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THE RIGHTS of THE OPPRESSED



Martin J. O'Connor
The Catholic Hour

THE RIGHTS OF THE OPPRESSED

By

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LIFE (WITH SATAN OR WITH GOD)

Address Delivered on September 7, 1941.

Life with Father! What an amusing story! And amazing too for its affectionate insight into human character. Here are all the figures of a lively family daily growing in the shadow of their lord and master—father. And as for him, whether he is fuming at relatives or buying an ice box, or roaring in genuine anguish when the household bills shoot high, you cannot help but chuckle at his foibles. Perhaps it may even bring you back to the days when you yourself had lived and laughed and loved your life with father.

But it never was the sum of your existence, because there was another life for you, with father or without. At forty it did not begin, but rather long before, nor will it end when time stops dead at the threshold of eternity. In one sense it is far beyond your contacts with this world, yet measures them with utmost care and never holds them wasted. It is something that is deep inside, moving apace with realities around while resisting and responding to their influence. It is the life of a force within that makes you wiggle your finger or clench your fist or love a sunset or remember the lovely face of your mother. It is the real force of the real you, the life of your very soul.

Yet your soul never lives alone. It is not an isolationist. From the time when reason begins to show, when thinking and remembering become a conscious habit, it treads a path that is not bare and never neutral. It starts you on a new life but one of your own choosing. It chooses its companion for the

course and sometimes even changes. Beyond that outward life and yet bound up with it, that you will lead with mother, brothers, sisters, sweethearts, friends, beyond all that is meant by "life with father," you begin to lead a life with Satan or with God.

A life with Satan! I can almost hear your gasp of horror now! "But it could never be!" you cry. "He is not real but only a thing of fiction like Fu Manchu or Superman or Ming, the Evil Emperor of Mongo. He only comes from someone's fertile mind." And yet I say he is as real as your own father. His identity is deep in history. He is Lucifer, brightest of the angels, lusting to be independent of God; he is Lucifer, turning as our tempter into Satan and seeking a throne in the wayward hearts of men. He is the "Prince of this world" (*John 12:31*) whom Christ's victory cast out. Yet the moral Quislings among men sought a throne for him again and served him in his will. But they missed the fact his aim was only ruin. In appeasing, did they fail to see the combining cunning deviltry he owned? How thoroughly this master mind of all the evil forces of the world had blinded them. And still they put him into fiction and not history where he belonged.

And so they waited; waited until the fires of persecution burned anew; waited until new dangers of wealth and even poverty rose from the ashes of the old; waited until they saw the vultures of despair soar from the rotting carcasses of truth on which this devil feasted, before they cried in terror, "Is this reality?". Aye, real it was but not more-so than the author of it all whose reality they doubted, whose slaves they were by sin, against whose darkened might they could have set the fighting words of

the Apostle, "Put on the armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the Principalities and the Powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness on high . . . Stand, therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplates of justice, and having your feet shod with the readiness of the gospel of peace, in all things taking the shield of faith, with which you may be able to quench all the fiery darts of the most wicked one" (*Ephesians* 6:11-16).

This then is Satan. You could never choose to live with him. The mere rehearsal of his works makes your soul rebel. Besides, creation endowed you only with the right to live with God. In Satan's train you become a servant and his slave. His will is sin and he will do his wily best to bend you to it, to drag you to the fate that has been set for him and for his angels, ". . . in everlasting chains under darkness" (*Jude* 1:6). Withal it is not direct attack you fear but the pincers movements of deceit that smash resistance to his company in life. Just think, sometimes it is even reassuring to sample fruits of first acquaintance. For example, did you ever say, "But surely that's not wrong, it's simply business," when your heart said no; or again, "This question of children is so perplexing, I don't know what I will do," when well you know God's mind in your regard; and yet again, you say, "It's permissible you know, just politics," and this, in spite of laws that men like you have made for your protection? Somehow or other it seems so broad to share appeasement fruits of this oppressor. In fact there is a kind of pride in a ripening friendship that does permit such liberties. So,

piece by piece, you take off all the armor of God; there goes the breastplate of justice; off with the girdle of truth; away with the shoes of peace that kept you from destruction; throw down the shield of your faith. And now, your hearts and minds and senses are thoroughly conquered. You are disarmed. Forgotten are the words of Christ, "He who is not with me is against me" (*Matthew* 12:30). Forgotten your sacred promise not to compromise. Even forgotten is the fear of Satan's slavery till remorse or ruin remind your soul that you have sacrificed your right to live with God.

But will you do this? Will you yield to these deceits? You may as well ask, "Shall I make God angry?" or "Shall I kill myself?" For to lose your life with God is spiritual death and no despair or no discouragement or no failure must ever lead you to it. No pot of devil's brew, no matter how enticing, must ever make you sell your right to live with Him. For it is said, "I am the Lord thy God, mighty, jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me" (*Exodus* 20:5). Through them that hate Him come the sorrows of this world to those that follow after. It is always so. The yielding of the right to live with God means a victory for Satan in your soul.

You cannot suffer it. You need not. This right to live with God can be preserved. I grant your being in the world, but so is God in whom "we live and move and have our being" (*Acts* 20:28). For He is "not far from anyone of us" (*Acts* 20:27). Nor is He unmindful of it when to the Apostles and to you He says through the lips of Christ, "I do not pray that thou take them out of the world, but that

thou keep them from evil" (*John 17:15*). That is your problem, to keep from evil all your life, just as you would from treason. If you pledge allegiance to your flag and to the republic for which it stands, why not then to God? Why not give your senses, those magic keys to virtue and to vice, in trust to your Divine Companion in a daily pledge of love? Why not offer Him that agile mind with every motion of your heart? For such a forthright loyalty will forge a silver chain of charity to God to bind you in agreement with this Christian formula of life, "If you love me keep my commandments" (*John 14:15*). And they will never interfere with life with Father and all that it conveys except to guide it. For your real father in Heaven, says His Son, "knows what you need before you ask him" (*Matthew 6:8*). He knows your heavy burdens all; your labors are His own, for it was no idle fancy made Him say in gentleness, "Come to me . . . I will give you rest" (*Matthew 11:28*). He sensed your doubts of happiness should you cast your lot with Him for His word of reassurance was, "These things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full" (*John 15:11*). And not joy alone but life, the very life of God is in you when you try to live with Him and keep from sin. For then you will not blush to say with the Apostle, "It is now no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me" (*Galatians 2:20*). Your labors, your burdens, your joys are all with Him.

If you were a murderer you could never sleep for the blood upon your hands. If you were a liar and a thief and caught, the world would soon despise you. In any case your fortunes are unhappy. But in the choice to lose your life with God you are all three at

once and to boot you have the devil's company in sin. You have stolen a soul that rightfully was God's; you have lied in masking every wicked turn; you have cruelly killed the force that is within you when you sought a life with Satan, not with God. But even a murderer can weep and a liar and a thief as well. A true repentant one was promised life again by Christ, "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise" (*Luke 23:43*).

As repentance gives you life again, a life eternal, so real prudence can keep it for you here on earth. Not with cunning or a shrewd or masterly maneuver but with prudence that has its source in a wise God. For an ancient proverb says, "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but he that walketh wisely, he shall be saved" (*Proverbs 28:26*). It is the wisdom of divine foresight. Make it yours. Walk with God. In all things, with all men, let your daily life with father and all that it implies be not a life with Satan but with God.

LIBERTY (EARTHLY CHOICES OF THE SOUL)

Address Delivered on September 14, 1941.

“One of you is a devil” (*John 6:71*). In a voice as cold as steel He made the charge. Gone was the usual gentle tone that made them love Him. Gone was the sweet compassion that always warmed these hearts that now were chilled. The voice was the ringing voice of Christ. The words were His. “One of you is a devil.” Thus he spoke to the Apostles. Others in the crowd had found His sayings hard and left, to walk no more with Him. With restraint that had a tinge of warning in it, He turned to His very own, “Do you also wish to go away” (*John 6:68*)? And impulsive Peter answers, “To whom shall we go? Thou hast words of everlasting life . . .” (*John 6:69*). A word, a pause, and then Christ’s bitter comment, “One of you is a devil.”

“Now he was speaking of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon; for he it was, though one of the Twelve, who was to betray him.” (*John 6:72*). So reads the record. For Judas had made a choice and his victim knew it. Judas was the devil and a thief. It was but a step to murder and he took it. In spite of being chosen by the Lord Himself, in spite of being trusted with the purse strings, in spite of miracles that made his senses reel, he took it! The voice of silver had clashed with the voice of Christ! The Master saw it all. And so, on the sunny shores of Galilee, down from the summer villas, he partly shared the guilty secret with the rest, “One of you is a devil.”

Do you feel guilty too? As though the Lord Christ could read too deeply in your heart? You know full well the sins you serve and they perhaps reproach you. For when you say you ought not to have done something that was forbidden, that it was your duty to obey the law, you practically say you could have done so. Yet all men are the same; and you are not alone. All men have freedom of this kind and how they love to use it! And misuse it! Think of that when you struggle with temptation. Or better still, just think of Judas! And when that streamlined consciousness of yours just carries you along, remember even then the things you do were born in human liberty. Somewhere along the line, or at the start, you yielded or resisted; somewhere you began or just approved, or maybe got the habit that you practice. Sometime, somewhere, you knew an act was right or wrong and apprehension grew; you knew your choice was free; you knew the act was yours; you felt accountable for it. In this, my friends, is moral liberty and the reason for your guilty feeling, if there be such, at the charge, "One of you is a devil."

But how good that you feel guilty, if you do! How good to find the chains of slavery do irk, a hopeful sign you love your right to liberty. Even though you cast it off, in thoughtlessness, in anger, in every kind of sin, you must admit you freely yielded it to be a slave. For that you are, despite excuses; "Amen, amen, I say to you," are Christ's familiar words, "everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin" (*John* 8:34). But men are always in defense of a bad policy; they rally to it faster than to good. Sometimes it even needs a Pagan to sweeten honesty to our taste as better policy. But not so the servants

of their sins; blindness is their virtue. By every effort of unhappy lives they work to give desire of false liberty to others. The liberty they preach is freedom from restraint wherein by contrast men will sink themselves in slavery. Yet still they talk and still their listeners grow, "The true, the good, the so-called sins of us are just illusions!" What pat and puttied phrases! No better sum of all their twisted reasoning is found than where the prince of the Apostles tells how they seek to draw the weaker from the moral cause of Christ, promising them "freedom, whereas they themselves are the slaves of corruption; for by whatever a man is overcome," says Peter, "of this also he is the slave" (2 Peter 2:19).

Yet why be overcome? Why yield when it is by yielding you begin to be a slave? But when misfortune follows sin, it is sometimes very human to blame God. You were not the first to do it, never fear. And yet what self-deception! And by devices whose only age is equal to man's memory. This last is long enough to serve us well for does not one of the Apostles say, "Let no man say when he is tempted, that he is tempted by God; for God is no tempter to evil, and he himself tempts no one. But everyone is tempted by being drawn away and enticed by his own passion. Then when passion has conceived, it brings forth sin; but when sin has matured, it begets death" (James 1:13-15). Through death like this you lose your liberty. Instead of blaming God when it is gone, why not pray to Him to help you keep it. "God is faithful," says the convert of Damascus, "and will not permit you to be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also give you a way out that you may be able to bear

it" (I *Corinthians* 10:13). You will not lose your liberty if you trust Him.

But bear with me. I know you want to say, "Is this important?" or rather, "They're true enough, these pious formulas, but are they practical?" Let me answer you with a story about drink. A recent writing told of a group of people in this country who make a selfless hobby of reform. They themselves are reformed drunkards; they know the problem. They give their time to those whom alcohol's abuse has fairly ruined. In their work they are anonymous, receive no pay and yet have won unusual success. In the course of curing their charges, they urge them all to pray to God for strength. And with that start they build up self-control. For how well they know that it can be destroyed by favoring impulse. How well they know from practice that always yielding to desire, that fixing one's attention on the nearest and the most attractive good in sight, that persistently neglecting every higher motive in one's life like duty, honor, sacrifice, will bring the loss of self-control through absolute disuse. How well they know that in proportion as they habitually yielded to intemperance themselves their real freedom was diminished and soon they sank to slavery. If this is practical, make the most of it for any vice you name. The story is the same for everyone of them. It is nothing but the truth for the victims of intemperance who hope with God and their devoted friends to "recover themselves from the snare of the devil, at whose pleasure they are held captive" (2 *Timothy* 2:26) by their sins.

For when men are the devil's captives, their moral liberty is harnessed through disuse. In other words they lose their precious freedom by their sins.

Yet this priceless power of the soul is built on weary effort. Take that story of intemperance again, for it is one sin whose painful consequences you admit. Insofar as the poor victim puts a rein on merest impulse; the more he checks the inclination of his taste; the more he sets a self-denial to temptation; the more he aims at discipline of appetite in life, the more does he increase in self-command and freedom. It is the same with every sin and every vicious habit. Freedom rushes in the room of serfdom when the goal of virtue is the aim of all your efforts. The ancient Christians had a word for it—ascetics—to foster human liberty in many by discipline. The moderns of the mind keep urging to uncalled-for daily efforts to strengthen with exertion the desire of the Christian soul for liberty.

For this is your soul's heritage, the freedom of your will to choose or act. "God made man from the beginning, and left him in the hand of his own counsel" (*Ecclesiasticus* 15:14). And in the will to look upon a world of the four freedoms, the freedom of the will shall have its place. "Before man is life and death, good and evil, that which he shall choose shall be given him" (*Ecclesiasticus* 15:18). Freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, and freedom from fear—and let them stand the way they sound—will all be subject to this force in you and me. But if the generations that expect to give these bounties to the world yield up their right to moral liberty as something unimportant, if they make themselves the serfs and slaves of sin, if they kill the will to virtue by the loss of common effort to obey the laws of God, I do not hold much hope for all these freedoms.

For victory lies in the common effort of us all,

“Behold I set forth in your sight this day a blessing and a curse: A blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God . . . a curse, if you obey not . . .” (*Deuteronomy* 11:26-28). The right to choose these blessings! This is freedom. If every man would use it well no other human liberty would ever suffer. The blight of persecution, want and worry, all effects of sins’ oppression would be less. In the beginning of their wisdom but one true fear would govern men, the fear of the Lord their God and His displeasure. This they would render in justice without cringing, for a sense of justice brings proportion to all things. It would be a guarantee of bond and obligation; a pledge of fairest dealing among men. To every other freedom it would give an honest basis, the hope of long endurance for them all. “For such is the will of God, that by doing good” said Peter, “you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. Live as freemen, yet not using your freedom as a cloak for malice but as servants of God” (*I Peter* 2:15-16).

And are you not a servant too? His will is not exacting nor too ideal in your regard. In being born, in dying, you obey it. It is only when you can, in life, that you rebel. But remember it was too ideal for Judas, too simple and too plain for all his plans. His malice lurked beneath the cloak of liberty, like ours if we let it. But we will not, for an ancient prophet sets us right once more, “Woe to you that call evil good, and good evil . . . woe to you that are wise in your own eyes and prudent in your own conceits” (*Isaias* 5:20-21).

Then put aside conceits lest Satan claim you; the wisdom of your eyes must lead to God; you will never trade in sins for all your freedom! To this you

pledge your life, your fortune and your sacred honor! And should you chance to hear those awful words to Judas, there will be no need for you to cringe in fear like him. For you there is no step to treason or to murder! You have guaranteed the freedom of your soul!

PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS (HERE OR HERE-AFTER)

Address Delivered on September 21, 1941.

And they lived happily ever after! Do you remember when all good stories seemed to end that way? And people never thought it strange or foolish. Perhaps you even cared for them yourself, more than you know, for like gentle sermons that always bring a congregation home to Heaven, they made you happy. You knew it. You wished it so. The voice of nature dealt in whispers in your soul. By sympathy you even loved to share the joy of strangers, if only characters in fiction; the emptiness that filled you would seem less. And so, with child-like vagueness you started in to solve life's constant problem, the means to use in seeking happiness.

"They satisfy!" Did you ever see that clever cigarette ad? In two words a special virtue is laid bare! But there also is the goal of all ambition, for satisfaction is the means to happiness. But where to find it, there's the rub, except in promises. And what is it that really fascinates! And will it last, or will it perish, there's a question, for so much goes to make up happiness. Is it in nature where the senses bring you deep and stirring pleasure? Is it the discipline of reason that argues for a spiritual peace? Or is it in the stern achievement of your destiny, the service of your only God while living, and being face to face with Him forever after death?

"They satisfy!" Is that a tribute to the common actions of your life, the actions that are all wrapped up in sense? For example, take the pleasures of the table! From the finest chef's confection to the big-

gest hamburger in town, they seem to have an awful power to be tempting! With what liquid phrases do your friends describe the things you often miss till taste becomes a little god, despite the watching, gripes, and choler of the intemperate. Or maybe with your eyes alone you do your feasting, perhaps unwisely; and the tongue and ear are not inactive too, for a little hastily you plead, "I'd die if I didn't have a soul to talk to." "And further, being idle," says St. Paul, as if he lived today, "they learn to go about from house to house, and are not only idle, but gossipers as well and busybodies, mentioning things they ought not" (I *Timothy* 5:13). To all this a canny touch is sometimes added till you're like the man who talked to his own soul. "'Soul,' he said, 'thou hast many good things laid up for many years; take thy ease, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'Thou fool, this night do they demand thy soul of thee'" (*Luke* 12:19-20).

Can you boast then of your senses that "they satisfy"? Can you call their passing pleasures your ideal? Can you say they are the source of complete happiness? Of course not! And your own denial gives their case away. How well you know their keenest pleasures dull with repetition! Their sweetest, finest joys grow stale with constant use. Just play a symphony you love a thousand times and find it out! And even in the narrow happiness they yield, they have to have the ice of your control; while, strange to say, when bounds are sanely set by reason and for occasion self-denial takes a hand, then the senses have their first real sense of freedom for the dangers of their slavery are less. But still they lurk like those in David's memories, "My

iniquities are gone, over my head: and as a heavy burden are become heavy upon me" (*Psalms* 37:5). For the sins of sense can bring their own misfortune and will never satisfy your hope for happiness.

"They satisfy!" The phrase is weak but broad enough to satisfy our purpose. For when Philosophy divorced itself from God, it relied too much on human reason for all truth. And sometimes reason forgot the nature it should rule. So it is with mottoes that are made to urge men on to happiness. If you choose one it should satisfy, but I remember one that had a miserable failure. It was chosen to embolden students just completing a portion of their course and read quite simply, "Duty, for duty's sake." At first glance it seemed to satisfy, too, for happiness. Duty and all that it implies, honor, suffering, sacrifice, no recognition of one's work, no punishment of sin as such, no reward in the here or hereafter, just "duty, for duty's sake." With age, reflection came more smoothly and harder reasoning toward man's final end and destiny. The formula lost none of its nobility but all its force. For just think from your own experience, unless virtue, your own constant efforts to be good, in the long run should end in happiness; unless you and not the traitor who sells out the moral law shall then be happy, your very existence, the existence of every man is thoroughly without reason. Why be good? It's so much harder. Just for duty's sake? Why, life would hardly be worth living for us all. And many a one would make it so, unequal to a life without reward. In the motto reason has dethroned itself. An empty formula like that is all exhorting but when it finishes exhorting, all is done.

It cannot offer any stable hope for happiness. So, in contrast let your soul be cheered with words like these, "Afflicted in few things, in many they shall be well rewarded: because God hath tried them, and found them worthy of himself" (*Wisdom 3:5*). Here is wisdom worthy of true happiness.

"And they lived happily ever after." Of course the book meant happiness in this life, but why not make it mean the future too? For all of us are called to happiness hereafter in the truest sense of a perfect life with God. You know that this is out of reach on earth where men are made to know and serve Him all life long. And man is not as simple as he looks. No car, no plane, or no precision instrument can ever rival the delicacy of his structure. No living thing on earth approaches him in thought. No wonder he was called "the lord of all creation" in reflecting the divine image of his God. With a soul immortal, bound in perfect union to his flesh, he could feel and reason, know and choose, in utter freedom; but on his choices will depend his happiness. For him there is a whole well-being as well as of the parts, just as you expect in complex creatures. But perfect happiness for him, the kind that satisfies completely, is not attained in this life but his next.

There he will enjoy without a hindrance, the only perfect good that satisfies. There his soul will meet the God Who made it, kept it, brought it back again, to the source of supreme happiness, Himself. Here his soul at once is active but at peace. In knowing God at last it sees but boundless beauty, like an eye that for the first time losing blindness, rests on all the splendors that make created things.

And in knowing God, it learns to love Him surely in all delights a human will can have, for it fought a lifelong battle with temptation, proudly, and now quietly it rests in the sensible possession of immeasurable good.

But lest the human meaning of this happiness be lost upon us, lest we fail to take an interest in our lot, the understanding of the Apostle will remind us that "Eye has not seen nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for those who love him" (*I Corinthians 2:9*). So we see that men as men will share that happiness. Of its fruits their lower powers surely taste. Nor will all this ever end for then we would suspect some imperfection and that would never do for complete happiness. Perhaps of all, this part is best, the fact that it is everlasting, but with secure and full possession of all good. This is what we mean by saying, "The possession of God is happiness essential" and, "to know God is everlasting life!" This is what Augustine meant by praying, "Our heart knows no rest until it may repose in Thee."

But we can find rest; we can find life; we can find happiness essential! There is no block to it save only sin. Will we never learn, as said the Psalmist, to "turn away from evil and do good; seek after peace and pursue it" (*Psalms 33:15*)? For once it pays to be intemperate in life. But must we wait to feel the tongue of the Apostle, "Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be sorrowful, and mourn, and weep. . . Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and he will exalt you" (*St. James 4:8-10*). If

you believe and do but that, and if you know that "wrath, envy, trouble, unquietness, and the fear of death, continual anger, and strife. . . such things happen to all flesh, from man even to beast, and upon sinners are sevenfold more" (*Ecclesiasticus* 40: 4, 8), you are on the way to solve the problem of true happiness.

Unless, like a famous lawyer who once stood up and tempted Christ, you also ask, "Master, what must I do to gain eternal life?" And He says, "What is written in the Law? How dost thou read?" You answer, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole strength, and with thy whole mind; And thy neighbor as thyself." And Christ replies, "Thou has answered rightly; do this and thou shalt live" (*Luke* 10:27-28). Ah, then His answer satisfies! You have found the only means to happiness.

INDEPENDENCE (DECLARATIONS FOR ETERNITY)

Address Delivered on September 28, 1941.

“Moses in the law commanded us to stone such a one” (*John 8:5*). The voices were high pitched and angry. But Jesus, stooping, continued writing on the ground. “What, therefore, dost thou say” (*John 8:6*)? They put the question eagerly. A pause, then He answered, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to cast a stone . . .” (*John 8:7*). And hearing this, they went out, one by one, beginning from the eldest. Jesus and the woman were alone. “Has no one condemned thee” (*John 8:10*)? And she said, “No one, Lord” (*John 8:11*). And in reply His voice was very gentle, “Neither will I condemn thee. Go thy way, and from now on sin no more” (*John 8:11*).

If you were treated so by Christ what would you do? Would you bitterly repel the pity that He lavished on your plight? Would you leave Him with a wish that He had left you to your fate? Or would that word of understanding so affect you, that from now on you would have ears for Him alone? This last would be your choice, of that I'm certain. For humility recalls the promises of youth; the heart that once begot indifference is cheered at being noticed by its Master; the will is strengthened too, through pity, His pity for your weakness, and you see more clearly all His love for you. A firm resolve to cast off chains of slavery begins to harden; the ears you have for Him are keener still; you appeal to the Supreme Judge of all the world for the rectitude of your intentions, and then hammering at the

bonds of Satan, your oppressor, you declare your independence from his rule!

His rule was born in apathy, not in exile, for you could have been so very close to God, "... you are the temple of the living God, as God says, 'I will dwell and move among them, I will be their God and they shall be my people'" (II *Corinthians* 6:16). But at first there was contrived a sham indifference for you admitted the evidence of truth. Yet bit by bit conviction in it weakened for the wily plans of Satan gained a place. Then sham lost all its affectation; and truth, its driving power in your heart. God with you? What of it? These were your thoughts! For persuaded you were only one of millions, you lost your sense of value in His sight. And the story of a one-time earthly paradise? Just a story you dismissed with all the rest. As to the Cross and the God-man hanging on it? "Well, what it meant was not exactly clear," was the way you read the history it told. And yet you might have had a feeling of conviction if you could have roused yourself to look at truth once more. But no, you drifted, satisfied you had ignored unpleasant questions, for you feared the very answers they inspired. As to Christ's Church and Peter and his authority, they were points you would rather not discuss. And so it went. With history, for a time it proved convenient to neglect the most important lessons; in economics you forgot that lessons had a bearing on men's souls; while in almost every other branch of human thinking, you tried to tread a path of indifference toward God.

Can you be startled now at how unhappiness possessed you? The soul that once was faithful is unable to content itself with other things. And behind the scene of your neglect and vague uneasiness,

the figures of suffering and toleration stand alone, lest the fears that always raised their ugly heads might endeavor to reproach you with the truth. In your ears the words of John began a torment as they fitted you too well for any peace, "I know thy works; thou art neither cold nor hot. I would that thou wert cold or hot. But because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot; I am about to vomit thee out of my mouth" (*Apoc.* 3:15-16). Yet your indifference had bred a gross deception. For as the Spirit said in the historic prophecy just mentioned, "I know thy works; thou hast the name of being alive, and thou art dead. Be watchful and strengthen the things that remain, but which were ready to die. For I do not find thy works complete before my God" (*Apoc.* 3:1-2). In fact there is a reason for such finding, and the reason is that you are dead! Yes, dead to the right you had to live with God; dead to the right of moral liberty that men enjoy; dead to the right of seeking happiness where you should rightly find it; dead, but with the name of being alive! You are like the subject of the Psalmist's song, "Behold he hath been in labor with injustice; he hath conceived sorrow, and brought forth iniquity; he hath opened a pit and dug it: and he is fallen into the hole he made. His sorrow shall be turned on his own head: and his iniquity shall come down upon his crown" (*Psalms* 7:15-17).

But did you ever try escape with David saying, "Direct my steps according to thy word: and let no iniquity have dominion over me" (*Psalms* 118:133). For dominion is the crafty aim of Satan and you further his ambition with your sins. And well you need direction and protection too, for as "the lion always lieth in wait for prey: so do sins for them that work

iniquities" (*Ecclus.* 27:11). You fled reproof however, and felt safe; and found excuse according to your will (*Ecclus.* 32:21); and in wisdom you saw abomination (*Ecclus.* 1:26). To your regret you found that wisdom never entered a malicious soul nor dwelt in bodies subject to their sins (*Wisdom* 1:4). And then you saw that the learning of wickedness was not wisdom and the device of sinners was not prudence, even in your eyes (*Ecclus.* 19:19); and the strength of men was not in wickedness (*Proverbs* 12:3), nor was their salvation in the words of all their sins (*Psalms* 21:2). You might have been a pet aversion of the prophet saying, "Three sorts my soul hateth, and I am greatly grieved at their life: A poor man that is proud; a rich man that is a liar; and an old man that is a fool, and doting (*Ecclus* 25:3-4). And in your folly you were more wise than necessity demanded and became stupid (*Ecclus.* 7-17). You continued binding sin to sin until you earned the rebuke a prophet gave its slaves by saying, "And thou has trusted in thy wickedness, and hast said: There is none that seeth me. Thy wisdom, and thy knowledge, this hath deceived thee. And thou has said in thy heart: I am, and besides me there is no other" (*Isaias* 47:10).

This then is the creed you made your own, "I am, and beside me there is no other." Yet, tell me if you ever told God this: "I am without sin and am innocent: and therefore let thy anger be turned away from me." Do not all of us plead so upon occasion? But are justly answered in the words of Jeremias, "Behold I will contend with thee in judgment, because thou has said: I have not sinned" (*Jeremias* 2:35). For as the Apostles put it, "In many things we all offend" (*James* 3:2). If we say that we have

not sinned, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" (*John 1:8*). To lies we add hypocrisy: "I am and besides me there is no other." Your creed stood for selfishness and cruelty and hate; it was thoroughly opposed to Christ and all He taught. In its use it might be crude or smooth as velvet, depending on your needs and circumstances; but it carried with it all deceitful arts at your command, including that which made you Satan's dupe. It built a barrier of haughty pride around you and one of prejudice toward all the things God loves. So in the end, if it satisfied to say, "Besides me, there is no other," you were restless that no other seemed to care. You gradually became a master at self-pity and the indifference you boasted neared despair.

It is true you see the evil that surrounds you, but until you look again into your heart; unless you see the ropes of sin that bind you, you will never rest in this world or the next. You are crushed under the heel of an oppressor, more frightful than any in the flesh. The sins of man can show his heartless tyranny which only naked courage can defeat. So in your thoughts of freedom say, "It is good for me that thou hast humbled me that I may learn thy justification" (*Psalms 118:71*). And take comfort in the hope and cry of David that "A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit: a contrite and humbled heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (*Psalms 50:19*). Nor will He, for as it was your mind to go astray from God; so when you return again you shall seek Him ten times more (*Baruch 4:28*). True, this takes His grace with courage and endurance, too, and never rests on passing whim or thought. But grace is not denied you: "Blessed is he that is conversant in these good things . . . If he do them, he shall be strong to do all

things: because the light of God guideth his steps” (*Ecclus.* 50:30-31).

“Besides me there is no other.” That is false! To your deepest sorrow you found Satan, now find God! For with a pity that is infinite He moves you, forgives you, loves you every moment to the end! He desires not your death but life with Him. To this you dedicate your right to moral liberty. You know the only hope of happiness is there. Then declare your independence from oppression, that Satan always brings you through your sins! “But now” as says the Apostle, “set free from sin and become slaves to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and as your end, life everlasting. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is life everlasting in Christ Jesus our Lord” (*Romans* 6:22-23).

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.

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