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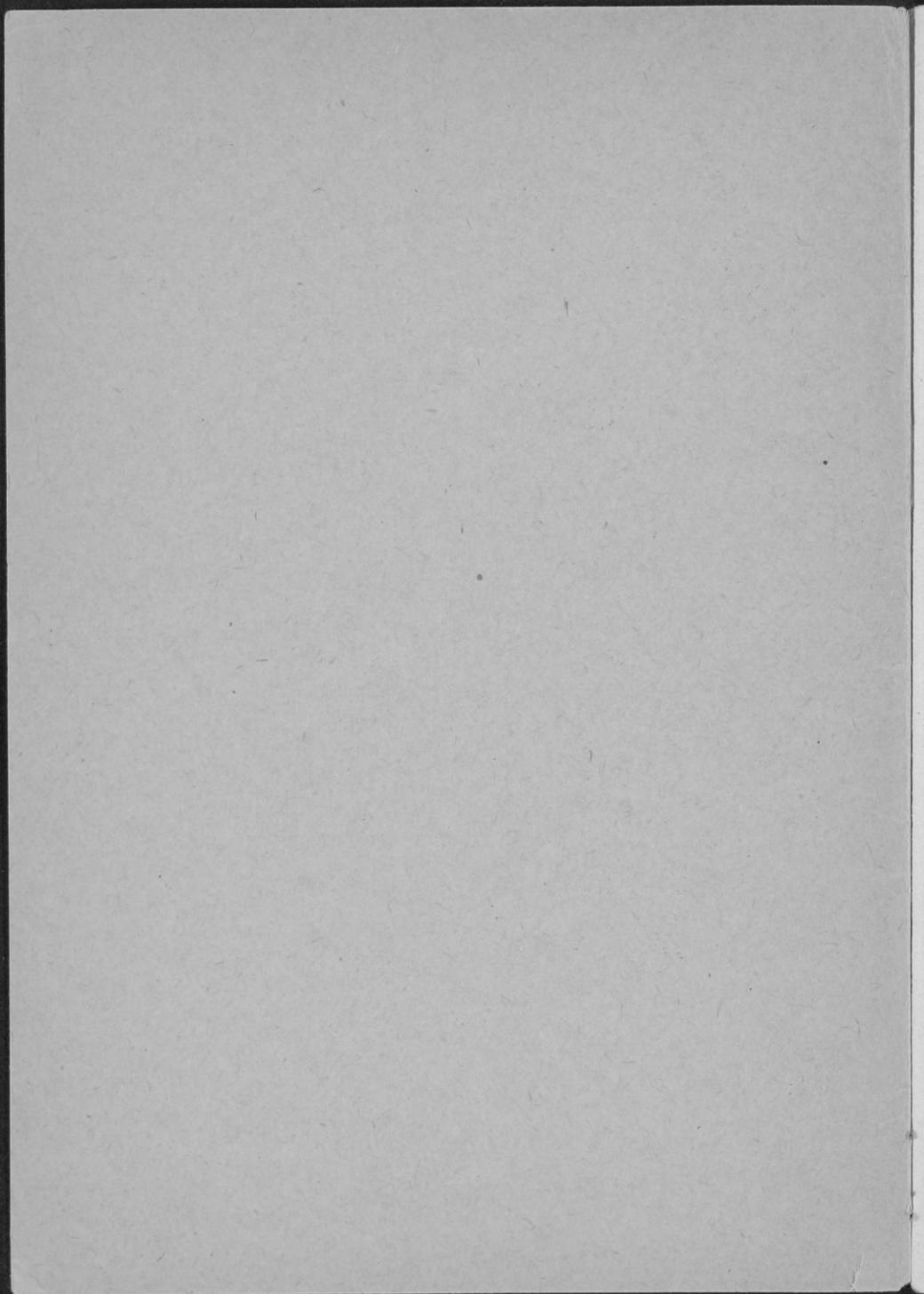
# ADVENT:

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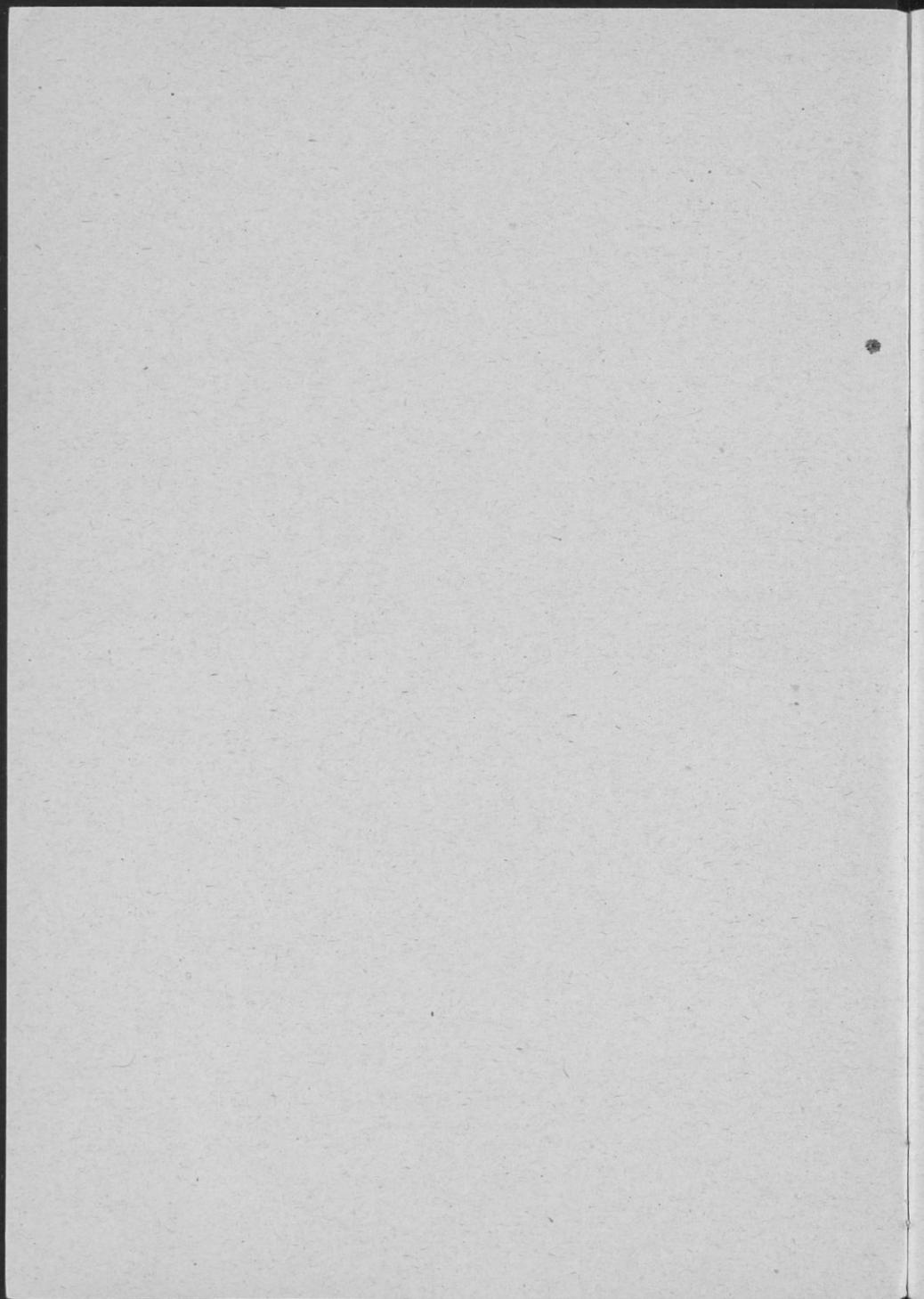


# CATHOLIC HOUR

REV. JOHN J. DOUGHERTY



Advent: Souvenir Or Promise



# Advent: Souvenir Or Promise

Six addresses delivered in the nationwide Catholic Hour, produced by the National Council of Catholic Men, in cooperation with the National Broadcasting Company, from December 1, 1946 through January 5, 1947

BY

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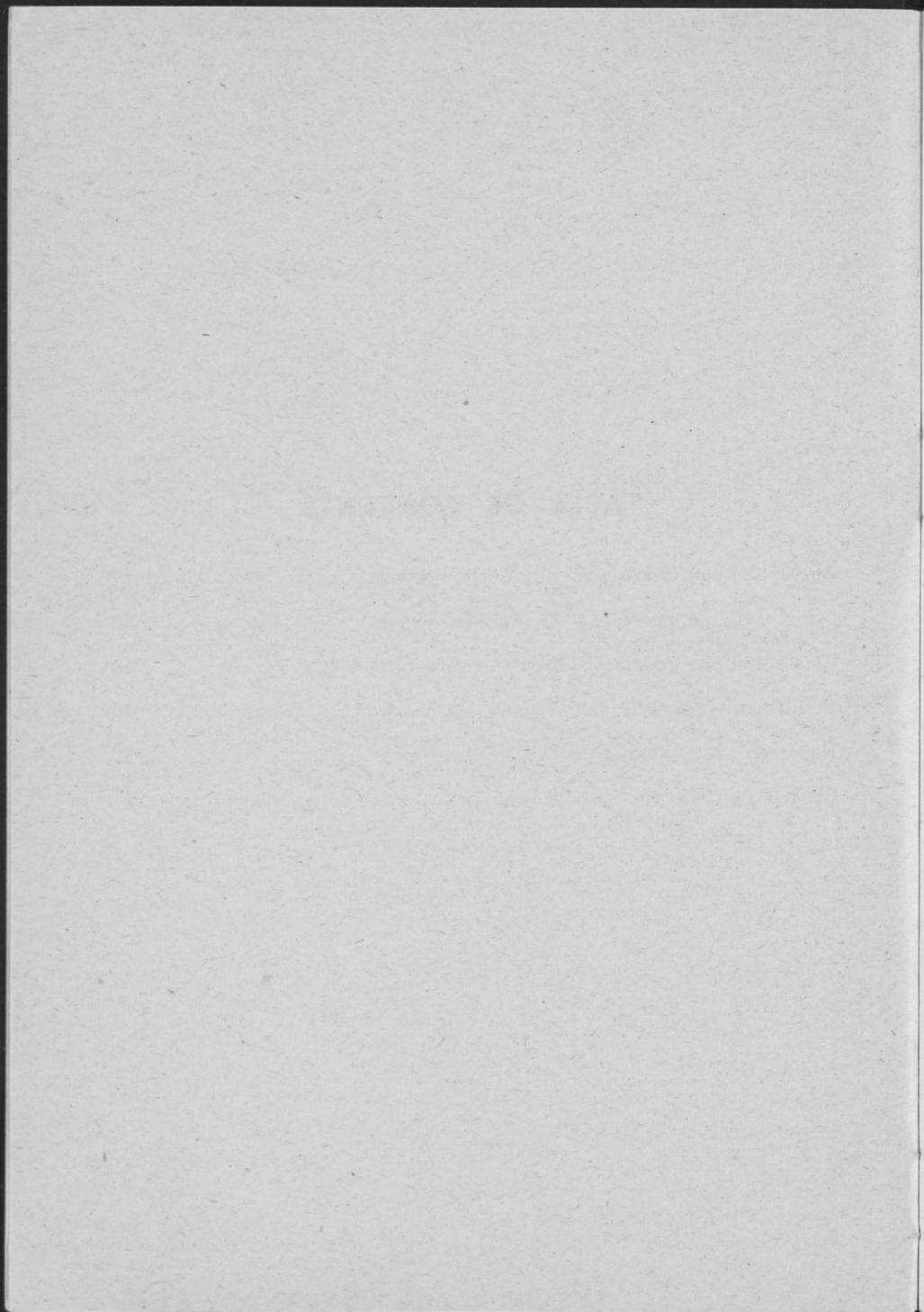
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## CHRIST AND THE CHRISTIANS: AN EARLY PORTRAIT

Address given on December 1, 1946

Advent has come again. This sacred season recalls the first thing of Christianity and predicts the last things of Christianity. It looks backward to the Infant Christ, and forward to the infinite Christ; backward to divinity in a cave, and forward to divinity on the clouds of heaven. The Advent liturgy is a recollection of Bethlehem, and a reminder of Armageddon. It is the souvenir of Christ's first coming and the promise of His second coming. I see incentive in the sacred season and incentive in the troubled times to take stock of the things you and I live by—Christ and Christianity.

Christianity is a philosophy of life that has been around for a long time. Any system of thought that has been around for a long time inevitably undergoes a shift of emphasis. The reason is obvious. When an ideology passes from the master to the masses new pressures strike it, the pressures of the crowd. When a philosophy pass-

es from the ivory tower of its birth and takes to the streets, it runs up against the pressure of the street, love and lust, greed and hate. There the philosophy is tested. If its lifeblood is truth, it will survive, but even the strongest philosophy may bend under the pressures of the street. There may be a shift of emphasis.

As illustration of my point, take our democratic way of life. Behind its operation there is a philosophy of self-government. Two ingredients are of the essence of that philosophy, and were so conceived by the minds that gave it birth. These ingredients are the rights of individuals and the obligations of individuals. When this ideology runs up against the pressures of the American street today, there is a shift of emphasis. Every man cries out his rights in a democracy, and no man whispers his obligations to the democracy. That shift of emphasis can be perilous to the idea, for when men who govern themselves re-

member only their rights, and forget their obligations, they may awake suddenly to find they have lost their rights. When the root withers the plant will die, and every right is rooted in an obligation. The wild thing that has no root in obligation is not right but anarchy.

To come now to Christianity: we might expect that in two thousand years there would be a shift of emphasis. Humanly speaking this shift of emphasis might alter the idea essentially, and endanger its survival. After two thousand years we might expect that many who bear the family name no longer hold the family heritage. Now no one questions the service that Christianity has rendered society in the past, but people anxiously ask: Can it do it again? They ask: Can Christianity ride through the hideous strength of this present storm, and again renew the face of the earth? Can the Faith lift the fallen world? Observe I am not asking if the Church will survive. I believe it will, for I believe the promise of Christ, ". . . the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (*Matthew* 16:18). My question is: Will there be a Christian world tomorrow? I

regret it is a question I cannot answer, but I do say that if Christianity is to renew the face of the earth, it is not an imitation of the original that will do it; it is not a watered-down Christianity that can do it.

I do not think that a Christianity with shifted emphasis can change the world any more than a democracy with shifted emphasis can survive in the world. In the name of history and logic I contend that the Christianity that worked in the past is the thing that will work again. It is not ideologies that are labeled Christian that will do this tremendous task, but Christianity that is stamped authentic. If your hammer has a broken head, you will find it difficult, or even impossible to drive the nail. If a shift of emphasis has broken the head of Christianity, it will lack point and power.

It is my purpose, therefore, to view Christianity as it was at first, that if there be a false accent on my own, I may, with the help of God, detect it. I come then to the examination.

When you first encounter the Christian movement in the streets of Jerusalem and on the high roads of the Roman Empire

Christianity is belief in a person. The emphasis is on the pronoun. On the lips of Christ the emphasis is on the first person. Jesus said, "I have come a light one thing is immediately clear: into the world" (*John* 12:46). Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (*John* 14:6). To his disciples Jesus said, "Come, follow me" (*Matt-hew* 4:19). On the lips of Peter the emphasis was on the third person. Peter said, "Him God exalted with his right hand to be Prince and Savior . . ." (*Acts* 5:31). Peter said, "God raised him on the third day . . ." (*Acts* 10:40). On the lips of John the emphasis is on the third person. John said, "All things were made through him . . . in him was life" (*John* 1:3-4). On the lips of Paul the emphasis is on the third person. Paul said, "He is the image of the invisible God . . . for in him were created all things in the heavens and on the earth . . . All things have been created through and unto him" (*Colos-sians* 1:15ff). The whole Gospel is summed up in Paul's magnificent accent on the personal: ". . . we . . . preach a crucified Christ . . ." (*1 Corinthians* 1:23).

When you first encounter the Christians in Jerusalem's streets or the Empire's high roads a second thing is clear: they believed this person to be divine. There is no doubt about this in the words of St. John: ". . . the Life Eternal which was with the Father . . . has appeared to us" (*1 John* 1:2). There is no doubt about it in the words of St. Paul to the Philippians: ". . . though he was by nature God . . . (he) emptied himself, taking the nature of a slave and being made like to men" (2:6f).

Where did the Christians get this idea? The New Testament leaves no doubt as to that. The idea came from the Master Himself, from the Master who said, ". . . I am from above . . . I am not of this world" (*John* 8:23); from the Master who said, ". . . I have come down from heaven . . ." (*John* 6:38); from the Master who said, "I and the Father are one" (*John* 10:30).

Christianity then was an ideology that was summed up in a person. Christ was the philosophy. He did not say to His followers: "I teach you truth"; He said, "I am the truth." As a consequence the believers held that there was an inviolable fix-

ity to His doctrine; no one could add to it or subtract from it; it was divine revelation from above and no man could change its content or its spirit. This astounding idea so gripped the heart of Paul that he wrote: "Even if . . . an angel from heaven should preach a gospel to you other than that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema" (*Galatians* 1:8).

Christianity was also a program of behavior that was summed up in a person. Christ was the program. It was a hard program that could be compared to a yoke or a burden or a cross; a program that demanded men to prefer Christ to father and mother, wife and property, and self. True, there was a great natural enthusiasm for the maker of the program, but enthusiasm is a fragile foundation on which to build high morality. True, there was a natural loyalty to this great teacher, but the demands of the program dug deep and hard into natural loves and hates—His stern divorce law for example.

Was the enthusiasm of nature and loyalty of nature enough to make men live the superhuman program of the Cross? For the Christians that question was

purely theoretical, for they believed that they were given an energy from above. Christ did not fear to give them a program above themselves, because He gave them a power above themselves. He could give them a superhuman program because He would give them a supernatural energy. They could live His program by virtue of the energy of God. The death and resurrection of Christ brought that energy within reach. Through Christ they were ". . . partakers of divine nature . . ." (*2 Peter* 1:4). Through Christ they were the ". . . temple of God . . ." (*1 Corinthians* 3:16). The program was possible and the victory certain because Christ was not only the light; He was the life, and Paul could say, "It is now no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me" (*Galatians* 2:20).

Now picture the primitive Christian. Behold his consciousness absorbed in the awareness of intimacy with God in Christ. Catch the accent of his speech. The emphasis is on the words grace and peace; grace, the real power from God in his mind and will; and peace, the inward rest that is its fruit. See the out-

ward signs of this inward life. Note the accent on altruism. Mark how people say of him: See how these Christians love one another. Note where the pivot of importance lies; it is beyond — in another world. Heaven is not a vague, distant, unreal never-never land of shadowy existence, doubtful location and more doubtful shape and size. It is substance eternal, for Christ is there and there He will meet the good Christian. Because his treasure is there, so is his heart. But that very thing and its magnificence makes him a good citizen of the earth for he knows that the only way to heaven is to serve Christ in men. He knows that if he is the brother of Christ, so are the poor, the hungry and the naked. He knows that Christ will say to him on Judgment Day, “. . . as long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it for me” (*Matthew 25:40*).

It follows then that Christianity was not set in motion merely as a program of social reform or a pattern for political Utopia. Neither John the Baptist, nor Jesus of Nazareth, described the Kingdom of God as a collective farm, or a five-day week, or a

personal operation involving the human heart which no one can get at but yourself and God. It was a personal plea that went out from the banks of the Jordan and the hills of Galilee. We cannot de-emphasize that ever. The Gospel is a personal program first. It is the plan for personal salvation, and thereby the foundation of social salvation. It was a personal appeal to the commoner and the king, and when kings and commoners lived it they had the good society. In the personal character of the Gospel lay its social worth, for the good society is nothing more than the community of good individuals. The body politic, like the physical body, is healthy when the cells are healthy.

Individual Christians once renewed the face of the earth. One by one they joined “The Underground” of God and then one day shot from the catacombs to make the Western World. Men like that can do it again, men like that writing, men like that governing, men like that hiring, men like that organizing, men coveting Heaven more than gold, coveting peace more than profit, coveting grace more than neighbor’s wife. It is my per-

balance of power in Europe. Both the forerunner and the Master preached a personal reform. Their first cry was: Repent. Repentance is a highly suasion that without men like

that it cannot be done. This is, I believe, the sober fact: Before the sun of social justice rise there must come the dawn—the dawn of personal justice.

## CHRIST AND THE PROPHETS: AN AGELESS DESIGN

Address given on December 8, 1946

Insight is defined as the power of seeing into things, so as to get a thorough knowledge of them. It is a keenness of mind rather than of eye, a power of penetration that resides in the spirit rather than the flesh. There is the insight of the man of science, who sees into the elements of nature and harnesses their forces for the good or ill of mankind. There is the insight of the man of letters, who sees into the beauty of nature and the complexity of man, and brings both to walk upon his stage in forms that delight. There is the insight of the man of God, who sees into the Maker's plan behind the spheres and into his purposes in men and events, and who proclaims them in stirring and artistic phrase. These three are the insight of the scientist, the insight of the poet, and the insight of the prophet. Without these three the world would be a drab unchallenging place. The scientist has given comfort and convenience to men, the poet has given in-

spiration and delight, and the prophet has given—God.

The insight of the prophet is above all. His vision is not made by man; it is made by God. Prophecies are not woven on the loom of his own fancy; their fabric is of heaven, not of earth. In His loving impatience, God let the prophet peer momentarily into His own infinite treasure, and catch there a glimpse of golden things to come. Like all men the prophets believed that man lost a golden age by sin, and unlike other men the prophets were taught by God of a golden age to come. Like colored bits of mosaic the details of the Messias-King and his kingdom fell from the hands of God. Isaias caught a glimpse of a virgin with child; Micheas caught a glimpse of Bethlehem as birth-place of the King; Daniel caught a glimpse of Him upon the clouds of heaven. So the prophets of the passing times sketched details of this timeless design of the mind of God, and in the fullness of time Jesus stood in the

Synagogue at Nazareth and read from Isaias the prophet, closed the book and said, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (*Luke 4:21*).

Jesus was prophet and the fulfillment of prophecy. He is above all prophets, for He has given us God in Himself. He is poet too, for He has given us doctrine and morality clothed in beauteous form. His poetic insight made the lilies of the field and the birds of the air talk about the Kingdom of God. His poetic insight made coins and pearls and fishing nets the parable dress of doctrine.

Jesus was conscious of his link with the prophets of old, with the faltering Jeremias, and the urban Isaias. He proclaimed that they spoke of Him in their inspired songs. He could say with confidence, "You search the Scriptures . . . and it is they that bear witness to me" (*John 5:39 f*). He knew that He was the fulfillment of the prophecies. Nowhere is this seen more clearly and more beautifully than in the narrative of St. Luke that tells of the appearance of the risen Christ on the road to Emmaus. Two disillusioned disciples were on their way to Emmaus when they were joined

by a stranger. They told Him of Jesus of Nazareth, "a prophet mighty in work and word," and of their hopes that lay buried with Him; their hopes and Jesus were three days dead. As they went along the stranger said to them, "'O foolish ones and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things before entering into his glory?' And begining then with Moses and with all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things referring to himself" (*Luke 24:25-27*). At Emmaus they recognized Him at the breaking of the bread, and when He had gone, they could look back upon those miles and say, "Was not our heart burning within us while he was speaking on the road, and explaining to us the Scriptures?" (*Ibid 24:32*). Jesus taught that He was the one the nation awaited with hungry expectation. When from his prison dungeon on the wild heights of Machaerus John sent messengers to Jesus with the question: "Art thou he who is to come. . .?" (*Matthew 11:3*), Jesus quoted from Isaias the prophet: "Go and report to John what you have heard and

seen: the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise, the poor have the gospel preached to them" (*Ibid* 11:4-6).

In the light of these things it is not hard to understand the accent the Church placed on the prophets. The first idea in the first sermon on the first day of the Church was the citation of a prophet. Speaking of the signs of the Spirit's presence, Peter said,

"... this is what was spoken though the prophet Joel:

"'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says the Lord, that I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh'" (*Acts* 2:16 f).

It is not hard to understand the basic part the prophets played in the preaching of the Gospel. Paul could say to the faithful, "You are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the chief corner stone" (*Ephesians* 2:20). The significance of the prophets lies in this: together with miracles they are the testimony of God himself to the mission of Jesus. Miracles were God's witness to Christ in nature, and prophecies were God's witness to Christ in history. The first was impossible

without the power of God, and the second impossible without the knowledge of God. They were a double-edged sword that opened the mind to believe. Nor has time changed the love of the Church for prophecy. The liturgy of Advent rings with the words of the prophets. The prophecies are still the startling witness of God to the Redeemer of the world. It is a strengthening experience to catch the spirit and fervor of the Church in this. Timeless lights and shadows are summoned to play upon the figure of the Savior, and with the soft step of age they come to bear witness again to the Expected of Nations. Gently they speak of God's own restless anxiety to make His Son known to the world.

The design drawn by the prophets from Moses to Malachias was not a puzzle to be solved by the clever. To accept Christ's interpretation of them a man needed a clean heart more than a quick wit, for the condition of a man's heart is much more of his own making than the condition of his head. God spoke through the prophets. Divine words fell from human tongues. The prophecies were conditioned by that fact. The prophets saw

wonderous things beyond words, and then they strove to give utterance to these unspeakable wonders with figurative speech and symbol. They were the finite brush the infinite artist used to limn a design of the Messiah. To no one of them was given a full portrait of the King to come. Their visions were fleeting things like flashes of light in the dark. They fought the battles of God and the God of Battles came to them in swift brilliant visions opening their minds to behold the victory to come. Thus when Isaias and all the kingdom saw the black night of defeat and disaster descend upon the tribes of Zabulon and Nephtali, there came to him that swift vision of God in which he saw future salvation, and he wrote:

"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: to them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death light is risen. . .

"FOR A CHILD IS BORN to us, and a son is given to us, and the government is upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace" (*Isaias 9 passim*).

The prophecies need an interpreter to give them unity and clarity, for men left to themselves are prone to take symbolic language literally, and reduce spirit to matter. To the believer, Christ is the living interpretation of the prophecies. It was of Him the prophets spoke, and He said so. When Christians compared His life from the Annunciation to the Ascension with what the prophets had said, they found a startling identity.

Men who saw the shameless sight of Christ on Calvary read Psalm twenty-one and were filled with amazement; they read:

"All they that saw me have laughed me to scorn; they have spoken with the lips, and wagged the head. . .

"They have dug my hands and feet. They have numbered all my bones. . .

"They parted my garments amongst them: and upon my vesture they cast lots. . .

"All the ends of the earth shall remember, and shall be converted to the Lord" (*Psalm 21 passim*).

Men who saw the shameless sight of Christ on Calvary and knew His sinless life were

amazed when they read the words of Isaias. They read:

"Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows. . .

"He was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him, and by his bruises we are healed.

"All we like sheep have gone astray, everyone hath turned aside into his own way:

"And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

"He was offered because it was his own will and he opened not his mouth.

"He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer. . .

"He hath done no iniquity, neither was there deceit in his mouth. . .

"He hath delivered his soul unto death, and was reputed with the wicked:

"And he hath borne the sins of many, and hath prayed for the transgressors" (*Isaias 53 passim*).

When the early Christians read these lines written hundreds of years before Calvary, a sense of the timeless came over them, and they seemed to hear

God whispering the name of Jesus through the ages.

Men saw the deeds of Jesus and heard His words. They heard him say in the Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are the peacemakers." At the Last Supper the Twelve heard Him speak long and often about peace. Men remembered His greeting after the Resurrection: "Peace be to you." In Him they saw fulfilled the words of Isaias:

"His empire shall be multiplied, and there shall be no end of peace. . ." (9:7).

Then they understood the vision Isaias described in symbols:

"The wolf shall dwell with the lamb: and the leopard shall lie with the kid:

"The calf and the lion, and the sheep shall abide together, and a little child shall lead them" (11:6).

Then the sense of the timeless came again, and again the whispering of God through the centuries.

When mothers read to their children the story of Christmas by the light of the oil lamps in Antioch or Ephesus, they read from Matthew or Luke. There the children heard the accents of Micheas and Isaias. Seven

hundred years before the children were born, or the Child, the prophets had caught the swift vision of God's anointed. Isaias wrote:

"Behold the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel (God with us)" (*Isaias* 7:14; *Matthew* 1:23 f).

Micheas had caught a glimpse of God's light. He wrote:

"And thou, Bethlehem of the land of Juda, art by no means least among the princes of Juda;

"For from thee shall come forth a leader, who shall rule my people Israel" (*Micheas* 5:2 *Matthew* 2:6).

Then the children were filled with a sense of the timeless and they seemed to catch the sound of the whispering of God long ago.

The prophets were not day-dreamers who sought escape in a flowery future. They lived vitally and intensely in the present; they lived in the present by the future: they got strength for the present from the promise of the future. Their captivating fire and their contagious force fed on hope. They pleaded the cause of God when

times were good and times were bad, because they knew that the cause of an eternal God is timeless. They judged by value rather than price. They knew that a merciful heart was worth more than the blood of a thousand bulls, that a heart full of pity was worth more than a handful of incense, that a mite with humility was worth more than drachmas with fanfare. Like them, the prophet from Nazareth, "mighty in work and word," hated drawing-room virtue and private vice, loved sinners and hated hypocrisy, preached that God loved mercy more than sacrifice, and that the luckiest man in the world is the clean of heart, because he shall see God.

The fire and fervor of the prophets was born of a promise to come; our fervor and fire must be born of a promise fulfilled. Christ is the promise. The prophets looked forward to a Savior to come; our world must look back to a Savior that has come, for with Peter I believe that there is salvation in no other. "For there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (*Acts* 4:12).

## CHRIST AND THE PEOPLE: A CONTEMPORARY SKETCH

Address given on December 15, 1946

It is a problem to my mind that so many people live as though they were never to die, and die as though they were never to live—forever. The problem does not grow less when I realize that many of them have fine minds, possess great skills, or enjoy exceptional talents. Not the least interesting phase of the problem is that they think me rather quaint for believing that I shall live forever, that they consider me altogether unacquainted with reality in believing that my eternal condition will depend upon the moral condition of myself wherever and whenever my time runs out; which time, incidentally, is highly uncertain for me and for them.

I propose to consider this problem with you this evening, for I think it is yours as well as mine. Let's take the people with good heads first. I have met intelligent people within the Church, and especially intelligent people outside the Church, intelligent people who have entered the Church and intelligent

people who have left it. If we were to count heads at this moment, I am sure we would find about a many good heads in the Church as out of it; I think a poll would show that neither the Christians nor the pagans have cornered the market on intellects. But where does this lead us? I think at this point the position may be stated without objection from either part that being a Christian involves something more than having a good head. Or to put it in other words, Christianity is not designed as a clique for the clever. When I look for confirmation of this conclusion, I find that the night that Christ was born angels spoke for him—since an infant cannot speak for himself—and they sang: "Peace on earth to men of good will." They did not sing: "Peace on earth to men with good heads." Furthermore, when Jesus gave the messengers of John the signs of His Messiasship, He said, ". . . the poor have the gospel preached to them" (*Matthew* 11:6)—the poor, not the clever. I see this

conclusion confirmed throughout the Gospels. The fact that some clever men do not believe only proves to me that faith depends on something more than cleverness, that it is as much a matter of will as of mind, as much a matter of heart as of head.

I consider the second and third phases of my problem together. There are men with great skills and talents who do not believe. I think of the amazing skill of surgeons, that has given such benefits to men. I think of the startling skills of science and technology, that have made America a wonderland of gadgets. America is also a fairyland of talents. There is talent in letters—our consummate masters of words, litterateurs homegrown and imported. At the mention of the word talent I behold a vision of floods of theatrical talent that pour upon our land from within and without. Nowhere in the world are there more song and dance men, more budding or fading Hamlets. Now there are talented people who are pagan, and talented people who are Christian. Of itself talent does not shut out faith or bring it in. There are great writers who have entered the Church, and

great artists who have left it.

When I look for the viewpoint of Christ on talent, I come upon a story he told about talents. The talents in the story are Greek coinage in value about two thousand dollars. The story goes that the master of a house had to go on a long journey, and he entrusted his property to his three slaves. He gave five talents to one slave, two to another, and one to the third, and then he went off on his journey. The first two slaves used their talents well, and gained others, but the third dug a hole in the ground and hid his. Upon the master's return the first slave showed him the five other talents he had gained, and the second showed him the two he had gained, but the third could only show the one he had hidden in fear and caution. The master praised the first two, and punished the third, because he had made poor use of the talent he had given him.

The moral of the parable is this: each one of us must give an account of gifts received, whether voice or charm, wealth or beauty; with the gift goes the responsibility of interpreting it aright and using it well.

Now the point I wish to make

is this: something has happened to our thinking in regard to intelligence, skills and talents, and because there is something fundamentally wrong with our thinking, these things have become idols of the tribe. There is in our midst a widespread worship of intelligence, skill, talent, success, wealth, beauty, and so on, that borders on an irrational idolatry. It is somewhat like the phenomenon of Indians dancing around a totem pole, or ancient Egyptians worshipping a sacred bull. It is not as naive or gross, not as ludicrous; but although more subtle, it is none the less a kind of idolatry. Idolatry is putting a created thing in the place of the Creator, any created thing. I do not see that it is more idolatrous to worship the sun that God made than to worship a body that God made. When a man so lives as to put the whole meaning and purpose of his life in a person or thing, he is worshipping that person or thing, and worship is something he should give to God alone. You cannot be a slave to God and Mammon.

There is no idolatry without cult and ritual. Never in human history has the cult of the female had more worshippers at

its shrine. Every news-stand is a shrine to the cult, every magazine cover. The ingenuity of commercial art is boundless in devising new lights and shadows, new postures, new angles, new suggestions. The female face and form is the magic symbol that will sell everything from bullets to butter. The cult has its chant sensuous and suggestive, with the idea repeated unto despair that animal attraction and emotional urge are man's supreme delight and the reason for man's existence. The cult of the female is not so naive as the cult of mummified bulls and cats, but it is equally irrational. There is one place that will help a man or woman bring the whole problem of the flesh into focus—a morgue.

Now the purpose I had in mind in drawing out this disheartening picture of contemporary cult was to point to a symptom. The disease is the unbalanced attitude of many of us to sex, success, and stimulants: this diseased atmosphere is hardly the air that Christians thrive on. It is not easy to get a child to eat his breakfast the morning after Santa Claus' arrival. He is captivated by the shining painted things about

him. Now the shining painted world we walk in can easily fascinate us, and turn us from the solid nourishment that is Christ and His truth.

Surely it is possible that we continue to attend the rites of the altar of Christ, the Sacrifice of His Body and Blood, and yet still be allured to the cult of the painted people, and to the sweet wine in their cups. We are ever tugged between the bitter-sweet chalice of Christ and sweet-bitter cup of the flesh. This was true of the first Christians as well as of us. Paul could cry out in anger, "What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? . . . And what agreement has the temple of God with idols?" (*2 Corinthians 6:15 f.*) But the tug is stronger today, for the city of man has put on more alluring finery, and the shallow people are enamelled more brilliantly, and it has found a way to move into the remotest village in black and white or technicolor, and its voice can carry into the remotest attic without wires. The tug of the city is greater for the old strongholds have cracked wide open; the home, the inner fortress, has sold itself to the enemy, and the elders have be-

come like the children playing with the painted toys of the world.

The idolatry of our time is a subtle idolatry; our false gods are not in the groves of the green hills, they are close and intimate. There is the false worship of intelligence. Leaders of this cult are the intellectuals, worshipping their own minds and accepting incense from the admiring crowds, setting limits to man and God by the four corners of their minds, answering all questions and solving no problems, substituting experiment for thought, research for reflection, and extroversion for prayer.

There is the false worship of skill, so that we have a world full of trained hands and a world full of empty hearts. The worshippers at the shrine look to the intellectuals and the skilled as the Greeks of old looked to their oracles. Because men are expert or erudite they are made philosophers and prophets, infallible interpreters of destiny. Then there is the false worship of the talented. Before all, the beautiful and the talented worship themselves, comparing themselves with themselves, becoming a law unto

themselves, taking in marriage and putting away at whim, their greatest sin that they have lost the sense of sin.

How many worship at their shrines; shallow people worshipping shallow people! How many live by the creed: the great can do no wrong! What shall I cry? Are these thy gods, O America! With Elias? "How long do you halt between two sides? If the Lord be God follow him, but if Baal, then follow him." (*3 Kings* 18:21). With Paul? "For who singles thee out? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received it, why dost thou boast as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Corinthians 4:7).

Such is Paul's interpretation of gifts of mind and body, gold or silver, fame or family. Talent, beauty and skill are given not as gods to adore, but as a doorway to God. Our God is a hidden God, and these things are the reflection of himself. Like the sun, the stars, the rains, the earth and the fullness thereof are the good things of God, but they are not gods. Neither in theory nor practice are we to worship them, but rather the God that gave them. Reason demands that there be a term of reference for

all of them, and the term of reference is God. When we interpret them in reference to God they take on a meaning that endures beyond time; then are the idols broken and the fragments become stepping stones to God and to peace of mind.

To sum up my points thus far: an irrational self-worship predominates in the American scene; this creates a materialistic and self-centered atmosphere; it is a highly attractive cult, and alluring to every man, so that complete surrender to it or compromise with it is amazingly easy.

But, furthermore, I see implications in the problem, alarming implications. This is what I mean: if we are unable to interpret correctly the things that I have just discussed, what of bigger things? If we do not refer little things to God, how shall we refer greater things? What are the greater things? Surely the first of the greater things is freedom. Can it be that men who interpret freedom wrongly in their personal lives, will interpret it rightly in their civic lives? Can it be that a man who lives by no law within his four walls, will live by law between his two shores? Does the

scale of operations make morality? To interpret freedom aright you must interpret restriction aright, for restrictions rise because the other fellow is also free. To interpret freedom aright you must interpret law aright, for the sum total of men breaking laws is a society not observing laws. If the mass of the people are fun-worshippers, where will we get the sinews of heart that freedom needs? When the test of strength comes—and it has come—who will rise and say:

“My strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure.”\* What shoulders will bear the weight of freedom, if every man wants only the fun of freedom? This is the first implication.

Secondly, there is the big thing that is progress, scientific progress, economic progress and social progress. How do we interpret progress? The experience of history is that man's spirit tags far behind the progress of his world. His law comes long after his abuses. The progress of our age is altogether astounding, and it is disastrous

to be blind to its meaning in the fascination for a walkie-talkie or a pressure cooker. The change demands much more than remodeling your kitchen. We must adjust our hearts and our minds in light of the great change in men and ideas. We must interpret the change in light of ourselves, and somewhere find a fixed core of truth that will apply to man in an atomic age or stone age. That truth must be a sense of values that progress cannot change nor time destroy. I believe it is to be found in its most beautiful expression in Christ's Sermon on the Mount, and in His Supper Discourse the night before He died.

I believe that if we interpret ourselves and our times in light of the truth of Christ, we will look upon all idolatry as folly, and false gods will vanish from our land. Like the statue of Nabuchodonosor's dream all idols have feet of clay. The prophet Daniel saw the great stone cut out of the mountain strike the feet of clay and break them to pieces; then the shattered statue became “. . . like chaff of a summer's thrashing floor and they were carried away by the wind . . . but the stone that struck the statue, became

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\*Alfred Lord Tennyson, Sir Galahad.

a great mountain and filled the whole earth" (*Daniel* 2:35). Pray that Christ will be like that stone for our dear land. Pray that He may fill our land because He fills our hearts.

## BETHLEHEM: SOUVENIR AND PROMISE

Address given on December 22, 1946

There is something of Christmas we all have in common and something of Christmas that is our very own. The real drama of Christmas is enacted in men's hearts rather than in their pageantry and display. Each man has his own Christmas story to tell; only he can tell it—and God. The carols, songs and stories we know so well are those that have found voice, but most wondrous Christmas stories have never been told; like Mary, many have "kept all these words pondering them" in their hearts. The Christmas of the priest is not the Christmas of the people. The Christmas of a parent is not the Christmas of a child. It is a different Christmas for the boy who stands in the snow with his eyes glued on the wonders of the shop window, which only his eyes can have, and for the boy whose arms are filled with the shop's toys.

Christmas is not the same for the man who believes that Jesus is the Son of God and Son of the Virgin Mary and for the man who does not believe it. Christmas was not the same for Jesus,

and Mary, and Joseph. This Christmas is not the same as your last, nor will it be the same as your next. It is an ever-changing day, because we are ever-changing people. One day Christmas meant everything because you clasped a doll, then it meant everything because you clasped a child—your own, then it meant everything because you clasped a Child—God's own. For every man Christmas is the day when joy is so great that it comes very close to sadness, and people cry with joy. Christ has done something to the day, that on it we must sing and pray, and weep and love.

Christmas song is the expression of sentiment and the expression of faith. It is the hymn of faith with sentiment, and if it is a sentimental song without faith, it is out of tune with the two thousand years old Christmas song of the Church. The faith that breaks into song is the act of the mind embracing the Christ-Child and whispering, "God!" Because of this faith the whole world has been singing Christmas hymns for two thou-

sand years. The hymns express two wondrous things, Emmanuel, which means God with us, and Virgin-Mother, which means Mary. These are the twin themes of the hymns of faith, two unique and wonderful things: the goodness of God to send His Son, and the goodness of God to send Him through the virgin womb of Mary; the goodness of God to make His Son small enough to fit into our arms, and to make a woman pure enough to bear Him. The setting of this gracious goodness of God was Bethlehem.

Bethlehem is a little white town populated with less than ten thousand people and with more than three thousand years of memories. Lovely are Bethlehem's memories of David, lovely the memories of Ruth, but loveliest of all is the memory of Jesus. Because of that memory Bethlehem became a word in every man's language and a word in every man's song. Tonight where the night is taut with cold men sing in a strange accent of Bethlehem. It is a magic word, a universal word, and when they hear it men dream of peace—and the Prince of Peace. This universal song is like the echo of

the angels' song, as though the song never died, but only sleeps, and then on Christmas night it stirs men's hearts again and lives upon their lips. And what do they sing of? Who is this Child that the whole world remembers his birth with song? St. John gives the answer: "In this has the love of God been shown . . . that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world . . ." (I *John* 4:9).

Bethlehem is souvenir of things past, and promise of things to come. It is souvenir of the Savior. There Jesus was born, and the name means savior. When Joseph was alarmed to see Mary with child, "an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Joseph, son of David, to take to thee Mary thy wife, for that which is begotten in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins.'" (*Matthew* 1:20-22). When the shepherds looked in open-mouthed wonder and fear at the brilliance of the glory of God in the night, and an angel standing by them, the angel said, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which shall be to all the people; for

there has been born to you today in the town of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (*Luke* 2:10f.). When years later an aged disciple of Jesus looked back upon that night he could only say, "In this is the love (of God) . . . that he has first loved us, and sent his Son a propiation for our sins" (1 *John* 4:10). Souvenir of the divine Savior, such is Bethlehem.

Bethlehem is the souvenir of a lovely lady, lovely and young, for purity is ever young. Mary was lovelier than the angels who crowded the night sky of Bethlehem, lovelier because she contained more of heaven than they; she contained Him who with the Father and the Holy Spirit makes heaven heaven. She was most beautiful at this midnight moment when motherhood came upon her, and she smiled at the infant in her arms and whispered, "Son," knowing that before many months had passed he would answer, "Mother." The cave of Bethlehem is souvenir of that unique motherhood, the virgin motherhood of Mary. When, nine months before, the angel Gabriel told Mary she would bring forth a son, her troubled question was, "How shall this happen, since I do not know

man?" (*Luke* 1:34). Gabriel gave her the answer he had from God, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; and therefore the Holy One to be born shall be called the Son of God" (*Ibid* 1:35). Divine Motherhood came to Mary by divine power, "not . . . of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (*John* 1:13). That power made the virgin vine fruitful, made the pure womb rich with Child. The Uncreated Love that hovered over the waters in the beginning of time, and caused them to teem with living things, overshadowed Mary and caused her to pulsate with the living thing that was Jesus, Son of God. Bethlehem is souvenir of that lady.

Bethlehem is souvenir of peace. The angels sang, "Peace on earth among men of good will" (*Luke* 2:14). When the shepherds came to the crib they found the peace of which the angels sang. There was peace in the solitude of the lamp-lit cave, but it was more than that. There was the peace about the quiet man the lady called Joseph, but it was more than that. There was a deep peace about the lady the man called Mary,

but it was more than that. The shepherds found the peace the angels sang about in the Child Mary and Joseph called Jesus. A share in that peace came upon the shepherds as they looked upon the Child wrapped so clean and tight in the swaddling-bands and lying so still on the soiled straw. The cave was filled with strong throbbing peace as they gazed upon the Child, and saw in His face the image of His mother and the image of God. Bethlehem is souvenir of the peace of Christ.

Bethlehem is more than a souvenir of the things past; it is a promise of things to come. Bethlehem is the memorial of the birth of the Savior. It heralds the fact that the Savior has come. But the fact that there is a Savior in the world does not save me. I am safe when He becomes my Savior. He becomes my Savior by faith and baptism; and He stays my Savior by good works. It is faith in the divine Savior that will save me. Human saviors are not enough to bring me to God absolutely and completely. Human saviors save themselves first. They are like hireling shepherds that have no care for the sheep, and flee when they see the wolf coming. But the divine Shepherd does

not save Himself. He saved others, and not Himself, so that men thought He could not save Himself, and said, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save!" (*Matthew 27:42*). Their cry was false. Isaias prophesied a long time before Jesus came that He would die because He willed it, and to save others from their sins. Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd . . . I lay down my life for my sheep" (*John 10:14-16*). The surest way to have the Savior of Bethlehem for your Savior is to have faith like Mary and Joseph.

Bethlehem is the promise of motherhood. It promises that we can be sons of Mary, because we can be brothers of Christ. The Son of God became partaker of our humanity that we might become partakers of His divinity. Because of Him we can be sons of God and brothers of Christ, and the brothers of Christ have Mary for mother. Jesus came to Bethlehem through Mary, and God wills that men come to Him through Mary. If the Son of God, "full of grace and truth" came to us through Mary, should not the sons of God by adoption go to the Father through Mary? Does not the Holy Spirit wish us to see this, when we see Mary

beside the crib at Bethlehem, beside the cross on Calvary, and beside the Apostles in the Upper Room when the Spirit came and the Church was born? Can one who was so close to Jesus at birth, so close to Him at death, so close to the Church at birth be stranger to the followers of Christ and the members of His Church? What other answer is there than that Mary is mother of the faithful. Bethlehem is promise of that.

Bethlehem is the promise of peace. But it is a promise that is conditioned. It is conditioned by the good will of men and the good will of God. The meaning of the angels' hymn is this: On earth peace among men in whom God is well pleased. In whom is the Father well pleased? Bethlehem gives the answer. Who was invited to the crib? The shepherds were invited. With them God was well pleased. They were free to come to the crib of Christ, because they could bring the things they had with them; no one would hesitate to bring sheep to the crib. Herod was not invited. Power had corrupted Herod so absolutely that He loved everything—everything—less than himself; wife, sons, friends, enemies went down in the bloody river of his self-

love and lust for power—and all the boys of Bethlehem two years and younger. Was Herod free to come to the crib? Could he bring his corruption to the crib of Christ? Or would he kill the Child if he came? The Child had come to die, but not yet. He had things to say to the Herods and to every man about peace. It was the same truth the angels sang; peace is conditioned by the good will of men and God. Christ said He gave a peace the world cannot give; and if the world cannot give it the world cannot take it away. If the world cannot give it, it hasn't got it. If it is to get it, it must listen to the song of the angels and to the Sermon on the Mount, and start trying to be pleasing to God. That is the promise—and the threat—of Bethlehem.

Yet a little while and the Savior's birthday will be here. May He be the Christmas you and I share in common, as we have shared these words about Him. The Christmas of a priest is not the Christmas of the people, for the priest has the Christmas Mass in his hands and in his power, but he can share that Mass a million ways, and he must, and he will, for when the silence of remembrance comes in the Christmas Mass, I will ask

Christ to remember you who who tries the impossible—to  
have listened so kindly to one speak for Christ.

## NAZARETH: A CHALLENGE TO CLIMB

Address given on December 29, 1946

This is the children's season. There is a wonderful magic in the air that makes us mindful of the children. There are movies for the children, because the magic has touched the movie-makers. There are shows for the children and operas, for the magic touches everything. There are parties for the children, even the poor children, who only get to parties when kind strangers bring them. It is the season of the children for it is the season of the Child, and we are mindful of the children because we remember the Child. We are carrying on an old, old custom began by the Magi.

They brought their gifts to the Child, and we bring our gifts to the children, knowing that to the Child it is the same as bringing gifts to Him, for He said so. Of course the greatest gift we can bring to the children is the knowledge of Him. He is the one person in the world they must meet. It is a good thing for the grown-ups too, for many have come to know Him in trying to introduce Him to the children. So in the midst of

parties and shows for the children there must be quiet moments when they sit and hear about Christ; there must be a silence when Jesus comes to them. I hope that this will be such a silence for the children, young and old, that listen.

Let us go over to Nazareth where the Child Jesus lived. Nazareth lies high in the hills of Galilee, hidden away and lonely. It is large enough to be called a village. It gave its name to Jesus, for men called Him the Nazarene. It gave its name to the Christians, for they were first called Nazarenes. Jesus made the village famous. It was strictly a small town, and people used to ask mockingly; "Can any good come out of Nazareth?" It startles me to think that God chose a cave to be born in and an unknown town to grow up in, until I remember that He chose a criminal's hill and a criminal's cross to die on. Christ's emphasis is never indefinite and indecisive. He says things in the simple declarative sentence of action. It is as though He said: Do you

want to know what I think of poverty? Look at the place I was born, and the place I grew up, and the place I died. To Me, poverty is important, and that's what I meant when I said: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Nazareth is a high and lonely town. It is like the Nazarene. He was high and lonely when He stood on Mount Olivet, and looked down upon Jerusalem and wept. When you come to Nazareth this idea strikes you: the people who follow Christ are high and lonely like the town. The high road is never crowded; nor is the low road crowded. You find the crowds in between, on the misty flats. Nazareth is a challenge to the Nazarenes of today—the Christians—to quit the misty flats of their indcision and their contradictions and climb to take their place beside the high and lonely Christ.

You catch this challenge when you sit on the hills above Nazareth, and look upon the village below, and dream of the Child. It is not a human challenge; it is divine. If there is not a little divinity in you, it will be a call to battle in a foreign language, and you will not stir. There

must be in you a little hunger for something more than you have now or have had in the past. There must be some awareness in you that everything you have tried you have found wanting. There must be a realization that your restlessness is not due to nerves, or indigestion, or your job, but that it is as basic to your being as the generation that brought you here. It is a restlessness from God, who made you for Himself. Then you are in the mood to sit on the hills of Nazareth and live in the past.

The first thing you notice when you see the boy Jesus on the streets of Nazareth is that he looks just like the other boys. He has the same olive skin and dark eyes; His hair is dark and abundant. His dress is the same as theirs, and His sandals. He runs as fast as the other boys, and breathes as hard as they. His shout is as clear and sharp as theirs; His aim as true when He hurls the sling. His appetite is as good as theirs; He loves the lush juicy figs and the purple grapes, or the loaf hot off the fire. He likes the games of chase and mystery in the caves of the hills. The carpenter's Son looks like the baker's

son, and the potter's son, and the tanner's son.

This is the first wonder of Nazareth: God's Son is like the baker's son or the tanner's son. Then He would be like the mechanic's son, or the automobile salesman's son, or the U.N. delegate's son. He would be a boy like them, and they can be a boy like Him. Then the bus driver's son, the senator's son, your son, can be like the boy of Nazareth. He has sanctified boyhood by being a boy. Boys who find it difficult to imagine God, much less love him, can love the Boy of Nazareth and so love God. All boys can know the companionship of God in the companionship of Christ. He can be their friend, and their religion can be a matter of friendship as is the rest of their life. Their worship can be an expression of that friendship. They can be clean and fair because of that friendship, and they can share the union with that friend in the Blessed Sacrament of His love. This is the first wonder of Nazareth, that God who made the wonderful thing that is a boy, did the more wonderful thing: he made his own Son a Boy to be the companion and

friend of every boy who dreams of being a man like Christ.

The next thing you think of when you look down upon Nazareth from the hills is that the Child is also a son. You think of His mother. She looks like the other mothers, except that her eyes are lovelier, and her hands, and her voice, and her soul. But like the other mothers she peers down the street when her Boy is late, she frets over a trifling wound on His knee, and tells Him He must be easier on His clothes—and then forgets it all when He lifts His head and smiles into her face. She forgets time and space and everything when she looks at Him asleep, or watches Him waking up.

This is the second wonder of Nazareth, the wonder of motherhood, singular virginal motherhood. Mary is not like the potter's wife, or the baker's wife, or the tanner's wife. The carpenter's wife is different, because before Joseph took Mary to his house she was with Child, and Joseph was told by a dream from God that Mary's Child had come by the Holy Spirit of God. And no man would touch a woman that the Holy Spirit had chosen as virginal spouse, and the Eternal Father had chosen

as the mother of his Son, the Messiah-King. But like the baker's wife Mary went to the fountain for water, like the tanner's wife she sat at the loom, and like the potter's wife she crushed the flour from the wheat. Here is the second wonder of Nazareth, that mothers have a model of motherhood, not divine, created like them, but mother of a divine Son, a mother full of grace from the first moment of her life.

Like Nazareth, Mary is high and lonely today. The crowds of women are in between on the misty flats, wavering to and fro in their indecision and contradictions; yearning to take the high and lonely road to Nazareth and Mary, but often taking the low road of the prudence of the flesh. Nowhere—nowhere—is the cleavage between the Nazarenes and the moderns more stark and glaring than in this matter of motherhood; nowhere is the abyss deeper and wider between the Christian of now and the Christian of then, than in this matter of childhood. This is an undeniable fact, whatever the reason may be: in this matter the Christians of old would not recognize the Christians of today; they would not

talk the same language, or think the same thoughts; the same Christians have changed beyond recognition. Nazareth sounds the cry of alarm. The whole town is talking of what has happened to the people whose lips profess Christ, and whose bodies deny Him.

The third wonder of Nazareth is the man, the carpenter Joseph. The wonder is that this average man was called to do an exceptional job, and he did it. The tribute of the Eternal God by the pen of the inspired Matthew is to call him just, and he whom God finds just needs nothing more. This ordinary man became extraordinary by the extraordinary work he was called upon to do. He was asked to have extraordinary faith, and by the grace of God he had it; he was asked to give extraordinary obedience, and by the grace of God he gave it; he was asked to keep extraordinary purity, and by the grace of God he kept it. By virtue of these extraordinary things he became an extraordinary person. The baker, and the tanner, and the potter knew Joseph, they knew his manhood and his work. But they watched the moral stature of this man grow until he was far

above them. Intimacy with Jesus and Mary was the extraordinary life of Joseph, and that extraordinary company made him an extraordinary man, a saint.

The wondrous lesson of this man is that we ordinary men can become extraordinary. We can do it by intimacy with Jesus and Mary. These two extraordinary people can change the most ordinary water into wine; they can transform the colorless tasteless thing that we are into the blood red glory and warmth of wine. We must run away from the misty flats where we vacillate and stagger, and begin to climb the hills to Nazareth. We have to leave the compromising crowd, and go up—up to the high and lonely town. That is the only hope for us and the crowd. More must desert the milling, unthinking crowd, if ever it is to be brought to think and to pray. Men the crowds

idolize must start the climb to Nazareth; attractive men, clever men, talented men, competent men; they must begin the climb to Nazareth. Then will the crowds follow, as they went up into the hills of Galilee looking for Jesus.

Then will the season of the children become a blessing for the children. It will not only be a day of fun, but a day of faith. The children resemble the parents not only in the face, but what is more important, in the heart. If the parents no longer resemble God how will the children ever resemble Him? For God's sake, and the sake of your children, and yourselves, join hands and begin the climb towards the high and the lonely Christ and the high and lonely Mary, and let the world be filled again with the Nazarenes—men who carry the spirit of Nazareth and the spirit of the Nazarene on the high road to God.

## GROUND PLAN OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Address given on January 5, 1947

My purpose at this time is to present the basic structure upon which the Catholic Faith rests. It is my hope that this effort at analysis will be of service to my listeners who are Catholic and to my listeners who are not Catholic; to the former, since every clearer perception they get of the faith is an added incentive to love it and live it; to the latter in the hope that it will aid them to a better knowledge of what Catholics believe and why they believe; better understanding makes for better relations.

It is the first tenet of the Catholic faith that it is a revealed religion, that is to say, it has been made known to us by God. It involves a personal entrance of God upon the stage of the world; God became one of the cast in the drama of humanity. This happened historically through Jesus Christ, in whom the divinity resided. The person of the Son of God dwelt among us as human, and used the mind and speech of men to make known to us the things we need

most to know about ourselves and God.

This idea of revelation as basic to the Catholic faith brings God into direct communication with man through Christ. This communication is not viewed as a natural thing; rather it is viewed as an extraordinary and wholly singular thing. It is a fusion of a higher and a lower order, a mingling of the divine with the human. We call it supernatural revelation, and it may be better understood by a comparison. I think you will agree that nature as we know it is a revelation of the Creator who made it, just as a painting or a book is a revelation of the author or the artist who did it. We may truly say that God reveals something of Himself in nature, just as the artist reveals something of himself in his art. Such a revelation of God in nature we may term natural revelation. I think you will further agree that, although you may know something of an artist from his work, a more sure way to know him is to make his acquaintance, to see him, and

speak with him. Now the revelation that Catholicism supposes is just that sort of thing; God speaking to men in Christ. The implication, therefore, of belief in a divine Christ is that divine truth comes from Him to us.

This visitation of God to the world is the basis of Catholic Christianity. When that idea is caught, attitudes that seem unreasonable take on a different aspect. For example, if I believe that through Christ direct contact is established between God and man, and then I can be shown that He taught divorce to be unlawful, my unalterable attitude toward divorce will be better understood. You may pity me for believing as I do, you may feel that I am missing out on a lot of the fun, you may even consider me a fool as the Greeks did the Christians of old, but you must at least understand that I am consistent in trying to make behavior conform to conviction.

This is my first point, then, to clarify the idea of supernatural revelation with the implications that follow. It means you get the ideas of your religion from Christ in whom God spoke; which means you get them from God. You may say:

If only I could be sure that Christ is the Son of God! I have not time to go into that point here, but this I can say: I think it can be proven satisfactorily to the human mind that there is sufficient motive to believe it, and I believe that the act of faith is a gift of God, a grace. Consequently a man must seek and pray; seek knowledge, and pray for grace.

The second basic tenet of the Catholic Church is that God was so kind as to give us a second visitation, the visitation of the Holy Spirit. Now the first visitation of God to earth was in Christ. It was a temporary visitation. John, the Evangelist, expresses it strikingly in the phrase, "he pitched his tent amongst us" (*John* 1:14 Greek). The first visitation was a corporeal visitation, that is, the Son of God dwelt in a body of His own; men could see Him passing by. John wrote; "We saw his glory—glory as of the only-begotten of the Father" (*John* 1:14). The purpose of God's first visitation was the redemption of humanity. The second visitation differs from the first in these three things. The coming of the Holy Spirit was not a temporary visitation;

Christ promised, "... I will ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate to dwell with you forever, the Spirit of Truth . . ." (John 14:16). It was not corporeal, that is, it was not a bodily presence, but rather a spiritual presence; the presence of the Holy Spirit might be represented by way of exception by a physical thing like a flame of fire as on the first Pentecost, but of itself it was an unseen spiritual presence. Finally, the purpose of this divine visitation was the sanctification of men, the distribution of the grace of the divine Redeemer.

The abiding presence of the Holy Spirit was assured to the Apostles by the promise of Christ. He said, "... the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name . . . will teach you all things . . ." (John 14:26). We might expect this promise of Christ to be absolutely certain of fulfillment. This abiding presence of the divine Spirit is the basic reason why the Catholic looks to the Apostles' successors with unquestioning confidence in matters of religion. I believe that in keeping with the promise of Christ the Spirit abides with the Apostolic Church forever, and consequent-

ly that the Church is a sure guide in the affairs of the human spirit, affairs of doctrine and morality. Therefore, with certainty born of faith I am sure of an unerring guide in the most important affair of life.

Furthermore, I know that this whole thing has to work out in some down-to-earth fashion if it is to help earthly people; it must be well-defined and specific. I find it is well-defined and specific when all the Bishops of my Church, successors to the Apostles, agree that a certain point of doctrine is part of the revelation of Christ, or when the Holy Father, speaks in the role of successor of Peter, as supreme shepherd of the flock. This gives a tangible meaning to the guiding presence of the Holy Spirit. If the presence of the Spirit remains vague, indefinable, uncontrollable, it can easily be reduced to phantastic levels or easily become the tool of religious quackery.

But you may ask: Did this well-defined and specific pattern come from the mind of Christ or from Rome's theologians? I reply that it came from both, and I explain forthwith. The ground plan of the organization of the Church is found in the

New Testament. In other words it is found in the teaching of Christ. The way the ground plan functioned in the year of the Lord 47 and the way it functions in the year of the Lord 1947 may differ, just as it may differ when three hundred thousand Christians are involved and three hundred and twenty-five million are involved, just as it may differ when the Church was bounded by the Mediterranean shoreline and is now bounded by the terrestrial globe. Theologians are men who train their minds on God and His revelation. Their intellects probe the truths of faith; they try to sound the depths of divine revelation. They do not consider themselves called to distort doctrine to fit political situations, or to piece theology together out of Greek myths or Oriental fables. The line of theologians from Paul of Tarsus to those of our own day strive with humble hearts to use their good heads to teach doctrine, not to invent it.

The third basic doctrine of the Catholic Faith flows from the second. We accept an organized Church. It is organized into those who rule and those who are ruled, the clergy and the

laity. The field of ruling is the things of the spirit. Those who rule are equipped to rule by training and education in the things of Christ, as twelve Galileans were trained and instructed to rule in the things of Christ by Christ. The Church expects those who rule to point the way, not like signposts, but like mountain guides. Paul, a ruler, expressed what was expected of the rulers: "Not that we lord it over your faith, but rather we are fellow-workers in your joy . . ." (2 *Corinthians* 1:23). Paul viewed the power to rule as one of the gifts of the Spirit, and the greatest of these he said is Charity. This is apostolic ideal for rules and rulers in an organized Church.

Secondly, an organized Church is a visible Church. It is a thing to be seen. Men can view the files of officers and men of the Church; they can view the ascending ranks of officers. They can see the union of men in worship on the Lord's Day. They can see the behavior of men professing in action on Monday the things they confessed with the lips on Sunday. But they can see more than that. They can behold the signs of God amongst us, the visible

sacraments of the visible Church. For the Catholic they are not mere symbols, not empty signs, but signs full of meaning and reality, by reason of the intention and design of Christ. Take the Eucharist, the central Sacrament and the greatest. We believe in the sign of bread not as an empty symbol but as a sign full of the presence of the Body of Christ. The reason we believe it is because Jesus the night before He died took bread in His hands and said ". . . this is my body" (*Matthew 26:26*). So the Twelve understood it for they had heard Him promise in Galilee to give them His flesh to eat. So Paul understood it, when he wrote to the Corinthians, reminding them that ". . . whoever eats this bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily, will be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord" (*1 Corinthians 11:27*).

There you have it: a sketch of the ground-plan. The Catholic admits that religion is and ever will be a personal thing be-

tween a man and his God, but he is thrilled with the belief that God has come to him in Christ and continues to come to him in the Holy Spirit. The Catholic believes he is helped in his approach to God by Christ the divine Redeemer; by the Spirit the divine Sanctifier, by the Redeemer's grace coming to him through seven visible signs, by the Spirit operating through chosen and trained guides in an organization—yes, more than an organization, for its internal life force is the Spirit of God, and therefore it is called by Paul the Body of Christ.

It is not easy to sum up briefly a thing as broad in actuality and as deep in history as the Catholic Church. But I hope that this sketch will serve to help Catholics see the Church better, and to others may it serve as an introduction to the ground plan of an institution which one, not of its membership described as "the greatest religious and political creation known to history." (Adolph Harnack).

## 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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