

As Edith Rowe listened her sweet face clouded.

She was older than Hester and had travelled and seen much of human nature. At the end of the recital she rose without a word and went to a drawer, from which she drew a small ivory rule.

"I thought some one had been there," she said simply. "The table was disarranged when I came in, and I found this with your name on it."

"I thought, if it were you that you would explain to me, but you didn't. And then when I heard someone describe your snappish study I wondered. But I never doubted that you would tell me about it when you were ready."

Hester drew a long breath.

"Well," she said, "no one could be more ashamed than I feel, Miss Rowe. You see, the flowers were so beautiful that they carried me away—made me forget where I was; that's the only excuse I have to offer. I will not enter the picture in the contest."

Edith Rowe took one of Hester's hands impulsively. "Yes, you will!" she cried. "The work is yours, no matter whose flowers they were: You rearranged them and changed the light and the background, so the composition, too, is yours. My study is of daffodils. You've got to enter your picture in the competition to please me. You owe it to me!"

Hester drew a long sigh. Her dark eyes brimmed with tears.

"I will," she said eagerly, "on one condition. If I win I'm to give part of the money to the Babies' Hospital. If I could afford to, I'd give it all!"

Edith Rowe nodded. She was perfectly well aware that the money meant a great deal to Hester, but how much did that other thing mean, that new look of character which irradiated the girl's sombre face and made it almost beautiful?

"Very well," said Edith, quietly. "If you choose to do that, it will be fine. But really there's no need of your giving anything."

No one was much astonished when Hester won the prize, though there were a good many who wondered a little at the enthusiasm with which Edith Rowe congratulated her.—Selected.

THE STORY OF CHRIST

BY GIOVANNI PAPINI

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THE RETURN

As soon as Jesus came again among men, He learned that the Tetrarch (second husband of Herodias) had imprisoned John in the fortress of Machaerus. The voice crying in the wilderness was still and pilgrims to the Jordan saw no more the long shadow of the wild Baptist fall across the water.

He had done his work and was now to give way to a more powerful voice. John waited in the blackness of the prison until his bloody head was carried on a golden platter to the banquet—almost the last dish served to that evil woman, betrayer of men.

Now Jesus understands that His day is at hand, and crossing Samaria He returns into Galilee to announce at once the coming of the Kingdom. He does not go to Jerusalem, the city of the great king, the capital. Jesus comes to destroy that Jerusalem of stone and arrogance, proud on its three hills, hard of heart like the stones. The men whom Jesus comes to combat are precisely those who glory in great cities, in the capitals, in the Jerusalems of the world.

At Jerusalem live the powerful of the world, the Romans, masters of the world and of Judea, and with soldiers in arms. Jerusalem is ruled by the representatives of the Caesars; of Tiberius, the drunken assassin, the perfidious heir of Augustus, the hypocritical voluptuary, and of Julius the adulterous spendthrift. At Jerusalem live the High Priests, the old custodians of the Temple, the Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes, the Levites and their guards, the descendants of those who pursued and killed the prophets, the petrifiers of the Law, the bigots of the letter, the haughty depositaries of arid fanaticism. At Jerusalem are the treasurers of God, the treasurers of Caesar, the guardians of the treasure, the lovers of wealth; the Publicans with their exorcisms and parasites, the rich with their servants and their concubines, the merchants with their crowded shops; money bags clinking with shekels in the warmth of the bosom above the heart.

Jesus comes to combat all these. He comes to conquer the masters of the earth—the earth which belongs to all; to confound the masters of the word—the word which should be spoken freely wherever God wishes; to condemn the masters of gold, base, perishable and fatal element. He comes to overthrow the kingdom of the soldiers of Rome who oppress bodies; the kingdom of the priests of the Temple who oppress souls; the kingdom of the hoarders-up of money who oppress the poor. He comes to save bodies, souls, the poor; He teaches liberty, in opposition to Rome; setting at naught the doctrines of the Temple, He teaches love; He teaches poverty against all the ideals of the rich.

He does not wish to begin His message in Jerusalem where His

enemies, gathered together, are the strongest. He wishes to surround the city, take it from the outside, arrive there later with a following behind Him, when already the Kingdom of Heaven has begun slowly to lay siege to it. The Conquest of Jerusalem will be the last test, the supreme trial, the great battle, the tremendous battle between the greater than the Prophets and Jerusalem, slayer of Prophets. If He should go to Jerusalem now (where He will enter presently as a king and whence He will be buried as a criminal) He would be taken prisoner at once and would not be able to sow His word on less ungrateful, less stony soil.

Jerusalem like all capitals—great sewers to which flow the refuse, the outcasts, the rubbish of the nations—is inhabited by a mob of frivolous, elegant, idle, skeptical and indifferent people, by a ceremonious patrician class who have kept only the tradition of ritual and the sterile rancor of their decadence; by an aristocracy of property owners and speculators who belong to the herd of Mammon, and by a rebellious, restless, ignorant crowd, controlled only by the superstition of the Temple and the fear of the foreigner's sword. Jerusalem was not fit soil for the sowing of Jesus.

A man from the provinces—therefore healthy and solitary—He goes back to His province. He wishes to carry the tidings of good news to those who were to be the first to receive Him, to the poor and the humble because the tidings are specially for them, because they have long been waiting for them, and because more than any others, they will rejoice. Jesus coming into the world is for the poor. Therefore leaving Jerusalem, He arrives in Galilee, enters into the Synagogue and begins to teach.

THE REIGN OF GOD

The first words of Jesus are few and simple, very much like those of John. "The time is accomplished; the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe the Gospel."

Bare words, incomprehensible to moderns by their very sobriety. To understand them and to understand the difference between the message of John and the message of Jesus, they need to be translated into our language, filled again with their eternally living meaning.

"The time has come!" The time for which men have been waiting, which they have prophesied and announced. John said that a King would come ready to found the new Kingdom of Heaven. The King has come and announces that the doors of the Kingdom are open. He is the guide, the path, the hand, before being King in all the splendor of His celestial glory.

When Jesus says "The time is accomplished," He does not refer to the exact date, to the fact that it was the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius. The time of Jesus is now and always is eternity. The moment of His appearance, the moment of His death, the moment of His return, the moment of His perfect triumph, has not yet arrived, not even yet. And yet, at every moment the time is accomplished, every hour is the fullness of time, on condition that the workers are ready. Every day is His; His era is not written down in numbers; there is no chronology in eternity. Every time a man tries to enter into the Kingdom, confirms the Kingdom by believing, enriches the Kingdom, consolidates, defends, proclaims its perpetual sanctity and its perpetual rightness in opposition to all the inferior kingdoms (inferior because they are human, not divine, earthly not heavenly) then always the time is accomplished. This time is called the epoch of Jesus, the Christian era, the New Covenant. Not quite two thousand years divide us from that time; not quite two days, because for God, and for men of understanding, a thousand years are as a day. The time is ripe; even today we are in the fullness of time. Jesus calls us even now. The second day has not yet expired, the foundations of the Kingdom are scarcely begun. We who live today, this year, in this century and we shall not always be alive, and we shall perhaps not see the end of this year, and certainly we shall not see the end of this century, we, I say, the living, can take part in this Kingdom, enter into it, live in it, enjoy it. The Kingdom is not the worn-out fancy of a poor Jew nearly twenty centuries ago; it is not an archaism, a dead memory, a bygone frenzy. The Kingdom is of today, of tomorrow, of always; a reality of the future always just-realized, alive, actual, ours; a work started a short time ago; a work to which every one is free to put his hand to take it up, to carry it on. The word seems old, the message dim with antiquity repeated by the echoes of two thousand years, but the Kingdom—as a fact, true, accomplished—is new, young, born yesterday, still to grow, to flower, to prosper. Jesus threw the seed into the earth, but the seed has scarcely germinated in two thousand years passed like a stormy winter, in the space of sixty human generations. It is perhaps possible that our own time after the flood of blood is the divine and longed-for period?

What this Kingdom is, we shall learn page by page in the words of Jesus; but we must not imagine it as a new Paradise of Delight, as a wearisome Arcady of beatitude, as an immense choir singing Hosannas with their feet on the clouds and their heads among the stars.

Christ describes the Kingdom of God as opposed to the Kingdom of Satan, as the antithesis of the Kingdom of Earth. The Kingdom of Satan is the Kingdom of evil, of deceit, of cruelty, of pride, the Kingdom of baseness. Therefore the Kingdom of God means the Kingdom of good, of sincerity, of love, of humility, the Kingdom of the lofty.

The Kingdom of Earth is the Kingdom of matter and of flesh, the Kingdom of gold, hatred, avarice, sensuality, the Kingdom of all things loved by evil and distraught men. The Kingdom of Heaven is to be the opposite of this; the Kingdom of the spirit and of the soul, the Kingdom of renunciation and of purity; the Kingdom of all things valued by men who know the worthlessness of everything else in comparison. God is Father and Goodness; Heaven is above the earth, hence it is the spirit. Heaven is God's home. The spirit is the dominion of goodness. All that crawls on the earth, grubs in the earth, takes pleasure in matter—that is bestiality; all that lives with upraised eyes, desiring Heaven, wishing to live forever in Heaven—that is Holiness. Most men are beasts. It is Christ's will that these beasts become saints. This is the simple and ever-living meaning of the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God is of men and for men. The Kingdom of Heaven is in us. Begin at once: it is our work, for our happiness in this life on this earth. It depends on our will, on our response given or withheld. Become perfect and the Kingdom of God will be founded among men.

It is true that Jesus added "repent," but the old word has been distorted from its true and magnificent meaning. The word of Mark—*metanoia*—should not be translated "repent," *metanoia* means rather the changing of the mind, the transformation of the soul. *Metanoia* is a change of form; "metanoia," a changing of the spirit. It ought rather to be translated "conversion," that is, the renewing of the inner life of man. The idea of "repentance" is only an illustration of Christ's command.

As one of the conditions of the arrival of the Kingdom at the same time as the very substance of the new order, Jesus demands complete conversion, a resolution of life and of the common values of life, a transmutation of feelings, of opinions, of intentions. This He called, speaking to Nicodemus, the second birth. Little by little He was to explain in what way this total transformation of the ordinary human soul is to be effected. All His life was devoted to this teaching and to setting an example. But in the meantime, He contented Himself with adding one conclusion, "Believe in the Gospel."

By "Gospel" men nowadays mean usually the book where the quadruple story of Jesus is printed; but Jesus neither wrote books nor thought of volumes. By "Gospel" He meant, according to the plain and sweet meaning of the word, "good tidings." Jesus is a messenger (in Greek "angel") who brings good tidings; He brings the cheerful message that the sick will be cured, that the blind will see, the poor will be enriched with imperishable riches, that the sad will be rejoiced, that sinners will be pardoned, the unclean purified, that the imperfect can become perfect, that animals can become saints, and saints become angels, like unto God.

If this Kingdom is to come, if everybody is to prepare himself for its coming, we must believe in the message, believe that the Kingdom is possible and near. If there is no faith in this promise, no one will do what must be done to fulfill the promise. Only the certainty of the truth of this good tidings, only the conviction that the Kingdom is not the lie of an adventurer or the hallucination of an obsessed zealot; only the certainty of the sincerity and validity of the message can arouse men to put their hands to the great work of its foundation. With these few words, obscure to the majority of men, Jesus began His teaching. The fullness of time, the need to begin at once! The coming of the Kingdom, victory of spirit over matter; of good over bad, of the saint over the beast. "Metanoia"—the total transformation of the soul. The Gospel—the cheerful assurance that all this is true and eternally possible.

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SPAIN'S IRISH DUKE

Dublin, Ireland.—News of the appointment of the O'Donnell, Duke of Tetuan, as Spanish Minister for war has been hailed with gratification by Catholics in Ireland. The Duke is descended from the O'Donnells of Tirone County in the province of Ulster, Ireland. One of his ancestors was Roderick O'Donnell, Earl of Tyrconnell, who with his only son fled to France in 1697 having been attainted for high treason. Subsequently the family settled in Spain. The first Duke of Tetuan was Minister for War under Espartero and Prime Minister of Spain in 1856-58.

For three centuries the O'Donnell has given his eldest-born to the Army of Spain. The Dukedom was won by the grandfather of the present holder and was conferred at the battle of Tetuan where the O'Donnell saved the life of the King of Spain.

When the Eucharistic Congress was held at Madrid in 1911 the Duke of Tetuan and the O'Neill held a reception in honor of the Irish visitors. Both noblemen delivered addresses in the course of which they assured the Irishmen and Irishwomen present that they were as much Irish in heart and soul as their forefathers were on the sad day on which they fled from Ireland. The Duke of Tetuan acted as President of the Irish Race Convention held in Paris in 1922. In Spain the spelling of the family name has been modified and it is written "Odonel."

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