

Catholic layman

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# The Catholic Layman and Modern Problems



A Series of Ten Talks  
*by*  
Distinguished Catholic Laymen

THE CATHOLIC HOUR

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# The Catholic Layman And Modern Problems

A Series of  
TEN TALKS

By

PROMINENT CATHOLIC LAYMEN  
GIVEN IN THE CATHOLIC HOUR

May 28 to July 30, 1944

EACH SUNDAY AT SIX P. M., E. W. T.  
NBC NETWORK

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## THE LAYMAN'S TASK

by Wilbert J. O'Neill  
President, National Council of Catholic Men

Address delivered on May 28, 1944

The layman's task, in simple terms, is to participate in the greatest thing in the world. spirit of brotherly love and truth and justice, which would have made the horrors of war impossible.

The greatest thing in the world is love. Not mere sentimentalism but love based on an appreciation of the dignity and unique worth of every person and on a rational desire to cooperate with every person and aid him in realizing the unity of all with God which is the perfection of love.

The greatest proof of love is sacrifice.

Yet, among the most misunderstood words in our language are the words love and sacrifice, and the greatest tragedies are in the lives of those who miss or reject the true meaning and beauty of those words. They do not know that love turns what would otherwise be the sorrow of sacrifice into joy and that selfishness brews a bitter cup of disillusionment.

In a world-wide war, we are sacrificing life and treasure for love of truth and justice, for God and home and country; but it is still true that the sacrifices of war are being made over all the world because, over all the world, men would not sacrifice pride and greed, would not deal with their fellowmen in a

Even now there is much confusion about war aims. No one can take away the supernatural reward of those who have made sacrifices in the war but we must see to it that, in a proper worldly sense also, the sacrifices shall not have been made in vain. We must see to it that the war shall not result merely in the ascendancy of new forces which sacrifice Liberty and Truth and Justice on the altar of Pride, Envy, Hate, and Greed. Shall the true God be served or the false? Will the sacrifice lead us into the paths of peace, temporal and eternal, or, ignoring the sacrifice and the lessons it should have learned, will the world risk the loss—yes, abandon the hope—of earthly peace and eternal salvation in another mad contest for worldly power? Does man not know and will he never learn what he is and why he is living on this earth?

These subjects have been discussed on the Catholic Hour by learned and eloquent priests. They are the authorized teachers of the Church's doctrine. But their teachings must be received and applied

by laymen (not received and filed for future reference in a personal crisis, as too many seem to think).

And Catholic laymen also have the function of assisting the hierarchy in the work of the Apostolate—that is the meaning of Catholic Action. They have not only to look out for themselves—they are also their brother's keepers. Their social and apostolic work may carry a special conviction because they are laymen. If their example is good, they may stimulate others to do better. Religion thus may become something more than a Sunday ceremonial (which may be no religion at all) and be made part of the warp and woof of society, illuminating men's minds, strengthening their wills, and so guiding their conduct in all their relations that the words of the Lord's prayer shall be realized—that His Kingdom shall come and His Will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

In line with this work of Catholic Action we have engaged to address you during the next two months laymen of broad experience and learning. They will not try to promote any personal interests or any political or economic nostrums. They are men well informed in many lines, who know the problems of the world both in the material and the moral order and from many points of view. They will not con-

fuse the technical problems of the natural sciences, which are in the material order, with the very different kinds of problems of the social sciences, which are in the moral order. They will give economics and politics their right place in the moral order and not try to deal with them as if they related only to mathematics and test tubes and mechanics. They will deal with the terrible evils of secularism, pragmatism, and totalitarianism which afflict the world today. They will deal with the ruinous confusion of the legitimate idea of what is practical, in the sense of being the best attainable by imperfect human beings, and the vicious idea of doing things that are wrong in principle but expedient in a sordid material sense. The true leader may say: "This plan is not perfect but it is right in purpose and the means are right and it is the best we can do." The false leader says: "Those impractical idealists would try this plan but it is too hard. We will not even try it. This other thing is wrong according to their silly moral standards but it is convenient and probably no one will catch us or be able to do anything about it if he does." That is called being practical. That kind of thinking has produced the present awful conditions, and not any single individual like Hitler nor any small group.



Wouldn't you think this very practical minded world would apply its practical tests to its own over-all results and decide on a moral reform?

The speakers on the Catholic Hour will present to you something very different from the pagan philosophy running through the statements of the great majority of commentators. They will have no sympathy for the blasphemous condemnation of God's gift of inventive genius, which we sometimes hear nowadays, but they will stress the awful evil and base ingratitude of using these gifts primarily for aggression against our fellowmen, whether in military or economic warfare, instead of using them in the ways of peace and for its preservation.

Much of this talk is critical, but it is intended primarily to be critical of doctrines and of manners rather than of men. In all of these talks we shall speak in a spirit of charity toward all men. We hope that we shall express our real meanings and purposes clearly, but we recognize that the capacity of language for misstatement, and the risks of misstatement and misunderstanding by people of good will, are almost beyond belief. We are starting this series on Pentecost and, though we have not the gift of tongues, we hope nevertheless

that we shall speak clearly and be heard and understood in the same spirit of truth and charity in which we intend to speak.

As for criticism of persons, the most helpful kind is self-criticism. The world needs a league for self-criticism. It could have it if it would, for it is here in Christ's Church in the Sacrament of Penance. Self-criticism is likely to be constructive. No political or economic device will take its place.

Those who have had the opportunity to know intimately the economic and political world know these things to be true. Most severe indictments of so-called practical business have been drawn by business men themselves, notably in their fair trade practice conferences. Most severe indictments of so-called realistic and practical labor leaders have been drawn by other labor leaders. Most severe indictments of professional trustees have been drawn by other professional trustees in seeking accounting and restitution from unfaithful predecessor trustees. Most severe indictments of bankers and investment dealers have been drawn by other bankers and investment dealers in connection with bankruptcies, foreclosures, and reorganizations of business concerns. Most severe indictments of politicians have been drawn by other

politicians, sometimes of the same political party. And in the field of family life the most severe indictments for domestic infidelity and gross immorality have been drawn in hundreds of thousands of cases in stories of wrecked homes told by petitioners in the divorce courts. One could go on at length to the same effect. Now when members of a group criticise the conduct of their own group, it is much better than if the only criticism were of one group or class by another.

If we could only get each of the offenders in each class to criticize himself and resolve to reform, what a fine world this could be. But much as men need self-criticism, they also need leadership, and especially the leadership of good example. On leaders especially is imposed the task of love and sacrifice. Leaders who disregard in practice the doctrines they profess to believe and teach, scandalize the world and lead it into social strife. Power is necessary but power sometimes corrupts and power can be abused by any class and especially by its leaders. Who will deny that, if those who professed belief in God and the moral law had produced enough of the kind of leadership which Christ's teachings should evoke, the modern pagans would never have had the chance to start the awful war in which we now find

ourselves. Many of those pagans were once professed believers.

We must beware of Pharisaical smugness, but if we believe ours is the way of peace, we must edify others by our example. That is the best way to lead them to our way of thinking. We cannot edify them by competing with them in their secularistic attitudes or by conduct morally as bad or worse than their own. Too often men have been selected or accepted for leadership solely because of wealth or social position or political power, regardless of how it was acquired, or even for their unscrupulous boldness and cruelty. It is foolishly argued by some that they must have such leaders because they can "get things done." But we must get the right things done and done in the right way. We must seek first a moral leadership for moral ends. In appraising values in men and things, we must recognize that Christ meant exactly what He said about seeking first the Kingdom of God and His Justice and we must believe that then all the other worldly things will be added in due measure. Do we believe it or do we not? We profess to believe that all men are stewards of their lives, their talents, and their opportunities. Certainly the leaders must exemplify this doctrine and not devote themselves to self-aggran-



disement. They need extraordinary capacity and technical training for the many and various problems of leadership, but above all they should have proved by self-discipline and self-sacrifice that they are fit to lead or govern others because they know the true meaning of self-government and are interested in helping to get their fellowmen a fair chance in this world and so a fair chance in the next, and not merely in getting themselves into some kind of who's who.

There is certainly no reason for complacency on the part of anybody in the present situation. We have fallen afoul of many stumbling blocks. We are face to face with the age old problem of good and evil. In this situation there are salutary lessons in the stories of what happened on two mountains. One presents the technique of the pagan world today. The other suggests the way of salvation.

On one mountain, the devil presented vainly to the God-Man the temptation which he has always presented to mere men, so successfully for himself and so disastrously for the world: "All these will I give thee, if bowing down thou wilt adore me" (*Matthew 4:9*). "All these" can become a hell on earth if we follow the Prince of this world in the misuse of our worldly opportunities. That is

pretty much the present situation for a large part of the people of the world.

On the other mountain, it was given to three men to get just a glimpse of the radiant glory of God, which is to be the eternal vision of those who serve Him faithfully. They did not then sense the full significance of the great events that were in preparation. They thought of a static situation. They said, "It is good for us to be here" (*Matthew 17:4*). They wanted to stay as they were and to erect tabernacles on the mount. Their foolish proposals were rejected and Christ led them down from the mountain to a life of service and sacrifice. They were told to tell the vision to no man until the Son of Man was risen from the dead. They were to wait for this final proof of His divinity and then get the commission, which we also have been given, to carry to all men the message that true peace and the Everlasting Vision are to be won only by love and sacrifice.

To carry that message by example as well as by precept, to help rebuild a war-torn and weary world by restoring all things in Christ, is the task of every Christian who would be a leader or a faithful worker in the ranks now in this time of awful war, and in the work of reconstruction in the post war world.

## SECULARISM AND SOCIETY

by Thomas F. Woodlock

Contributing Editor, The Wall Street Journal

Address delivered on June 4, 1944

The late William Graham Sumner of Yale used to impress upon his students that, in approaching any subject, they should ask four questions. First: "What are we talking about?" This called for a "definition." Second: "What is it?" This called for an examination of the definition's content. Third: "What do we think of it?" This called for conclusions concerning that content. Lastly: "What should we do about it?"—which speaks for itself. This seems a good method of dealing with our present topic—"Secularism and Society"—and I shall try to follow it.

What do we mean by "secularism?" The word has an interesting etymological ancestry into which we need not go. All that concerns us is the idea that the word is intended to convey. That it is of relatively modern coinage is not important. We have coined a good many new words in recent years, some entirely new like "fascism" and "totalitarianism," and have reminted old words in entirely new meaning—that word "democracy" for instance. We all worship Thomas Jefferson as the patron saint of "democracy" as we conceive the idea. But to Jefferson the word conveyed no such meaning as we give it today. To Jefferson also the word "fascist" would have meant nothing at all on first hearing, and "totalitarianism" would have required unpacking. So too, with "secularism," not only because of its etymological cross-breeding but because the idea that it is now intended to convey was not as clearly recognized in his day as it is today. What is that idea?

Last winter there was published by the Institute for Religious Studies at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, a highly interesting collection of addresses and discussions representing the work of the Institute in the Season of 1942-43. The book is titled *Religion and the World Order* and is distributed by Harper & Brothers. The editor of the volume is Doctor F. Ernest Johnson, Professor of Education of Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, and Executive Secretary of the Department of Research and Education of the Federal Council of the Church-

es of Christ in America. The volume opens with a lecture by Doctor Johnson on "Contemporary Secularism as an Impediment to Religious Effort." He defines his terms as follows:

"To designate this quality of the modern era, I employ the word 'secularism'. It is not to be confused with the principle of the separation of Church and State. Freedom of the State from Church control, and of the Church from State control is required by the religiously heterogeneous nature of our population. And even if all citizens belonged to one church, it would not follow that the boundary between the political and the ecclesiastical should become blurred. What is implied by secularism is that man's religious life is conceived as an inner and private affair, having no necessary relevance to his business or political activities and incapable of furnishing him with sanctions to guide his organized social relationships."

In brief, secularism means a theory of life in which religion in general plays no important part in determining man's conduct in his social relations in that it exercises no direct authority over his actions. Doctor Johnson's essay discusses the effect of this theory upon society in our day and I recommend

it for anyone's reading who wishes to inform himself on the subject. I have all the more pleasure in doing this in that it is the work of one who is not a Catholic.

Theory is one thing and practice is another. So, too, a tendency in men's thinking is one thing and its final acceptance in fixed form is another. A fundamental change in men's thinking is usually slow in establishing itself, and generally it is not so much a matter of a theory hardening into practice as it is the reverse, practice gradually developing its own theory. It is the latter process that seems to have produced the "theory" of "secularism," for the "tendency" in its case can be observed over at least five centuries, whereas the "theory" itself is a modern and, historically speaking, quite recent development. Moreover it constitutes a fundamental change in man's concept of his life and of himself.

I think I am safe in making two statements. One is that there has not been discovered on this earth any race or tribe or social group of human beings altogether devoid of the religious sense. By "religious sense" I mean an apprehension of the existence of some unseen Power or Powers upon whom men are ultimately dependent for their well-being. Extremely vague

as is this sense in some cases, it is real, and so far as we know it is universal in mankind. The other is that the recorded history of the great civilizations that have been born, have grown, and have died on this earth, show us that in every one of them religion was the vitalizing principle of its life, markedly influencing in each its cultural form and color. Christopher Dawson's *Religion and Progress* is a masterly exposition of this truth. Not until the nineteenth century did the notion of a completely de-religionized order of society appear in men's thinking. Even the French intellectuals who prepared the French Revolution were Deists of a sort, and Robespierre himself even staged a great feast of the Supreme Being. The fathers of our country were certainly Deists or more, as the preamble to the Declaration of Independence demonstrates. It remained for Proudhon and Marx to state plainly and unqualifiedly that religion was a humbug. Finally, it is not yet thirty years since, for the first time in the world's history, a great nation formally took its stand upon a sweeping denial of religion as such. We now have in this country a complete philosophy of secularism which enjoys a wide support among our intellectuals, and in many other countries it has its

counterpart, and its followers. So recent is the birth of "Secularism" as a theory of human life.

Not so its origins. They go far back. In sketching them I shall follow Doctor Johnson's analysis, reminding you that he writes as a Protestant and not as a Catholic. He starts with what he calls the "Medieval synthesis," the essence of which was that religion should furnish ethical standards not only for private conduct but also for "the governance of business and trade." Whatever may be said of men's behavior in the Middle Ages—which we will consider to include the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries—men's thinking on human life was saturated with religion, that is with Christianity. All scholars agree as to the fact. Some deplore it, others regret its passing; none deny it. Doctor Johnson dates the rise of secularism from the fragmentation of Christianity in the sixteenth century as a result of the Reformation. Here are his own words:

"As a Protestant I share the conviction of those who see authentic values in the Reformation, but I think all of us who stand in that tradition should see that a concomitant of the fragmentizing of Christendom was the divorcement of large areas of life from effective

religious and moral sanctions—in other words, the rise of Secularism. When the economic life of the Western World acquired a moral autonomy of its own, the way was open to all the ills of unrestrained *laissez-faire*. With the decline of the spiritual authority of the Church in political affairs, however badly that authority may have been exercised, the way was open to the rise of nationalism as a false and pernicious religion—I would go even further and suggest that the triumph of nominalism in modern philosophy, with its restriction of reality to particular objects of sense, displacing the older realism with its insistence on the reality of universals, has played havoc with human society by sacrificing the philosophic basis of community.”

Both the fragmentizations, that in Christian belief and in metaphysics, took place long ago. I think, however, that of all the factors which have brought about the modern abandonment of religion by so large a part of human society the sudden explosion of scientific discoveries in the second half of the nineteenth century has been the most powerful. For one reason it quickly caught the popular imagination. No one who did not live in the eighties can realize the excitement that followed the pub-

lication of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, which the great Thomas Huxley and John Tyndall expounded to eager audiences in those days. There followed a host of their lesser disciples who popularized the new learning in a literature that rapidly crowded the railway book-stalls, and penetrated deeply into what might be called the innermost circles of “intellectual Suburbia.” The result was the generation of what I venture to call a gigantic superstition, the superstition of “Scientism.” The essence of this was that modern science has disproved all religious truth by its discovery of Evolution. Not that Darwin had said any such thing, nor Wallace, nor can we hold Thomas Huxley to task for plainly asserting it. But that was the effect produced upon the minds of a great number of people by the forms in which the new doctrine reached them, in many of which the death of religion was formally and aggressively asserted. This was not the fault of Science, as such, but of most of those who spoke for it. Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe*, appearing at the turn of the century, was a good example of this literature at the time of its high water. He scoffed at the notion of God, as that of a “gaseous vertebrate!” Nor was it the fault of

theology, as such, but of some of those who spoke for it in those days. The sad fact is that we then had too many scientists who insisted on talking bad theology, and too many theologians who insisted on talking bad science, each trespassing on the other's territory without real knowledge of its topography.

The net result was, as I have said, the generation of the superstitution of Scientism, and the net result of that was to destroy in a great many people the religious sense, either by smothering it altogether or by diverting it to the worship of something they liked to call "Science." There was excuse, perhaps, for this—for Science seemed to be daily proving its gospel by miracle after miracle. It was also the late afternoon of the long peace that followed up the end of the Napoleonic adventure. Peace and progress—progress certain, automatic, and limitless—seemed to have settled down at last upon the earth, thanks to Science which had emancipated man both from his physical prison and his mental darkness. There is indeed something about the Victorian Age that seems to recall the age of the Antonines of the second century—an aura of inward settledness, of self-assurance, of mastery of the future, of world peace.

But secularism had come to its full growth as a philosophy in society, and it had driven religion back in a large way, back to its inner fortifications where it was besieged as closely as it had been for many a long century.

Yet it was a time when the full harvest of Christianity's humanitarian fruits was being garnered. Never before in Christendom's long history was there such a generous humanitarian crop as ripened in the nineteenth century, especially in its second half. In fifty years the working man came into his full rights as a recognized element in the social order. In all directions reform followed upon reform—education, penology, factory conditions, public health, and other social services, all showed results. Philanthropy was in the air. The years following the Civil War in this country saw the founding both of great fortunes and of colossal benefactions and foundations for the benefit of mankind. It seemed as if the gradual fading of the religious sense had turned men's thoughts and feelings all the more actively to visible works of mercy and charity for the good of their fellows, both their minds and their bodies. As Christian dogmas were being first compromised and then dropped, their place was gradually taken by a new religion of sorts,

which many liked to call the religion of the Golden Rule.

It was and is an excellent rule—no doubt about that. Moreover men were, on the whole in those days, practising it not so badly. They were on the whole kindly disposed toward each other. They observed, on the whole, the decent customs, the conventions, the traditions of their forefathers, they generally kept their promises to each other and their hands off each other's property. What they did not realize was that they were spending a capital accumulated for them by their ancestors who had held a definite Christian faith, and that the capital was limited. It was limited because it was neither earning interest nor being replenished. It was like a hoard of gold coins lying idle in a treasure-chest, or flowers in a vase cut from their parent stem. In short, the humanitarianism of the nineteenth century and since is a legacy from a Christian faith which has largely evaporated over what we have long

called Christendom, and the legacy is being exhausted, as we are now beginning at least to suspect, if not clearly to recognize. The terrible fact is that Christendom has been gradually, indeed rapidly, ceasing to be Christian. It is true that in Christendom—the Western World—there was always a residue of what we call paganism, sometimes more of it, sometimes less. The modern form of paganism is *secularism*, and today this new paganism has reconquered and now occupies a larger part of Christendom than paganism has ever occupied since the Middle Ages. This is perhaps the most characteristic feature of the age in which we live. But the worst thing about it is that it is a paganism devoid of that vague but real reverence for the unseen which permeated the Greek and the Roman mind to the last, when the best elements of both were taken over and baptized by Christianity. Today it is their worst elements which have risen up in war against Christianity itself, and their name is Secularism.

## THE RAVAGES OF SECULARISM

by Thomas F. Woodlock

Contributing Editor, The Wall Street Journal

Address delivered on June 11, 1944

In the last talk, I attempted to answer the first two of Professor Sumner's four questions. Today I shall tackle the last two: "What do we think of it?" and "What should we do about it?" Secularism we defined as a theory of human life which excludes "religion," as such, from having any important part to play in it. We glanced at its origins and its development. Today I shall try to describe its effects upon human society and, if I shall succeed in doing this, the last question should quickly answer itself.

When a man is attempting to explain to another almost anything from abstract ideas down to concrete processes, nine times out of ten he will fall back upon analogy. The purpose of analogy is to explain an unfamiliar idea by likening its content to that of a more familiar idea. It is a rather dangerous method, yet, when properly employed, an extremely useful one for communicating any idea to another person. It is dangerous because it is always easy to assert likeness where it does not in fact exist at all or, where it does exist to some extent, to over-state the

extent. In either case communication fails. With this warning in mind, I shall attempt an experiment in analogy to bring out the principal effects produced upon society by its secularization in modern times.

Everyone has heard of the mysterious thing that we call the "force of gravity" which seems to govern matter throughout the universe, and all man's dealings with matter. In some of its manifestations it is a hindrance and an obstacle to be overcome; in others it is a help when it can be harnessed to man's needs. In both, it is the fundamental principle of *order* in all material things, by keeping all things in their places, so that man can always find them there when he wants them. It gives us our measure of time. It gives us the recurrent sequence of the seasons. It keeps the heavenly bodies in their orderly courses so that we know where each will be in relation to the others at any moment. We know the laws of its operation. Indeed, we know almost all about it—except what it *is*; and in every one of our movements it meets us



and governs those movements. So far as we know, it is co-extensive with the visible universe, the thing that gives unity to the universe.

Now suppose that this force of gravitation were to begin to weaken, to dwindle, and gradually lose its present control over the bodies of matter that now move in their appointed courses—what would be the result? Our astronomers would be quick to detect it. They would find that their calculations as to the places of heavenly bodies no longer worked out. Long before the ordinary man would notice anything different in the weather, the tides, or the seasons, they would be sounding the alarm. But presently we would become aware through our own senses that something had gone badly wrong with the whole order of our daily lives, in other words that order had given place to disorder. And the end of that disorder would be the end of life on the earth as we know that life.

The analogy that I am suggesting is that between the force of gravitation in the physical order and religion in the cultural and civilized life of man. I suggest that the growth of secularism in the modern world is analogous to the weakening of gravitational forces in the physical order in that it is producing a disorder in human conduct in the same way that would follow in

the physical world from a lessening of gravitational force. I do not wish to push the analogy too hard, but I think it is a true analogy of likeness. I think that history, as we have it, substantiates it beyond dispute. It tells us of many great civilizations that have come and gone. Each of these is the product of three things—a creed, a cult, and a code, the whole making a culture and a civilization. The creed is the origin and the vital principle of the rest. The cult expresses the creed in ritual. The code reflects the influence of both on men's behavior toward each other. The culture is the color so to speak of the civilization and the civilization reflects the order which gives form to the whole. This picture is admirably presented, as I suggested in the last talk, in Christopher Dawson's *Religion and Progress*. If it be true that religion is the source of the order that characterizes a civilization, then it performs the same function in its field that gravitational force performs in the physical field of matter; and we should expect similar results to follow from similar disturbances of the sources of both fields. Those results would be disorder.

So far, our physicists have detected no signs of change in the order that governs in the field of matter, nothing, at least, to suggest

that gravitational force is not still what it has always been. Astronomers can still predict eclipses to the split second, the seasons recur as they have done ever in the memory of man, our nautical almanac time tables of future tides are still verified. In short, the whole physical order stands. But not so in the case of man's life. Here we must note an important qualification in our analogy. We have no record of a completely orderly civilization: history, indeed, is mainly a record of disorders in the behaviour of men toward each other, sometimes greater, sometimes less, but always disorder. But the analogy does not for that reason wholly fail as I shall attempt to show.

The question is, what has the thing of which we are talking—secularism—already done to our civilization and what does it further threaten to do to it?

Our civilization is a Christian civilization: it is the product of the Christian creed. Its cult has been a Christian cult, its code a Christian code, its culture a Christian culture. Now the difference between the Christian religion and all the other world religions that have preceded it, is that it rests upon a divine revelation, and a divine Person, and an historical Person. A Man who lived and walked

this earth as a man among men, was also God. The revelation was made to the Jewish people and Christ was born a Jew. That is why Pope Pius XI reminded Catholics that "in religion we are Semites." And so we are. Now the whole edifice of the Christian creed stands or falls as St. Paul says with the divinity of Christ. Upon that creed depends the Christian cult, code, culture, and civilization, and the attitude of that civilization to life in general.

The first effects of secularism on the Christian creed are discernible in the abandonment by a large body of those who still consider themselves Christians in belief in the divinity of Christ. In this sense, as I said previously, a large part of Christendom has ceased to be Christian in *creed*. It has also ceased in the same sense to be Christian in *cult*. The result was the evaporation from this body of denatured Christians of what remained in it of definite Christian beliefs. At the same time there was born a definite philosophy of secularism which eliminated all religion as a source of truth in men's thinking, as a measure of human values, and as a rule of human behaviour. Not only that but it also denied the existence of any truth which remains true, and any law of right and wrong the same for

all times and places. What has been the effect upon the *code* of our civilization?

A code is a tenacious thing and it outlasts for a time the creed and cult of which it is the product—sometimes for a long time. The distinctive hall-mark of our code today is the humanitarianism that characterizes its emotional outlook. As I said last Sunday, at first glance, most men seem today still kindly disposed to each other, still keeping their promises to each other, and still generous in helping each other, both individually and collectively. Yet when one looks more closely there are signs disturbing the picture. We have seen in the last generation an outbreak of positive anarchy in the phenomenon of "gangsterism" and, worse even than that, an organized commercialism of crime, including wholesale murder—a new thing in modern experience. We are today disturbed over the thing to which we have given the name of "juvenile delinquency." We do not talk much openly about it, but we worry not a little over the state of what we used to call "sexual morality" among our youth, only we don't call it morality as much as we used to do, and we are more concerned over the physical consequences than about its moral aspect. We are beginning to talk about the disap-

pearance of the "family" as a social factor, resulting from the increasing fragility of marriages, and the growing concept of the marriage relation as a temporary partnership dissoluble at the will of either partner. Incidentally, with our birthrate already below the level necessary to maintain our population, we are encouraging the spread of contraceptive practices. All these phenomena are analogous to the phenomena that would follow the weakening of gravitational force in the physical order, and all reflect a breaking away from moral standards in conduct, that is, a *code*.

In the cultural field the same sort of phenomena are discernible: a flight from standards in all forms of art and a general experimentation in new forms of artistic expression in music, in literature, and in painting, in sculpture, in architecture, and in the dance. There is nothing wrong in experimentation in methods of artistic expression, but when it comes to experimenting in forms the case is altered. Assuming that beauty is the ultimate end of art, I think we must recognize in modern trends something like a deliberate cult of the ugly and a deliberate return to the more primitive modes of expression. However, we need not now go into this aspect at any length: it suf-

fices to note it and pass to more important matters.

In two important fields of social relations, we have seen secularism work havoc. One is that of international relations where one can readily note the disappearance of all remnants of international morality and good faith on the part of some great nations, for whom the given promise means absolutely nothing. I need not long linger on this point for we have all seen in recent years a breaking of treaties and solemn pledges on a scale wholly unprecedented in the history of two thousand years. Treaty breaking, of course, has always occurred, but never on a scale anything like so wholesale as in our day, and never so brazenly done. The other is the appalling dehumanization of modern war both in principle and practice. Here, too, I need spend no time or words, for the horrors of what is going on in the world are our daily diet. I must however note that both these developments represent a violent departure from men's thinking of only two centuries ago. One of the outstanding features of eighteenth century thinking was its preoccupation with the need for limiting and humanizing war and bringing international peace under the domain of law. Every scientific branch of knowledge is today employed in the

making of what we call "total" war, involving as it does entire civilian populations, and there has even developed a "philosophy" to justify it.

This leads me to a third matter which holds perhaps the most sinister possibilities for the future security of society. That is the appearance in modern jurisprudence of a philosophy of law itself which is a fundamental breach with the past. This new philosophy denies formally and *in toto* that there is any such thing as the "natural law" of right and wrong which Christendom has, until within less than a century, regarded as the basis of human law making. However, this new jurisprudence recognizes no fixed and enduring truth, religious or metaphysical. Anything that the legislative authority chooses to enact into law becomes "truth." This philosophy strikes directly at the heart of society, for the natural law has been, for society, the analogue of the gravitational force for the earth and the planets, and to cut human society loose from its anchorage in the natural law would be equivalent to replacing law by anarchy, and civilization by something like moral if not physical chaos.

Gathering up now, in conclusion, what I have been trying to say in these two broadcasts, it amounts to

this: Every great civilization of which we have record derived its principle of life from *some* form of religion. The Western civilization, the greatest of all of these, had Christianity as its soul, which is why we called it Christendom. For at least four centuries there has been in progress an evaporation of Christendom, of Christian belief from men's thinking which has finally led to the development of a philosophy that denies the very existence of all religious truths. The effect has been to introduce into human relations a fundamental disorder already painfully apparent in some of these, becoming progressively more apparent in others, and threatening complete disorder in all, unless its progress can be checked.

In making these statements, I have been attempting to follow Professor Sumner's injunction. I have offered a definition of secularism which may stand for an an-

swer to his first question, "What are we talking about?" I have attempted to describe its nature in answering his second question, "What is it?" And I have tried to answer his third question, "What do we think of it?" in what I have said today. There remains the last question "What should we do about it?"

To that question the answer is short and clear. Our civilization for which we are fighting, the Western civilization — Christendom — must somehow recover its Christian soul or die. A civilization which has once been Christian cannot live with any other soul much less with none at all. I will go further and avow my own conviction that secularism, if it finally shall establish itself, will prove incompatible with any kind of true civilization, for it is nothing more or less than a fundamental denial of the one thing that makes man human — and civilization is exclusively a human thing!

## THE DANGERS OF TOTALITARIANISM

by George N. Shuster

President, Hunter College, New York City

Address delivered on June 18, 1944

We are to consider the struggle between the totalitarians and the Catholic peoples of the world. This is a conflict which Catholics most assuredly did not seek. Indeed, they may fairly be said to have hoped, with their leaders, that the values of peace were so evident that considerable sacrifice to preserve those values was justified. In a dozen countries the Church was conciliatory, willing to give up old and cherished privileges, if social stability could thereby be maintained. Privation and sacrifice became the badges of the faithful. They indicated that, knowing the unsettlement of the age, Catholics would demonstrate by their quiet fortitude the worth of the things for which they stood.

And now? It can only be said that although the Church has sometimes been like unto the Man of Sorrows, her Master, in the hour of His scourging and His agony, the resemblance has never been so close and harrowing as now. No one could possibly describe the tragedy of Catholic Europe, home of saints, poets, and scholars beyond number. Centuries ago Saint Benedict

founded his great Order at Monte Cassino, and the monastery there has been enriched and adorned by every age since his. As our boys look on the heap of rubble which now alone remains, they surely think of the arches and the chapels, the chanting and Sacrifice, which are gone, and their hearts beat anxiously.

But Monte Cassino is only a feeble, lifeless symbol of the martyrdom of the Church. It is not so much that millions have perished in this war, or that whole peoples of whose fidelity there has never been any question have well-nigh vanished from the earth. Yes, we cannot speak of the Slovenes and their priests, for example, without a tug at the heart. We remember that when Hitler came to Austria, thousands—many thousands—of those who stood in the vanguard of the spiritual struggle were herded off to concentration camps, from which few have returned. Nor have we even forgotten, finally, the memory of steadfast German Catholics who learned to know the meaning of torture and ignominy. Yet all these tragedies could be borne were

it not for the inroads which have been made into the citadel of the faith itself—the perversion of youth, the enslavement of the poor to laws and practices which are not consonant with Christianity, the slow strangling of freedom, the creation of spiritual deserts inside which the Gospel cannot be preached. And I would add something else which merits our charity, and it is this—the anguish of moral isolation, of dwelling alone in the darkness which seems to have descended upon the spirit of man, of being a helpless eyewitness of the horrible evil which has been wrought upon the earth. No man can paint this picture too starkly. For the truth has grown terrible in our time.

It is true that the sacrifice which this chronicle of heroism has exacted is not always estimated at its true worth. People have sometimes said that the Catholic Church did not understand the Nazi and Fascist threat. But one recalls as if it were yesterday the feverish preparation in Italy for the visit Hitler was to pay in 1938. Efforts to widen the street which leads to the Basilica of St. Peter were restlessly intensified, so that the cortege of dictators might proceed in triumph. But when the day came, the magnificent old Pope, Pius XI, unlocked the gates of the Vatican.

They stood like barred ramparts of the spirit against the assault of evil. And all this was done because it was already painfully, ominously evident that there could be no fellowship between those whose fundamental belief it was that peace shall come on earth to men of good will, and those who held that it is the immemorial right of the strong ruthlessly to crush the weak.

Some days prior to that event, I had been given the copy of the address which was delivered over the Vatican Radio on the occasion of the seizure of Austria. It was given to me because authorities in the Papal Secretariat feared that the manuscript would not be safe unless it could be given in trust to an American. And what did that address say? Simply what the Encyclical which is entitled *Mit Brennender Sorge* ("With Burning Anxiety") had said, namely, that there could be neither compromise nor collaboration between Catholics and the apostles of darkness who were marshalling their forces in Berlin for the subjugation of the world. The message differed hardly at all from that which had been given to me nearly five years earlier by Cardinal Faulhaber, of Munich. That great prelate, who had lived close to the cradle of Nazism, understood from the beginning what

sinister thing had been born into the world. At the time I thought him too sombre and pessimistic. But, alas, not even he had foreseen all the truth.

Nor must it be felt that there had been no insight into the menace of Fascism. It can now be said without fear of violating a confidence that even before 1930 there came to us from circles close to the Vatican commentaries which set the truth before us in all its sinister plainness, at a time when it was still the fashion—even among some who have since grown eloquent, indeed—to say that Mussolini made the trains run on time. For how could the Church have remained indifferent to the slow decay of honor under that sorry regime? It may be true that the Holy See viewed Fascism with a certain irony, based on the conviction that the toy sabres of Il Duce were scarce to be compared with the formidable weapons of war being forged elsewhere.

Yes, the Pope did hold that the menace of Communism was greater than that which peered out from the oratorical balconies of secular Rome. We may be sure that the heroic Russian people, which has so valiantly fought a just war, did not invent the Ogpu or the refinements of a dictatorship modeled after that on the release from which

the Holy See had congratulated them in 1918. It is just a simple matter of fact that the Vatican judged all the totalitarian movements at their true significance.

The reigning Holy Father said not once but often, emphatically, that he regarded Nazism as the most ominous menace with which Europe had been confronted since the fall of ancient Rome.

This judgment was not based on surmisal. It was only too appallingly evident, long before the march into Poland began, that Hitler had designed the destruction of Christianity. It is difficult for most of us even to imagine the state of affairs prior to 1938. Christian education had been suppressed in Germany. Instead the Hitler Youth, to which all young Germans were compelled to belong, was forced to believe that "Christianity is a religion of slaves and fools." The Catholic press had slowly ceased to exist. Old journals and publishing houses, revered throughout the world as mouthpieces of religious feeling, were either suppressed or doomed to poverty and impotence. Convents, monasteries, and houses of retreat were closed and often diverted to uses more vile than even those of the Nazi Party itself. Quite as violent and destructive were the attacks on Protestant Christianity.



After 1934 the German Bishops left no one in doubt as to what vast and vital issues were at stake. They could no longer count on the support of the law, or on any political defense such as that which had been organized in the days of Bismarck's Kulturkampf. Their priests were arrested and imprisoned, hounded and humiliated. They themselves were often stoned and spit upon. An attempt on the life of the Cardinal of Munich was followed by attacks on episcopal residences and by the desecration of churches. One Bishop was probably poisoned. But unceasingly, even until the present day, German Catholics have risked life and fortune to make available to congregations the outspoken letters of their Bishops—letters which set forth in clear and resolute words the story of the fiercest attack on the Church known to modern man.

Later on, when the Nazi wave swept over Europe, Catholic heroism was again not wanting, though it might exact the supreme sacrifice. The world will never forget the story of bloodshed reported from Poland, where the victims were not patriots merely but also defenders of the Christian faith. Hitler's religious warfare did not spare even German Catholics and Protestants resident in that unhappy country. I do not think that

the agony of these countless Polish folk is much less overwhelming than has been the death struggle of a driven and despised Jewry, which in the Warsaw ghetto paid its last incredibly brave tribute of devotion to its own faith. In the Western countries the plight of religion has been scarcely less dire. It will be a long while before our historians exhaust the theme of the sacrificial steadfastness of the Dutch, Belgian, and French clergy, or of great lay teachers and leaders, many of whom have died the death of martyrs in confinement. Ancient seats of Catholic learning like Louvain and Nymwegen will emerge from this war-scarred, empty, and mute. In all these lands, the blight of death has lain even on the little children.

Thus there has been added to the chronicle of Catholic suffering under the revolutionary Soviets, a new and overwhelming story of terror and agony which the imagination of none of us can picture in its entirety. We who believe in the Testament of Our Redeemer know that in every hamlet and in every city street throughout all the once pleasant lands our forefathers knew, two or three gathered together in His name in order to pray that the chalice might pass from their lips. They have, we may reverently hope, tried to find their way up Calvary's

slope in patience, certain that beyond these scenes of torment are to be found the vistas of eternal life. But it would be unwise to suppose that many can have come through that dire ordeal without wounds so deep and awful that only another generation can forget them. Those who survive will bear the marks of this scourging upon their bodies and their spirits all their days.

I think we shall have to bear in mind as best we can these words of Saint Paul: "Religion clean and undefiled before God and the Father, is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation, and to keep one's self unspotted from this world" (*James* 1:27). The fatherless and the widows, in throngs great as armies, are much more important than are boundaries and resolutions. But I should like to stress the second part of the Pauline definition. The world as we have known it was formed in the womb of the totali-

tarian revolt. Dictators and their disciples have said so much so vehemently that the task of gain-saying what they have spoken and of undoing what they have done will be a difficult one, indeed. Is this not quite clear? Only if we remember who was the Good Shepherd and who raised Lazarus from the sleep of death can we find again the wisdom that shall keep us unspotted from the tide of totalitarianism which only a little while ago well-nigh engulfed the world. Many of our countrymen are living in unimagined sorrow these days. The defense of freedom is a costly thing, even as is the defense of the faith. Is it too much to surmise that this suffering and that of all the others—so many, many others, whose recollected faces crowd in upon our dreams and our awakening—may sometime make clearer the way that we must go? For the Catholic has no easy answer, easily given. He can only say with Dante, In His will there is our peace. May His will be done.

## TOTALITARIANISM VERSUS CATHOLICISM

by George N. Shuster

President, Hunter College, New York City

Address delivered on June 25, 1944

Today we are to ask ourselves: Why is the doctrine of the totalitarians hostile to the Catholic view of life? In answering, we must try to keep several quite different things separate in our minds. First, the Church, to which has been entrusted the spiritual governance of those who have faith in Christ, does not attempt to prescribe civil rule in any country. It scrupulously refrains from telling the people of the United States that they ought to give more power to the Congress, or from urging the citizens of Denmark to discard the monarchy to which they are attached. So long as the Church can carry out its own religious mission in a given national domain, the Vatican authorities do everything possible to foster friendly relations with the ruling powers in that domain.

Second, the moral code by which the Catholic citizen himself is guided is that implicit in Christian teaching. As an individual one must try to live up to the counsels of the Gospel if one hopes in a measure to be loyal to a great religious tradition. And as a member of society one must attempt also to

deal as a Christian with others and in particular with the community itself. Therefore Popes and Bishops carefully observe the social conduct of Catholics and offer both advice and, if need be, warning. This has been the practice in all centuries, but there is no doubt that it has been particularly characteristic of modern times. You will note, for example, that when Pope Pius XI spoke of disruptive ideas which were shaping the outlook of human society he referred to them always as being anti-Christian. It was for this reason that he attacked the kind of nationalism which endows the ambitions and the culture of a nation with sacredness—that is, with the assumed right to set up a moral law of its own and to sanction whatever means are deemed necessary to reach a desired objective.

Now a totalitarian government is a government which confers absolute authority upon the State. It is not an absolute monarchy, or a plain dictatorship, or a form of government based on the abolition of the congress or the parliament. All these are dangerous and the Chris-

tian conscience has often suffered under them, but they are far less perilous than is totalitarianism. When we speak of this we mean rule by a Party which has three principal characteristics. It is, to begin with, a Party which has the sole right to make laws and to enforce them; then it is a Party which subscribes to a doctrine, or an ideology, which all members must profess and which no non-member can publicly question; and finally it is a Party which seeks to extend its influence beyond the boundaries of the State inside which it exists, either by propaganda or by force of arms.

Accordingly, it is conceivable that a totalitarian Party might appear somewhere, professing to sponsor as its own ideology the Christian faith. In that case the temptation to look upon such a Party with favor might prove very strong, especially if the membership were restricted to Catholics. The great modern Popes have dealt with this problem. I think that the reigning Holy Father, Pius XII, has commented on it with special incisiveness and authority. Referring to the fear of many outside the Church that in preaching the Gospel with missionary fervor she is seeking to usurp civil authority and to exact submission, he says, in the Encyclical Letter entitled *Darkness*

*Over the Earth*: "We declare in all apostolic sincerity that the Church is as far removed as possible from any intention of that kind; that she stretches out her motherly arms to men, not seeking to have dominion over them but, in every possible way, to be their servant. She does not seek to intrude herself into the position occupied in a special and most legitimate manner by secular authority." No one will expect me to explain what these words mean. They are clear. There can be no Catholic totalitarianism, and there is no Catholic totalitarianism.

But unfortunately there are bitterly, vigorously anti-Christian forms of totalitarianism. They did not spring up over night. For centuries great Christian thinkers have observed with alarm the slow rise of ideological forces knitted together by their common repudiation of the Judaeo-Christian faith—that is, of the Revelation given in the Old Testament, and in the New, which was to fulfill the Old and give it transcendent significance, and of the moral principles enshrined in both Testaments. Mr. Woodlock has spoken of that gradual and extensive turning away from this faith to which the name of "secularism" is applied. It remains for us to see very briefly how and why this act of turn-

ing away finally led to the reign of the totalitarians.

Those who have studied the life and writings of Adolf Hitler will have noticed first of all that his decision to repudiate the Judaeo-Christian faith was radical and absolute. Like so many who resemble him, he is personally an apostate. In particular he persuaded himself that God is not the father of all men, but only a mighty Energy which works through Nature and is therefore always on the side of those who are strong and ruthlessly determined to survive; that immortality is not given to the single human spirit, but rather to the folk-group, which lives on and acts on in history; and that making this group-spirit victorious over others and secure in a position of mastery, is a moral deed which renders lawful any steps which are taken to achieve it. But the apostate keeps and uses words, images, and ideas associated with the ancient Catholic creed. As Pope Pius XI pointed out in the great Encyclical Letter entitled *Mit Brennender Sorge* ("With Burning anxiety"): "Thousands of pens are wielded in the service of a Christianity which is not that of Christ." And in particular the dictator claims a dominion over the consciences of men which is like unto that of the Church, even as the

might of Satan is a reflection of the Lord's power. The dictator is the author of a new religion. He would make Christianity secular.

Here are confusions which have sometimes deceived even the elect. And just as strange is the manner in which the totalitarian appeals to the sense of injustice which is so deeply rooted in our world. That the dictator could find so many ready to follow him is undoubtedly due in part to defeat, poverty, and the depersonalization of modern economic life. He has profited by the sad fact that too many Christians have forgotten the words of the New Testament, "As long as you did it to one of these . . . you did it to me" (*Matthew 25:40*). But although the totalitarian system comes thereby to have a "revolutionary" aspect, and to hold out a hope of reform, it is at bottom radically anti-revolutionary. It insists upon complete uniformity of the social mind. Its state capitalism is far more repressive than even liberal capitalism has been. Keeping the citizen in the bondage of absolute authority, it dispels what it terms the myths of the freedom of conscience and the freedom of action.

Note also that the chief instrument upon which the totalitarian relies is the secret police. To the citizen it is always the secret and terrible executioner, whose victims

disappear leaving no trace except, perhaps, the box of ashes mailed to the survivor. It knows no law save that of expediency. Those whom it slays may be numbered in the tens of thousands, but there is among them no individual who has rights he may plead or customs to which he can appeal for sanction. So long as totalitarian organizations exist, democratic society nowhere in the world can be safe. For to them neither national boundaries nor international agreements mean anything. Murder, sabotage, and subversion are standard items in the code book of the secret police. The only ethic which exists for that police is the ethic of uninhibited expediency.

The principal reasons for Catholic opposition to totalitarianism are therefore these: First, the rights of the Church cannot be upheld under such a regime because those rights are not respected; second, Christian living must become a hidden life of suffering and of refusal to compromise. Let us be quite clear about what is involved when a totalitarian government abruptly repudiates the Catholic Church. There then ensues an openly proclaimed breach of diplomatic relations between that government and the Vatican. On the other hand, when such a govern-

ment accords recognition to the Church but at the same time proceeds to do what it can to render Christian living impossible, there may result no overt breach of diplomatic relations but nevertheless a determined violent moral conflict.

Thus Russia broke completely and overtly with the Church, while in Fascist Italy there could be a great deal of diplomatic intercommunication although there was also persistent, sharp disagreement. At what point such disagreement becomes so marked as to require a severing of diplomatic relations is a question to be answered prudently on the basis of a realistic appraisal of the situation.

It is unfortunately true that under the conditions of moral and social anarchy which have prevailed so widely in our time, the Christian is perforce compelled to realize anew what are the sources of his weakness and his strength. Roughly fifteen hundred years ago the early Church surmounted the persecutions of the ancient world. Dying for the pleasure of Romans in the arena, or marked for death in the courts of North African cities, the Christian had been gloriously certain that he was a branch of his Master's vine. Memorable words had written themselves upon

his heart: Blessed are the meek, the sorrowful, those who have suffered persecution for justice's sake; blessed are they that mourn, who are merciful and clean of heart. It was for these truths that the blood of martyrs stained the white sands of the arena. Then the days of persecution ended, and the Christian set about making a new and better world. He did not always succeed. He was often weak and venal. But looking back it is clear that he gave to humankind its most precious heritage—the certainty that there resides in man a dignity of person that is a reflection of immeasurable divine affection, that the lowliest human being can be made holy, that the company of the sanctified knows neither birth nor breed nor class. And so today the man and the woman who have waited for liberation from the dark hours and the dungeons of the totalitarians have learned a new humility in which there is concealed a vast and legitimate pride—humility by reason of the fact that it is so obviously true that man is man only when God makes him so, and pride in the unending possibilities which are the result of his origin and his destiny.

Though night broods over the earth, it is not deeper than the dusk which followed the Crucifixion. There is so much of vengeance, so very much of blood. But justice begins to rise again like a faint and distant star. Even in the totalitarian countries they speak once more of the dignity of man. Is it not clear that we shall come out of our dread conflict with little except that boon? And is it not also clear that having this as a faith and a principle we shall once more be infinitely rich in hope and purposeful resolution?

The Catholic can only say to all who are of good will: "Let us look about us and see that there is in reality neither Jew nor Gentile, nor bondservant nor free man, nor is there an impassable gulf between those from the Orient and those from the West. Holy is the Lord of us all, who has strangely coveted our holiness. We shall go out again into the vineyard and unto the sowing. Our sons shall make a pact with one another so that His will may be done, not in dire anguish any longer, but in joy. For when His Kingdom comes, the song of our victory over ourselves shall be heard over the earth."

## THE CATHOLIC HERITAGE OF AMERICA

by Francis P. Matthews  
Supreme Knight, Knights of Columbus  
Address delivered on July 2, 1944

Proud indeed in ancient times was the boast, "I am a Roman citizen." Prouder yet today is the boast, "I am an American citizen." For more than twenty-three millions of people in this beloved land of liberty and freedom, the proud claim is, "I am a Catholic American citizen!"

What is the Catholic heritage of America? To Catholics, America can give thanks for her discovery, her exploration, her very name. They baptized this continent, its rivers, its lakes, its mountains, its valleys, and its very hearthstones, and enriched them with the names dearest to our Faith as all the while they bore tidings of the unknown Christ to the benighted natives.

Every school child knows the story of Christopher Columbus and of his landing on San Salvador. I wonder how many of them, or, for that matter, how many of us, ever attempted to determine the origin of the urge which impelled Columbus to pursue this dream—the dream which, to the doubting Thomases of his day, appeared so

fantastic. His conception of the universe, though the product of scientific learning, was not the real sustaining force that supplied the indispensable perseverance which ultimately conquered the heart-breaking rebuffs imposed upon him so cruelly by the pitiless groups to whom he appealed for support. It was something more exalted than a naked scientific theory that made it possible for him to endure ridicule, starvation, physical pain, and mental torture in behalf of his profound conviction; it was the unfaltering faith of a devout and edifying Christian in the Providence of Almighty God.

A pagan heart could not have persevered in the face of such devastating scorn and disbelief. Faith in himself, faith in the integrity of his vision, faith in his religion—therein reposed the power and force which elevated Columbus to the ranks of the immortals. It was the fire of his Catholic faith that convinced Isabella, the Catholic queen of Spain, to pledge her precious royal jewels to finance his voyage into the unexplored western seas. It was his



faith that sustained him as he met and mastered the unknown.

It was the Christian faith animating his grateful heart that made his first demonstration at the moment when he stepped upon the shore of the newfound world a prayer of thanksgiving to the God of Hosts whose providential support and protection he recognized as the salvation of his hazardous mission. He proclaimed his Catholic faith for the edification of all future generations when he erected the beckoning arms of the Cross of Christ before the puzzled eyes of the wondering natives and christened the land San Salvaodr.

Columbus, the Catholic discoverer, was eagerly followed by the Catholic explorers whose courage and martyrdom are ineffaceably enshrined in the significant names which adorn the land, the sea, the rivers, the mountains, and the settlements in every part of this land. It was Cabot, the Catholic from Genoa, who first discovered and explored our Atlantic shore; Verrazano who first saw the Hudson and named Long Island the "Isle of the Apostles;" Cartier who revealed the hidden vastness of the majestic St. Lawrence; Champlain, the founder of Quebec, who was the discoverer of Lakes George and Huron. There was LaSalle, the dar-

ing explorer of Lakes Erie and St. Clair; DeSoto, the discoverer of the Mississippi, the father of waters; Father Allouez, the first to set sail on Lake Superior; Cadillac, the founder of Detroit; Father Marquette, explorer of the great territory which now comprises Wisconsin and Michigan; Balboa, who first beheld the Pacific; Eccalante, known for his finding of the Great Salt Lake; Juan de Padilla and Father De Smet, who crossed and recrossed the great central plains which now comprise the territorial heart of our nation. Florida was named after Easter, the day of its discovery. In California almost every community was a Franciscan Mission—San Diego, Los Angeles, Monterey, San Francisco, Sacramento. The coast of Washington, out in the great northwest, was first visited by Catholic Spaniards. Father Gibault, the missionary from Quebec, has left his lasting influence on the great states of Indiana and Illinois. Let us recall also St. Augustine, the oldest city in our country; Sante Fe, the next; Vincennes, Natchez, Mackinac, Niagara, Mobile, New Orleans, Joliet; and the rivers of Sacramento, San Joaquin, and countless other streams, communities, and areas, each one Catholic in name, discovery, exploration, or settlement! And all comprising an indestruc-

tible reflection of the religious faith of the daring men who pioneered in drawing the veil which, until their time, had concealed the latent natural resources and the slumbering potential power in this promised land—resources and power awaiting the genius of those who were to fashion, from the raw and unsettled wilderness, the miracle of human freedom under constitutional government.

Those Catholic explorers were accompanied, or promptly followed, by the Franciscans, the Jesuits, and the white-robed Dominicans. These heroic missionary priests penetrated the remotest lairs of the uncivilized Indians, some of them to be burned at the stake, others to suffer martyrdom through unspeakable savage torture. Many of them, fortunately, were able to win the natives to the Banner of Christ, and to establish the first rude chapels of Christianity on the bosom of the virgin territories in which they labored.

Their sufferings, their sacrifices, their inspiring martyrdom, and the fruits of their explorations and missionary labors, also belong to the Catholic heritage of America.

Discovery, exploration, and settlement are but a part of the fruits of Catholic effort in the building of this nation. In the field of gov-

ernment, in the field of education, in the field of social welfare, and on the battlefield, the Catholic citizen has been exemplifying his unshakable loyalty to the fundamental conception of our national philosophy as embodied in those immortal charters of human dignity and liberty, the Declaration of Independence and the Federal Constitution.

It is a first principle of Catholic belief that the rights of man are not bestowed upon him by virtue of any circumstance of race, color, creed, or class. Neither may they be withheld from him by any government or temporal authority. The Church has maintained from the beginning that the individual's rights are his inalienable birthright, given to him as a human being, by God, and that no government may deprive him of his inherent right to exercise his free will to resist what his conscience denounces as evil.

That principle, which is the *sine qua non* of the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights, was succinctly expressed in the writings of Cardinal Bellarmine in the fifteenth century. Thomas Jefferson is said to have had Cardinal Bellarmine's writings on the shelves of his private library, and to have been influenced by their jealous concern for the sacredness of the God-given rights of the individual.

That solicitude for the welfare of the human being is reflected with reassuring consistency in the repeated declarations of the American bishops released at intervals throughout our nation's history. They have spoken invariably in behalf of liberty of conscience or for freedom of religion; they have appealed for a living wage for the working man and for equity in international economy, or for freedom from want; they have urged better understanding and mutual forbearance among nations, or freedom from fear; they have defended the right of the individual to resist and protest against ruthless domination by those in power, or freedom of speech.

The modern State is displaying a disquieting tendency to arrogate to itself functions previously reserved to the home and Church. In the field of education, this trend is most apparent. The Catholic Church stands squarely opposed to this dangerous development. It recognizes that the child belongs to its parents, who are primarily responsible for its education and spiritual training. To meet that obligation, Catholics have established their own educational system. As good American citizens, they pay their taxes to maintain the public schools, which mostly they do not use. From

their personal, and frequently limited, means, they have contributed magnificently to provide their own school buildings and maintain a high standard of education in which religious instruction is a first requirement. The Church beholds in the child the precious fruit of family life, and recognizes the sinister menace to society in any scheme which would deprive the child of natural home influences and direction. It has fought unremittingly against every effort of the subtle apostles of Statism to invade this sanctuary of parental right. The age-old wisdom of this position of the Church is convincingly confirmed as we learn more of the sad consequences resulting to youth in those lands where home and family are subordinated to the godless theory of state supremacy.

In her schools, her hospitals, her orphanages and homes for the old and infirm, the Church has maintained her unflinching concern for the natural beneficiaries of her maternal solicitude. To measure the value of that contribution to social welfare in material worth, or even in terms of human betterment, would be impossible. Its accomplishment is an inevitable product in the fulfillment of the spiritual mission of the Church. It, too, is

a part of the Catholic heritage of America.

Today the sons and daughters of Catholic parents are fighting side by side with their comrades of other faiths, sacrificing and dying for their common country. These Catholic boys and girls are the product of a religious teaching which pledges them to uphold their government in every exigency. Their forebears have fought and died on every battlefield in every war in the nation's history.

They know of the contributions of their co-religionists to the building of America. They know of her discovery by Columbus, the Catholic origin of her name, the Catholic exploration and settlement of much of her vast area. They are familiar with the Catholic principles permeating the Declaration of Independence and the Federal Constitution, and influencing our American civilization. They know of the ceaseless effort of their Church to safeguard the home, preserve

the family, and influence education and social welfare by means of religious principles. They are conscious of the legions of their faith who have met the patriot's highest test—supreme sacrifice in his country's cause.

They know all those things, I say, but, if they think of them or mention them at all, they do so just as we have outlined them today, not to boast, not to compare, not to distinguish ourselves from our fellow-Americans.

They and we review these Catholic contributions to American civilization that we may be refreshed and invigorated by the inspiration which they afford; that we may better realize the privileges and opportunities of our American citizenship, which make such contributions possible; that, conscious of our obligation to our country, we may, by emulating the example of the Catholic patriots who have preceded us, become better Catholics and better citizens of America.

## GOD'S COUNTRY

by Clarence Manion

Dean, College of Law, Notre Dame University

Address delivered on July 9, 1944

"This is God's country!" At one source and seed of our choicest time or another, practically every-American blessings. It is responsible for all the prized special compliment to some place in some characteristics of our country in part of the world. Of course, the precisely the manner that root, soil, expression is a mere figure of sun, and rain are responsible for speech. All countries belong to the edible fruits that now weigh God, just as all people are God's the branches of our trees. To children. Yet, just as some people understand this is to solve the are more conscious of God's fath- sweet mystery of American life. erhood than others, so also some "Our Country!" What do we places are more clearly marked mean by that expression? We with God's ownership than certain certainly mean more than its peaks, other places. Such a mark is in- prairies, cities, industries, fields, delibly upon the United States of and farms, or all of them America. Truly enough, the mark put together. Physically and geo- graphically, the United States is not as apparent now as it was has many prototypes. Else- too surprising. We know that where in the world some fields many of the people made in the are much richer than many of ours; image and likeness of God man- some mountains are higher; some age to disguise the image and views and vistas more picturesque distort the likeness. In much the than those in this country. Ours same manner, the mark of God's is by no means the greatest res- special title to our beloved country ervoir of all varieties of natural has now been pretty well obscured resources. We have the largest by an unfortunate combination of productive capacity and the over- ignorance and connivance. But the whelming bulk of all existing mod- mark is still there, make no mis- ern conveniences, but these are take about that. Remember, too, merely physical things, the tangible that this mark of God upon our translations of the ability and re- United States is the veritable sourcefulness of our free men and

women. This ability and resourcefulness constitute the fruits of this country; they are not the country itself. But the fruits are a clue and that clue takes us directly to the point—to the vital principle of our American life breathed into the United States at the moment of its birth by the inspired genius of those who baptized the infant republic with the holy waters of God's creative purpose.

When the first news of some startling event reaches the ears of the average man, certain questions pop into the mind. He wants to know just what happened, what caused it, and what, if anything, was the alternative. These questions suggest themselves to us as we confront the altogether startling fact of the birth and baptism of the American Republic. What happened is unmistakable. Out of what the Founding Fathers called "a decent respect to the opinions of mankind," they thoroughly explained the action taken, together with all of its motives and purposes. This action dissolved "the political bands" which had connected the American and British people. In performing it, the Founding Fathers lifted and removed from the limits of the new United States all of the sanctions, force, and effectiveness of British Government. Simultaneously, they established

and declared the sanctions, force, and effectiveness of the new government of the United States, which they then and there established upon definite and completely comprehensive principles. Nowhere in history has a revolution been more sharply, suddenly, and precisely accomplished. The Founding Fathers told the world exactly why they considered the British governmental system unsatisfactory and intolerable. In the same breath, they proposed and established a brand new political system, "laying its foundation," as they declared at the time, "on such principles as to them" seemed "most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness." They then wrote what is at once the most compact, comprehensive, and unequivocal paragraph of political principle that the world has ever seen. Listen to it:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Govern-

ment, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness . . . . .”

This paragraph is the really astounding and mystifying fact about the American Revolution. Its fearless and uncompromising postulates plumbed the very depth of philosophy and theology. This paragraph reached down to the bedrock of religious and political principle, and after sweeping that bedrock clean of all equivocation and compromise, it etched into its eternal surface a clear design of the American Constitutional System.

Today, as we look at those sweeping affirmations, it is difficult to realize that they were signed in complete unanimity by all of the representatives in Congress. Such support was no mere casual or routine performance. Each of the Continental Congressmen affixed his signature at the expressed risk of his life, his fortune, and his sacred honor. The adoption of the Declaration came only after full debate and studied alteration of its original text. Jefferson had submitted his first draft to Adams and Franklin and, following suggestions from each of them, he made a few verbal changes. However, when

the document was submitted to the entire Congress, it was changed materially. Large sections were deleted entirely and, in two instances, significant additions were inserted. This is proof positive that the entire content of the Declaration was thoroughly reviewed and that each word was carefully weighed. It is more than merely significant that the important paragraph that I have just quoted was allowed to pass unchallenged into the final and official version. Observe now that it was these unquestioned and unchanged provisions that dedicated the new American Government to the accomplishment of God's will in creation. As we have seen, they declared with uncompromising finality such things as the universal Fatherhood of God, the equality of men before their Creator, the unalienable character of the God-given rights of man, and the perpetual function of man-opped government as the protector and conservator of these rights.

That such unimpeachable orthodoxy should emerge from this group of eighteenth century farmers, lawyers, and businessmen is little short of miraculous. These Continental Congressmen represented a complex and diversified population which embraced many nationalities and a great variety of

religious creeds. Yet, practically on the spur of the moment, they fashioned a platform of principle which, though strictly and uncompromisingly dogmatic, was at the same time broad enough to accommodate all who were conscientiously and faithfully the children of God. How did it happen? To what source did these Founding Fathers repair to obtain the inspiration and materials for this achievement? In a letter many years later, Jefferson stated that he had not copied the sentiments of the Declaration from any previous writing. He likewise denied that it was his intention to express any novel or original ideas. The Declaration, he said, was the "common sense" of the subject, a valid projection of the "American Mind." In other words, the Declaration was not merely something that Jefferson and the Founding Fathers had said; it was much more than that; it was what the American people felt and believed.

In the Declaration's platform of principles, there is much that closely resembles other writings familiar to Jefferson and most of his associates. Among such commonly credited sources are the works of John Locke, Algernon Sidney, and the Preamble to the Virginia Bill of Rights. Nevertheless, upon scrutiny, the differ-

ences between these and the Declaration itself are much more significant than their similarities.

For instance, whereas Locke thought and wrote of the Natural Law as if it were the blind instinct of man, the reference in the Declaration is to "The Laws of Nature *and of Nature's God.*" Sidney had agreed that man was *naturally free* and that just governments are based upon consent but, like Locke, he credits man's *inherent nature* rather than the design and purpose of man's Creator.

This same distinction carries into the Virginia Bill of Rights which was published just a few weeks before the Declaration of Independence was written. The Virginia Bill says "that all men are *born* equally free and independent and *have* certain inherent and natural rights." The Declaration of Independence states that "all men are *created* equal, and endowed by their *Creator* with certain *unalienable* rights." There is the difference of day and night between being "*created* equal" and simply being "*born* equally free;" between rights "*endowed*" by the "*Creator*" and rights that are simply "*had*" without clue or reference to their source. The Virginia Bill merely states the fact while the Declaration of Independence gives both premises and their inescap-



able conclusion. The former describes the condition of man while the latter explains that condition and puts it in perspective.

In the great libraries of Philosophy, Theology, and Political Science that were scattered throughout the world in 1776, Jefferson and his associates could have found ample and complete justification for the principles they inserted into the birth certificate of our Republic. In the first century, St. Paul had written concerning the equality of man as follows: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus" (III *Galatians* 26: 28).

Passing to the rich and inspiring accumulations of early saints and scholars, they would have found in the thirteenth century writings of St. Thomas Aquinas substantially all of the principles of which the Declaration was fabricated. Here is a typical quotation:

"The Kingdom is not made for the King but the King for the Kingdom, for God has constituted Kings to rule and govern and to secure to everyone the possession of his rights; such is the aim of their institution: but if Kings, turning things to their own profit, should act otherwise

they are no longer Kings but tyrants" (*De Reg. Princ.*, Cap. II).

St. Thomas wrote this 500 years before the American Revolution. Nevertheless, it sounds very much like Jefferson's references to George III.

Going into the seventeenth century, the Founding Fathers would have discovered the Jesuit, Francis Suarez, saying that "Nature made man positively free with an intrinsic right to liberty," and that "the State has legitimate power over private persons and their goods only in so far as this is necessary for their due government" (*De. Leg.*, LII C x IVN 16, 19). Here Father Suarez is saying substantially what the Declaration of Independence said 150 years later, namely: "to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men," and that when government goes beyond the scope of that special agency, its acts are unjustifiable and void.

In the comprehensive writings of Cardinal Robert Bellarmine, the Founding Fathers would have discovered the most pointed of all precedents supporting the philosophy of the Declaration. How well they were acquainted with the works of Bellarmine is a matter of speculation. However, here are

two of the many pertinent sentences from the Cardinal's works, all of which were written more than 150 years before 1776:

In a commonwealth all men are *born* naturally free and the people themselves hold the political power so long as they have not transferred this power to some King or Ruler" (*De Clericis*, Ch. VII).

"The law is manifestly not repugnant to true liberty; for its purpose is not to impede the choosing of good and the rejection of evil but to promote the exercise and enjoyment of liberty" (*De Laicis*, Ch. X).

Now whatever may be its relationship to these and others of its possible sources, the striking obvious thing about the Declaration is its unequivocal directness in linking government with God, and human rights with the Omnipotent Creator of all men. Most positively, the Declaration puts the equality of men in the clear perspective of God's Universal Fatherhood where, of course, it properly and exclusively belongs. It is most important to ponder what the Declaration states on this subject, namely: "that all men are *created* equal." This is exactly true. The expression signifies equality in *the sight of God*. It describes the only type of human equality that is to be found here or in any other

country on earth. From this inherent equality before God, the American democratic doctrine of equality before the law is a natural and inescapable deduction. In this connection, let it be forever remembered that without the first American doctrine, namely, the equality of men before God, the second American doctrine, namely, the equality of men before the law, becomes a senseless and insupportable cliché.

This operation of religious cause and democratic effect is a persistent and characteristic feature of American law and government. The American Tree of Liberty is literally loaded with the rich fruits of this operation. Unfortunately, the overwhelming majority of us use and enjoy these fruits without the slightest knowledge of the sacred soil from which the tree itself proceeds. Our generation is prone to think of what we call the American Way of Life as a benign social climate that is spontaneously radiated from the sunny disposition and shining intellects of the American people. The growth of this parasitic and faithless egotism has obscured the essentially religious nature of the American Republic. Unable any longer to see the clear mark of God upon our political and legal systems, we have come to believe

that we can have liberty while we deny the Author of liberty; that we can promote democratic ideals while we reject the basic democratic formula, namely, the equality of men before their common Creator.

The prevalence of these palpably false and un-American notions constitutes what is at best a suspended sentence of death against the American Constitutional System. The Founding Fathers were wiser in their generation than are these twentieth century children of light. The self-evident truths which our ultramodern intellectuals glibly call "obsolete absolutes," the Founding Fathers regarded as the common sense of the subject, the supporting foundation for their temple of American liberty without which it would long since have

crumbled into dust. These Founding Fathers were, above all else, realistic and practical men who knew that "unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (*Psalms* 126:1). Thus, alert lest their risks and labors be in vain, the Continental Congress added two, only two, completely new clauses to Jefferson's original draft of the Declaration. The first of these said: "appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions;" and the second was: "with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence . . ."

The Founding Fathers were determined that there should be no mistake about their intentions and, indeed, there can be none. This is the land that the Lord hath made. This is God's Country!

## OUR CONSTITUTIONS IN PERSPECTIVE

by Clarence Manion

Dean, College of Law, Notre Dame University

Address delivered on July 16, 1944

If there ever was a time when the people of the United States could profit from a thorough understanding of their unique political and legal system, that time is now. Most of the world around us is sick unto death. With the full vigor of our contrasting health, we have rushed to its bedside. The world's sickness is the disease of Despotism. This is a deadly plague that recurrently has scourged mankind from time immemorial. For 168 years, which is all of its life to date, the United States has successfully resisted this destructive malady. We eventually came to believe that we were immune to its ravages. This complacent conviction grew steadily until a few years ago the expression, "It Can't Happen Here," attained the status of an American truism.

Nevertheless, the fact that it can and does happen elsewhere, and each time with a wider range of mortality, has shaken popular confidence in the quality of our immunity. We now feel strange, discomforting symptoms. Professional diagnosticians divide sharply on the nature of these manifestations.

Some say that they are healthy growing pains; others, that they are sure portents of the ancient plague. Between these hotly debating experts, the American people stand mute and bewildered. Of and by ourselves, we are unable to tell what ails us because, as a people, we are now without any real understanding of our own unusual political nature. We do know from experience that our greatest and bloodiest sacrifices are made in remote parts of the world, as we bind up the wounds of other peoples and nurse them out of strange diseases that never seem to strike us here at home. This would seem to prove that America enjoys a healthy political climate while much of the Old World does not, but few trouble to explain the reason why this is so.

The fact is that the customary practices of American Freedom long since passed from the state of conscious action into the realm of subconscious reaction. The paths of our liberty were beaten clean by those Americans who went before us. We followed those paths like sheep while we gave our con-

scious minds to other things. This is not surprising. The basic processes of modern life work so smoothly that all of us perform them subconsciously until something goes wrong. When that happens, we are shocked to find how little we know about the workings of the simplest things.

It is like this with the beaten paths of American liberty. Now, all of a sudden, some of the paths are called inadequate; many of the others are made to appear less clear than they used to be. Such paths as "The Constitution," "The Bill"—or is it the Bills—"of Rights," "local Self-Government," "The Separation of Powers," "States' Rights," and "Checks and Balances," are said to cross and contradict each other at many points. Alternately, we are urged to ignore the old paths, to strike out in new directions, to stand still, to go back. One thing is certain. If we, as a people, are to retain the wholesome, plague-free climate of American freedom, a great many of us must quickly put our conscious minds to work on the basic essentials of our constitutional system. Its important features, long taken for granted, must now be explained. That explanation must be inspired with a great genius for simplification.

As a people, we are notoriously

susceptible to the simplified slogan. To a great extent this very susceptibility is responsible for the present confusion and conflict in our political thinking. Somewhere along the line of our recent history, the word "Democracy" was deliberately "sold" to the American people as a simple synonym for all the many implications of American Liberty. Because the word "Democracy" is plausible and easy to remember, the sterner and more involved word symbols of our unique political system were gradually discarded in its favor. But the trouble with the term "Democracy" is the fact that it has been broadened out of all depth. Any politically descriptive term that can be applied indiscriminately to the governments of Great Britain, China, Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Finland, and the United States of America is obviously incapable of symbolizing the distinctively individual thing that our American political system undoubtedly is. That system must be called by its right name; nicknames encourage substitutions.

America is different. The beaten paths of American freedom constitute the pattern of and for that difference. If those paths confuse us now, it is only because we have lost perspective. An aerial photograph of these paths of our American Constitutional System

will give us this perspective so necessary to determine their origins, general directions, and ultimate destinations. Let us take such a photograph and examine it. We see now that all these paths have a common origin, a common direction, and a common destination. They all originate in the American Declaration of Independence. In that document, with the first breath of the new life of the Republic, it was decided and declared that all American government was to be man's agent for the protection of God's gifts. These gifts of God are the inalienable rights of each person.

The paths of American Liberty are the constitutionally established roads which our local, state, and national governments must use in achieving American Government's one true mission. That mission is the protection of the God-given rights of man. Before we examine the course and construction of any one of these roads in particular, let us observe the origin and ultimate destination of the whole road system. Our perspective reveals that all these roads begin and end in God, the Creator. God is the source of all the rights which the roads of American law and government are designed to protect. Without God, there would be no rights and consequently no roads. Without

God, government would not be confined to certain designated paths. Without God, government could go where it pleased. No citizen would have any rights or immunities that a godless government would be obliged to respect. Under such a godless government, every man's life would be lived at the mercy of the State. Personal liberty would disappear. The citizen's every action would be subject to State direction and control. Without the Supreme Omnipotence of God, the State would be the all-powerful master of mankind. There would be no conceivable authority above it. On the other hand, with God and God-given rights, Government drops from master to servant. The area of its activity shrinks to certain narrow lines of action in certain well-defined areas. Thus, the existence and power of God is the ultimate difference between freedom and slavery, between liberty and tyranny, between the deadly swamp fever of despotism and the healthy climate of American constitutionalism.

It now appears that the whole road system of American Liberty is expressly designed to limit and subordinate government and empower it only to serve man's eternal nature as a creature of God. The framers of that system knew that government has an innate tendency to

reach for omnipotent powers. To resist this tendency and to keep American Government in its place, they first arranged the roads of government into two separated systems of pathways—the one, State, the other, Federal; then, within these two main divisions, individual roads in each system were reserved for special branches of State and Federal Government. In each of the two divisions, the legislatures were given the exclusive use of one road, the judiciary another, and the executive a third. The early American designers of this involved network of governmental pathways were convinced that the two main divisions, State and Federal, should be sharply separated, and that within each of those divisions, the branches of government should be kept well apart from one another. They knew that the merger of branches or the union of divisions would make the force and power of government irresistible. This accounts for the studied pattern of separation in the American paths of liberty. If our presently dis-united roads of government were combined into one broad, smooth highway, the unified force of government would probably drive straight ahead for the old goal of omnipotence.

To hold and contain its sacred and essential *substance*. That substance is simply the divine purpose of God in the creation of free human beings. In acknowledgment of this substance, not only our Declaration of Independence but, likewise, each of our forty-eight State Constitutions expressly proclaims either the existence of God, the existence of the God-given inalienable rights of man, or both. Many years ago in one of its important decisions, the Supreme Court of the United States paid its official respects to this substance in the following words:

“The rights of life and personal liberty are natural rights of man. ‘To secure these rights’ says the Declaration of Independence, ‘governments are instituted amongst men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.’ The very highest duty of the States, when they entered the Union under the Constitution, was to protect all persons within their boundaries in the enjoyment of these ‘unalienable rights’ with which they were endowed by their Creator.” (U.S. v. Cruikshank, 92 U.S. 542)

In chaining American Government to the high duty stated in the foregoing quotation, the Fathers of our Constitution frankly ac-

Thus, the American *form* of government was expressly designed to

knowledged that unlimited government is tyranny, regardless of the name by which it was, is, or will ever be called. They likewise acknowledged that the last and best means of preserving human liberty and keeping government within its proper limitations is an official and universal respect for the supreme laws of God.

"The laws of Nature are the laws of God," argued George Mason, the distinguished author of the Virginia Bill of Rights, four years before the American Revolution. Continuing in the same case, he said: God's "authority can be superseded by no power on earth. All human constitutions which contradict His laws we are in conscience bound to disobey" (1772 General Court of Virginia—Jefferson). This was the consistent theme of American constitutionalism from its genesis right down into the present century.

Today, however, this orthodox construction is obnoxious to many people. A fresh form of paganism is currently popularizing the notion that the future happiness and security of a nation calls for the establishment of an all-powerful government. According to the prospectus of this new dispensation, God is to be liquidated while the whole gamut of human life is rendered unto Caesar. This is more than a

political movement; it is a new religion. Heaven is to be brought down to earth through the intercession of the Great God Government. After the Supernatural has been thoroughly naturalized, man need not look beyond the State.

By the very nature of this new pagan political order, the new *God-State* must be free from constitutional or moral limitations. Its decrees shall take precedence over constitutional bills of rights, as well as the Ten Commandments. We are assured that this new order will be the very optimum of "Democracy," which gives the final four-way stretch to that now thoroughly elastic term.

This scheme is as unscientific as it is un-American. It is the egotistical folly of the faithless who, refusing to acknowledge and worship the One True God, have turned to the worship of the State. It illustrates anew that despotism and atheism are merely different sides of the same political profile. Conversely, it clinches the inseparable connection between human liberty and a system of government, such as ours, that is formed and built in the bright light of God's creative purpose.

It is the irony of the new Paganism that it is advanced as the natural progression of "American Democracy" into the modern con-



ditions of modern times. It is the shame of modern leadership that no firm finger is put upon the error of this assumption. To this error Thomas Jefferson would repeat that "a legislative despotism is not the government we fought for," and George Mason would add that God's "authority can be superseded by no power on earth." Every generation has its "modern times" and "modern conditions." Every tyrant that has ever emerged from the despotic plague-spots of the Old World, including those whom we are fighting today, has urged the peculiarity of his "modern conditions" as justification for the chains that he has wrapped around the souls of men. Lest this shrewd new Paganism engulf us, we must quickly learn what Lincoln well knew, namely, that this nation was conceived in liberty precisely because it was and is dedicated to the proposition that "all men are created," that only under God may it have a new birth of freedom; and that without God it will certainly perish from the earth.

## SUMMING UP THE LAYMAN'S TASK

by William Agar

Executive Vice President, Freedom House

Address delivered on July 23, 1944

For the past eight weeks you have listened to distinguished Catholic laymen speak on one or another phase of the great problems that confront all men and women in this country—all in the whole world in fact—at the present time.

Tonight we shall attempt to tie together some of the things that have been said and to draw general conclusions. Next week, in concluding the series, we shall raise our "sights" into the future and try to look honestly at the things which must be done.

The opening remark of the first speaker on this series was as follows: "The layman's task, in simple terms, is to participate in the greatest thing in the world." He went on to say that this greatest thing is love—"love based on an appreciation of the dignity and unique worth of every person"—love which will make men treat their fellowmen as brothers and with mutual trust and justice.

There is nothing new about that thought. It is as old as man himself. But it is none the less important just because it is old. The Golden Rule, or something like it,

has been a part of every religion and every great philosophy. Man discovered long ago that he must love his brother as himself—that he must do unto others as he would have them do unto him if only in order to be treated that way himself and thus to gain peace and security.

But the great traditions of Judaism and Christianity have emphasized that point and given it a greater sanction than the sanction of pure self-interest. They have laid it as a duty upon men because all men are children of one God and therefore brothers. Thus men became responsible to their Creator for what they do to others.

But these traditions, these sanctions, have been in existence a long time. In spite of them and, of course, with uncounted numbers of individual exceptions, man continues to treat his fellows as though they existed merely to be preyed upon for his own selfish advantage.

And today, more than nineteen centuries after the founding of Christianity, the world is wracked by suffering as it struggles to end the most widespread and des-

destructive war of all time. A large part of the formerly Christian world repudiated its beliefs and, joining up with a pagan nation on the outer rim of Asia, set out to plunder the world and rule other men by brute force.

Several of the speakers have attributed the extraordinary fact that formerly Christian peoples have become the worst enemies of Christ to the secularization of society which has proceeded throughout many years, and to the impact of science, misconstrued of course, on the thoughts and the actions of men.

Nor did these speakers try to attach all the blame to those nations which started the present war. In one degree or another we are all responsible for this war, most of us, to be sure, more because of what we did not do than because of any positive action.

It is true that our civilization is a Christian civilization. As such it cannot live with any soul other than a Christian soul, or with no soul at all. It is true also that the impact of scientific knowledge has tended to make men forgetful of God and of their dependence on Him. Men have liked to think that growing knowledge of how the universe of energy and matter works is the same thing as understanding how it came to exist or

being as able to bring it into existence. They used the inspiring concept of evolution as proof that man was only an animal—a thinking animal to be sure—and, moreover, one destined to progress towards ultimate perfection here on earth through no effort of his own but simply because of a *Law* of evolution which would carry him on and up regardless of what he did.

This philosophy of progress sickened under the impact of World War I and died during the worldwide depression. But before it died it had weakened man's sense of his own moral responsibility.

All these things that have happened have had their effect in cutting our civilization off from its necessary foundation—that is, belief in a permanent moral code ingrained in the world by God—a code which nations as well as individuals cannot flaunt without bringing disaster on themselves.

It is well to consider what right we have to call our enemies wrong in their attempt to conquer the world. Of course we would fight back anyhow, simply because we do not wish to be conquered. But there is more to it than that. Even the atrocities the Nazis commit against the Jews and the Poles, in fact against all the conquered people of Europe, are wrong only if they are measured up against an unchang-

ing code which clearly indicates that they are wrong.

The Nazis can justify these acts as expedient and clearly for the future good of Germany and Europe if the State, as they claim, is above the law.

Similarly there is no way to disprove the right of the strong to crush the weak and plunder their belongings unless there exists a known reason why that action is evil. For that is the law of the jungle and, if man is merely a beast, when did he cease to have the right to do this—provided he can get away with it?

The act of starting a war of plunder and conquest, and all the horrors over and above those necessary to prosecute such a war, are wrong, we *know*, because they go against the conscience of civilized man—a conscience trained and nurtured through long years of Christian tradition.

That knowledge is based upon belief in God, His law, and our accountability to Him. That is why emphasis on the importance of our religious tradition and the danger accruing from the things that weaken that tradition has run like a thread through this series of talks.

The Totalitarian State claiming unlimited competence over the minds and souls as well as the bod-

ies of men, seems almost the inevitable result of the materialization of the thinking of our age. It is the ultimate secular State, Leviathan, foreseen by the philosopher Hobbes, come to destroy mankind which has wavered from its goal. For too long we have all served expediency and sought security through material forms alone. We have let supreme values become worthless, therefore force unrestrained seeks to take over our world. Power for power's sake justifies itself insofar as it can succeed.

The central attack of the thing we call Fascism is upon the worth, the dignity, of the human individual. And it is plain why this is so. Because while knowledge of that worth remains uppermost in men's minds there is no chance for Fascism or the Total State to assert themselves.

Again, that is why you have heard repeated over and over again the central Christian theme of the dignity of man as the child of God, the brotherhood of all men under God. It is the only sure weapon we have with which to fight against the enemies of our civilization, both within and without. Anything we do to weaken that concept lays us open to the same evil which we are bleeding and suffering to overcome.

For, as one speaker emphasized, "it can happen here." There are many tendencies in America, many things we do or permit to be done which constitute a direct denial of our own, our Christian foundations.

Let's look back a minute. Our Declaration of Independence was the most extraordinary political document of its time—of all time. When the founders of this nation decided the hour had come to break away from tyranny imposed from overseas, they did not immediately launch upon a revolution. Instead, and because of a "decent respect to the opinions of mankind," they explained to the world what they were doing and why they were doing it. Was ever a revolution started that way before? Was ever a nation born more nobly?

And remember that this great document bases men's rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness on the fact that each individual is endowed with these rights by his Creator. All are *created* equal. This concept has its roots deep in Catholic tradition but Americans were the first to proclaim it to the world as a nation. Many years later, in 1861 President Lincoln could say, "I have often inquired of myself what great principle or idea it was that kept this Confederacy so long together. It

was not the mere matter of separation of the colonies from the motherland, but that sentiment in the Declaration of Independence which gave liberty not only to the people of this country, but hope to all the world for all future time."

All this is true. But have we lived up to it? Let's consider two things only. First anti-Semitism. There has always been a certain degree of social ostracism directed against the Jew, but it is only recently that anti-Semitism has taken on the violent form it possesses today. Many of us have drunk in Nazi propaganda and turned our venom against the Jew seeking to make him the scapegoat for the war and for all the evils of our society. Those guilty of this atrocity come from every group—Catholic, Protestant, and non-believer. This is not primarily a Jewish problem, but it is a Christian problem—for we are the majority and we are responsible.

Then consider the Negro. These people are Americans like ourselves. Yet in all parts of our country we find them deprived of their rights to equal education, equal opportunity, housing, recreation, sanitation. Here again the problem is a majority one. It is almost literally true to say that there is no Negro problem in America; there is a White problem. The things we do harm

the Negro but they do not corrupt him. They do corrupt the souls of those who impose them on the Negro.

We cannot go on giving lip service to ideals which we find it inexpedient to try to put into practice. We cannot, at least, and expect to survive as a nation. For ideals must be nourished and renewed just as surely as must our material bodies.

Of course it is easy to see the evils in our midst—more particularly those of other nations—and, throwing up our hands, to say to ourselves, "the world is too evil, there is nothing we can do to stop it from destroying itself."

But that in itself is the greatest evil of all. We have a reservoir of faith in America—faith in God and faith in man and in his ability to find a way out of the troubles that beset him. Catholics, Jews, Protestants, and countless men and

women who profess no formal religion can and do subscribe with all their hearts and all their souls to the fundamental belief of America—the dignity of man and his freedom under law to work out his destiny as his conscience directs.

All of us have been derelict in carrying out this belief—none dare throw stones at others. But together we witness a world struggling to rid itself of evils, the roots of which we can comprehend, and which we see even in our own midst. We can and must work together to cure those evils. Those of us who have a religious motivation for that work and who believe that, in the long run, such a motivation is needed to keep us headed towards our goal, owe it to ourselves and to the world to show by our acts that our belief is justified.

We dare not shirk that responsibility.

## THE FRAMEWORK OF PEACE

by William Agar

Executive Vice President, Freedom House

Address delivered on July 30, 1944

Last week we emphasized the importance of living up to our American ideal and not despairing of our ability to overcome the evils of the day if we hope to bring this great nation to the fulfillment of its destiny.

As a people we want and have always wanted peace and the chance to develop unhindered by others. Because of our unusual heritage of natural resources and because we did develop in an era during which broad oceans furnished some semblance of security, we were freed from any desire for aggression and we came to regard ourselves as set apart from the world.

Of course this was never true in fact. But we did believe we could trade and travel when and where we pleased, that we could take whatever part in world economics we saw fit to take—yet play a game as observers only in world politics and, when trouble brewed, secure ourselves at will behind a barrier of neutrality.

Following this course and desiring only peace, we have become inevitably involved in the two greatest wars of history—both within

twenty-five years. Isn't that enough to show that our ideas about peace and the means of getting it leave something to be desired? We thought that peace was static. We believed we could have it and keep it by doing nothing, by simply refusing to become involved in war. We confused peace with pacifism.

That could not succeed. We see it now. We see that peace is hard to come by and infinitely harder to retain—that we need to think and work and struggle to retain it even as we now struggle to gain the victory which will make peace possible.

We have advanced this far in America under the impact of events. Our people are convinced that we contributed to our own present troubles by our attitude after the last war, and they do not want it to happen again. They want peace between nations—peace which can endure because it is based on law and on justice to all.

That is our aim. We fight to win the opportunity to establish peace. We know that if we do not, all the blood and tears and sacrifice of countless millions of men

and women throughout the world shall once more have been in vain. We certainly do not want to betray the men who are fighting for us. But how are we to accomplish our purpose? What can we do?

It is not my aim to analyze the various proposals for world order that have been advocated or to concern myself now with the plans for peace which the leaders among the United Nations are working out. These proposals, these plans, deal with the institutions which form the framework of peace, just as bones and muscles form the framework of a body. Both are essential. But they must be animated by a life force. Otherwise they are useless and rapidly decay.

After the last war there were many good men with high ideals, including our own President, who participated in the attempt to write the peace. Yet the memory of the failure of that peace is still sharp and bitter. It looms as an ever-present warning of impending disaster.

For, in the reorganization of the world, lust for power and possessions prevailed over the considered judgment of those who sought justice; the selfishness of nations led either to complete withdrawal or to demands impossible to fulfill except at the sacrifice of others. It was an order devoid of reference

to the moral law or to religious sanctions that failed. Nations unwilling to accept moral responsibility for world order permitted the enemies of society to re-arm and to set out once more on their orgy of destruction.

Many of the talks you have listened to in this series have emphasized how the secularization of our thought, the loss of the knowledge of good and evil, has permitted men to seek material goals as their highest good until material things of their own making, wrongly used, have come near to destroying them. You have also heard it said many times that society must return to the fundamental moral principles upon which it is founded if it is to avoid destruction.

I believe this has been realized at last by large numbers of people. Religious leaders have always claimed that no peace can endure unless it has a place in it for God and is founded on His laws. Separately, the highest authorities of the Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant religions made pronouncements, during the past several years, on the requirements for peace. Finally it became clear that large areas of agreement existed between them. Then, on October 7, 1943, identical statements were given out by the leaders of the three groups.



These statements make no attempt to water down differences in religious outlook. They contain seven propositions designed to point the way for every individual to promote the principles of the declaration within the framework of his own beliefs. And, since the principles are the fundamental moral ones—those, in fact, upon which America was founded as a nation—all Americans, whether or not they profess a formal religion, can subscribe to them. Their basis is belief in the dignity of man and the need to regulate human affairs according to ethical principles.

As we look into the future with an ardent desire for peace and security and justice for all, let us see if we cannot work together to assure that the provisions for peace embody these seven points:

1. The organization of a just peace depends upon practical recognition of the fact that not only individuals but nations, states, and international society are subject to the sovereignty of God and to the moral law which comes from God.

2. The dignity of the human person as the image of God must be set forth in all its essential implications in an international declaration of rights and must be vindicated by the positive action of national governments and internat-

ional organization. States as well as individuals must repudiate racial, religious, and other kinds of discrimination in violation of those rights.

3. The rights of all peoples, large and small, subject to the good of the organized world community, must be safeguarded within the framework of collective security. The progress of undeveloped, colonial, or oppressed peoples toward political responsibility must be the object of international concern.

4. National governments and international organization must respect and guarantee the rights of ethnic, religious, and cultural minorities to economic livelihood, to equal opportunity for educational and cultural development, and to political equality.

5. An enduring peace requires the organization of international institutions which will develop a body of international law, guarantee the faithful fulfillment of international obligations, and revise them when necessary; assure collective security by drastic limitation and continuing control of armaments, compulsory arbitration, adjudication of controversies, and the use when necessary of adequate sanctions to enforce the law.

6. International economic collaboration to assist all states to provide an adequate standard of living

for their citizens must replace the present economic monopoly and exploitation of natural resources by privileged groups and states.

7. Since the harmony and well-being of the world community are intimately bound up with the internal equilibrium and social order of the individual states, steps must be taken to provide for the security of the family, the collaboration of all groups and classes in the interest of the common good, a standard of living adequate for self-development and family life, decent conditions of work, and participation by labor in decisions affecting its welfare.

These propositions are concrete ones. The men who wrote them were not content with moralizing. On the contrary, they set forth a definite program and propose definite institutions which, if established, would make possible the fulfillment of the requirements of the moral law for all men and all nations. They are minimum requirements but, if we abide by them, we shall be living up to our American ideals and we shall have helped establish a world order in which peace between nations is possible.

The objective of the declaration is a spiritual objective, yet it remains within the temporal order. The spiritual principles which it

points to are: (1) The sovereignty of God over nations as well as individuals; (2) the essential place of the moral law in social life; (3) the inherent dignity of man; (4) the unity of the human race.

As a result of these principles it proposes an international bill of rights, the repudiation of racial, religious, and other discriminations, protection of the weak and oppressed and of all minorities everywhere, and the development of international economic cooperation in the interest of the common good.

The seventh point recognizes the intimate connection between the internal social order of the individual states and the well-being of the international community as a whole. This is a point which we have emphasized before with particular reference to America. Before we can hope to establish peace among nations, we must set our own house in order and assure to all our citizens those rights which in our Declaration of Independence we proclaimed were theirs as human beings and which our Bill of Rights attempts to safeguard.

The racial problem in America, as one example, has passed beyond the stage when it was a local problem or even a national problem. It is now a world problem as witnessed by the fact that the mistreatments, misunderstandings, and

clashes of interest involving colored peoples has given much aid and comfort to the Japanese and has helped their propaganda among the colored races whom they have conquered.

But, even beyond that, we must assure the security of the family as the bulwark of society. This means safeguarding marriage, and establishing decent standards of living and conditions of work for all men and women. The just demands of the worker must be met. Otherwise we are building peace upon insecure foundations. And all our people must recognize that their rights involve duties, and act accordingly.

The religious leaders of America have pointed out the means whereby all, religious and non-religious, can unite in a common effort to attain a just and peaceful world order.

The practical steps in the political order required to implement their proposals, must be taken by our politicians and statesmen. It is our duty to see that they do this. But we also must do our part. For these moral principles will not save

the world unless we and the men to whom we grant the power to frame the institutions and construct the machinery for peace are guided by them. And it is the special duty of those whose religious training has made them aware of God's law, to help incorporate it into the law of nations.

Without proper institutions the best intentions will fail to produce anything at all. But the best institutions, the most perfect machinery men can devise, will also fail unless supported by individuals and nations.

So our job as citizens of America and of the world is two-fold. We must force our legislators and administrators to take cognizance of the essence of these seven points. We must then support them with all the energy and good will we possess.

If we fail in either of these tasks we shall break faith with those who suffer and die for us today. If we wish to prevent the world from being plunged into another devastating war a few years from now we must not fail.

## THE PURPOSE OF THE CATHOLIC HOUR

(Extract from the address of the late Patrick Cardinal Hayes at the inaugural program of the Catholic Hour in the studio of the National Broadcasting Company, New York City, March 2, 1930.)

Our congratulations and our gratitude are extended to the National Council of Catholic Men and its officials, and to all who, by their financial support, have made it possible to use this offer of the National Broadcasting Company. The heavy expense of managing and financing a weekly program, its musical numbers, its speakers, the subsequent answering of inquiries, must be met. . . .

This radio hour is for all the people of the United States. To our fellow-citizens, in this word of dedication, we wish to express a cordial greeting and, indeed, congratulations. For this radio hour is one of service to America, which certainly will listen in interestedly, and even sympathetically, I am sure, to the voice of the ancient Church with its historic background of all the centuries of the Christian era, and with its own notable contribution to the discovery, exploration, foundation and growth of our glorious country. . . .

Thus to voice before a vast public the Catholic Church is no light task. Our prayers will be with those who have that task in hand. We feel certain that it will have both the good will and the good wishes of the great majority of our countrymen. Surely, there is no true lover of our Country who does not eagerly hope for a less worldly, a less material, and a more spiritual standard among our people.

With good will, with kindness and with Christ-like sympathy for all, this work is inaugurated. So may it continue. So may it be fulfilled. This word of dedication voices, therefore, the hope that this radio hour may serve to make known, to explain with the charity of Christ, our faith, which we love even as we love Christ Himself. May it serve to make better understood that faith as it really is—a light revealing the pathway to heaven: a strength, and a power divine through Christ; pardoning our sins, elevating, consecrating our common every-day duties and joys, bringing not only justice but gladness and peace to our searching and questioning hearts.

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Michigan	Detroit .....	WWJ*	950 kc
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