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GOD



Richard Ginder
The Catholic Hour





GOD

BY

REV. RICHARD GINDER

Associate Editor of OUR SUNDAY VISITOR

Four addresses delivered in the nationwide Catholic Hour (produced by the National Council of Catholic Men, in cooperation with the National Broadcasting Company) from August 6 through August 27, 1944.

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IT'S GOD'S OWN TRUTH

Address delivered on August 6, 1944

There are times when it's hard to believe in God. There are times when being good gets awfully dull—we tend to become bored with it all. And there are times when wickedness becomes awfully fascinating. I can imagine a young person—a boy in senior high school or in college, say—I can imagine such a boy becoming restless under the Ten Commandments, and almost regretting that he had been educated to a belief in God.

And surely there must be some people who have scrapped their beliefs on that account, with the idea that they were passing beyond good and evil and gaining a large liberty for themselves, freedom to think and to do as they pleased.

Notice, now, I'm being careful—I'm making it very plain that they are not thinking the *truth* or doing the *right* thing. They're thinking and doing as it suits them—which is quite another thing entirely.

Suppose we follow one of these youngsters on his journey through this spiritual no-man's-land. We're supposing he's formed the conviction that there's no God. We'll suppose, too, that he's about twenty or twenty-one years old.

At first he feels like a man who's

just shaken off a pair of handcuffs. He's free—free to do, to say, to think, to read whatever he pleases. He feels as though he's got a new lease on life. It's as though he's grown wings, and can fly. It's great! It's wonderful!

For a few weeks—perhaps even for a few years—he throws himself into all the pleasures formerly taboo. He wallows in lubricity; he drinks himself into a stupor more often than he'd care to admit. In a word, he becomes thoroughly beastly.

Then one day he snaps out of it. It may be Christmas or Easter. But his conscience finally gets him by the shoulder and says:

"Look here, Joe, you can't go on like this. You're making a fool of yourself."

"Go away," says Joe. "I thought I finished with you back there when we decided there was no God."

"God or no God," says conscience, "you've got to get a grip on yourself or you'll go to the bow-wows."

"What's the matter?" says Joe. "If there is no God then there are no Ten Commandments. And you can't scold me for doing wrong when there is no such thing as right and wrong."

"Just the same . . ." says con-science.

And Joe reforms. He falls into a kind of amiable mediocrity. He never does anything very wicked—he never does anything very good. He just turns into a kind of hail-fellow-well-met, following the social patterns of the community around him. He may even go to church now and then, and he makes it a point to come through with a substantial check each year for the Community Chest or for his favorite charity.

But what about God? Well, Joe's a little confused now. He's had time to think things out more carefully and, honestly, he's pretty wretched. He's trying to be honest with himself, and yet he can't suit his actions to his belief.

For instance, at first he rather liked the idea of Communism. He wasn't too keen on the business of sharing everything he had with everybody else, but he did like the idea of universal brotherhood. But then how could he believe in a universal brotherhood without thinking of a universal fatherhood? People are brothers because they share one father, and Joe wasn't too sure he could talk about Our Father, who art in heaven.

Then he used to think about

evolution. This world was becoming a better place to live in. He could work toward that ideal—toward making things better for his grandchildren. But what had his grandchildren ever done for Joe? He didn't owe *them* a thing. And why should he slave away for a lot of people he'd never see? Some day they'd tuck him under the daisies and that would be the end of him.

I'm going to leave, Joe, now, but I think we can all see what a bleak proposition we make of life when we put God out on the pavement. Just picture yourself without God—stuck on a ball of mud which science is making smaller every day; life?—nothing more than a flash in abysmal darkness; we live, we die, and that's the end; no one to care for us while we're living, no one to think of us after death; we're rooted in a senseless world; we're freaks of nature, produced by an accidental collision of atoms, created by we know not what; our hopes, our fears, our sufferings, our music and our poetry, the agonies of doubt and suffering endured by the parents and the boys themselves fighting in Normandy and in the South Pacific—all these are absolutely nonsensical, the mere result of constantly shuffling molecules, acting, again, without rhyme

or reason; the devotion of a mother for her baby is the by-product of a glandular irritation; no love can last beyond the grave; the coffin ends everything; all our painting and architecture, our philosophy and poetry, our prayers — everything is to be demolished at the end of the universe, left broken, like the dome of some bombed cathedral. As one philosopher put it, our life becomes "a long march through the night, surrounded by invisible foes, tortured by weariness and pain, towards a goal that few can hope to reach, and where none may tarry long. One by one, as they march, our comrades vanish from our sight, seized by the silent orders of omnipotent death."

For ourselves life swings like a great pendulum from pain to boredom, pain to boredom, pain to boredom, pain to boredom. We thread our way through life's highways, carefully avoiding every danger, driving cautiously, only to end in death — the inescapable crackup which consumes us all. We want things and we're in pain until we get them; when we do get them, they've lost all their charm.

We're so weak—life's so short—and facing us, getting closer with every pulse-beat, is death. And the pity of it is that, as our mother, our wife, our brother or son

closes his eyes, we know that never shall we see them again. The earth from which they came, on which they lived for such a pitifully short time, that earth has wrapped them to herself.

It was the German philosopher Nietzsche who worked out atheism to its logical conclusion by throwing common decency completely overboard. "There is no God," he said, "and there are no Ten Commandments. There is no such thing as good and evil. It's all right now to cut and slash, to plunder, rape and murder if we have to, to get what we want." And that's true! If there is no God, then it is just as Nietzsche said. And Hitler agreed with him. "I will exterminate the Jews," he said. And he began cutting them down, in hundreds of thousands. "I will blot out the Poles," he said. And he used the same methods.

"What is good?" Nietzsche asked. "All that heightens in man the feeling of power, the desire for power, power itself. What is bad? All that comes from weakness. What is happiness? The feeling that our strength grows, that an obstacle is overcome. Not contentment, but more power; not universal peace, but war; not virtue, but forcefulness."

Nietzsche was one atheist who

worked his principles out consistently to the end.

In normal times, we could see how a person might come to take this crabbed view of things. The atheist lives in his little world. Everything in it is neat and tidy and all ship-shape—just as though it were a little bungalow; but the atheist has to keep all the doors and windows shut. He must live with his blinds pulled down. For if ever he looks out, he'll see that his bungalow is perched on a mountain top, with a vast world above and beneath him.

The trouble is, he can't stay closed up that way for very long at one time. There are always storms, earthquakes which shatter his walls and fling open the shutters and force him to look out into the supernatural. I mean, in spite of evolution and the survival of the fittest and the constant promise of a better world for our grandchildren, we're forever getting ourselves into an awful mess of some sort or other. Right now it's this war.

Here the atheist was resting comfortably with the idea that we didn't need God any more. We had bowed Him off the stage. The world was improving automatically by natural selection and either the survival or the arrival of the fittest.

Then came Hitler's invasion of Poland, Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, and the disconcerting knowledge that far from being the best world yet, this was the worst in history—and after all these years of natural selection!

Then came a recognition of the fact that the world had a conscience which was outraged by Hitler's rejection of the Ten Commandments. The atheist saw there was such a thing as right and wrong—that you just can't get up one day and slaughter a whole nation. He couldn't say why it was wrong. He knew it wasn't instinct, because all his instincts were on the isolationist side—"Let them fight it out themselves. What business is it of ours?"—and all the rest of it.

But this inner Voice was all the time hoping the Allies would win; and after Dunkirk that same inner Voice began throttling the isolationist and looking for a chance to take a crack at the Axis.

No—this was something different from instinct. It was suspiciously like conscience, which our fathers had told us was the Voice of God pointing out the difference between right and wrong.

Then came disquieting reports from the battle-fronts. A sergeant on Bataan said there were no atheists in fox holes, and the men

themselves started writing books about how, when things were blackest and they felt death at their heels, they felt the existence, the presence, even the help, of the Thing Above, as William James used to call it. They felt compelled to believe in God.

And at home, the people started going to church. Mothers and fathers began praying for their boys when they were shipped overseas. If they had never thought about it before, they came to see now that it was cruel and unnatural to say that we're mere freaks of nature, produced by an accidental collision of atoms; they knew that their worry, the blood and the agony of their boys, were not nonsensical, not the result of molecules shuffling themselves without rhyme or reason—it was part of some higher purpose, some sublime plan being worked out in the mind of an everlasting, all-knowing, and almighty Father.

And how can the atheist tell them otherwise? Who would have the heart to hand a mother a telegram from the War Department and say at the same time, "Well, madam, I sincerely regret this. But death is the end of everything. You'll never see your boy again. He was the victim of circumstances beyond his control. It's unfortunate but, well, we're doing our

best to see that nothing like this will ever catch your great-grandchildren."

That would be perverse; it would go against nature; it would be cruel; and it would be false.

It isn't as though the existence of God were something incredible, you know. It's not at all as though we were being asked to believe in some great spirit out of the Arabian Nights or something out of our childhood fairy-tales. The evidence, the proofs for the fact that there is a God, are so powerful that we're tempted to miss the forest for the trees. But really it's the atheist who's asking us to believe what is simply unbelievable. He wants us to think that life has no purpose; that this world had no cause; that no one laid out the world; that it's purely accidental, the way summer follows spring, and harvest time the summer, each year; he wants us to believe that nothing is permanent; that the voice of conscience is—I don't know what; that there is no such thing as right and wrong and so Hitler may be right after all. He wants us to go against our nature. And it just doesn't add up. It doesn't make sense.

After all, there *are* a lot of problems in life—a lot of things we *don't* understand—we'll grant that; but we're never going to solve them,

without God. That would only be God than to us, their own families. pouring out the baby with the bath And if death overtakes them, water! whether in France or in Japan, it

We want to believe in God! We won't be the end of everything, we want to believe that there's some but the beginning—not the taking, purpose in this life of ours. We but the changing of life, the enter- want the comfort of knowing that ing into an everlasting dwelling our boys and girls are giving their place more beautiful than anything lives, their blood, for everlasting they have ever known on earth, Truth, for everything that's fine where we can join them when and decent. We want to know that death calls us with its friendly in- there's a heavenly Father watch- vitation, to be happy with them ing them and loving them, and that forever.

our prayers can help them. They're We want this faith, I say. It more than miscellaneous collec- goes with belief in God. We'll tions of molecules and atoms mov- hug it to ourselves and we won't ing around at random. They're hu- let anyone take it from us. Be- man souls, even more precious to cause it's God's Own Truth.

THE CASE FOR GOD

Address delivered on August 13, 1944

Last week I said there are times when it's hard to believe in God. We're tempted to get "fed up" with religion and we're inclined to throw the whole thing overboard and forget it. But as I said then, we can never quite get away with it, because after all we have to live with ourselves, and that becomes pretty hard when our actions don't square with our conscience. Sooner or later the agnostic is reduced to the position of a likeable fellow who's thrown God over his shoulder in return for a freedom which he doesn't dare use. In other words, he pays for his cake, but his conscience won't let him eat it.

And besides, atheism—or even agnosticism—isn't very practical. It divides people up and separates us from our brother men by denying our common Father; for how can we all be brothers unless we have a common father.

There are so many points on which atheism breaks down . . . For instance, Nietzsche worked it out to its logical conclusion and came up with the teaching that happiness is "Not contentment, but more power; not universal peace, but war; not virtue, but forcefulness." It sounds exciting, all right, but when

Hitler took it out of the books and began writing it in human blood, we saw that it didn't work. There was something wrong with Nietzsche's line of argument. What was wrong was that he started 'way off base by saying there is no God.

And so we wound up last week's talk by saying that we want to believe in God. We want to believe that there's a Friend helping us through life, and that when we die, it won't be the end of everything, but the beginning.

Well, it's one thing wanting to believe, and it's another thing having proof. But if we showed last Sunday how atheism collapses when it's put to the test, or that it goes against our nature and instincts, then we've cleared the deck and even bent ourselves a little toward belief in God.

Let us go on, then, by thinking of a train. (I like trains anyway. There's something beautiful about them, from the sound of the whistle down to the glow in the firebox.) Anyway, we'll make it a passenger train. We've heard the warning gong, and now we're standing at the crossing waiting for the train to pass. Here she comes! The

tracks begin to tremble as though one to tell us now to sit down and they're half afraid of the big black monster thundering along in the distance. We're fascinated as she flashes by, pulling the long line of coaches behind her: First the day-coaches, with lots of people inside—

little boys with their noses flattened against the window, soldiers and sailors singing and talking with one another, people reading and napping; in one or two windows, the blinds are down. Then comes the diner, with waiters in white coats, juggling big silver trays on flat hands. Then the chair-cars—lots of space between the people. And last of all, the lounge-car, with people facing each other across the aisle. Then, in an instant, the whole thing disappears into the distance and we see two red lights growing smaller down the track.

Remember when we were youngsters, how the people on trains seemed to be almost in another world? They lived and ate and slept right there between those two tracks. And when we were in bed at night and heard the whistle, it always made us sad, as though we would be far happier on the train—someplace else—anywhere but home.

Then one day we grew up and we were able to take a train ride all on our own. We were old enough to pay our own way. There was no

First we walked around the engine as it stood puffing in the trainshed. It certainly had enough wheels to get us where we were going!—and the boiler, studded with rivets and laced all over with piping . . . and away up there was the engineer, with his overalls and peaked cap. He was the one who ran the thing.

Then when we got on the train and walked through it from end to end—then we really were impressed: the broad aisles, the water cooler, the lavatory, the sleepers, and the kitchen. It *was* another world. We marveled at the genius of the inventors and engineers and workers who had been able to put it together.

And right there, in that train, we have one of our proofs for the existence of God. We just took it for granted that our little world on wheels had been designed and built by human beings. If anyone had told us we were wrong—that the train had no builders but was the result of ageless evolution—we would have been bug-eyed with surprise. "One of us is crazy," we should have thought, and we should have had a good idea of which one it was.

That's just the position we're in when it comes to belief in God.

Here we're living in a world which is a thousand times more complicated than a passenger train. Its lights are millions of miles away. Its drinking fountains are supplied, not from a tank, but from water which falls from the sky. Its food isn't transferred to the kitchen from little wagons at different stations—it grows right up out of the ground. But there's no need for me to go on describing what's perfectly obvious. Everyone knows that the world has it all over a passenger train for size and every- that the train was designed and put that the train was designed and put together by engineers and other intelligent men who knew what they were doing; but when it comes to the world, the agnostic won't let us say that it was put together, or made, or created at all. He wants us to imagine that it just happened. Isn't that foolish?

Maybe it's the size of the world that throws him off balance. He just can't think of anyone so great that he could make a world. If that's true—I mean, if it's true that it's hard to think of anyone that great—it's only because we're so puny. Really, though, it's no reason for denying that there *could* be or that there *is* such a person. It's as though a mother sparrow should perch on a chimney and solemnly assure its little sparrows that "This

house just happened to grow here," simply because it couldn't imagine a sparrow great enough to build a house.

And there, I think, we've touched the center of the difficulty. We're tempted to think there's no God because we can't picture a man bigger than the world. But, you see, God's not a man. No one ever said He was—excepting the time He came to earth in the Person of Jesus Christ. God's a spirit and we're acting very much like the sparrow when we go thinking of God as something like a great big giant.

However—that's taken us pretty far from our train, hasn't it? Let's get back to the station . . .

If we walk the length of the train, from engine to lounge-car, we'll find that the whole thing has obviously been built to move. It's all on wheels. Each car has springs to hold up the shock of the bumps and jolts along the way, and all the cars are coupled. It all shows that whoever built the train was working toward a definite idea. The parts were assembled with a purpose. Notice that the wheels are round, for instance; not a one of them is square.

Here, again, we make our comparison with the world around us. It's like our train, in a way. It's been put together by someone who knew what he wanted to do and

how to do it. Things would be pretty awkward if we had our mouths in the back of our head. Just think of it! We couldn't see where to put our spoon. I guess it could have been that way, if things had been thrown together just hit or miss. Or suppose we had one eye where it is now and the other eye on our elbow. We'd have a great time getting our glasses on! I know it sounds silly, but things usually are silly when they're done all higgledy-piggledy, without any plan at all. But thank God (and I mean it literally!) our world wasn't got up that way. It's not at all a higgledy-piggledy business. It's full of planning. Everything's worked out to the last detail. And, by the way, that's why we speak of God as a Person: because the Creator acted with intelligence—an intelligence we can't begin to fathom. And so He must be a person, because persons alone have intelligence. He is not a man—but He is a person, a spiritual Person endlessly greater than we are. Comparing God with ourselves is a little like comparing ourselves with a potato-bug—and we're still away off!

Getting back to the depot. Our train is least lovely when its standing still. It's at its best when it's hurtling down the track, shaking the countryside with its weight

and grandeur. As we see it in the station, we can know that it's built to go, but we know that it won't get under way until the engine's got steam up; and our particular car won't move unless it's coupled to the engine in some way. Whatever steam the engine gets is going to come from the coal being thrown into the fire-box; and whatever motion our car gets is going to come from the engine.

Can you see what I'm driving at? All motion is *borrowed*. It's a first principle of Science that matter is inert. It can't move unless it be moved by something outside itself. Well, then, since we see motion all around us, we're bound to ask where it all came from. The wind blows, things grow and decay (that's a form of motion!), we ourselves have vitality, and—well, there's no end of it. And we can't say that everything borrows its motion from everything else. That won't work. It's like all the people in a town trying to make a living by taking in one another's washing. Or, putting it another way, we can stretch out our passenger cars until we have a hundred of them; then we can stand all of them around in a circle—and still, if there's no locomotive, they won't move. There's no use in saying they can all borrow their motion from one another, because there's

no motion to start with. They need a locomotive.

And that's exactly the way it is with the world. We have things moving right and left, everything getting its motion from something else, but where did it all come from in the first place? From the sun? All right. But who lit the sun and hung it up?

I'm not trying to be fantastic at all. I'm only putting a philosophical truth in plain everyday language. And what it comes to is this: Someone gave the universe a shot of energy in the beginning, and we've been running on that shot ever since. That someone, of course, is God.

There's just one more thing about that train of ours. It's got to go someplace. It wasn't made just to rush aimlessly through space. It has a destination. It's going to New York or San Francisco, New Orleans or Montreal. And the people inside know that. They're better off, in a way, than a lot of people I know—people who think God made the world for no particular reason at all; that things are moving rather aimlessly and, even worse, that they themselves have no special destination in life. They're merely rolling down the track, not knowing whether they're headed upwards or downwards. But that's something else again . . .

I see that my time's running out now, so I'll take this last minute or two to gather together what I've just said.

We've seen that atheism or agnosticism doesn't work. It has no answer to the deeper problems of life. It breaks down whenever it's faced with a crisis—such as a fox-hole, or the death of a close relative. Agnostics pay for their cake, all right, but their conscience won't let them enjoy it. That's one thing to remember.

And then the fact that there is a world at all forces us to reason back toward a maker of the world, just as our train led us back to the car-company and the engine-works. Mind you, all that's apart from any question of plan or purpose. The mere fact that we can put our feet on the ground is enough to stir up the profound conviction that there is a God.

But, we find that the world, like our train, has been laid out with intelligence. Our own bodies give us a nice example of that: we have the circulation of our blood, with its system of nerves and arteries; we're supplied with oxygen by our lungs; we take food into our stomachs and assimilate it into our blood; our brain keeps us in touch with the outside world; and we have it in our power to turn out

perfect little duplicates of ourselves the cry of a baby. *That* would be —two-foot models, so to speak, capable of growing to our own size and reproducing *themselves*. And that's something no locomotive can do, in spite of its size and power. So you see, we have it all over a train, and yet if it took planning to design a train, think of the planning it must have taken to design the human body!

Yet it isn't quite enough to have nothing more than design. Think of the world, if you can, as being absolutely static—motionless: There isn't a ripple on the ocean; not a leaf quivers; everything's petrified; bodies built for life are helpless! There's not a sound—not even

design without motion. We need someone to come in, now, and start the wheels rolling, to touch men with the spark of life. But the wheels can't get motion from man, because man has none; nor can man get it from the wheels, because the wheels have none. If there is to be motion, it must be brought in from the outside. And that's where God comes in.

Those are a few of the reasons why people believe in God. It's not only that we want to believe; it's not only that the Church teaches there is a God; it's that we can and must believe. It's only common sense!

A DESCRIPTION OF GOD

Address delivered on August 20, 1944

Last week we spoke of a sparrow perched on the chimney of a house and solemnly assuring the baby sparrows that the house had just happened to grow—naturally, without benefit of architect or contractor—for how could any bird be great enough to build a house?

The mistake in the sparrow's reasoning was quite obvious. It couldn't imagine anything greater than itself, and just because it couldn't get the idea of a man into its little head, there it sat perched and comfortably preaching that there is no such thing as man because, as it would say, the sparrow is the measure of all things.

Now, as I see it, that's pretty much the position taken by people who say our world had no Maker, just because they can't imagine a man big enough to make it. But God's not a man, and we have no more right to make Him a man than the sparrow has to make us like itself. God's away out of our class, just as we're away out of the sparrow's class. Painters generally make Him look like a dignified old man in their pictures, I suppose because that's the most venerable type of being we've ever seen in life; but after all, they're only painting sym-

bols of a vast reality which is utterly beyond our comprehension.

Maybe that's one reason why there are agnostics and atheists. I shouldn't be surprised if it's because they've never thought to go deeper than those nursery pictures of the old man with the long white beard. I know I had that idea of God when I was a youngster. I used to see those lithographs of a great big eye, much larger than the globe it was supposed to be watching. There's nothing wrong with pictures of that sort, of course. I don't mean to criticize them. I'm only saying that some people, instead of taking them as a symbol of God's greatness, take them as proof of something they've always suspected: I mean, that God's actually an invisible giant.

When we think of God that way, we're inclined to credit Him with most of the good qualities we see in the elderly people around us; that's all right, but the worst of it is that we give Him the bad points, too. We come to think of Him not just as a giant, but as a cranky giant, into the bargain—a rather peevish old gentleman, sitting some place off in the sky and doing His best to keep people from having a

good time. There are some people who get Him all mixed up with laws against Sunday baseball; with prohibition; with regulations against card-playing and smoking and boogie-woogie. And so they begin to think, "If you're good, you'll get to heaven, but you'll never have any fun." And then, instead of finding out what God really *is* like and what He really *does* want, they put Him in the back of their heads and only talk to Him on Sunday mornings.

We're doing God an injustice if that's the way we think of Him, because He's not that way at all. We can tell what He's like from the things He's made. When we look at God, remember, we're not quite as badly off as birds looking at a man, because we have intelligence—but still, come to think of it, God's much farther from us than we are from sparrows. That's why, even at our best, we can only fumble around and say that God must be or must have something *like* what we see in ourselves. He's so far above us that we have no ideas which come *near* fitting Him. It's something like trying to compare the lapping of water in a glass to the beating of ocean waves against the rocks on the shore.

All right, then; let's see if we can't do something in the way of a description of God; let's see how

much we can figure out for ourselves independently of anything He Himself has told us. It's much easier to use the Bible and study the Person of Jesus Christ, who was God in the flesh; but just to clear up our own ideas, we'll pretend we're talking about God to someone who doesn't believe in the Bible. We'll see, now, how far we can go.

In our last talk we found that the origin of the universe could only be accounted for by some cause outside the universe. The world couldn't start up by itself, any more than a man could lift himself by pulling on his own bootstraps. Then when we tried to explain motion and design in the world through natural causes, we were always forced back to the idea of a first cause, a cause which had no cause itself. Every instinct of our mind cried out for that answer, and the only way we could have sidestepped would have been by denying that things *need* causes. But that would blow a fuse in our whole system of thought—for if it were true that things can happen without causes, we wouldn't be able to trust any of our thinking processes and all science would be overthrown. For that reason it's insane to have the idea that every thing has a cause and then to make an exception when it comes to the sum-total of everything.

Before we even get started, then, we can see that there are many reasons for knowing that the first cause must be unlimited, absolutely endless. For instance, there can be no fences hedging it in. Since it made all things, the only thing that could cut it down or tie its hands would be something it had previously made.

That's something we must get fixed in our minds. When we speak of God, we can't think of anything building a wall around Him. It's a point which will come up again and again.

It has a powerful meaning. It means, for instance, that God is perfect, in the strictest sense of the word. I'm not perfect and, begging your pardon, I'll take the liberty of saying you're not perfect, and I don't doubt that you'd be the first to admit it. We're all lacking something somewhere. We don't have all the brains we might have. Our will-power isn't what it should be. We have our faults, all of us—and the same thing can be said of everything around us. We're all limited, crowded in by our human nature, by our bodily setup, by our training, our income. But with God, that isn't so. He lacks nothing. He has everything. He simply can't be fenced in since, as I said, the only things that could do

that to Him would be the things He has made.

So far so good. We have an absolutely limitless, a perfect God. Naturally, then, there can be only one God. Since He has everything, there's nothing left for anyone else to have. If I'm holding all the cards in my hand, the only ones who can get any are those I choose to deal them to.

It's pretty clear, too, that God had no beginning. To say He had we'd have to say there was someone or something on hand first to get Him started; but if that were so, then that other thing would have been the First Cause, and we'd only be pushing the problem back another step.

If He's unlimited, He must be everywhere; otherwise we'd have to say He's just not big enough to be everywhere at once, and right away we're building one of those impossible fences around Him. In the same way, since He made everything, He must know everything. And of course, He can do everything. Why not? What's to stop Him? Who's to stand in His way?

I've had school-boys ask if God can make spinach which can be green and not-green at the same time. Only a school-boy *would* ask a question like that, because he's not sharp enough to understand

that there's a contradiction there. flaps or the brass blades, as the We have to make up our mind what case may be. we want before we turn in our order. We can have green spinach or we can have spinach that's not green, but we can't have both at the same time, because it's not common sense. In fact, it isn't anything. It's a flat contradiction. The one cancels the other out, leaving nothing. And anyone can make that!

That's how things are with God and His world. He must have His attention fixed on the universe all the time; otherwise it would drop right back to what it was before creation—to empty nothingness. But there's still another way of learning about God. It's by looking at ourselves and the world around us, and it's based on the idea that every artist puts a little of himself into his work. So, if it's music on the radio, we can tell whether the performer is a finished artist or just a beginner. If it's a construction job, we can size up the talent of the engineer. And so on. Well—with the world: it's all been poured out of the one jug, so to speak. The result is that if we have intelligence and can think, it's because God had it first (He certainly couldn't have given us what He didn't have Himself). But if God has intelligence, since He's perfect, He must have perfect or unlimited intelligence.

There's one thing about God and this old world of ours that can easily escape our attention. It's the fact that God must forever be holding up the things He's made. When a man makes a table out of wood, it stays wood; and when God makes a tree out of nothing, it would drop right back into nothing if He didn't stay *with* it. A good example of that might be the sun, which fills our house with light and warmth; in a loose sort of way, I suppose we might say that the sun created light and heat for us. But when the sun sets, or when we pull down the blind and cut off its power, look what happens! There's no more light and warmth! Or we might think of a pin-wheel, or of an electric fan. When the thing's going around and around, we get the illusion of something solid there—of a round flat surface. As soon as the motion stops, our surface is gone and we have nothing left but the celluloid

Do you get the idea? If we have anything worth having, God must have it to a limitless degree. It's the same way with beauty. We can manufacture a little of it, to put it crudely, from what He's given us. Men have written poetry and symphonies; they've painted pictures and built cathedrals. And we can

appreciate the natural beauty around us—the oceans and the mountains and the flowers. That enables us to see that God must be beauty itself, since in first creating the beauty of nature He had no pattern to guide Him, excepting the idea wrapped in the sublime depths of His own Person.

We can't think of Him as being ugly in any way. That's out by it's very nature. Ugliness is nothing more than a lack of something good which ought to be there but isn't.

Lying, thieving, and lechery, for instance, show a want of truthfulness, honesty, and purity. That's moral ugliness. Aesthetic or physical ugliness comes from a lack of harmony and proportion—from jangling sounds, clashing colors, or unbalanced masses of material.

Possibly this all sounds rather complicated—what I've just been saying, about how God's perfect, how He knows everything and can do everything, and all the rest of it. We're more interested when we hear that He's good and beautiful with a sort of goodness and beauty we can only faintly see. We catch it now and then in the holiness of a little child—in the unspoiled beauty of a field curving over the horizon during these last days of August. We find it haunting great music, in the limpid perfection of Mozart, the mysticism of Cesar

Franck. It's an elusive sort of thing, always evading our grip and yet forever calling us on and on to a loftier principle, a higher something far above the moil and toil and all the sordidness of our daily grime and sweat. It calls us before the very throne of God, Himself, the dazzling Source of all goodness and beauty, the first Fountain of holiness and truth, the Master Artist, who couldn't help but stamp His character on His own handiwork.

But up to this point we've been looking at God, with all due respect to His dignity, as though He were something under a glass bell—something roped off in a museum. We've been discussing Him as He is in Himself with hardly a word on how He affects *us*.

It's mostly through His justice and love that God cuts across our lives, for if He is all wise, then He must be perfectly just and we must be prepared some day to see everything squared up with all accounts settled.

He's put it in our hearts to know good from evil, and He's let us know that He's mightily interested in what use we make of our lives. He doesn't want us to be wicked. Conscience tells us that. He wants us to be good, and His justice tells us that both good and evil will get their proper deserts.

And if love is a virtue, if we see that the devotion of a father for his children, of children for their father, if we see that the love between husband and wife or between friends—if we see that love and loyalty such as that is a fine thing, it must be only because God has given us a little of His own love and loyalty. Think of what that means!—to be loved by One who is all-powerful, all-wise, and all-beautiful!

It adds a quality of mercy to justice. It tells us God will not only show us what's good but will help us do it. It means He's interested in us, whoever we are and whatever we are, interested in our happiness here and forever.

He made us. He put us where we are now. He's everything—in your heart and mine. He sees everything. He knows our troubles and our worries. There is no kindness shown, no patience, no fineness which isn't seen and marked down for its reward. He has kept us safe from harm, and when things were darkest He has given us His hand.

But, don't you see, that's our personal declaration of independence. We're free. We've exchanged the love of God for the blind tyranny of matter. We've crushed that

pessimism that wants to condemn us to everlasting death. Our life is not a flash in the pan of cosmic evolution; it's a dawn which never ends. Our loves are not spun from cobwebs, to be swept aside by the rough hand of Death, for Death is not now an enemy; it's a friend, waiting patiently to usher us into the presence of everlasting Love and Beauty.

God is intelligent; He can hear our prayers. He's almighty; He *can* do whatever we ask—and He *will* do it, provided only it be good for us, because He loves us with a love which is as great as Himself.

Think of what that means: We've burst the bonds of this little world and shaken the chains of decay from our wrists. Our vision sweeps now from eternity to eternity. We've broken the tyranny of atheistic denials and agnostic doubts. We're free men!

No one can cajole us now or coax us into believing that we're the slaves of nature, or cruel forces forever driving us to the wall. We know better than that! We're not the slaves but the lords of the universe, enthroned at the very summit of creation—not just because we have intelligence and free-will, but because we're the well beloved children of an all-wise and almighty Father.

OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN HEAVEN

Address delivered on August 27, 1944

We finished up last Sunday by head—and I dare say it's as wide-spread as the old-man idea. I mean atheism and agnosticism—free-thought, as it's called. But if atheism does free us from a wise and friendly God, it only makes us slaves to the cruel, blind forces of nature. The religious man doesn't fear death as the end of everything; his vision isn't cramped by the four square dimensions of space and time. It's just the other way around. He isn't afraid of anything, except to do wrong. Death isn't the end, but the beginning of his life. His view reaches out into eternity. By giving himself to the service of God, he becomes not the slave but the master of the universe. He's not a stranger in an alien and hostile world, but a son in the house of his Father.

I believe we also did away with the curious idea of God as an old man, a terrifically big old man with a beard and an inclination to be cranky. God is a Person, all right, but He's a spiritual Person—that is, He has no body. He's all perfect, all powerful, all wise, and all good. There can't be any bad qualities about Him.

But now there's another wrong notion we have to knock on the head—and I dare say it's as wide-spread as the old-man idea. I mean the picture some of us have of God as being something like a big old "softie"—a sort of easygoing old fellow who wants everyone merely to enjoy himself, to have a good time. That comes of forgetting about God's justice. Our sketch of God would be lacking if it didn't bring in the fact that He's absolutely just. We ourselves idealize justice. It's the one virtue that seems to agree most with the scientific view of things—with the law that things tend to stabilize themselves eventually, that what goes up must come down, and all the rest of it.

We have that in us so deeply that when we see someone make a pile of money through unfair means—say, through graft, or traffic in vice—we almost know "in our bones" that it isn't right and that sooner or later the criminal will get what's coming to him.

That intuition, or instinct, if we can call it that, has been put in us by God, of course, and we couldn't have it if He didn't first have it Himself, and to an endless degree. God is all love, it's true—but, just the same, He's not an easy-mark.

Remember the passage from the Bible: "Come unto me all ye who labor and are heavy burdened, and I will refresh ye"? Suppose we paraphrase it this way: "Come unto me, ye liars and grafters; ye bigamists, with your concubines; come unto me, ye thieves and degenerates and I will refresh you. Know ye not that I care not whether you lie, or graft, or fornicate, or multiply your injustices?—Ye may have your selfishness and enjoy your wickedness with my love and blessing. I will not ask you to give them up . . ."

That's blasphemous, isn't it?—because we sense instinctively that it goes against the very nature of God, against His holiness, against His justice.

What I'm getting at is this: there is such a thing as retribution. I won't call it vengeance. I'll call it justice—the fact that the moral order must be kept straight—that if it's tipped over it must be straightened out; and the further it's tipped, the more trouble it's going to involve getting it to balance again. God is not mocked. We couldn't respect Him otherwise; and the sins we commit by twos and twos, we pay for one by one.

In this connection, someone told me lately that in his reading he had come across the story of some early settlers in this country. They were

religious refugees who had strong feelings against violence of any sort; so much so that one day when the Indians swept down on them and carried off their women, they just stood around with their hands in their pockets. They didn't believe in violence!

But, you see, there are times when violence must be done, to prevent greater violence. There are times when God must arise, either to prevent injustice or to put things right.

We must keep those two ideas straight then: God is all love, but at the same time, He's all justice. Sometimes we can't quite see how the two can be combined, even in the virtue of mercy; but if that's so, all we can do is to call it a mystery—a mystery which can't be solved by playing down or doing away with either justice or love. We're just as sure that God's just as we are that He loves us.

I think we're using the best possible example to show God's relationship with us when we think of Him as our Father and ourselves as His children. That's the way Jesus taught us to think of Him.

Now, we have to think of God as an ideal Father of course, because God has many times more love for us than our earthly father—many times more love and wisdom. And

then, besides that, He's perfectly just.

A good father, we'll say, is one who sees that his children are well provided for. They have good food and warm clothing and a roof over their heads. He looks out for their health; he has them taught a trade, or enters them in one of the professions. Most important though, he looks after their moral education. He wants them to be good and decent before everything. They must be honest and truthful, clean-minded, sober, and industrious. So, from the moment they begin to think, he begins the interesting business of teaching them the difference between right and wrong. He builds up their sense of honor and gives them to understand that he'd rather see them dead than given over to a life of crookedness or filth.

Those of us who have watched children grow up—the parents and teachers among us—all of us know that firmness is very necessary in bringing up fine boys and girls. It's never hard to say Yes to a child, but it takes great love to say No at the right time. And the pity of it is, I'm sure, that many a child has thought his father a mean old tyrant for having said No to the fourth hot-dog and the third bottle of pop. The fact is, though, that the father has more wisdom than

his child. He has a "longer head," as they say. He can see further into the future, and so he's able to guess the dismal results of stirring four hot-dogs into three bottles of pop in a child's stomach. So he says No, and he gets no thanks for it until the child has grown old enough to understand his father's reasons.

I suppose there's hardly a one of us who doesn't remember the first time he was caught smoking, as a child, or the first time he swaggered home and used a naughty word in the hearing of his mother and dad. We certainly got a receipt for it—at least I did; and it stopped the practice in the root. Now, we know very well that our parents punished us not because they hated us, but because they loved us. They would actually have been wanting in love, they would have been neglecting our better interests, had they let us get away with anything low or dishonest—for when I spoke of children's misconduct, I meant to cover the whole field of characters.

But how does all this fit in with God? Well—this is it. If He's our Father, then all of life begins to look very much like a process of education. He feeds us, all right—it's all there in the earth, so that all we have to do is to plant and harvest—and He gives us the means of keeping ourselves warm. But He's much more interested in see-

ing us grow up as good, decent children—that is, if He really loves us. We can't even imagine God pampering us, letting us fill up on hot-dogs and soda-pop, letting us get away with murder, so to speak, because, for one thing, that wouldn't be real love. We wouldn't have much use for human parents who would do that. No . . . if God loves us, He's got to do His best to see that we turn out to be good men and women, even if it does involve an occasional correction.

I said He must do His *best*, because in spite of everything, we can still turn out pretty rotten. Those are the terms on which He made us. He doesn't coerce people; He wants volunteers. If we're going to love Him and be His good children, we're going to do it of our own free-will. But the only way things can work out along this line is if we have a choice: to serve or not to serve; to be good or to be wicked. And the one sure way God has of making us stay away from evil—without forcing us, I mean—is by seeing that we get our fingers burned when we play around with wickedness.

That's how God corrects us. It hurts us. It hurts our pride, first of all, and then it very often leaves our bodies hurting and smarting. We can't forget, though, that it's not because He hates us that He

corrects us, when it's necessary, but it's because He loves us.

Another of our troubles is that we're short-sighted. We're like youngsters at a picnic who can't see beyond the next hour. But God's vision reaches through years and years. He sees what we don't. He sees all the complications which can possibly follow from every one of our actions, and He knows that we're going to live forever. This life is only the first act of the play. The other acts follow after death.

That's a partial explanation of all the troubles that come to us in this life: pain and suffering, war and disease. They're God's means of turning us into better men and women. He wants all of us to become as perfect as we can; He wants to make the bad good and the good better.

We're like so many blocks of marble. It's only through the action of the artist's chisel and mallet that we can become anything worth looking at; and the longer the artist works over us, however painful it may be, the more beautiful we become in the end.

Understand, now, I haven't said that God causes pain and suffering. We have those things and He permits them because, like everything else in the world, we're limited. We live, we run down, and we die. The pity of it is that, being human, we

feel the gradual wearing away of our bodies.

Nor did I say that God caused this present war. He doesn't make bullets and bombs, remember; it's we who make them. But since we've insisted on getting ourselves into such an awful mess, He's permitted it, and now He'll draw as much good from it as things will allow.

He could have prevented the war—He could stop it this minute; but that isn't His way. He's given us our free-will and now He won't interfere. By His leave we're free to do and say as we please; and when that's not possible, we can at least *think* as we please. God respects that. He made us that way, and He won't, He simply won't ever force us one way or another. He'll coax us, but He won't push us.

But pain and trouble can be more than medicine and correction. They can reflect the working out of Divine Justice as we have it even in such an everyday expression as "Crime doesn't pay." The books must be balanced some day, and often the operation commences here on earth.

There are problems—yes. But at that, we're much better off with God and the certainty that everything's working out for the best—*so long as we keep the rules*—we're much better off than the poor fellow

without God, who has only the idea that everything's against him and that he can't win, no matter how he plays.

Think of God, then, as a Father; not as an overly indulgent Father—one who wants us to enjoy ourselves just as we please, not caring whether or not it involves stealing or lying or lechery, but as a Father who really loves us and wants to be proud of us—who would rather see us poor than prosperous, if prosperity meant a loss of decency—a Father who would rather have us dead than living dishonorably.

But it would be a strange child who thought of a good father only in terms like that. When most of us think of our dads, our first impression is that of the man whose strong arms used to sweep us up to himself nights when he came home from work; he was the one who kept the house going, who could fix anything. We'd get him to help us with our school work, because we knew there was no question he couldn't answer. When we were sick he could tell whether we needed the doctor or just a good night's sleep. Strong—wise—a good provider—that's what he was. There are other memories, too; visions of Christ-mases and birthdays, of picnics in the country, and outings in the park. He was our childhood king and we were the heirs apparent.

Our earthly father was our first gave it holiness, but besides that introduction to the Fatherhood of He gave us a key to the meaning God. Jesus meant it to be that way of Divine Love: for now we can when He taught us to call God "Our see God only as the all wise and al-Father." In those words He not mighty Protector of mankind, His only canonized the word father and earthly family.

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.

92 CATHOLIC HOUR STATIONS

In 39 States, the District of Columbia, and Hawaii

Alabama	Birmingham	WBRC*	960 kc
	Mobile	WALA	1410 kc
Arizona	Phoenix	KTAR	620 kc
	Tucson	KVOA	1290 kc
	Yuma	KYUM	1240 kc
Arkansas	Little Rock	KARK*	920 kc
California	Fresno	KMJ	580 kc
	Los Angeles	KFI	640 kc
	San Diego	KFSD	600 kc
	San Francisco	KPO	680 kc
Colorado	Denver	KOA	850 kc
District of Columbia	Washington	WRC	980 kc
Florida	Jacksonville	WJAX	930 kc
	Miami	WIOD	610 kc
	Pensacola	WCOA	1370 kc
	Tampa	WFLA	970-620 kc
Georgia	Atlanta	WSB	750 kc
	Savannah	WSAV	1340 kc
Idaho	Boise	KIDO	1380 kc
Illinois	Chicago	WMAQ	670 kc
Indiana	Fort Wayne	WGL	1450 kc
	Terre Haute	WBOW	1230 kc
Kansas	Wichita	KANS	1240 kc
Kentucky	Louisville	WAVE*	970 kc
Louisiana	New Orleans	WSMB	1350 kc
	Shreveport	KTBS	1480 kc
Maine	Augusta	WRDO	1400 kc
Maryland	Baltimore	WBAL	1090 kc
Massachusetts	Boston	WBZ	1030 kc
	Springfield	WBZA	1030 kc
Michigan	Detroit	WWJ*	950 kc
	Saginaw	WSAM	1400 kc
Minnesota	Duluth-Superior	WEBC	1320 kc
	Hibbing	WMFG	1300 kc
	Mankato	KYSM	1230 kc
	Minneapolis-St. Paul	KSTP	1500 kc
	Rochester	KROC	1340 kc
	Virginia	WHLB	1400 kc
Mississippi	Jackson	WJDX	1300 kc
Missouri	Kansas City	WDAF	610 kc
	Springfield	KGBX	1260 kc
	Saint Louis	KSD*	550 kc
Montana	Billings	KGHL	790 kc
	Bozeman	KRBM	1450 kc
	Butte	KGIR	1370 kc
	Helena	KPFA	1240 kc

92 CATHOLIC HOUR STATIONS

In 39 States, the District of Columbia, and Hawaii

Nebraska	Omaha	WOW	590 kc
New Mexico	Albuquerque	KOB	1030 kc
New York	Buffalo	WBEN	930 kc
	New York	WEAF	660 kc
	Schenectady	WGY	810 kc
North Carolina	Charlotte	WSOC	1240 kc
	Raleigh	WPTF	680 kc
	Winston-Salem	WSJS	600 kc
North Dakota	Bismarck	KFYR	550 kc
	Fargo	WDAY	970 kc
Ohio	Cincinnati	WSAI*	1360 kc
	Cleveland	WTAM	1100 kc
	Lima	WLOK	1240 kc
Oklahoma	Tulsa	KVOO	1170 kc
Oregon	Medford	KMED	1440 kc
	Portland	KGW*	620 kc
Pennsylvania	Allentown	WSAN	1470 kc
	Altoona	WFBG	1340 kc
	Johnstown	WJAC	1400 kc
	Lewistown	WMRF	1490 kc
	Philadelphia	KYW	1060 kc
	Pittsburgh	KDKA	1020 kc
	Reading	WRAW	1340 kc
	Wilkes-Barre	WBRE	1340 kc
	Rhode Island	Providence	WJAR
South Carolina	Charleston	WTMA	1250 kc
	Columbia	WIS	560 kc
	Greenville	WFBC	1330 kc
South Dakota	Sioux Falls	KSOO-KELO	1140-1230 kc
Tennessee	Kingsport	WKPT	1400 kc
	Memphis	WMC*	790 kc
	Nashville	WSM*	650 kc
Texas	Amarillo	KGNC	1440 kc
	Dallas	WFAA	820 kc
	Fort Worth	WBAP*	820 kc
	Houston	KPRC	950 kc
	San Antonio	WOAI	1200 kc
	Weslaco	KRGV	1290 kc
	Salt Lake City	KDYL*	1320 kc
Virginia	Norfolk	WTAR*	790 kc
	Richmond	WMBG	1380 kc
Washington	Seattle	KOMO	950 kc
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(Revised as of October, 1944)

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