shall be taken and destroyed and of the Temple, defiled by the abomination of desolation, there shall remain not one stone upon another. But Jesus has not said all, until now has not spoken of His second coming.

"Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." What are these "tempora Gentili, tempora nationum?" The words of the Greek texts express it with greater precision than the other languages: they are the times adapted to, fitting, and awaiting the Gentiles, that is, those in which the non-Jews shall be converted to the Gospel, announced to the Jews before all others. Therefore that real end shall not come until the Gospel has been carried into all nations, until the Gentiles, the faithless ones, tread down the city of Jerusalem. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

The second coming of Christ from Heaven, the Parousia, will be the end of this world and the beginning of the true world, the eternal kingdom. The end of Judea was announced by signs human and terrestrial; this other end will be preceded by signs divine and celestial. "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall give her light. And the stars of heaven shall fall. And upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after these things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

For the end of Jerusalem only, the little earth was troubled; but for this universal ending, Heaven itself is convulsed. In the great sudden blackness only the roaring of water will be heard, and screams of terror. It is the Day of the Lord, the day of God's wrath, described in their times by Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Isaiah and Joel. "The day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come. A day of darkness and of gloominess! The land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness. The people shall be much pained; all faces shall gather blackness. Therefore shall all hands be faint and every man's heart shall melt. And they shall be afraid; pangs and sorrow shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth; they shall be amazed one at another. Behold the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll; and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree."

This is the day of the Father, day of blackness in the Heavens and of terror on earth. But the day of the Son follows immediately after. He does not appear this time hidden in a stable, but on high in Heaven, no longer poor and wretched, but in power and splendor of glory. "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. And when the celestial trumpets shall have awakened all those sleeping in the tombs, the irrevocable division shall be made.

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: "And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left."

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye to me, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: "For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: "Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me."

"Then shall the righteous answer him saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? "When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? "Or when saw we thee sick or in prison, and came unto thee? "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: "For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: "I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not."

"Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? "Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

Jesus, even in His glory as judge of the last Day, does not forget the poor and unhappy whom He loved so greatly during His life on earth. He wishes to appear as one of those "least" who hold out their hands at the doors and on whom the "great" look down. On earth, in the time of Tiberius, He was the man who was hungering for bread and love, thirsting for water and martyrdom, who was like a stranger in His own country, not recognized by His own brothers, who stripped Himself to

clothe those shaking with cold, who was sick with sorrow and suffering and no one comforted Him, who was imprisoned in the base prison of human flesh, in the narrow prison of earthly life. He was divinely hungering for souls, thirsting for faith. He was the stranger come from the ineffable fatherland, defenseless before whips and insults, man sick with the holy madness of love. But on that great Day of final Judgment, He will not be thinking of Himself, as He did not think of Himself when He was a man among men.

The code of this dividing of good from evil men will be based on one idea only: Compassion—Charity. During all the time which lies between His first and second coming He has gone on living under the appearance of the poor and the pilgrims, of the sick and persecuted, of wanderers and slaves. And on the Last Day He pays His debts. Mercy shown to those "least" was shown to Him, and He will reward that mercy in the name of all. Only those who did not receive Him when He appeared in the innumerable bodies of the poverty-stricken will be condemned to eternal punishment, because when they drove away the unfortunate they drove away God. When they refused bread, water and a garment to the poor man, they condemned the Son of God to cold, thirst and hunger. The Father had no need of your help, for all in His name and He loves you even during the moments when you curse Him. But you must love the Father in the persons of His children. And those who did not quench the thirst of the thirsty will themselves thirst for all eternity; those who did not warm the naked man will suffer in fire for all eternity; those who did not comfort the prisoner will be prisoners of Hell forever; those who did not receive the stranger will never be received in Heaven, and those who did not help the fever-stricken patient will shiver in the spasms of everlasting fever.

The Great Poor Man in the day of His glory will, as justice dictates, reward every one with His infinite riches. He who has given a little life to the poor will live forever; he who has left the poor in pain will himself be in pain forever. And the Chosen will be peopled with other more powerful suns, with stars flaming more brightly in the heavens and there will be a new Heaven and a new Earth, and the Chosen will live not as we live now, like beasts, but in the likeness of angels.

WORDS WHICH SHALL NOT PASS AWAY

But when shall these things come to pass? These are the signs, this is the manner in which it shall happen. But the time. Shall we be still here, who are now under the light of the sun? Or shall the grandchildren of our grandchildren see these events while we are dust and ashes under the earth?

Up to the very last, the Twelve understand as little as twelve stones. They have the truth before them and they do not see it: they have the Light in the midst and the Light does not reach them not only they had been among stones like diamonds which send back, divided into reflected rays, the light which strikes them. But these twelve men are rough stones, scarcely dug out of the darkness of the quarry, dull stones, opaque stones, stones which the sun can warm but not kindle, stones which are lighted from without but do not reflect the splendor. They have not yet understood that Jesus is not a common diviner, a student of the Chaldeans and of the Etruscans, and that He has nothing to do with the presumptuous pretensions of astrology. They have not understood that a definitely dated prophecy would not work out men to create a conversion which needs perpetual vigilance. Perhaps they have not even understood that the Apocalyptic sayings revealed on the Mount of Olives form a double prophecy which refers to two events, different and distant from each other. Perhaps these provincial fishermen, for whom a lake was the sea and Judea was the universe, confused the end of the Hebrew people with the end of the human race, the punishment of Jerusalem with the second coming of Christ.

But the discourse of Jesus, although it is presented as one unit in the synoptic Gospels, shows us two distinct prophecies. The first announces the end of the Jewish kingdom, the punishment of Jerusalem, the destruction of the Temple; the second the end of the old world, the reappearance of Jesus, the judgment of the merciful and of the merciless, the beginning of the New Kingdom. The first prophecy given is close at hand—this generation shall not pass before these things shall have arrived—and is local and limited, since it is concerned only with Judea and especially with Judea's metropolis. The hour and the day of the second are not known because certain events, slow to take place but essential, must precede this end, which, unlike the other, will be universal.

The first, as a matter of fact, was fulfilled to the letter, detail by detail, about forty years after the crucifixion, while many who had known Jesus were still living; the second coming, the triumphal Parousia, is still awaited by those who believe what He said on that day, "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away."

A few years after Jesus' death

the signs of the first prophecy began to be seen. False prophets, false Christs, false apostles, swarmed in Judea, as snakes come out of their holes when dog-days arrive. Before Pontius Pilate was exiled, an impostor showed himself in Samaria, who promised to recover the sacred vessels of the Tabernacle hidden by Moses on Mount Gerizim. The Samaritans believed that such a discovery would be the prelude to the coming of the Messiah, and a great mob gathered threateningly on the mountain until it was dispersed by Roman swords.

Under Cuspius Fadus, the procurator who governed from 44 to 66, there arose a certain Theudas, who gave himself out for a great personage and promised great prodigies. Four hundred men followed him, but he was captured and decapitated, and those who had believed him dispersed. After him came an Egyptian Jew, who succeeded in gathering four thousand desperate men, and camping on the Mount of Olives announcing that a sign from him the walls of Jerusalem would fall. The Procurator Felix attacked him and drove him out into the desert.

TO BE CONTINUED

LAW AGAINST MASKS PASSED IN TEXAS

Both houses of the Texas Legislature have passed measures aimed at the elimination of the use of masks by the Ku Klux Klan in this State. The two bills differ only slightly—the House measure exempting the Masonic shrine from its provisions. Under the terms of both the Senate and House bills it is made a felony to appear in a church, commit an assault or go near a private home to intimidate the residents, while wearing a mask, and parades by masked members of any secret society are prohibited by the Senate bill. Fines up to \$500 and jail sentences up to six months are specified for violations of the bills.

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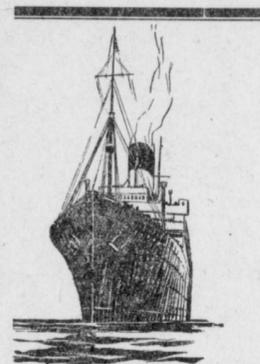
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