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CRUCIAL QUESTIONS



James Gillis C.S.P.
The Catholic Hour

CRUCIAL QUESTIONS

by

REV. JAMES M. GILLIS, C. S. P.

Editor of The Catholic World

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WHY ARE YE FEARFUL, O YE OF LITTLE FAITH?

(Matthew 8:26).

Address delivered on October 6, 1940

Everyone seems to be saying nowadays that civilization has come to a sorry pass. It is true. Too true. So obviously true as to be a platitude, or what men used to call in the slang of yesterday a "bro-mide". Certain writers and speakers say that here and now in this second quarter of the twentieth century, we face a crisis more serious than any known to our ancestors. Hamlet, the melancholy Prince of Denmark, exclaimed, "The time is out of joint: O cursed spite, that ever I was born to set it right!" But our contemporary pessimists say not that a joint is out of place here or there in the organism of civilization but that the whole framework is in a state of collapse; and instead of complaining that they were born to set it right, they declare that no one can set it right. They are not merely pessimists but defeatists.

One of them, Hermann Rauschning, formerly an associate of Hitler, has written a terrifying volume called *The Revolution of Nihilism*. There have been revolutions before, he says, but never such a revolution as this. Hitherto a revolution had for its purpose the removal of one form of government and the substitution of another. But the revolution now in progress, he claims, the Nazi-Communist revolution, aims at the obliteration of all government and the substitution of nihilism. The purpose of Hitler and Stalin, he insists, is not to change the world but to destroy the world.



In the city of Rome, "Immortal Rome," there are, it is said, the ruins of seven or eight civilizations piled one upon another like geological strata, the present Rome, the one now visible on the surface of the earth, being perhaps the ninth. A new civilization always rose on the ruins of the old. But Herr Rauschnig seems to say that this time there isn't going to be any new civilization. The one we have is all there is, there isn't any more. The world will not rise again like Rome but will remain buried like Babylon, Sodom, Gomorrah. "All our pomp of yesterday is one with Nineveh and Tyre," says Kipling. All our civilization of today, says Rauschnig, art, architecture, music, literature, manners, morals, religion will be so thoroughly blotted out that the *next* generation—a generation of savages—will see no sign of it as we see no signs of Ur of the Chaldees, or of Zenobia's Palmyra.

"*Après moi, le deluge,*" said Louis XV, or whoever invented the phrase and put it in his mouth, "After me, the deluge." And sure enough, there was a deluge, a deluge of blood. But the deluge subsided and a new world emerged, as the mountains and the plains, even the cities and towns, somewhat damp no doubt but intact, emerged when the universal deluge subsided in the days of Noe. But after this present deluge, if I understand Rauschnig, the world, at least the world we call civilization, if not the world of land and sea and sky, trees and rocks and hills and hollows, will never emerge again. In Genesis we read that at the beginning "the earth was void and empty and darkness was upon the face of the deep." Another word for the void, empty, dark world is Chaos. Now when the Hitler-Stalin combination has done its deadly work

Chaos will have come again. For this revolution is the Revolution of *Nihilism*. I make no commentary upon what Rauschning says the two dictators are attempting. But I will venture the hesitant remark that it will be quite a trick if they do it. As for me, I don't believe they can do it.

Another philosopher of history equally learned, Christopher Dawson, in a very stimulating and exciting volume, in spite of its title *Enquiry Into Religion and Progress*, says in more measured phraseology, "Western civilization at the present is passing through a crisis which is *essentially* different from anything that has been previously experienced. Other societies in the past have changed their social institutions, or their religious beliefs under the influence of external forces or the development of internal growth. But none like our own has ever faced the prospect of fundamental alterations of beliefs and institutions on which the whole fabric of social life rests" (p. 259).

Now who was the simpleton who said that he had tried again and again to be a philosopher, but he couldn't because "cheerfulness was always breaking through"? There seems to be an understanding that you cannot be a deep thinker unless you are lugubrious, and that if you can still smile or hope, or so much as say "Cheer up, it may not be true," it proves you are no philosopher. But there was in ancient days a very wise man, in fact they say he was the wisest who ever lived, King Solomon, whom Dawson seems for the moment to have forgotten. "This crisis is essentially different from anything that has been previously experienced," says Dawson. But Solomon says "What is it that hath been? The same thing that shall be. What is it that hath

been done? The same that shall be done. Nothing under the sun is new, neither is any man able to say: Behold this is new: for it hath already gone before in the ages that were before us."

Now it does seem to me that a philosopher of history should not forget history. Perhaps a little more history and a little less philosophy would do no harm. And it seems to me furthermore that the greatest expert on history is the Catholic Church. She doesn't have to *read* history. She *lives* history. She makes history. She doesn't have to dig it out of some crumbling tome in a musty library. She digs it out of her memory. She has the tomes indeed, and the library. The schoolboy who had a jumble of history and of physics in his head, confounding "Vatican" with "vacuum", produced the boner: "A vacuum is a great empty space where the pope lives." The Vatican is not empty and if it were, the pope couldn't fill it. It contains the greatest library in existence, greatest at least in the records of what has been going on in this ever changing world for the last two thousand years. But if the pope wishes to learn whether Dawson and Rauschning are right when they say there never was a time like this, he doesn't have to go poking into those folios, those incunabula, those parchment manuscripts. All he has to do is remember. What the Church remembers he remembers. She remembers because she has seen and heard. He remembers because he has inherited the traditions and memories of the Church. Her experience has been passed on to him like a castle or an estate or a family tradition that is passed from father to son by inheritance for hundreds of years.

Only two years ago when Spain was devastated

and unnatural atrocities were done that had not been done in the memory of living men, the horrified world said "such savagery is unprecedented." But the pope, and I may now say all who have inherited with him the Catholic tradition and the Catholic memory, might well have replied: "Savage indeed, but not hitherto unknown. Have you forgotten that more than a thousand years ago Spain was overrun by the Moors and her children afflicted with such tortures as only Moslems could devise? Have you forgotten, or did you never know, that before the Moors the Visigoths ravaged Spain and France? Even today in such border towns as Carcassonne and Arles and Avignon the inhabitants will tell you of what happened to their Christian ancestors in the Visigoth invasion, and show you evidences of barbaric cruelties the like of which cannot be surpassed today."

As in Spain, so in Hungary, conquered and occupied for centuries by the fanatical followers of Mohammed. Across the Mediterranean in Egypt and Algeria and Tunisia you may follow the march of the terrible Turk who in the seventh century did indeed destroy a civilization, devastate a continent, and strike such a blow at the Church of North Africa that it has never recovered.

But the high water mark of the Moslem invasion is not Algiers or Tripoli, or Gibraltar or Toledo, but far north in France. During the World War, while men were talking about the Battle of the Marne and about Joffre and Foch, we Catholics were saying "How curious! A Battle at the Marne once more. But *the* Battle of the Marne was that in the seventh century when Charles Martel drove

back the Mohammedan hordes and saved the continent of Europe from a fate like that of Asia, heathenism, paganism, Mohammedanism, stagnation, decay, the death and burial of a civilization."

Also in the World War when men spoke of "The Huns", we said *Huns? Huns?* These are not the original genuine Huns. We remember the Huns under Attila, the Scourge of God who boasted that the grass never grew again where the hoofs of his horse had trod—Attila, who came from the borders of Tatar and cut a swath a thousand miles wide and two thousand miles long, drenching all the conquered lands with the blood of uncountable victims. That *was* a Hun, a "savage king of still more savage men," hundreds of thousands of them if not millions, as fiendishly cruel as the Iroquois or the Sioux, but with a knowledge of organization and military strategy such as the wild Indians never learned.

With Attila the Hun, Alaric the Goth who captured Rome and sacked it, giving over the metropolis of Greco-Roman civilization for fourteen days to his rapacious bloodthirsty lust-maddened followers. "Sack of Rome"? Do I say Sack of Rome? I once attempted to count the times Rome has been sacked, beginning with the Gauls in the fourth century before Christ and ending with the sack in 1527. I gave it up. I don't know how often Rome has been pillaged, battered, burned, destroyed. Ask the antiquarians. But this I know: Every one of those catastrophes, those inundations of savages, those carnivals of rape and pillage and slaughter, has left its mark in the memory of the Church. She was there. She saw it. She suffered it. She needs not read a book. It is graven with a pen of iron on the fleshly tablets of her heart. That and a hundred

similar catastrophes that have happened to Church and State, to religion and to society, she remembers. Ours is the Universal Church. Her experiences are not limited to Rome, to the Italian or the Iberian peninsula, or to the coasts of the Mediterranean, or to France or Hungary. She is the Mother of all European peoples; she cannot forget the calamities that overwhelmed the Austrians, the Armenians, the Bulgarians, the Poles who have been at various times slaughtered by millions, as men slaughter rabbits in Australia, as if men were indeed vermin. She remembers not alone the cruelty of heathen to Christian, but of Christian to Christian; as in the case of the Irish who had scarcely recovered from the invasion of the heathen Danes when they were afflicted by the invasion of the Anglo-Saxon Christians, and commenced their martyrdom of seven centuries.

In the heart of Asia, also, the Church ventured as early as the seventh century. She witnessed, and in her own flesh and blood experienced, the devastating westward sweep of Tamerlane and Genghis Khan in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Those incredible Mongolians are called semi-civilized, because they were masters of the art and craft of war, as skillful perhaps as Alexander or Napoleon or Caesar; but they were as cruel as raw savages. Legends have come down to us of their erecting pyramids, high as those of Egypt, of the skulls and bones of their victims.

All this, I say, the Church remembers, and with the Church the pope and all Catholics who are, as all should be, history-minded. All this and a thousand other instances of what seemed irreparable disaster. To mention but one more, there were the

wars of religion in the sixteenth century, when fifteen millions died in Germany alone in battle or of famine or pestilence.

So, when a man like Rauschning—and dozens who copy him—talk about the imminence of Nihilism, or when more sober-minded, less alarmist scholars like Dawson, say: “this crisis is different, essentially different,” we say “Different? Is anything different?” When they say, “Unless this war ends as we hope and pray, with victory for the side we favor, civilization and religion will be set back a thousand years, if not obliterated once and for all,” we say “perhaps,” but we must be permitted a little dose of doubt about the annihilation of our Church and of the civilization that She created. The Church has been here a long time, and she is due to remain a longer time. “I am with you all days,” said Her Divine Founder, “unto the end of the world”. We often call the Church the Bark of Peter. When a storm on the Lake of Genesareth threatened to engulf the Bark of Peter and the disciples in alarm cried “Lord save us, we perish”; the Master awoke from sleep, or from seeming sleep, and asked with divine calm, “Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?”

I dare say that Saint Peter never forgot that mild rebuke. His faith did not waver again. Neither does that of his successor, the present Peter—the Pope. The Holy Father does not grow hysterical. He does not pace up and down the corridors of the Vatican, crying “Woe! All is lost! this is the most serious crisis ever known; there never was a time like this!” Not that he is apathetic; not that he blinds his eyes to the genuine gravity of the situation. He is awake, and alert. He is mod-

erately alarmed. But if he does not minimize the evil, neither does he magnify it. He is not only the successor of Peter; he is vicegerent of Christ. As such he has taken on some of the calm, the interior peace, the mental balance, the emotional equilibrium of his Master. I suggest that we profit by his example.

WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?

Address delivered on October 13, 1940

“What’s It All About?” is one of those vague indefinite expressions that may mean anything, everything, nothing. At present it happens to be a slang phrase, flung around indiscriminately, sometimes making sense, sometimes nonsense. I have heard an impatient listener at a violin recital say of an incompetent performer, who was floundering around in a Beethoven Sonata, “He doesn’t know what it’s all about.” A spectator at a newsreel of a congressman attempting clumsily to defend some dubious policy of his party said in a stage whisper, “He doesn’t know what it is all about.” Listening to three men of national reputation in a debate on the Philippine question I felt that not any of them knew what it was all about. There appeared in the papers a picture of the great great great grandson of Paul Revere pulling the string to unveil a statue of his famous ancestor. The bashful fellow was caught by the camera with such a timid little smile on his face that he seemed about to cry. “The poor child doesn’t know what it’s all about,” said a dear kind lady. But perhaps, at that, the boy knew as much about the purpose of the American Revolution as some of the big wigs on the platform, who in the interests of political partisanship were ready to nullify the achievement of Paul Revere.

The best known and best liked playwright and comedian of the American stage fifteen or twenty years ago, after dancing and singing and waving a flag all evening would answer a curtain call with a monologue commencing “Life is a funny proposition

after all; we're here today and away tomorrow," meaning not we're on Broadway today and on the road tomorrow, "but we're alive today and dead tomorrow." It was a semi-serious piece, an attempt to puzzle out an answer to the question "What's It All About?" a sort of Broadway version of Shakespeare's *Seven Ages of Man*, from the infant, "mewling in the nurse's arms," to the "lean and slippered pantaloone" ending "this strange eventful history" of human life in "second childishness and mere oblivion."

"Strange, eventful history" says Shakespeare. The history of man on this planet puzzles, fascinates, baffles dramatists, poets, philosophers, all manner of thinkers, profound and superficial, religious and irreligious; it thrills the idealists, angers the pessimists, and seems to nauseate the cynics. Shakespeare returns to it again and again both in his comedies and his tragedies. Whether he writes of country buskins like Bottom in "hempen homespun" upon whom the fairies, that is to say the fates, play practical jokes, or of disgruntled amateur philosophers like Hamlet, brooding over "the oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely" and all the other grievances listed in that familiar soliloquy; whether he treats of a poltroon like Falstaff or of a real soldier "seeking the bubble reputation in the cannon's mouth"; whether of the big blackamoore, honest, stupid, tragic, pathetic Othello, or of some wily devil like Iago or Richard, masquerading in human form, Shakespeare is forever occupied with nothing else but that formidable question, "What's It All About?" Man is born, grows, matures, works, plays, sins, suffers, marries, procreates, rejoices, grieves, sickens, dies. Sometimes he seems like a god upon

the earth, or an angel; again, as King David says, "he is compared with senseless beasts and made like to them." Sometimes he seems to be master of his fate, dictator of his destiny, a lord of all creation, but again he is heard complaining like Gloucester in *King Lear*, "as flies to wanton boys are we to the gods; they kill us for their sport." Beast or angel, man or devil, master or slave, victor or victim, he struts his brief hour upon the stage of life, and passes off; he has his entrance and his exit.

Looking upon human life as spectators at some bewildering play, men ask "What does it mean? What *can* it mean? What's it all about?" All literature, art, music, poetry, drama and the better sort of fiction—fiction which is not fiction but truth—are really nothing but an attempt to answer these questions. "What's it all about?" asks Shakespeare, and all that he writes—comedies, histories, tragedies—are his answer. Dramatists and philosophers, Sophocles and Socrates, and Seneca and Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, and ten thousand thinkers in their tradition, aim to interpret human life, that is to say "What's It All About?" Hendrik Ibsen, Eugene O'Neill, Thomas Hardy, Schopenhauer, Voltaire, Mark Twain (the later Mark Twain, humorist turned pessimist, the Mark Twain who wrote *The Mysterious Stranger*), Aldous Huxley, Hector Bolitho, author of *Twelve Against the Gods*, Ernest Haeckel, curious combination charlatan and scientist, author of *The Riddle of the Universe*, Robert G. Ingersoll, probably honest but bombastic and blasphemous—But why prolong the interminable catalogue? All literature in prose and verse, all art and drama and the more ambitious kind of music, Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Wagner, are all concerned with

that seemingly flippant question "What's It All About?" Aristotle said, twenty four hundred years ago, that man is born with an insatiable desire to know. What he wants to know is the meaning of life, and what there is, if anything, after this life, and what is the connection between this life and the other. It's a far cry from Aristotle to George M. Cohan, but the Yankee Doodle Boy who would suddenly swing into the monologue "Life is a funny proposition after all," was, I suppose, trying to convey to the rather blase Broadway audiences, something of what Aristotle tried to tell the Greeks on the Areopagus in Athens.

All thinkers, great and small, since the birth of thought have pondered the questions "What is Man?" and "What is Life?" "Is this the Only Life? If there is no other, what can be the purpose of this? If life is, as some one has said, a flash of light between two eternities of darkness, if we emerge out of one black void and disappear into another, what's it all about?"

St. Paul, of course, like all profound thinkers—he indeed being the most profound of them all—says that if this were all there is of life Christians should be the "most miserable of men." Undoubtedly: The higher our hopes, the deeper our despair. But all other men would be miserable too. No man can be satisfied with this painful thing we call life. With his hopes and desires and anticipations and expectations it would be infernal torture to man to be told that what he suffers, he suffers to no purpose.

Anatole France, who concealed the deep cynicism of a Schopenhauer under the shallow flippancy of a Voltaire, said "*L'Univers est enragé*," "the universe is mad." The word "enragé" carries, I believe,

the connotation of rabid. The French use it of a mad dog. Apparently then, according to Anatole France, the whole world and all men and women in it are suffering like a dog with rabies. We are all mad—not only with ambition, greed, lust, the lust of the flesh or blood lust, but mad especially with hallucinations of grandeur. We think there is something else but there isn't. "Man who elevated himself to the skies," says Ernest Haeckel, "is found to be only a placental mammal, of no more importance in the universe than the microscopic infusoria," the bugs that move blindly in the slime under the murky waters of a stagnant pond. Haeckel was a Darwinian extremist and I take his cynical utterance to be the absolute ultimate of the animal theory of man.

But man will not accept any theory of materialism and animalism offered him in explanation of himself and of his life in this world. Man knows that he is man, no matter what the biologists say. "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy," says Hamlet. And there are more things in the heart and soul of man than are named and numbered, described, defined, analyzed and synthesized, in the works of Darwin and Haeckel and Freud. The evolutionists go to the animals to learn about man. Why not go to man to learn about man? Scientists—of the materialistic stripe—are so intent upon fossils, fish, serpents, simians, alleged antecedents of man, that they have no eyes for man himself. "I sought Thee and I found Thee not because I sought Thee without; again I sought Thee and found Thee because I sought Thee within," says St. Augustine, speaking of God. These modern materialists are so sure there is no God that they don't even look for

Him, without or within. But they do look for man, and some one should convey to them the elementary information that the place to look for man is in man, not in rocks, or pools of slime, not in the depths of the sea or the heart of the jungle; not in laboratories or test tubes, not in vats of saline solution; not in protoplasm, atoms, molecules, ions, electrons—but in man.

They themselves insist that man has been in the making for countless ages, and that all the forces in the universe have been in labor to produce man. Very well then, why not look at the finished product? Don't ask the rocks, don't ask the amoeba, don't ask the tadpole, or the walrus, or the wolf, or the orang outang. Ask the *Man*: What are you? What do you make of yourself?

And man will tell them. I don't mean merely man the philosopher, or man the theologian. I would not send skeptical enquirers to Aristotle or Immanuel Kant or Spinoza or Thomas Aquinas. These were professional philosophers; scientists are suspicious of philosophers—suspicious and perhaps jealous. So jealous that they are forever trespassing out of their own field of science into the field of philosophy.

But if not to philosophers, why not to the prophets, the seers, the poets? These dig their material out of the heart of man. There is David and Solomon, and the writer of Job, and Isaias and John the Divine, and Paul and Augustine and a Kempis and Dante and Shakespeare (there is ten thousand times more knowledge of man in Shakespeare than in Immanuel Kant) and Wordsworth and Coleridge and Conrad and Masfield.

Above all, first of all, if the materialists could overcome their prejudices, their narrow notion that

man is to be studied in the field and the laboratory but not in his own heart, I would send them to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. "He knew what was in man and needed not that any man should tell him."

The poets and prophets know man because like the pope in Browning's *The Ring and the Book* (a superb revelation, by the way, of human nature) they "have studied many hearts beginning with their own." Ask them and they will answer: "We don't know all about man: the subject is vast, profound, illimitable. Man is a world in himself; to study man is to study the world: He is a combination of all the forces that have been at work in this mysterious universe since the dawn of time; to understand him would be to know the universe. We don't know man thoroughly. But we do know enough about man to laugh at the ridiculous and obscene idea that man is only a highly organized intricately constructed animal. If that were all, man could be as content as a cow; no more introspective than a hippopotamus soaking at his ease in the tepid waters of a tropical stream; if he were only an animal, he would experience no more remorse for his sins than a tiger that has killed a gazelle. If he were only an animal, that question—"What's It All About?"—would not so much as occur to him. The fact that he asks it and cannot rest content until he answers it is the best of evidence that there is something in his nature, something in the depths of his being that goads him like a gadfly, that makes him discontent with what he has and what he sees, that tells him he was not born to die; something that not only stings him and tortures him but that lifts him up to ecstasy, that enables him to fare forth—in the body or out of the

body, he knows not—beyond the *flammanitia moenia mundi*, the flaming ramparts and bastions that mark the edge of this world; something that tells him that he does not belong to this world but to another, and that his life on this planet is no more like the real life he is to live than the life of the embryo in the dark narrow confines of the womb is like life in the sunshine under the wide sky, surrounded on all sides by the wide horizon, surrounded but not confined because that wide horizon expands forever and forever as he approaches.

And so we come upon the answer to the question with which we commenced, "What Is It All About?" Why all these torturing thoughts at the roots of the mind of man? Why all these longings and expectations of a life beyond life? Why these "unsearchable groanings of man's heart"? There must be meaning in the incessant repetition of the drama of life, the drama that neither Sophocles nor Shakespeare could write, try as they would. And what *is* that meaning? Why do we labor and strive and grieve and struggle? Why are we so tempted? Why do we sin? When we sin, why can we not be happy? Why do we repent and suffer agonies of remorse? These and a thousand more questions arising in the human soul are the material of which all literature, poetry, drama, fiction (fiction I have said which if it be literature is not fiction), all art and music, are composed. Religion deals with these questions and answers them. All human experiences, sufferings, joys, problems—though not the essential substance of religion—are taken into account by religion. The answer given by religion corroborates the answer given by literature and art and philosophy.

This life is not so much life as a prelude to life.

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If there were no other life but this, this life would be horrible, inexplicable, indefensible, inexcusable. The only explanation and justification of this life is the other life. This life without the other would be like one hemisphere without the other. This hemisphere is in the dark, the other in the light. To die is not to go from darkness to deeper darkness, but from darkness to light. "Out of the shadows and the images into the light."

"What then, finally, is this life all about?" It's about the other life, the true life, immortal life.

WHY MUST THE INNOCENT SUFFER?

Address delivered on October 20, 1940

In religion, as in all other departments of human life, complete intellectual honesty is indispensable. There is scarcely any worse sin than refusal to see and to confess the truth. So, in considering the question which concerns us today, "Why Must the Innocent Suffer?" we would best commence by admitting that we do not know. That is to say, we do not know, if to know means to comprehend. "We know in part, and we prophesy in part" (I *Cor.* 13:9), says St. Paul; and he adds, "We see now through a glass in a dark manner" (I *Cor.* 13:12). We see not as one looking at a physical object in full sunlight, but like one groping in gloom. If anyone tells you that to him the mysteries of religion are as plain as A.B.C. you may put him down as a charlatan. Once in my life I heard a man say "Predestination is no mystery to me." "Wonderful," said I, "you are more privileged than St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Augustine, or St. Paul. You must be a prophet—more than a prophet."

In the Catholic religion, at least, mystery is recognized and emphasized. "What is a mystery?" asks the Catechism, and the answer is given, "A mystery is a truth that we cannot fully understand." That question and answer should appear in catechisms of science as well as of religion. There is as much mystery in a hen's egg as in the Holy Trinity, said Huxley. Whether he said it with malice or with reverence, it is true. Mystery is mystery. One mystery is no more a mystery than another. If you don't comprehend, you don't comprehend. The poet said that if he understood a flower in the crannied

wall, he would understand God. Religion has no monopoly of mystery. The whole universe is crammed with mystery. One of the most highly reputed scientists of our day wrote a volume which he entitled *This Mysterious Universe*. So, if a scientist declares that he will not accept religion because he refuses to recognize mystery, you may also put him down as a charlatan. There are as many scientific charlatans as theological charlatans, if not more.

So much by way of warning to those who expect a too precise answer to the question, "Why must the innocent suffer?" So much in defense of anyone who attempts some sort of answer. The greatest intellect of the last nineteen hundred years, St. Augustine, was held back from the Catholic Faith in his early days because, for one reason, he demanded, as one editor of the *Confessions* says, "a trenchant uncompromising answer" to his questions—"such an answer as young men love." Young or old, we all like to have unqualified answers to our questions, absolutely clear solutions of our problems. We feel balked and frustrated if we don't get them. But we have no right to expect them. We live in a world of shadows and images. Plato said so twenty three hundred years ago, and another man of genius, not much short of Plato, Cardinal Newman, said that leaving this life for the next we pass "out of shadows and images into the light." Then and not until then shall we see face to face and know as we are known.

To come to the question: Why must good people who have never done any one harm suffer? Especially why must they suffer at the hands of the wicked? "Christ," we say, "is on the cross and Herod on the throne." There was blood on that throne, as on the Cross, but the blood on Herod's

throne was other men's blood; the blood on the Cross of Christ was His own. Why does the man who spills the blood of others sit in comfort and honor, surrounded by fawning courtiers, while the Man who pours out His blood for His brethren hangs in agony and disgrace, surrounded by murderers and blasphemers? That's the question that confronts us. To answer it we should have to dig down deep to the roots of reason, and mount to the heights of revelation. Even then we shall not find the trenchant uncompromising answer that St. Augustine sought.

But one thing we do know: The Crucifixion of Our Lord is not only a fact but a symbol. From the day of that supreme tragedy until now the word "cross" has been used as a synonym for pain, physical and mental, for anguish of soul, for disappointment, shame, poverty, disgrace, dejection, despondency, the endurance of injustice, and, in brief, for suffering of every sort. Our Saviour said, "If any man will come after me . . . let him take up his cross, and follow me" (*Matt. 16:24*). "Where I am, there also shall my minister be" (*John 12:26*). "Where I am," He says. But He was nailed to the Cross. "Come down," said the scoffers, "Save Thyself." "Save Thyself and us," said the impenitent thief. But He came not down. He died on the Cross. His disciples, therefore, must be nailed to the cross, perhaps remain upon it and die upon it. The disciple is not above the Master.

Christians are not alone in enduring the cross. Suffering is ubiquitous, perpetual, inevitable. In ancient days, as in our own, armies have swept across the face of the earth, making a shambles of one country after another and deliberately attempting to annihilate entire races and whole populations.

When a Persian or a Macedonian or a Roman conqueror had won a victory, the vanquished were led away to be enslaved or slaughtered. Some few of them were guilty (if it be a guilty thing to defend one's own land), but for the most part they were poor innocent peasants, serfs, workingmen, no more responsible for the calamity that befell them than the French farmer, the Czecho-Slovakian mill worker, the Norwegian fisherman, the Hollander who grew tulips, milked the cows, made butter and cheese, was responsible for Hitler. Peasants don't make wars. Politicians make wars. The politicians live, the peasants die. The guilty survive, the innocent perish.

Of old, victors in war led their victims captive, chained them in dungeons, left them to starve, or dragged them out to be devoured by beasts in the amphitheatre, to make a holiday for the mob. Nowadays, statesmen (save the mark!), "statesmen" attempt to do away with vanquished peoples by economic strangulation. Then statesmen on the other side turn the tables and wreak dire vengeance on the conquerors. The leaders of both peoples, Fuehrers, Duces, Generals, strut around, proudly laden with medals, accept the idolatrous worship of the people, deliver truculent speeches, live in palaces, feed on the fat of the land. When they die, statues are erected to them. Around the statues crowds gather to listen to panegyrics, to scatter flowers, to shout and to sing, and to wish that another such conqueror might arise to lead them again to the battlefield for slaughter, as their fathers and grandfathers and forebears back to the beginning of history were led forth to slaughter.

For hundreds of years before William Wilber-

force and Abraham Lincoln, the poor black man in the jungles of Africa who hadn't so much as known the existence of the white man and the white man's civilization (what irony there can be in that phrase "white man's civilization") were hunted down, whipped in droves like cattle from the forests to the sea, crowded into the stinking holds of slave ships, transported to another continent, sold like cattle, whipped as even cattle were not whipped. How much blood was spilled, what rivers of tears flowed, what poor simple hearts were broken, who can say, except perhaps the angels who record such things?

White men too, guilty of no worse crime than that of criticizing a corrupt government, or complaining of a tyrant, were taken from their homes, condemned with swift terrible injustice to the galleys, chained to an oar, whipped, clubbed, bruised, compelled to labor in blood and sweat, and perhaps, in the midst of battle, left to drown like rats in the sinking hulk.

Others, a whole race of them, guilty of no crime except that of being born of a despised blood, were driven under the lash to carry back-breaking burdens, to impossible tasks, building prodigious monuments to a king gone mad with vanity who feared that if there were no pyramid over his bones someone a thousand or ten thousand years later might forget that he was the illustrious Ptolemy or the ineffable Pharaoh.

But why attempt a comprehensive catalogue of the forms and varieties of torture inflicted upon the innocent by the wicked? Let these few specimens suffice in place of an encyclopedia of inhumanity.

But just one final word about man's suffering in our own day. We flatter ourselves that the world

has grown more humane since the days of Darius, king of the Medes and Persians, or of Attila or of Tamerlane and Ghengis Khan. But I am not so certain of it. Modern war with its mechanical contrivances for inflicting death at wholesale, and not only death—which might be a boon—but disfigurement, blinding, burning out the lungs with poison gas, or leaving a victim to grope about maimed for the rest of his days, or stretching him flat on his back with paralysis; this modern war is perhaps more cruel than the torture invented by fiendish Oriental despots in ancient days, or than the medieval rack and thumbscrew. Joan of Arc and Savonarola, I think, would have preferred burning alive rather than choking and agonizing with mustard gas. Certain authors of books with sadistic or ghoulish intent have dug into ancient records and have written histories of what our Federal Constitution calls “cruel and unusual punishments,” but I cannot help wondering what the future historians will make of bombs dropped from the sky upon dwelling houses, churches, hospitals, kindergartens; or flame throwers on the field of battle, of torpedoes shot at merchant vessels, of mustard gas and perhaps of some still more ghastly means of torture newly invented to be inflicted upon people who had no say about the war and who were no more responsible for what England and France did to Germany, or what Germany has done to England and France, than they were responsible for the eruption of a volcano on the moon.

But now, after this hurried and inadequate resume of some of the sufferings of the innocent because of the sins of the guilty, comes the question: “Why does not the Infinite Almighty God intervene?

Is God indifferent? Is He a sphinx? A sphinx that hasn't lifted an eyebrow or moved a muscle in three thousand years, even though the white sands all about him have been sprinkled, drenched, saturated with human blood a hundred times over?

In the Old Testament we find the Psalmist taunting the heathen with the helplessness of their idols: "They have eyes and see not, ears and hear not: they have mouths and speak not." But it would seem that the heathen retorted that the God of David was equally impotent, and with some apparent reason, for the prophet king cries out:

"O God of vengeance, Lord,
O God of vengeance, shine forth!
Arise, judge of the earth,
Render requital to the proud!

"How long, O Lord, shall the wicked—
How long shall the wicked exult?
They babble, they speak haughtily,
All the workers of iniquity boast of themselves;
They trample, O Lord, on thy people
And afflict thine inheritance;
They slay the widow and the stranger,
And murder the fatherless,
And they say: 'The Lord sees it not;
The God of Jacob regards it not'."

But David has his answer to those who think God blind and deaf and dumb and helpless:

"Ye fools; when will ye be wise?
He that fixed the ear, shall he not hear?
He that formed the eye, shall he not see?
He that gives sense to the nations,
shall he not reprove?
He that teaches men knowledge—?
The Lord knows the thoughts of men,
That they are but as a breath . . .

"They assail the life of the righteous
And condemn innocent blood.
But the Lord shall be my high tower,
And my God the rock of my refuge.
He will bring down on them their own iniquity
And by their own wickedness cut them off,
He shall cut them off, the Lord our God."

Sometimes, as a matter of fact, God did punish the tyrant swiftly and visibly. In Chapter seven of the second book of Machabees we may read—if our squeamish stomachs can stand it—the detailed account of the tortures inflicted upon the seven brothers and their valiant mother by the incredible monster Antiochus. But if we go on to the second next chapter, we find described in equal detail the even more repulsive account of what happened to Antiochus. But, as St. Paul says, “I spare you.”

Once again the question of unbelievers and of impatient believers, is “Why doesn’t God *always* intervene?” “I am willing,” said Adolf Hitler to Hermann Rauschning, “to send a million or two million young Germans to their death for my purposes.” But when the madman picks up a pen to sign the document, why doesn’t God paralyze his hand or strike him dead? When Pius VII excommunicated Napoleon Bonaparte, the great conquerer is alleged to have said, “Does he think that excommunication will make the muskets drop from the hands of my soldiers?” We used to be told when we were boys in school that the muskets did drop. But if a document from the pen of a pope stopped Napoleon, would not a thought in the mind of God stop Hitler? So it goes: Why? And why? And why?

Remember, I have not promised a perfect answer. “Who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor?” (*Rom.* 11:34), exclaims the patriarch Job. Certainly this poor sinner makes no such claim. But I can make a guess. Take it for what it is worth. God does not strike Hitler dead for the same reason I suppose that he does not strike you or me dead if we sin or plan a sin. Every mortal sin is outrage to God, but God

does not punish the outrage with instant death and hell. "Shall we call down fire from heaven?" said James and John, the "Sons of Thunder." "You know not of what spirit you are," was the reply of the gentle Jesus. If all who displease God were dealt with summarily, the earth would be depopulated. When the sinner opens his mouth to lie or to slander or blaspheme, God does not strike him dumb. When a tempter follows an innocent maiden with lecherous eyes and more lecherous heart, God does not strike him blind and slay him. When Judas went out of the supper room to complete his treacherous plans with the murderers of Jesus, God did not strike him dead at the threshold. It is not God's way. He is a long-suffering God, plenteous in mercy. He wills not the death of the sinner. And He is Almighty: He can produce good out of evil. No man can say how much God can and will endure before He strikes. If He were to strike at all, we should probably think He strikes too often and with too small provocation—especially if He should strike us.

God could indeed prevent even the thought of sin, but only on condition that He take away our free will. Then we should be irresponsible animals or machines in human shape. God seems to think it better that we be free even if freedom is dangerous, than that we should be beasts or mere automata.

Secondly, it is a matter of faith that physical evils are not always calamities. "Be not afraid of them who kill the body," says our Lord, "and after that have no more that they can do" (*Luke 12:4*). They that die innocently achieve happiness. They achieve it all the more swiftly in proportion to the agony they endure. If they are conscious of their union with Christ as members of His Mystical Body,

they may offer their sufferings in union with His; become in effect martyrs and so help in the moral and spiritual progress of the race.

Finally, be it said, this is not defeatism. Ours is not a defeatist religion. We speak much of the Cross. But the Cross is not all. The Divine Victim slain on Calvary did not remain in the grave. His death was not the end. There was the Resurrection. It is our religion that if we suffer with Him we shall be glorified with Him. If that be not sufficient answer to the question, "Why do the innocent suffer?", I am afraid that those of us who see no further will have to wait until the Eternal Light dawns.

"WHERE IS NOW THY GOD?"

Address delivered on October 27, 1940

That question "Where Is Now Thy God?" was first asked of the Jews by idolatrous heathen. It indicated an exceedingly primitive mentality. The heathen said in effect: We have gods that can be seen. The God of Israel cannot be seen. Where *is* your God? Again and again that taunt was flung at the Hebrews by Philistines, Moabites, Assyrians, Babylonians, and the dozen other idolatrous peoples who surrounded them, hemmed them in, threatened them, fought them, persecuted, exiled them, but most of all, worst of all, tempted them to abandon the invisible Jehovah and accept Moloch or Baal, Isis, Osiris, Merodach.

But the answer to the heathen came swift and sure from the mouth of those who had learned the Law. "God cannot be seen by mortal eyes. No man hath seen God at any time. God is no stick or stone. God is no image of baked clay. You cannot pick up a handful of mud out of the bed of the Nile or the Tigris or the Jordan, fashion it with your hands, put it in a kiln like any piece of pottery and bring it out a god. Your gods—your heathen gods—are the work of the hands of man; they are not God at all. Man does not make God. God makes man."

Those early Jews knew their Bible as modern Christians know their Catechism. They had learned in the synagogue what Moses had been taught on Mount Sinai, and what the prophets had retold in phrases ever varying but ever the same, sometimes in solemn majestic utterance, sometimes in familiar speech more adapted to the mental level and the

taste of simple people. In Isaias we find this magnificent passage, "To whom then have you likened God? or what image will you make for him? Hath the workman cast a graven *statue*? or hath the goldsmith formed it with gold, or the silversmith with plates of silver . . . Do you not know? hath it not been heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have you not understood the foundations of the earth? It is he that sitteth upon the globe of the earth . . . he that stretcheth out the heavens as nothing, and spreadeth them as a tent to dwell in. He that bringeth the searchers of secrets to nothing, that hath made the judges of the earth as vanity . . . To whom have ye likened me, or made me equal, saith the Holy One? Lift up your eyes on high, and see who hath created these things . . . Knowest thou not, or hast thou not heard? the Lord is the everlasting God, who hath created the ends of the earth: he shall not faint, nor labour, neither is there any searching out of his wisdom" (*Isaias* 41:18-28).

There are a dozen passages like that in Isaias, and the temptation is to continue with his superb descriptions of the One True God. But Isaias was a versatile and resourceful orator. He did not always speak in stately measures. A master of many moods he switches suddenly from the majestic dignity of a Demosthenes or a Cicero to the caustic irony of a Tertullian or a Savonarola, as he ridicules the manufactured gods of the heathen:

"The smith hath wrought with his file, with coals, and with hammers he hath formed it The carpenter hath stretched out his rule, he hath formed it with a plane: he hath made it with corners, and hath fashioned it round with the compass:

and he hath made the image of a man as it were a beautiful man dwelling in a house. He hath cut down cedars, taken the holm, and the oak that stood among the trees of the forest: he hath planted the pine tree, which the rain hath nourished. And it hath served men for fuel: he took thereof, and warmed himself: and he kindled it, and baked bread: but of the rest he made a god, and adored it: he made a graven thing, and bowed down before it. Part of it he burnt with fire, and with part of it he dressed his meat But the residue thereof he made a god, and a graven thing for himself: he boweth down before it, and adoreth it, and prayeth unto it, saying: Deliver me, for thou art my God" (*Isaias* 44:12-17).

It is a curious fact—curious and pathetic—that seven hundred years later the apostle Paul was obliged to tell the highly cultured sophisticated Athenians what Isaias had told the primitive barbaric heathen: "God, who made the world, and all things therein; he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is he served with men's hands, as though he needed any thing; seeing it is he who giveth to all life, and breath, and all things: . . . For in him we live, and move and are . . . Being therefore the offspring of God, we must not suppose the divinity to be like unto gold, or silver, or stone, the graving of art, and device of man" (*Acts* 17:24-29).

Stranger still, some four hundred years after St. Paul we find St. Augustine, who in his youth had fallen under the influence of the Manichees who had brought to Italy and North Africa the superstitions of Persia, confessing bitterly that for a time he did not know how to conceive of God:

“Knowing not the true Being, I was so shaken by quips and quiddities that I had no answer for these silly deceivers when they asked me whether God is limited by a bodily form? . . . My eye could see nothing but bodies, and my mind nothing but materialized ideas. I did not understand that God is a spirit, who has no parts that can be measured, whose being is not a bulk, because bulk . . . cannot be wholly everywhere like God, who is spirit. And I had not the least conception in what we are like God, or whether Scripture was right in saying that we are in the image of God.”

And again: “I marshalled before the sight of my spirit all creation, all that we see, earth, and sea, and air, and stars, and trees, and animals; all that we do not see, the firmament of the sky above, and all angels, and all spiritual things, for these also, as if they were bodies, did my imagination arrange in this place or in that. I pictured to myself Thy creation as one vast mass, composed of various kinds of bodies, some real bodies, some those which I imagined in place of spirits. . . . And Thee, O Lord, I conceived as lapping it round and interpenetrating it everywhere, but as infinite in every direction; as if there were sea everywhere, and everywhere through measureless space nothing but illimitable sea, and within this sea a sponge, huge but yet finite; the sponge would be pervaded through all its particles by the infinite sea And I said to myself, ‘Behold God, behold God’s creation’.”

Now it may be a fancy of mine, but I seem to find in that passage “Not knowing the True Being, I was shaken by quips and quiddities,” a prophecy of some very highly educated heathen of our own day. Fifteen hundred years after St. Augustine,

certain doctors of science, having rejected the True God, substitute in His place "quips and quiddities." They have invented a hundred gods: Gods of the laboratory, gods of the test tube, gods of chemical combinations; gods of physical force; the dynamo god of Eugene O'Neill's strange terrible play, fantastic imaginative things that do not exist, the Life Force god of Bernard Shaw, the elan-vital god, the Creative Evolution god of Bergson, Time-Space, the hyphenated god (most unintelligible of all). Men even make god of an abstraction like Auguste Comte's Humanity (with a capital H) and I don't know whether that be not a cruder superstition than the gods of the heathen fashioned of wood or stone or brass. After all wood and stone and brass are something, and an abstraction is nothing.

A generation ago laboratory workers were breaking up the molecule; today they are smashing the atom, looking—whether they know it or not—for God. "I have examined many systems purporting to be atheistic," said James Clerk Maxwell, premier physicist of a generation ago, "but I have always found in them a God concealed somewhere."

Yes, there is a God hidden away in the laboratory amongst the Bunsen burners and the test tubes, out of sight beneath the atoms, the ions, the electrons. "Raise the stone and thou shalt find Me. Cleave the wood and there am I," says God, the same God who said "Seek and ye shall find" (In the *Oxyrhynchus Logia, Fifth Logion*). But the pathetic fact about science is that so many scientists, with God under their eyes do not see Him, with God at the tips of their fingers do not touch Him. "O Father," said our Lord, "Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed

them to the little ones . . . Blessed are the eyes that see what you see." "God," says the mystic Eckhart, "is nearer to me than I am to myself: He is just as near to wood and stone, but they do not know it." "They do not know it"—the saddest words of tongue or pen. "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not" (*John* 1:10). If you ask these pitiable scientific folk "Where is now thy God?", they say, sometimes with scorn but again with wistfulness, "we do not know; we do not even know if there be a God." If a man without a country is an object of commiseration, if a Melchisedech "without father, without mother, without descent" be a lonely figure in the world of the sons of men and women, what shall we say of the man who in answer to the question "Where is thy God?" says, "I know not." "Great God, I'd rather be a pagan suckled in a creed outworn" than that most forlorn object in all creation, the man who knows not whence he came or whither he goes, because he has caught no glimpse of God, the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End.

But there are those who after much mental labor, spiritual anguish, moral struggle, have won their way through "like the Catholic man who hath mightily won God out of knowledge and good out of pain, sight out of blindness and purity out of stain," as Sidney Lanier says so beautifully. And perhaps of all men in any generation who have mightily won God out of knowledge and good out of pain, the most conspicuous and the most articulate was St. Augustine. This most learned of the Fathers of the Church, east or west, was no stranger to books. He spent his life with books and he wrote a whole library of books. But seeking God he did not confine

himself to pages of print; unlike the alchemists of his day (sometimes I wonder if they were really more foolish or superstitious than materialists of our day) he did not lock himself in a laboratory with fire and bellows and copper retorts to wrest from the chemical elements and physical forces the secret of being and of motion. Hundreds of years before our American poet, he had followed the injunction, "Go forth under the open sky and list to Nature's teachings." He interrogated Nature and Nature replied to him. Nature does speak if we ask reverently and await her answer in silence. "I asked the earth and it said 'I am not He.' I asked the sea and the depths and the creeping things that have life and they answered, 'We are not thy God, look above us.' I asked the breezes and the gales, and the whole air with its inhabitants said to me 'Anaximenes is in error, I am not God.' I asked the heaven, the sun, the moon and the stars. 'We too,' said they, 'are not the God Whom thou seekest.' And I said to all the creatures that surrounded the doors of my fleshy senses, 'Ye have said to me of my God that ye are not He: tell me somewhat of Him.' And with a great voice they exclaimed 'It is He that hath made us'."

But why is it that if nature speaks to St. Augustine she does not give an answer, that same answer, to all who ask her? Some people look upon the sun and moon and stars and see no sign of God. Others, poets, saints, mystics, lose themselves in an ecstasy because they see God in a landscape, a cloud, a lightning flash, a wave breaking upon the shore. A sunset to them is a glimpse of the heavenly Jerusalem; a path of light from the moon upon the waters shows the way into another and lovelier

world. Even philosophers, an unimpressionable breed, have confessed that the sight of the starry heavens filled them with awe. But to some—to not a few in our own skeptical generation—the sea and the sun and the stars speak, if they speak at all, in vain. Why?

St. Paul, who perhaps is somewhat more abrupt in his speech than St. Augustine, seems to say that all men should know God from His creation. “The invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; his eternal power also, and divinity; so that they are inexcusable Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (*Romans* 1:20-22).

“Inexcusable” is a strong word. “Fools” is a stronger word. St. Augustine is, in regard to those who cannot see God in creation, a little more lenient. He says that religious belief is not capable of proof, at least to all men. But perhaps we have a solution of the apparent contradiction of two great saints in the words of our Saviour Himself. “Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God” (*Matt.* 5:8). A clean heart is one in which there is no impurity of any sort. Unchastity is not the only impurity. We often speak of the sin of the flesh as if it were only one kind of sin. But St. Paul has a long catalogue of sins of the flesh. “The works of the flesh,” he says, “are manifest, which are fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, idolatry, witchcrafts, enmities, contentions, emulations, wraths, quarrels, dissensions, sects, envies, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like. Of the which I foretell you, as I have foretold to you, that they who do such

things shall not obtain the kingdom of God" (*Gal.* 5:19-21).

They shall not obtain the kingdom of God. They shall not so much as see God. We see objects in nature with the eyes in our head. A murderer, a lecher, an ambitious, selfish, cruel or covetous person can, I dare say, see a sunrise or a mountain or a waterfall quite as well as the pure in heart. But there are eyes of the mind and soul as well as eyes of flesh. We see God not with eyes fixed in a socket in the skull, but with the eyes of the spirit. These eyes of the spirit are dimmed or blinded not only by adulteries, but by contentions, emulations, wraths, quarrels, envies, revellings, and the rest. The pure of heart are those who have driven not some but all of these vices out of their heart.

And there, my friends, is, I believe, the answer to the question that has been, during all this talk, in the minds of many of you, the question which perhaps you feared would not be answered or perhaps even so much as asked. I seem to hear you say, "I have no difficulty in seeing God in Beauty. But Nature is not only beauty; nature is in some of its aspects ugly, vile, horrible. Speak not to me of sunsets but of earthquakes, not of the glittering stars in heaven but of cyclones, hurricanes, mass slaughter by those calamities which the civil law calls 'An act of God'. How can I see God in pestilence, famine, drouth, in a conflagration started by lightning; how can I see God in tuberculosis, in carcinoma, in such a plague as syphilis which afflicts the innocent no less than the guilty? If wars, with all their attendant and consequent horrors, are to be laid at the door of willful man, is God responsible for pestilence and plague and all the other hideous mani-

festations of pitiless nature? When my friends, heathen perhaps as you call them, modern heathen, ask me after an earthquake or a tidal wave, 'Where is now your God?' I confess that I know not what to say."

In reply to such a heart-rending protestation as that what can any one say? I have explained in the talk that preceded this in the present series that I myself do not feel that I can solve the everlasting problem of evil. But perhaps I may make bold to ask if you have entirely purified your heart of all those obstacles to spiritual sight. Ask of God a clean heart and you will see God.

Perhaps, furthermore, I may send you to the book of Job, that incomparable masterpiece, that unequalled blending of profound philosophy and lofty poetry. The author of that book, like a composer of sublime music, takes as his theme that very question, "Where is now thy God?" and plays upon it like Beethoven or Brahms in a superb symphony. I hesitated to introduce Job earlier because I feared I should quote him and do no more. It is the most poignant, penetrating, eloquent drama of the problem that tortures you, and I pray that reading Job you may conclude with that ancient sufferer, "Although [God] should kill me, I will trust in him" (*Job 13:15*).

One thing more I feel that I can do. I bid you look upon the Cross of Christ. He surely had done no harm. If no other man was innocent, Jesus was innocent. He was the loveliest of all the children of men. Yet there He hangs in agony, a supreme example to all the innocent who suffer. Look upon that Cross. Read it. And learn this lesson! All who love God are on that Cross with Christ. "With

Christ I am nailed to the cross" (*Gal. 2:19*), says St. Paul. The innocent, like the innocent Christ, agonize upon the Cross that those who are not innocent may be saved. If you need not expiation for your own sins, you may offer your sufferings to God in union with Him who surely needed not expiation for sin because there was no sin in Him. "Suffering," says one writer on the Mystic Life, "plunges like a sword through creation, leaving on the one side cringing and degraded animals and on the other side heroes and saints." If you look upon the Cross and learn the Gospel of the Cross you will be not a cringing and degraded animal, not even a plaintive human, but a hero and a saint. Those who have absorbed the lesson of the Cross, when asked "Where is now thy God?", point to Jesus bleeding, agonizing, about to give up the ghost, and they say, "There is my God."

Those who can see God on the cross can see God in any tragedy, even though it attain to the proportions of a catastrophe. But those who see God on the Cross have a Grace that enables them to see God beyond the Cross. The Cross was not the end, but a means to the end. The end is triumph and glory. And here in a word is the solution of the problem of evil. Our answer, therefore, to the question, "Where is now thy God?", is that our God is in glory, and that the Incarnate God came to glory through tribulation and death. If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him.

"WHEN THE SON OF MAN COMES WILL HE FIND FAITH ON EARTH?"

Address delivered on November 3, 1940

When our Saviour's enemies asked Him a question, He sometimes asked them another, and if they made no answer, neither did He answer them. Even when friends—not enemies—asked Him a question, He sometimes put them off, saying, "It is not for you to know" (*Acts* I:7). At least on one occasion when the Lord had first questioned the disciples and they were silent, He left them to discover the answer.

That is the instance we have for consideration today: "The Son of man, when he cometh, shall he find, think you, faith on earth?" (*Luke* 18:8). That was all. Those who heard Him, and we, many centuries later, are left to surmise what the answer should be.

I think, however, that He didn't propose that question as a puzzle, upon the solving of which men should expend their ingenuity for the rest of time. Our Saviour was not concerned with intellectual riddles. He left that sort of thing to the peripatetic philosophers of His day who walked up and down, back and forth on the Areopagus at Athens, proposing questions, suggesting answers, as if philosophy were a game—a kind of mental and verbal battle-dore and shuttlecock. That sort of game is still played in many an American university by men who call themselves agnostics. "Of course," they say, "there isn't any solution to the great problems of human existence, but we keep on puzzling, as a kind of intellectual gymnastic."

Jesus was no such trifler. If He asked a ques-

tion there is an answer. But, like a wise master, He doesn't tell us all the answers. He leaves us to figure out something for ourselves. In the present instance the answer is not too recondite. We don't have to search for it very far. The reply to that question, "Will the Son of man find faith upon the earth?" is, I think, rather obvious. Obvious but tremendous. It's a startling shocking answer. It will shake us out of our apathy and complacency. It will send a shiver of fear through us. Unless our mind and will are paralyzed, unless we are in a mental and physical stupor, it will whip us up to action. The answer to the question, "Will the Son of man find faith upon the earth?", is that it *depends upon us!* "Without me you can do nothing" (*John 15:5*), says the Lord. But conversely, without us He can or at least will do nothing. He did not stay on earth to build His own kingdom. He left it in the hands of men. The greatest compliment ever paid to the human race, and at the same time the most awful responsibility placed upon man, was when our Savior said, "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you" (*John 20:21*). "As I have done . . . so you do also" (*John 13:15*). "The Father worketh . . . and I work" (*John 5:17*), but now henceforth you too shall work. The salvation of the world, the propagation and preservation of faith upon the earth is, under God, by the Divine Dispensation, in our hands. And let me hasten to add that when I say "in our hands" I do not mean in the hands of the clergy alone, but in the hands of all, clergy and laity alike. We have had, especially in recent years, a great deal of discussion and exhortation around and about the subject of "Catholic Action." I have heard people say, "We don't know what 'Catholic Action'

means;" and I have heard even priests ask, "Now precisely what does it mean?" I cannot see why any one should be puzzled. It means that if the faith is not to die out on this earth, if there is to be faith on earth at the second coming of Christ, we must bestir ourselves.

Abraham Lincoln in the ever memorable Gettysburg Address expressed hope that government by the people should not perish from the earth; and in that brief discussion he found space to say, no less than three times, that whether it was to survive or perish depended upon the measure of devotion, of self-dedication and self-consecration, of American citizens.

We may say the same of the Faith of Jesus Christ. Our Lord indeed remains with His Church all days; He has promised that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. But He has not said He will work the miracle of perpetuating the Church and the Faith without human help. The fact remains, a fact that may seem to some stupefying, but that is really stimulating, exhilarating, highly exciting, the fact that the survival of the Christian Religion is, by God's Providence, in our hands.

But the Faith cannot survive if it aims only to survive. A nation may wisely be content with its boundaries, for a political organization which extends its sway to the ends of the earth, may by that extension bring about its own doom. A far-flung battle line may be too far flung. A battle on two fronts or on a dozen fronts scattered over all the continents and all the seas may be easily lost. A compact little nation may hold together, while a worldwide empire falls to pieces.

But the Church of Christ is no political organization. We call it Catholic, and so it is. Catholic is the word for Universal. We are not national, nor are we international. We do not talk of continents or hemispheres. Our sphere is the wide world. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof" (*Psalms* 23:1). Our God is not a tribal God or a national God. Neither is His religion a tribal matter or racial, or national, or imperial. Worldly conquerors have great ambitions, excessive ambitions that will be their ruin, but no matter how far and wide they aim to conquer, they place limits to their desires. The one who at the moment fancies himself world-conqueror has declared that he wants no Jews or Negroes in the empire he aims to build, and perhaps he will say, by and by, that he will tolerate no Slavs.

If they wish it that way, let them have it that way: include some in and, as the malaprop Hollywood producer says, include others out. But Christ recognizes no such limitations. "Going . . . teach ye *all nations*" (*Matt.* 28:19), said He. "Preach the Gospel to *every creature*" (*Mark* 16:15). In prophecy David says of the preachers of the Gospel, "Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth: and their words unto the ends of the world" (*Psalms* 18:5).

For this reason I feel resentful when certain orators, thinking to do honor to the Church and the Faith, speak of the Church as a fortress, a citadel, and of the Catholic religion as a bulwark against this or that destructive revolutionary force. A citadel is something fixed and static. A bulwark sits heavy on the earth. It is even possible to overwork the simile of the rock. How many times have we heard preachers and platform lecturers describe

the Church—sometimes indeed with thrilling eloquence—as the rock that stands forever firm even though buffeted by a thousand storms? Doubtless that is all true. The Church is a rock and a bulwark. But too much emphasis of that fact may lead to a neglect of something equally true. The Church and the Faith have an organic life, a life that must abound more and more, a supernatural life, an exuberant life. Whatever is good tends to diffuse itself. The Church and the Faith move on over all the seas to the ends of the earth.

Similarly it is all very well for priests, preachers, lecturers in the pulpit or upon the platform, to recite in grandiloquent tones the magnificent story of how the Apostles, after the coming of the Holy Ghost in tongues of fire upon their heads, stepped across the threshold of the cenacle at Jerusalem, went forth, carrying the banner of the Cross over all the Empire and beyond, to lands that had never seen the eagles of the conquering Romans.

But what if some scoffer, skeptic, cynic or even some realistic friend should say, "Very well, but what now? How stands the Church today? Did she not lose North Africa in the Moslem invasion of thirteen centuries ago? Has not the faith of Christ been largely extinguished in the very land where He was born, where He lived and wrought miracles, and died?" He died and rose again. Must the Church and the Faith die and not rise again? He raised dead men to life. Can the Church repeat the miracle upon nations dead to the Faith? If not, what comes of His saying, "The works that I do, [you] also shall do; and greater than these shall [you] do" (*John 14:12*)?

What, for example, of Russia? Has it not

been in schism for a thousand years, and is it not now engulfed in atheism? And India with its three hundred and fifty millions; and China with its four hundred and fifty millions? What incursions have we made upon these enormous strongholds of heathenism? In India we have wrested from Buddha or from Mohammed or from the Hindu gods some four millions; in China we have three millions. But what are seven millions among eight hundred millions? In Japan we have one hundred and ten thousand among seventy million; in Korea one hundred and twenty thousand out of twenty three millions. How do these facts comport with the command, "Going . . . teach ye *all* nations" (*Matt.* 28:19)? "Preach . . . to *every* creature" (*Mark* 16:15).

For that matter, what of the Latins in Europe and America? Is the Faith alive in Mexico and Cuba and Puerto Rico; in the tropic and subtropic lands of South America?

And the much vaunted English-speaking peoples—are they really custodians of civilization and Defenders of the Faith?

And this Pan-Germanic empire now in process of construction: Is it, even in the most attenuated meaning of the term, Christian? Who dominates Central Europe? Adolf Hitler or Jesus Christ? Nazism, like Communism, they say, is a living force because it is a religion. Isn't our religion also a living force? A thousand volumes have been written on the portentous phenomena of Nazism and Communism. One of the books is entitled *We or They?* "We" are the Democracies. "They" are the Dictatorships. We and they are now committed to a life and death struggle. One or the other will possess the earth. But if "we" are the Church and the

Faith, and "they" are anti-Christ, which of us shall possess the earth?

The greatest scandal of all, said the late Holy Father Pius XI, is that the Church has "lost the workingman." That is a calamity. Before we ever had a king or an emperor under the banner of the Cross, we had the working men. We started out and we were well on our way in the first three centuries to get the working men of the world. After sixteen more centuries what has happened? Under the Soviet hammer and sickle there are one hundred and seventy million people, most of them poor—peasants and industrial workers—who should be ours. In other lands like Spain and France and South America other millions of workers have not only turned their backs upon Christ, but to borrow a phrase of His own, they have "lift[ed] up [their] heel against [Him]" (*John* 13:18). Here in the United States there appeared a generation ago an organization which arrogated to itself the title "International Workers of the World." It appeared and disappeared. But its place has been taken by a dozen slightly less radical groups which have won to themselves, by hook or by crook, by facts or by lies, many thousands of workers who belong by right to Christ the Workingman.

This hurriedly painted picture, I admit, is not reassuring. But what we should have in mind is to be honest, to see clearly where we stand, to estimate how far we have come in nineteen centuries; what we have lost, what we have gained; and in a word provide the basis for a rational reply to the question, "The Son of man, when he cometh, shall he find, think you, faith on earth?" (*Luke* 18:8).

Speaking for myself, I have no doubts. The

Church has inexhaustible vitality. Divine Grace is not like a supply of oil or water, which being tapped and drained, becomes exhausted. We can no more exhaust the Grace of God than we can use up the atmosphere. Rather let us say, the Grace of God is like the sun which sends out light and heat and power but has some miraculous way of renewing itself, spending but never being spent. So is it with the Life and Warmth and Power at the disposal of the Church. Grace is not a material something that lives and dies, grows and declines. It is energy. The sum total of energy, say the scientists, remains constant in spite of all that is expended. So of the Grace of God. Yet more: The Grace of God, like God Himself, is infinite. We cannot use it up. We have as much at our disposal as had St. Peter and St. Paul, as much as St. Patrick, St. Boniface, SS. Cyril and Methodius, St. Remy, St. Francis Xavier. Those men converted continents. We can re-convert those continents and go forth to others that they did not know, or could not reach. St. Francis Xavier as he lay dying on Sancian Island, looking towards China, lamented, not like Alexander, that there were no more worlds to conquer, but that there was a world before his eyes which he was not to live to convert. What he did not do we can do. We must do. The Son of man may come more quickly than we expect. When He comes He must not be disappointed. When He comes and asks the question, "Is there faith left on the earth?" we must be able to say, "Behold, Lord, the miracle of Pentecost ten thousand times magnified: 'devout men, out of every nation under heaven . . . Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,

Phrygia and Pamphilia, Egypt, and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews also, and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians' (*Acts* 2:5-11), these and a hundred other nations and peoples of whom they had no knowledge. Lord, as Thou knowest, new continents have been discovered and evangelized, and from them all, new and old, we have brought together to meet Thee at Thy coming, multitudes that outnumber the stars of heaven, the sands upon the shore of the sea, the drops of water in the ocean. How then sayest Thou, 'Shall there be faith on earth?' (*Luke* 18:8). 'The earth is [Thine] and the fulness thereof' (*Psalms* 23:1)."

Friends, brethren, if this is not to be empty oratory but substantial fact, we must hear and heed the words of the prophet, "Rise, thou that sleepest" (*Ephesians* 5:14)!

CARDINAL HAYES STATES PURPOSE OF CATHOLIC HOUR

(Extract from his address at the inaugural program 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.

107 CATHOLIC HOUR STATIONS

In 40 States, the District of Columbia, and Hawaii

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|------------|------|----|
| Alabama | Birmingham | WBRC, | 980 | kc |
| | Mobile | WALA, | 1380 | kc |
| Arizona | Phoenix | KTAR, | 620 | kc |
| | Safford | KGLU | 1420 | kc |
| | Tucson | KVOA, | 1260 | kc |
| | Yuma | KYUM | 1420 | kc |
| Arkansas | Little Rock | KARK, | 890 | kc |
| California | Bakersfield | KERN, | 1370 | kc |
| | Fresno | KMJ, | 580 | kc |
| | Los Angeles | KECA, | 1430 | kc |
| | Sacramento | KFBK, | 1490 | kc |
| | San Francisco | KPO, | 680 | kc |
| | Stockton | KWG, | 1200 | kc |
| Colorado | Denver | KOA, | 830 | kc |
| Connecticut | Hartford | WTIC, | 1040 | kc |
| D. of C. | Washington | WRC, | 950 | kc |
| Florida | Jacksonville | WJAX, | 900 | kc |
| | Lakeland | WLAK, | 1310 | kc |
| | Miami | WIOD, | 610 | kc |
| | Pensacola | WCOA, | 1340 | kc |
| | Tampa | WFLA-WSUN, | 620 | kc |
| Georgia | Atlanta | WSB, | 740 | kc |
| | Savannah | WSAV | 1310 | kc |
| Idaho | Boise | KIDO, | 1350 | kc |
| | Pocatello | KSEI, | 900 | kc |
| | Twin Falls | KTFI | 1240 | kc |
| Illinois | Chicago | WMAQ-WCFL, | 670 | kc |
| Indiana | Evansville | WGBF, | 680 | kc |
| | Fort Wayne | WGL, | 1370 | kc |
| | Indianapolis | WIRE, | 1400 | kc |
| | Terre Haute | WBOW, | 1310 | kc |
| | Des Moines | WHO | 1000 | kc |
| Iowa | Pittsburg | KOAM | 790 | kc |
| Kansas | Wichita | KANS, | 1210 | kc |
| Kentucky | Louisville | WAVE, | 940 | kc |
| Louisiana | New Orleans | WSMB, | 1320 | kc |
| | Shreveport | KTBS, | 1450 | kc |
| Maryland | Baltimore | WFBR, | 1270 | kc |
| Massachusetts | Boston | WBZ, | 990 | kc |
| | Springfield | WBZA, | 990 | kc |
| Michigan | Detroit | WWJ, | 850 | kc |
| Minnesota | Duluth-Superior | WEBC, | 1290 | kc |
| | Mankato | KYSM, | 1500 | kc |
| | Minneapolis-St. Paul | KSTP, | 1460 | kc |
| | Rochester | KROC | 1310 | kc |
| | St. Cloud | KFAM, | 1420 | kc |
| Mississippi | Jackson | WJDX, | 1270 | kc |
| Missouri | Kansas City | WDAF, | 610 | kc |
| | Springfield | KGBX, | 1230 | kc |
| | Saint Louis | KSD, | 550 | kc |
| Montana | Billings | KGHL, | 780 | kc |
| | Bozeman | KRBM | 1420 | kc |
| | Butte | KGIR, | 1340 | kc |
| | Helena | KPFA, | 1210 | kc |
| Nebraska | Omaha | WOW, | 590 | kc |
| Nevada | Reno | KOH, | 1380 | kc |
| New Mexico | Albuquerque | KOB, | 1180 | kc |
| New York | Buffalo | WBEN, | 900 | kc |
| | New York | WEAF, | 660 | kc |
| | Schenectady | WGY, | 790 | kc |
| North Carolina | Asheville | WISE, | 1370 | kc |
| | Charlotte | WSOC, | 1210 | kc |
| | Raleigh | WPTF, | 680 | kc |
| | Winston-Salem | WSJS | 1310 | kc |
| North Dakota | Bismarck | KFYR, | 550 | kc |
| | Fargo | WDAY, | 940 | kc |

107 CATHOLIC HOUR STATIONS

In 40 States, the District of Columbia, and Hawaii

| | | |
|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Ohio | Cincinnati | WSAI, 1330 kc |
| | Cleveland | WTAM, 1070 kc |
| | Columbus | WCOL, 1210 kc |
| | Dayton | WING, 1330 kc |
| | Lima | WLOK, 1210 kc |
| | Toledo | WSPD, 1340 kc |
| Oklahoma | Zanesville | WHIZ, 1210 kc |
| | Oklahoma City | WKY, 900 kc |
| Oregon | Tulsa | KVOO, 1140 kc |
| | Medford | KMED, 1410 kc |
| Pennsylvania | Portland | KEX, 1180 kc |
| | Allentown | WSAN, 1440 kc |
| | Altoona | WFBG, 1310 kc |
| | Erie | WLEU, 1420 kc |
| | Johnstown | WJAC, 1310 kc |
| | Philadelphia | KYW, 1020 kc |
| Rhode Island | Pittsburgh | WCAE, 1220 kc |
| | Wilkes-Barre | WBRE, 1310 kc |
| | Providence | WJAR, 890 kc |
| South Carolina | Charleston | WTMA, 1210 kc |
| | Columbia | WIS, 560 kc |
| | Florence | WOLS, 1200 kc |
| South Dakota | Greenville | WFBC, 1300 kc |
| | Sioux Falls | KSOO-KELO, 1110-1200 kc |
| Tennessee | Chattanooga | WAPO, 1420 kc |
| | Nashville | WSM, 650 kc |
| | Kingsport | WKPT, 1370 kc |
| | Knoxville | WROL, 1310 kc |
| | Amarillo | KGNC, 1410 kc |
| Texas | Beaumont | KFDM, 560 kc |
| | El Paso | KTSM, 1310 kc |
| | Fort Worth | KGKO, 570 kc |
| | Houston | KPRC, 920 kc |
| | San Antonio | WOAI, 1190 kc |
| Virginia | Norfolk | WTAR, 780 kc |
| | Richmond | WMBG, 1350 kc |
| Washington | Seattle | KOMO, 920 kc |
| | Spokane | KHQ, 590 kc |
| Wisconsin | Madison | WIBA, 1280 kc |
| HAWAII | Honolulu | KGU, 750 kc |
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(Revised as of November 5, 1940)

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