

Madigan James J
The Catholic Church
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**CATHOLIC
CHURCH**

*and
The*
NEGRO

by JAMES J. MADIGAN, S.J.

THE QUEEN'S WORK

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The Catholic Church and the Negro

By James J. Madigan, S. J.

ORSON WELLES has done it again. If there were a few years ago some who were under the impression that the earth was the only planet in God's creation, or others who had forgotten their geography, the very real existence of Mars was brought home to them in a startling broadcast which Welles conducted. Then the Negro show "Cabin in the Sky" opened on Broadway for a successful run. After an evening of entertainment its audiences went home having experienced no shock to their general equilibrium.

The inducing of such a shock remained for Welles again; and sure enough with the powerful Negro drama "Native Son" he was up to his old trick of waking people up. Under the direction of this "rude awakener" this play was telling the gripping story of the American Negro, a story that some never before knew of and one which the majority comfortably chose to forget.

Over on Times Square—in fact all over the land—communist groups have been doing the same thing. But in addition to telling the story of the Negro, they have been telling another story about themselves, a story by which they plan to woo the Negro to the godless of the world.

Then there are the pleasant Negroes we find on the sports page, like Joe Louis and "Satchelfoot" Paige; and there are Duke Ellington and Henry Armstrong, whom lovers of the quicker tempo in music know so well—and so on down the list, all proving that the Negro is definitely before the

public now more than he has ever been before.

This all sounds rather good. Does that mean that the Negro problem has been settled? Well Orson Welles can grip a Broadway audience every night in a year, and communists can rant up and down the land, and Joe Louis can lull opponents to slumber nightly and hold the heavyweight crown till old age claims him, and "Satchelfoot" Paige can keep curving his throws around batters, and Ellington and Armstrong can "give" till they give out, but the Negro problem still remains a problem. All the publicity in the world will never cure a sick man. There is need of something else, and that something else only the Catholic Church can give.

Something New?

Where does the Church stand in all this?

As an experiment in an attempt to get a partial answer to this question, I paid a visit to one of our best Catholic libraries and thoroughly inspected the magazine section. There was a copy of every representative Catholic magazine since, I suppose, Herr Gutenberg's press relieved weary monks of the task of copying. I had not looked very far before my eyes were opened to the fact that with very few exceptions in the issues preceding 1934 there were no articles dealing with the Negro question. But in the issues following that year, there was an abundance of writing on the subject.

What is to be deduced from this? There is no need of a Nero Wolfe to bring us to the conclusion that until recent years interest in the Negro and his problems has been disgracefully meager and that the American Negro is a neglected apostolate. Certainly this is not so much a new problem as a late awakening to a problem. Work for

the Negro has just begun in earnest, and I venture to be amateurishly prophetic and say that this important branch of Catholic Action will soon receive all the attention it merits.

Now let's get into things.

History of the Problem

Eleanor Roosevelt won my attention a few years ago by an article she wrote for the *Cosmopolitan* magazine. The opening paragraph of the article, which was entitled "Intolerance," is well worth the quoting, and her views are on the whole orthodox and encouraging:

"People keep asking: 'Is a wave of intolerance sweeping over our country? Are we getting away from the traditional attitude that all races and religions are equal in the eyes of the law?' The answer is obviously yes! A wave of intolerance most certainly is sweeping over us. But we need not behave as though it were a phenomenon which we had never before experienced."

Her last statement is so terribly true. Intolerance is nothing new to *us*, and intolerance itself is as old as the world and sin.

There is a very common notion abroad that the southern states alone were guilty of the slave traffic. A mere superficial glance at American history invalidates this false idea. At one time one of the most thriving slave marts in the land was the now-fashionable Newport in Rhode Island. In fact not very long before the Civil War, New England was reaping a greater profit from her trading in human cargo than were the people who had agricultural interests in the south.

When the Founding Fathers of our nation meekly suggested cessation from this criminal traffic, so great was the outcry from all sides that the fathers thought it wise never to mention the matter again.

Thus the mind of the nation was an open book on the subject, and to this day the book has never been closed.

Signs of Trouble

There were however calm and deliberate legislators who previsioned the slave question as the source of future contentions and strife and as a threat to national unity. We've got to hand it to those men, as we look back, and appreciate their wisdom. At a time when freedom from British tyranny was young and still "a grand and glorious feeling," men came forth with the plea that this "necessary evil" cease in the interests of common decency. With the passing of time a great number of our ancestors began to see the rotten logic of there being millions of slaves in the land of the free.

We must not imagine that moral scruples were the prime motive for this change in temper. For example Thomas Jefferson, though on the personal score he was as guilty as any other slaveowner, as a legislator campaigned on numerous occasions for the adopting into our statute books of a measure forbidding slavery. Later as a member of the Continental Congress he proposed that in the draft providing government for the Northwest Territory there be included a measure forbidding slavery after 1800. I suppose that Jefferson's contemporaries thought that he had a "bug" on the Negro question. At any rate he was promptly shouted down.

One way in which to see how the question was debated at the time of our nation's formation is to consult the writings and utterances of Pinckney, who held that the Negro should be considered part of the southern peasantry and legally on a par with his white neighbor. On the other hand Gouverneur Morris looked upon the Negro as a piece of property, a chattel—nothing

else. There were spokesmen aplenty on both sides, and they went at each other hot and heavy. Anyway when the dust had cleared and the din had subsided, the law-books of the nation remained as they were: Slavery was the law of our land.

Big Business in Slavery

Undoubtedly the cotton gin of Mr. Whitney was a great thing, one of the big pushes of the Industrial Revolution. But old Eli started more than he had bargained for, believe me. The cotton gin is a good thing in itself; but when southern plantation owners bought cotton gins, it meant that thousands upon thousands of African natives were literally stolen from their homes and families to augment American wealth. The selfsame Americans who had not long before risen in rebellion against oppression by England now owned millions of slaves.

By severe mental gymnastics history books have thought up inoffensive labels for this whole racket of slavery. Really it was kidnaping on a monstrous scale. And when many thousands died from the plague they contracted in the foul slave ships that brought them to this land of the free—that sounds like wholesale murder to me.

The eminent American historian Bancroft gives a few figures on slavery that will speak for themselves. In 1714 there were 59,000 Negro slaves in the States; in 1717 there were 78,000. What a boom for business! And what business methods! In 1754 the number increased to 263,000; by 1790 the 697,000 black slaves made the illicit slave commerce a national institution.

Trouble

For a time the equal balance of power between the northern and the southern states checked the rivalry that was grad-

ually growing up between free and slave states. Then Wisconsin came into the union in 1848, and the controversy was resumed. Things started popping. Spirited "discussions" were no longer confined to the halls of legislation. The Negro dispute went out from there and became a subject on which priests and rabbis and ministers waxed eloquent, a subject that formed the editorial policy of newspapers and periodicals—and in the heat of battle members of the House of Representatives vacated their seats.

Now we're coming to more familiar history—the nation at the time of the Civil War. When we were in grade school, we learned that the single decade from 1850 to 1860 was witness to an aroused citizenry divided into two camps on the issue of Negro slavery. In a passion fanned to white heat by bitter controversy, adversaries took their differences before the courts of law, and an obscure Negro, Dred Scott, became famous overnight.

In unfortunate instances litigants took the law into their own hands, and the town halls of the nation reechoed to the vituperative eloquence which the slave question precipitated. On this point our old friend and champion G. K. Chesterton had this to say:

"The only difference was originally that one side thought that, the crime once committed, the only reparation was the Negro's freedom; while the other thought that, the crime once committed, the only safety was his slavery."

When all was said and nothing done, they marshaled their forces on the battlefields of Gettysburg and Bull Run and waded in the blood bath that was the Civil War. Two illustrious authorities, John Nicolay and John Hay, have written a three-fold explanation of motivation of this real "American Tragedy":

"First, the economic efforts to prevent the destruction of the monetary value of four millions of human beings, held in bondage, who were bought and sold as chattels and whose aggregate valuation, under circumstances existing at the outbreak of the Civil War, was variously computed at \$400,000,000 to \$1,600,000,000; second, a moral debate as to the righteousness or iniquity of the system; and third, a political battle for the balance of power in the Government and public policy, by which the security and perpetuity of the system might be guaranteed."

And so they met and fought to the issue, until slavery was by law abolished.

This is the brief outline of the beginning of the Negro problem in America. Following the Civil War up to our own day, we find there has been a comparative silence on the problem. But this does not mean that the problem has been solved. For many a decade the only attention it seemed to merit was from the now decrepit Ku Klux Klan or from some writer reminding us that Negroes existed and we could not annihilate them by ignoring them.

American "Pastime"

Alongside my typewriter I have a typical article from a fairly recent issue of a widely popular magazine. The article is illustrated with large pictures of the Ku Klux Klan in action. One picture shows the burning of a gasoline-soaked cross, around which stand men whose faces are covered with white hoods. Another shows—in the words of the magazine—a "Negro group, lined up outside a Lakeland beer parlor, being warned by Klansmen against disturbances, threatened with hooded mass violence." Now in the land of the free that should seem an outrage to ordinary justice. but the magazine's comment is almost frivolous:

"KLAN MARCHES AGAIN IN FLORIDA"

"Two great American pastimes are: dressing in outlandish costumes and riding steers. To warn the local Negroes against further 'jook joint' violence, Klansmen paraded through the Negro quarter, herded the frightened colored people before them, and burned a fiery cross. . . ."

So Negro baiting is a "great American pastime."

The Church Moves

Within recent times the Catholic Church has inaugurated measures to bring once more into the light of truth the question of the black man. This time however the point at issue is changed. The motives that prompted the Civil War were political and financial; the Church is concerned with moral issues. Its aim is not merely to release the Negro from physical slavery; except where the Negro is used as a strike-breaker or exploited as cheap labor, that end has more been or less accomplished. But while iron chains have been loosed from his ankles, around the Negro's neck there still hangs the yoke of social ostracism, the aftermath of thralldom. That is what the Church would eliminate.

Despising the arbitration of the sword, the Church will not have the issue decided on the fields of war but in the hearts of believers in the universal Christ and His teaching of brotherly love. While of old the discussion of this controversy drove adversaries to fanatical frenzy until the law courts of the nation became the scenes of brother fighting brother, the Church raises the issue of membership in the Mystical Body of Christ. She wants no solution by unbridled passions, by lawsuits, or by recourse to violence. The communist solves the Negro problem by civil war. But Christ said: "All that take the sword shall perish with the sword." And the wise

old Church has lived long enough and seen more than enough to realize the truth of that warning.

Starting around 1934, there was a new and increasing awakening on the part of Catholics to the neglected apostolate within our shores. And it looks as if a lot of other good people are now interested, alert.

A first measure of success was won when the heavy mists of Catholic apathy began to lift. Here were 13,000,000 Negroes outside the Catholic fold. Apostles to the Negro began to increase.

The men now in that field are brave men, because they are taking up a tough assignment that has long been put off to the tomorrow that never comes. They are fighting against a bulwark that has been a long time in the rearing, and they mean to tear that bulwark down. They are out for a complete Christian "Emancipation Proclamation" which will put the Negro into the full scheme of things.

We admire these priests and religious and lay apostles. But all Catholics have a job there, a job considerably greater than that of cheerleaders for our apostles to the American Negro.

Hard Sayings

The problem of the Negro is the problem of a twofold conversion interlinked as cause and effect. The more important conversion, logically speaking, is the conversion of the white Catholic to the ordinary cold injunctions of justice, the universal application of the second commandment of Christ, and the sweet charity of the young God-man, who died alike for white and black and red and yellow.

God knows that deep in the heart of every Catholic is a fervent desire to obey all of Christ's commandments. Isn't it true though that the white Catholic oftentimes

forgets that these commandments bind him in his dealings with his black neighbor just as much as in his dealings with those of his own race? "The servant is not greater than his lord," and Jesus Christ in His life and pilgrimage cursed discrimination when He held up the hated Samaritan as our neighbor and personally preached salvation to the sinful Samaritan woman. The Samaritans were supposed to be kept at a safe distance, and no decent Jew was ever willing to be seen with one of this class. But Christ loved them, served them.

Again Christ condemned the snobbery and class consciousness of rich Simon and blessed the lowliness of another social outcast, Magdalen. Though not quite up to the measurements that their fellow men required of them, these people were still good enough for the God that made them.

Our Lord knew that racial hatred and repugnance would be a problem; so after He taught His doctrine of universal brotherhood by both word and deed, He uttered His beautiful prayer: "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us."

Years later the beloved disciple John echoed those words. But John added a pretty strong touch to them, so he must have been aware that hard words were necessary to persuade men of a doctrine they find so unwelcome: "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer. And you know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in himself." No mincing of words for John, gentle though he was. For the Catholic who bears no intentional malice toward the Negro there are the inclusive words of all wisdom: "As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me."

Catholics and Catholics

Don't misunderstand me. There are a great many sincere Catholics who couldn't

give you a single argument for deliberate discrimination against the Negro. Yet they live in an atmosphere of intolerance, and—willingly or unwillingly—they become infected. They don't mean any harm. They don't mean to deny the faith.

So if my words seem to become a bit strong, and if I produce all sorts of evidence, my reason is (let us face the facts) that there is a terrifying prejudice deep even in Catholic hearts.

Sometimes I think it is unfortunate that some of our splendid Catholics have the impression that this interest in the Negro question is merely the latest guise of Catholic activity and just a "flash in the pan." The point of fact is that this is no new form; it is a neglected form.

Even the phrase Negro problem is misleading. When the problem is analyzed, we find that it is just as much—if not more—a white problem.

Writes the great anthropologist Father John M. Cooper of the Catholic University of America:

"By our inaction in the face of unjust discrimination we are taking a most deadly means to stifle whatever sympathy the non-Catholic Negro may still have for the Catholic Church.

"Perhaps there is yet time, but we shall have to act quickly if we expect any large numbers of the colored people ever to enter the Catholic Church. Certainly we shall not get them to do so by giving them schools and orphanages and at the same time doing nothing to get them justice. Protestant denominations and liberal groups of humanitarians, and not we, have in recent years taken the initiative in pleading and working for justice to the Negro. We Catholics are again asleep Instead of standing for justice to him, we have been pussyfooting around and following a policy

of weak and spineless compromise not merely with facts but with principles."

When G. K. Chesterton in 1922 wrote down his impressions of America, he left this significant memorandum:

"I have not attempted in this book to deal with the question of the Negro. I have refrained for a reason that may seem somewhat sensational: that I do not think that I have anything to say or suggest. I do not profess to understand this singularly dark and intricate matter." He saw the problem. He wondered if we saw the answer.

So we have to educate ourselves and our own Catholic friends to basic human justice and Christian love before we can entertain hope for the conversion of our black brothers in Christ, members of the same Mystical Body. This education implies more than one's taking oneself over to a corner, rolling up one's shirt sleeves, and going through the motions of a speech and a resolution. No one is going to force himself by sheer determination to adopt a more humane attitude toward the next Negro he meets; he has to see why his former attitude was wrong and why a new and yet ancient and Christlike attitude is the Catholic thing to accept and develop in himself.

"No Cure!"

You have probably come across the type of person, as I'm sure I have, who is ready to give you the cure in one brief sentence: "Just be decent to the Negro." Well pin these people down to just what they mean, and nine times out of ten what they really mean is that they always say hello to the Negro—and so should you. Now that is really a noble scheme, and we can beam on these well-meaning people. But you and I could go out of our way to say hello till hades reaches the melting point, and the

Negro question would still be entirely unanswered. Imagine, if you can, a Benevolent Society for the Saying of Hello to the Negro. Certainly we should speak in friendly, brotherly fashion to our Negro associates. But that should not be the end. If that were the solution of all racial problems, then G. K. C. must have exaggerated when he called the problem "singularly dark and intricate."

Here's How

First of all there must be an understanding of racial prejudices and just as solid an understanding that there are no honest objective foundations for such prejudices. Hand in hand with this should go an intellectual appreciation of the principles of justice and of the Sermon on the Mount. Then there is need for us to act as intelligent people. Finally sin can enter in. It can be seriously sinful to indulge our prejudices against the Negro.

"Race prejudice cannot be cured." That is what a lot of people are thinking and saying, and the sad part is that they get an audience to drink in their fallacies. But race prejudice can be cured. It must be cured. Let's see.

Prejudice is either voluntary or involuntary. If the prejudice is involuntary, then the intelligent man must face the facts that blast his prejudice and accept them. If on the other hand the prejudice is voluntary, as far as Catholics are concerned it must be cured. For to act voluntarily on prejudice, to be willfully discriminating against anyone, is sinful. If we have acquired the prejudice voluntarily, we can lose it voluntarily. But voluntary or involuntary, prejudice must be killed by facts, some of which we'll see in a moment.

So prejudice can be cured. Can it be cured entirely? That is a different ques-

tion. Should it be that despite gallant efforts the traces of prejudice remain, that does not prove that the conquest of race prejudice is an impossibility; all we know then is that it is a hard job. But to say that it is impossible, and so the devil with the whole thing, is false and defeatist. After all to lead a good life is a hard job, and I've never heard it recommended in decent circles that because it is a hard job it is a good idea to throw in the towel and give up.

Serious Business

It's high time then to realize that in this question sin very definitely rears its ugly head. When God made the tables of the law to Moses, He made no distinction among the races, and it seems slightly presumptuous that we should take the prerogative upon ourselves.

The sin becomes serious when prejudices heedlessly assented to and rashly propagandized hurt not only individuals but an entire population group. Yet the advancement of the entire colored race in America has been held back by the injustice and discrimination and exploitation resulting from voluntary and involuntary prejudice. Herein, it appears, lies matter for reflection on the part of the sincere Catholic. After reflection should follow a deeply-felt act of contrition and the white man's personal conversion.

All this is justice, not charity. A Catholic need not consider himself a humanitarian and one doing mankind a favor when he attempts to overcome his prejudices. When you come down to brass tacks, he is doing only himself a favor. He is finally acting like an intelligent man. No one else benefits more—on the score of eternal values—by this education than the educated. As I see it, breaking down bias is building

up character; and that is always something personally positive.

Enter Defenders

When slavery was a well-oiled machine and properly—or rather improperly—functioning in our national life, the opposition that was growing on all sides drove slave-owners, as one might expect, to seek a champion to defend the sad and evil practice. At first the usual form was to excuse the policy on some financial or social pretext. But with the coming of the Industrial Revolution in England and the influx of more slaves into the world, there cropped up a defense attorney for slavery. Joseph Arthur de Gobineau was a champion, a prophet despised in his own country.

While his *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*, published 1853-55, did not create the same stir here as it did abroad—particularly in Germany—it nonetheless served to introduce the racist theory into America and to rationalize slavery with the most fallacious and nasty arguments ever written: The Negro was a member of an inferior race; he ought to be a slave.

Now it was no longer necessary for slaveowners to apologize, because slavery was here to stay, a part of nature itself. "It was," Samuel Orth had formerly stated, "economically necessary, a peculiar southern institution, and above all it paid." So the rationalization of slavery, on the belief that the Negro was the inferior race, was taught, and it has come down to our own day.

In all probability few Catholics who are prejudiced against the Negro advert to the fact; but they are—consciously or unconsciously—holding to the baseless teachings of de Gobineau and of Houston Stewart Chamberlain, son of an English admiral and son-in-law of the famous composer

Wagner. They are giving approval to the racist policies of Hitler. They are intellectual brothers of the nazis. How many of us realize that right here in the United States we have our own racist apostles, who distinguish between white and colored as the nazis do between Aryan (whatever that is) and non-Aryan? But we'll say more about this later on.

Yes indeed; there is need of education in the matter. Prejudice is the mark of an ignorant man. Discrimination is the sign of real cruelty.

Negro Free?

The first lesson that we Catholics should learn is the simple truth that the Negro today is still not free. Startling? Not at all. Elementary, my dear Watson. When General Robert E. Lee handed over his sword to the Union commander Ulysses S. Grant, the Negro became free before the law—but that was just about all. Real liberty and complete emancipation for the Negro were no more the results of the Civil War than was the preservation of democracy the crowning achievement of World War No. 1. The Negro was free in the same sense that a drowning man at sea is free, or a man starving in the desert.

Of course the Negro is free—if we have the odd notion that freedom and helplessness amount to one and the same thing. He is independent, we are told—when ostracized should be the right word. A released chattel, he could find no employment, and he wandered about the land of the free a slave to a discriminating social scheme. In a land of plenty he stood poverty-stricken. Before him the avenues of crime opened up often as his only way to bread and butter. Human like the rest of us, even the black man has to eat.

Beam in Our Eye

If under pressure of superior forces the southern states were obliged to grant the Negro freedom, in the halls of legislation men wise in the wisdom of time and expediency deprived him of his citizen rights by legal legerdemain. If on the statute books Negroes were to be on equal footing with the white man, their former masters would wield the power of ostracism and brand them for the outcasts they were.

Can you in all seriousness think of a greater tragedy than that of our bringing Negroes from their homes in Africa, chaining them like pieces of property—horses, cows, or sheep dogs—then releasing them into an unfriendly world, telling them they are free, and daring them to try to use their freedom? Rightly we are horrified today at the accounts that come from abroad—the treatment of the Poles at the hands of the Germans. But right in our own land we set a shameful example: One group of human beings make literal slaves out of another group of human beings. And we continue to act as if the Negro, not the white man, were to blame.

In the Negro's dark night of isolation, deserted as he was by the north and adrift in the south, a lone star did shine in the heavens; for after all there was left a drop of the milk of human kindness in the heart of the white man. Congress in 1865 formed the Freedman's Bureau to help the Negro through the difficult period of transition. But that kindness died an early death; the lone star was blinded at its birth.

So most of the Negroes have never really overcome the obstacles placed in their way by the whites. Where they have overcome them, they have done so almost alone and of their own merit and initiative.

Not very long ago the lovable Al Smith lauded the successful efforts of the Negro

and expressed wonderment at the fact that he has advanced as far as he has, despite the obstacles. Yes; Al has been around and knows whereof he speaks.

Just a Chance

Opportunities are necessary for a man to make his way in the scheme of things. How in heaven's name can we reasonably expect the Negro to get anywhere at all when these opportunities have in the main been criminally denied him? Too much emphasis cannot be laid on the fact that the white man is a slaveowner all over again when he discriminates because of color and thus forbids opportunities of education to the Negro. The great labor unions are guilty of the same sin when they deny the benefits of organization to the black laborer.

In short the white man must be educated to realize that the Negro will never enjoy his rightful liberty until he is given a chance for advancement in the normal fields of human enterprise. And while the Negro continues to desire vainly education and opportunity, there will always be the bitter and resentful Negro who will hate and be potential foe to the sinfully discriminating white man.

Theories

Most of us know something about the theories of racism made popular today by Hitler. But allow me to write down very briefly the few impressions I have garnered on the subject.

First of all theories of racism are no innovation; they are as old as literature. The chosen-people ideas are found in the Old Testament, though these have nothing of the sinful character of the later racist beliefs.

Sheer racism however, the belief in the natural superiority of one people over

others, is found in the Sacred Books of India, in the writings of the Arabian thinker Ibn Khaldun, and in other ancient works. From the days of Schlegel, Rhode, and Young, Europe has been self-conscious about race and blood.

The renowned composer of the music that helps keep the fire of Hitler alive, Wagner, in 1851 directed a bitter pamphlet at two men, fellow composers Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer, and in his work "*Über das Judentum in der Musik*" went beyond the personal attack and slandered all Jews as an impotent race artistically. In so many of his musical dramas, particularly "*Götterdämmerung*," the German type is elevated at the expense of the Jews.

The effect of these writers was to make men aware of a thing called an "inferior race." Today in Germany new prophets of the great god Race have made millions aware of the Aryan myth, and fanatical leaders have herded the masses before the shrine of Race.

Unfortunately we are accustomed to view racism in action from a distance, to consider it as peculiar to the other side of the world. But from the shelves of any public library take down the works of Madison Grant, or Lothrop Stoddard, or Major Shufeldt, to mention but a few rabid racists.

Our Way

While here in America we have few counterparts of the common road sign found in Germany and in other countries under German domination, "*Juden Sind Hier Erwünscht*," we have nonetheless similar prohibitions for Negroes. We have the Jim Crow cars, segregated sections in amusement areas, special sections in churches, separate schools, Negro living quarters, and so on down the long list. We have the offensive epithets "jigaboo," "nig-

ger," "shine," and other terms too filthy to print.

There are publications in America that do their level best to influence our people to hate the Negro. Just pick up a Ku Klux Klan paper. What an editorial policy! "Down with Catholics, Jews, and Negroes!" Naturally we Catholics resent it. And why shouldn't we? But does it not seem a bit inconsistent for us to be angry at this and then fail to be angry at the same attack on the Negro? The Negro resents our attitude. And why shouldn't he? We can protest for ourselves—and we do. But when the Negro shows signs of resentment, the cry goes up that the Negro has to be "put in his place" again because he's getting out of hand.

Are we racists, like the nazis? Perhaps the main difference between racism as it is practiced in Germany and as it is practiced in our own country is that in Germany, apart from the greater extent of the crime there, the sin has been labeled, while here in America there is an embarrassed silence on the matter.

What Is Racism?

Nazism, the greatest modern propounder and teacher of the subject, at Nuremburg in 1933 explained racism as follows:

"The distance between the lowest forms that are still called human and our highest races is greater than that existing between the lowest type of human beings and the ape."

From this it looks as if the soul is of less consequence than blood.

Now Catholics must realize that they may be unconscious followers of a belief they regard with horror in its effect abroad. Hence we have the need not only to solve the Negro problem but also to realize that too many people justify their discriminat-

ing methods by arguments dangerously close to those that racists use.

A terrible sensation comes over one when one reads the following words that the notorious Dr. Rosenberg wrote into his "Bible" of racism:

"A new faith has risen today, the blood myth, a faith able to defend itself by one's blood. . . . Any religious movement that would endeavor to grow into a national church would have to declare that the ideal of love for one's neighbor must be subordinate to the ideal of national honor; that no act can be endorsed by a German church unless it first serves to strengthen the race."

Now read the words of Hanns Kerrl, late Reich minister for religion (he died in December of 1941):

"Only he is a true National Socialist who recognizes his dependence upon God and knows that God's commands come through his conscience and his blood."

Then out of a belief in the Negro's essential inferiority comes that old, bewhiskered argument: "The Negro was better off the way he was before the Civil War." No less a racist than Adolph Hitler expresses the same idea in his "*Mein Kampf*," in the chapter headed "Nation and Race":

"But while extracting useful, if hard, work out of his subjects, he [the Aryan] not only protected their lives but also perhaps gave them an existence better than their so-called freedom. So long as he continued to look on himself as the overlord, he not only maintained his mastery, but he was also the upholder and fosterer of culture; but as soon as the subjects began to raise themselves and their language with the oppressor, the sharp barrier between lord and servant fell."

Motive

Among the excuses offered for discrimination against the Negro is the foolish belief that he is by nature unclean. What these people should say is that too many Negroes haven't a decent house to live in or a decent set of clothes to wear. Who is to blame? We'll take this up later on.

Racism—Evil and Fallacy

In reference to racism in America — labeled or unlabeled — the following words of Jacques Maritain, written in May of 1937, are eloquent and challenging:

“From a social and racial point of view racism to an unimaginable degree degrades and humiliates reason, thought, science, and art, which are henceforth made subservient to flesh and blood and are stripped of their natural ‘catholicity.’ Among all the types of barbarism which threaten mankind today, it inflicts on many the most inhuman and hopeless barbarism, since it welds them to biological categories and fatalities from which no exercise whatever of their liberty permits them any escape.”

With all the racist theories broadcast in the world today, it is a fundamental necessity that Catholics and all other apostles for interracial justice understand that there is no foundation in the findings of science for these erroneous teachings.

I was reading recently an anti-Negro book entitled “America’s Greatest Problem—the Negro,” by Major R. W. Shufeldt. His first three chapter headings will give an idea as to the studies men like the Major will utilize to fool the average mind: “Man’s Place in Nature From a Biological Standpoint,” “The Ethnological Status of the Negro,” “Further Comparative Ethnological Data.” The Negro is then “proved” to be the inferior race by the data of science.

Against this is the report published in December of 1938 by the American Anthropological Association. Every Catholic interested in seeing the dawning of that day when racism will be a corpse should, I feel, become at least cursorily acquainted with this document. Here is what real scientists declare:

“Whereas the prime requisites in science are the honest and unbiased search for truth and the freedom to proclaim such truth when discovered and known, and

“Whereas anthropology in many countries is being conscripted, its data distorted and misinterpreted to serve the cause of unscientific racism rather than the cause for truth,

“Be it resolved: that the American Anthropological Association repudiates such fallacies and radicalism and adheres to the following statement of facts:

“I) Race involves the inheritance of similar physical variation by large groups of mankind, but its psychological and cultural connotations, if they exist, have not been ascertained by science.

“II) Anthropology provides no scientific basis for discrimination against any people on the ground of racial inferiority.”

And here is what Eva J. Ross, Ph. D., writes of racism:

“As an example of a mistaken race theory, take for example the idea that the Negro is less intelligent than the white folk. Yet far from considering the Negro as unintelligent, whites should marvel at the enormous progress made by the American Negro since his emancipation in 1863. In all history there is no such record of swift, silent, peaceful, almost unobserved progress as the Negro has made in the past seventy-five years with the migration of more than two million Negroes to the north during and immediately after the Civil

War, despite his handicaps, socially, in economic life, in education, in every other way.

“Sometimes such theorists support their ideas with the further theory, based on the notion of man’s evolution from the lower animal forms, that the Negro resembles the higher anthropoids more closely than the Caucasians in cranial capacity, length of arm, receding forehead, and prognathous jaw. Yet of all races the Negroes are the farthest removed from the ape type, with their thick, black lips in contrast to the thin, bloodless ones of the ape and their hairlessness in contrast to the extreme hairiness of the ape.”

Eternal Rome Speaks

The present Pontiff, Pius XII, in his encyclical on “The Unity of Human Society” expressed alarm at the rampant racism throughout the world. Not in the hard language of Maritain, but in one brief sentence the Holy Father set up the positive, opposing doctrine we Catholics hold:

“Those who enter the Church, whatever be their origin or their speech, must know that they have equal rights as children in the house of the Lord, where the law of Christ and the peace of Christ prevail.”

Negro Glories

To the uninitiated the real history of the Negro is an eye opener. Once on a time my impression was that the Negro’s history was one long tale of thralldom, a sad background for the thirteen millions of blacks who dwell within our shores. Yet recorded history speaks only to the credit of the race, and the reader comes away from the study reenforced with arguments to confound those who urge the inferior stock of the colored man.

The glories of Holy Mother Church are brilliantly reflected in the sanctity of the

black slave St. Moses, of the Ethiopian king St. Elesbaan, of the penitential monk St. Benedict. The martyrs of Uganda and the twenty-two other Africans, canonized only two decades ago by Benedict XV, form some of the brightest jewels in the Church's modern diadem. And today the simple Dominican lay brother Blessed Martin de Porres is the inspiration and the guiding light behind the new American Catholic activity in the black man's behalf.

On the achievements of the Negro, Father La Farge, S. J., has written amply in his work "Interracial Justice." He has enumerated all the modern successes. I shall name here but a few to show that the Negro, given a chance, certainly has it in him to be as great as any other race.

So many of the accomplishments which I list here came about when the swimming was upstream and against the current. I shall make no effort to classify them, but it will be seen that they cover a wide field of endeavor: Prairie View State Normal School; Fisk University; Booker T. Washington, prominent on so many scores; Tuskegee Institute, founded by Booker T. Washington; Dr. Daniel Williams, famous heart surgeon; Paul Laurence Dunbar, poet; Colonel Charles Young, U. S. A.; Richmond Barthé, sculptor; Paul Robeson, Marian Anderson, Roland Hayes, Hall Johnson, Harry T. Burleigh, Catarina Jarboro, William Dawson, Lillian Evanti, and many others as well known in the field of musical accomplishment; Mrs. Mary McLeod Bethune, educator and champion of Negro rights; the famed Negro scientist Dr. Carver.

The list is far from exhausted, but it suffices to give the lie to the fallacy that the Negro is incapable of advancement. This simple truth that the Negro has definitely advanced — and chiefly by his own

efforts—is an important lesson in the education of the white man as the Church prepares to bring the wandering and confused sheep into the fold.

No Wonder

My own experience has taught me that too many people are of the notion that the Negro has made his place only in the world of crime and that he is by nature filthy and unkempt. This was brought home to me when I was a young Jesuit in Pennsylvania. Often on our long walks we came upon the most tumble-down hovels, and often these hovels were the spotless homes of large families of Negroes.

The Negro is beset by terribly discriminating handicaps. Thus according to recent figures there is in hospitals only one bed for every 1,940 Negroes; there is one bed for every 139 whites. Due to unhealthy conditions imposed on them through poverty, the progeny of unjust discrimination, 202 out of every 100,000 Negroes died; for the same number only 86 whites died. Again only four per cent of the sanatoriums that care for whites also care for Negroes.

When Major Shufeldt and others make the claim that the Negro is born into tuberculosis and in turn becomes a breeder of the disease, the "scientific" gentlemen forget the conditions of life which have been imposed upon the Negro, conditions which the Negro did not choose. They forget too that when the Negro had healthier conditions, before the Emancipation Proclamation, the percentage of Negroes that carried the disease was much lower than the percentage of whites that carried the disease.

Since he lives in circumstances that bring on such misery, is it any wonder that the Negro saw nirvana in the late Marcus Gar-

vey's back-to-Africa movement, away from the "freedom" of America? In view of this state of affairs one ponders confusedly the words of Booker T. Washington: "No race that has anything to contribute to the markets of the world is long in any degree ostracized." No? I wonder.

Study in Contrast

Beside my typewriter I have some more data. A book and an article I will single out as deserving of notice at this point of our discussion. The contrast of personalities depicted by the tone of the writings is very striking.

The first is an editorial in the *Johns Hopkins Alumni Magazine* by Broadus Mitchell, professor of political economy at the university. It is a plea to admit the Negro to Johns Hopkins. From this Christian article the last point will be made clearer, namely that the Negro is not a criminal by nature, not dirty by nature, but that these faults are rather the outcome of the circumstances in which he is constrained to live and that the same charges are true of white people who live in a degrading environment. Dr. Mitchell says, in part:

"By excluding the Negroes we are turning our backs upon the part of the population that needs us most. The School of Hygiene and Public Health boasts that it has students of many climes and colors. When degrees are conferred, the dean requests that they be granted *in absentia*, since the recipients have been snatched back, instantly their courses were completed, for service in the Orient or the Occident. But never a Negro among them. The Caroline Islands have our solicitude before Caroline Street, Baltimore, and the Dutch East Indies before Druid Hill Avenue. And yet the death rate of the Negroes of Baltimore is almost twice that of the whites. It must

be assumed that specialized training of the Negroes in public health is suitable, even necessary to successful attack upon the bad health conditions where Negroes live. A Negro physician, a member of the staff of the Baltimore City Department of Public Health, has just been awarded a scholarship to continue his training in the public-health school of Harvard University. He is serving Baltimore, but he may not study here."

It is certainly a relief to find such Christian sentiment in a secular magazine. But my relief is short-lived, because my attention is now drawn to the book I spoke of. The book is anti-Negro with a vengeance, authored by a John J. Jones. After I had finally waded through it, I felt that someone had been shouting at me for a number of hours. Large capital letters filled in for rhetoric when the author became more than ordinarily violent against the Negro. I'll give a few choice morsels—and note the contrast between this masterpiece of Jones and the preceding editorial:

"They [the Negroes] show themselves very poor sportsmen by ranting in extravagant and violent language about their so-called rights and at the same time throwing the white man's rights to the winds."

Consider this gem:

"Let us have the Jim Crow law! If not, the north shall be as poor as the south is.

"It will take more rebuffs, more failures finally to convince him that Uncle Sam is not the bread-and-butter man extraordinary for the Negro."

A typical outburst:

"Who said the Negro is as good as the white man?"

Our Shame

I have no comment to make on the remarks of good Mr. Jones. That would be superfluous. But what Jones says is repre-

sentative of the answer of so many of our citizenry to the pleas of Booker T. Washington, who was ever extending his hand in friendship, speaking this promise:

“As we have proved our loyalty to you in the past, we shall stand by you with a devotion that no foreigner can approach, ready to lay down our lives, if need be, in defense of yours, interlacing our industrial, civil, commercial, and religious life with yours in a way that shall make the interests of both races one.”

And the way that the Negro boys suffered the shrapnel and the rats and the lice and the disillusionment of fighting for democracy is strong backing to that promise. How perfectly willing we are to allow the Negro equal rights to be drafted in order that we whites may live in peace and security! Would to God we could extend a greeting and a pledge to our Negro countrymen, as they did to us through their noble spokesman.

Their Story

Men like John J. Jones have written the story of the Negro in bitterness.

The Negro has written his own story to music. It remained for the Negro to tell a sad story in touching lyrics and tuneful bars and to raise the sorrow of the piece to a spiritual level. Only a Negro could do it. In this land of ours, where more than sixty per cent of the population profess no religious affiliation whatsoever, the Negro has accomplished the seeming impossible when his melodies lift the hearts of hearers—at least for the space of a song—back to the loving God who made them:

“Nobody knows the trouble I see,
Nobody knows, but Jesus. . . .”

Low notes that Negroes sing remind the enraptured listener of the most sacred

events of the redemptive Passion of Our Lord:

“They crucified my Lord,
An’ He never said a mumblin’ word.
They nailed Him to a tree,
They pierced Him in the side,
The blood came twinklin’ down,
He bowed His head an’ died,
An’ He never said a mumblin’ word,
Not a word, not a word, not a word.”

When all the world is dashing its maddening pace to God-knows-where, the soft and lilting strains of Negro song can check momentarily the onrush and make the wayfarers of life think of the true goal they are avoiding. They are the singing troubadours of God:

“Swing low, sweet chariot,
Comin’ for to carry me home. . . .”

So many of the Negro spirituals have the one pervading theme — and remarkably enough it is the prayer of Africa’s dark St. Augustine: “Our hearts were made for thee, O Lord, and shall not rest until they rest in thee.” These are the wonderful souls whom we have been slow to greet, to accept in this country because between the white man and the Negro there has arisen a high wall of prejudice. We whites reared it. Let’s tear it down.

Apostles

Maybe I’m making the picture so gloomy that the question might suggest itself: “In the name of heaven, isn’t anyone doing anything for these people?” The answer is that plenty of people are doing things for the Negro—and they are mostly the wrong people. Thank God, there are a great many religious men and women devoting their lives to this noble cause. Their lives are their encomia, and I could not measure up to the task of blessing them. But here and

now suppose we consider the work that is being done for the Negroes, possibly on the Negroes, by large mass movements.

About a year ago, when I was studying in Long Island, two of us took a stroll toward Manhasset. Along the way was a Negro who was painting a seemingly eternal fence. As we approached, he stopped us and asked, without further ado, "Pardon me, reverends, but could you tell me just where does this body of mine go when the last judgment comes?"

Whew! the first crack out of the box! I had always heard that the Negro was deeply religious, and here was a typical example. That fellow must have been pondering that question over and over in his mind for a long time before we met him.

Anyhow we explained the simple catechism answer to him, and then we started to ask the questions. We asked him to what church he belonged. He was born a Baptist, he said, but for the last few years he had been a devoted follower of Father Divine. Aha! just the man to see. That diminutive dynamo who styled himself "God" always did interest me. How that little fellow, who spent so much time in jail and did more explaining to judges than a henpecked husband ever did, managed to do the things he did and command such a host of followers was always a mystery. All the exposés in newspapers and magazines tried to explain it, but the answer this Negro painter gave was more revealing. When we put the question to him, asking him to explain the phenomenon of the dusky messiah, he replied, "Well, reverends, it seems to me that Father Divine—he does things for us colored folk. These other groups, reverends—what do they do?"

There is a world of bitter truth in those words. Most of us scoffed at the antics and activities of Father Divine. But when we

come right down to it, our scoffing didn't limit the number of his followers one iota. Multitudes still crowded around him adoringly — and what are we doing to bring them back to the true divine Father of all?

Utopia Beckons

Before we come to just what we can do that is practical, we ought to look at what our old friends the communists are doing for the Negro. Their activities should put us to shame.

In one of the better Catholic magazines whose policy and aim is justice to the Negro, I read a letter from a well-educated Negro which was featured as an article. The main import of it was that we Catholics are accustomed to exaggerate the influence which communism wields over the Negro. The writer backed his stand by stating that the average (this is the important word) Negro finds no appeal in the utopia of Marx and Lenin.

I cannot bring myself to agree with this Negro correspondent, and the words average Negro explain my dissent. Communism is not going to fold up tomorrow evening just because it has failed to entrap the average Negro. But tomorrow and the next day communism will continue to enroll Negroes, the depressed, the clever, as it has been doing with remarkable success—and that is what must be reckoned with.

Anyone who says that the communists are not succeeding with the Negro will have a hard time explaining some facts. Here are a few such facts. Read them, and then judge if the alarm is unwarranted. For example this dispatch which the NCWC sent to all Catholic papers:

“CATHOLICS IGNORED AT NEGRO YOUTH MEETING”

“New Orleans — Catholics, numbering one fifth of the 362 attending the All South-

ern Negro Youth conference, were practically denied a voice in the proceedings. A resolution against communism was ignored, Catholic literature was tabooed, and Catholic speakers could not gain the floor."

Again when the highly propagandized "Gone With the Wind" was setting all sorts of records and collecting all available "Oscars," the communists were up in arms. Was it Scarlett's adulterous escapades that brought down their wrath? Was it because Rhett was not the perfect gentleman in his treatment of the heroine? Nothing of the sort. The cry they raised was that the picture was unfair to the Negro. I happened to get hold of a circular they were passing around at the time. If I quote the heavy-type part on the back of the circular, the general message will be clear:

"FOR THE UNITY OF NEGRO AND WHITE.

"UPHOLD CIVIL LIBERTIES.

"STOP THE K. K. K. PASS THE ANTI-LYNCHING BILL.

"FOR THE RIGHT TO VOTE, ABOLISH THE POLL TAX.

"DEFEND THE BILL OF RIGHTS. ENFORCE THE 13th, 14th, 15th AMENDMENTS.

"FIGHT AGAINST DISCRIMINATION. UPHOLD THE AMERICAN TRADITION OF EQUALITY.

"IN THE SPIRIT OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN, FREDERICK DOUGLAS, JOIN THE YOUNG COMMUNISTS' LEAGUE.

"WRITE TO YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD MOVIE. PROTEST AND BOYCOTT THE SHOWING OF 'GONE WITH THE WIND'."

One Genius Beguiled

It was not very long ago that I came across a rather bombastic circular inviting

the general public to a testimonial dinner to be given in honor of a young man whom the sponsors thought was the poet of the day. On the invitation was printed the poem that made him famous. It was one of the most blatantly blasphemous pieces of writing you would ever want to read.

Entitled "Goodbye Christ," the verses came down to saying that Jesus had outlived His usefulness and in all decency He should move on and make way for the modern god whom Marx and Engels and Lenin once dreamed would rule the world, the international worker.

The author, Langston Hughes, a Negro, is a member of the American chapter of Moscow's International Union of Revolutionary Writers. Maybe he is not one of the average Negroes, but certainly he is a gifted, thinking man. •

It all adds up to show, along with many other similar instances, that communism has an appeal for other than illiterate and unreflecting Negroes. The point of fact is that very many Negroes are enlisting under the banner of the hammer and sickle, and that is satisfaction to Joe Stalin's heart.

Tactics

Because of the deep sensitiveness they descry in the emotional make-up of the Negro, the communist agitators are able in their harangues to make a deep impression on the persecuted masses whom communism would lead out of the darkness of tyrannical capitalism and Christianity. The apostles of antigod are diabolically clever and zealous when they succeed in bringing the Negro once more to his knees in deep faith.

But this time his eyes are not on the stars nor his thoughts on the God of the stars. No longer does he dream of the cloudships that will carry him home to his

“Cabin in the Sky.” No; this time his eyes look to the ground, and he is led to adore the stars of the earth.

Where once husky Negro voices harmonized the melodious charm of “Ole Black Joe,” Negro throats now strain to the martial notes of the “International,” and Negro fists are clenched against the wrongs that are done them. The emblem of the cross is giving way to the hammer and sickle. When the Negro sees one of his own running on the communist ticket for the vice-presidency of the United States, he sees a guarantee of Red promises.

If you’ve ever heard a communist agitator in Times Square—or anyplace else—who has spotted a group of Negroes in the crowd, then you have heard the type of appeal the communist makes. It runs somewhat along this pattern—in speeches and literature:

The Red spokesman demonstrates, and with visible success, that though the body of the Negro was liberated from bonds by the great White Father in Washington, the “Roman Church” seized upon the delivered people, anxious to put the chains of thralldom once more upon the Negro. Inasmuch as the Church could not put the bonds on the ankles and wrists—and get away with it—it would enslave the Negro personality. Consequently through the agency of black-hearted men practiced in the diabolical chicanery of priestcraft, thousands upon thousands of the Negro race wended their way to the altar of the Christian God.

The aroused Negro audience sees unfolded before it clever Catholic legerdemain when it is told that its people, once within the fold, were segregated from the white communicants as so many leprosy victims and reminded Sunday after Sunday in the unmistakable language of exclusion that

they were an inferior race. Catholicism, shouts the communist agitator, has brought about a slavery more appalling than that of chains on the body; it has enslaved the Negro personality. And too many Negroes are believing this Red ranting.

But It Works

Touching on the success of atheistic communism among the Negroes, Earl Browder wrote in *People's Front*:

“Significant progress has been made in building the United Front for Negro liberation. The National Negro Congress, which met in Chicago and established a permanent organization, found the correct road to a broad unity of the various forces among the Negro peoples and their friends. . . . The position won by our party among the Negro masses carries with it corresponding difficulties.”

Page eighty-one of the second report of the Special Committee on Un-American Activities is the other authority we may quiz:

“The committee found that communists are making a concerted attempt to win over the Negro. . . . The communist united-front movement among Negroes in the United States is known as the National Negro Congress. The officers of the National Negro Congress are outspoken communist sympathizers, and a majority of these on the executive board are outright communists. The National Committee is composed of a mixture of left-wingers and dupes. By the by-laws of the organization the control is vested in the officers of the executive board. No authority is vested in the National Committee. In this way the communists control the movement. At the Philadelphia Congress 1,149 delegates representing over 100 Negro organizations with a membership of 1,000,000 Negroes were present.”

And then they tell us that the Negro is not susceptible to communism!

We

I guess it ought to be clear now that some people are doing things for the Negro. It's about time that we got going before it's too late. The question we have to decide now is this: Can we do anything to help alleviate matters?

Unfortunately there is a rift in the Catholic fold as to the method of solution. Both sides doubtlessly have the good of the Church and of the Negro at heart. One group we shall call the idealistic group or the theorists, those who recognize the meaning of Our Lord's words and who would immediately admit the Negro to our schools and seminaries. To these theorists that is the ideal, because it is precisely what Our Lord would want.

The other group, the down-to-earth realists, is willing to admit that meditation on the words of Christ will convince us intellectually that there is an equality of races in the Catholic scheme of things. But to them the equality is not actual so much as theoretical—and they bring up some of the objections we have considered throughout this discussion.

Does it not seem though that these realists fail to see the real? If these people are really sincere when they state that the admittance of the Negro to our schools and seminaries would be a step to social and marital intermingling, let them find the Negro's own idea on the matter in the words of Booker T. Washington: "In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers." No champion of fairness to the Negro in the Catholic Church is setting forth the idea of intermarriage between Negroes and whites.

Protestantism is not dead among the Negroes. It attracts five million Negro followers, while the Catholic Church in America can claim only three hundred thousand. There is something wrong somewhere.

Maybe the Negro himself is to blame. Are his demands too high? Nonsense!

The Negro has been very humble in his requests. He has asked us for no extravagant favors. All he wants is a chance. But if the Negro doesn't get the ordinary cold justice from us Catholics, he thinks he knows where he can get it. Given the equality of opportunity, he will prove himself a worthy member of society, as so many Negroes have proved themselves; denied this chance, he becomes a problem. It is the Negro's own request, this chance; and if we do something about it, we will remove the discontent that leaves him open to the forces outside the Church.

If we do not want to admit the Negro to our schools and seminaries, here is a proposal that might work. There is of course the obvious financial difficulty, but the plan can be carried through. Why not build for the Negroes more Catholic schools and seminaries like those conducted by the Fathers of the Divine Word? After all God gives priestly vocations to Negroes as well as to white men. In this way we will in a short time have educated Negro priests and laymen to give needed care to their own. Maybe this plan would suit all concerned in the Church's desire for the Negro. But something must be done—and soon.

New Dawn Breaking

Not so long ago I was privileged to attend a meeting of the De Porres Interracial Council in New York City. It will be a long time before the impression I received that night wears away. Following an in-

structive introductory talk by the moderator, Father La Farge, S. J., three Negro priests succeeded each other in addressing the throng. One was a missionary who had returned from Trinidad to the States to beg funds for the twenty-three thousand souls whom God had entrusted to his care. The second was the editor of the *Negro Messenger*. The third was secretary to the bishop of Jamaica, British West Indies.

I am not exaggerating when I say that they were the most interesting three speakers I have ever heard on one program. Not once in the course of the three talks did any of the speakers evidence a desire to throw blame on the white man. Not in the least vituperative, they spoke as advocates of the Negro race, pleading before the tribunal of Christian charity. These Negroes were a tribute to the Catholic priesthood, and their example was more impressive than a stirring exhortation would have been.

It was not very long ago that the Negroes in the United States celebrated the diamond jubilee of their freedom. It was a quiet affair, and I wonder how many people knew about it. There must have been a touch of sadness and irony about it all, because those people know that they are a long way from real freedom. Abraham Lincoln and the Union Army gave the Negro his liberty before the law. The granting of complete emancipation is in our hands. It is a personal matter to each one of us—and it is a Catholic matter.

I feel that there is cause for optimism as we Catholics begin to carry through this neglected apostolate. It is not too late. In view of the strides already taken, I feel that a new dawn is breaking, the dawn of freedom—and the Catholic Church will usher it in. The day is not far off when there will be a new world of interracial

relations, when the millions of wandering sheep will be brought within the true fold, which one historian describes as the haven where . . .

“ . . . the gentile met the Jew he had been accustomed to regard as an enemy of the human race; the Roman met the Greek Sophist; the Syrian slave the gladiator born beside the Danube. In brotherhood they met, the natural birth of each forgotten, the baptism alone remembered in which they had been born again to God and to each other.”

Here is the American apostolate in which we can all join. We can do nothing without prayer — first, last, and always — because prayer is our invitation to God to work together with us in this apostolate.

As I write these last words, a double quartette composed of the Negro boys who work in our kitchen has started up in song:

“Deep River, my home is over Jordan,
Deep River . . .”

Listen to that baritone!

THE QUEEN'S WORK
3742 West Pine Boulevard
ST. LOUIS 8, MO.

