SAINTS vs. KINGS

by

James M. Gillis, C. S. P.

NATIONAL CATHOLIC WELFARE CONFERENCE
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Rev. James M. Gillis, C. S. P.,
editor of The Catholic World

Eight addresses delivered in the Catholic Hour, produced by the National Council of Catholic Men, through the courtesy of the National Broadcasting Company and associated stations.

(On Sundays from November 7 to December 27, 1937)

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DEDICATION

To the multitudes of listeners scattered over a wide territory, who have been, though unseen, an inspiration to the speaker, and in particular to those who have been kind enough to express their pleasure in the programs of The Catholic Hour, these talks are respectfully and gratefully dedicated.

DRAMA IN THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS

Address delivered on November 7, 1937

The dramatists have neglected the Saints. Strangely, unaccountably, for playwrights are at their wits' ends for dramatic material. Making bricks without straw, gathering figs of thorns, making a silk purse out of a sow's ear are recognized symbols of futility. But to that list we might add writing plays without plots. Lacking fit material, those who write for the stage fall back upon the threadbare theme of adultery. But adultery is not dramatic. Not in itself. Not as it exists in polite society. True, Homer made fine dramatic poetry of the abduction of Helen of Troy, wife of Menelaus. But there was more—vastly more—to that episode than the stealing of a wife from her husband. There was a raid, rape, a war, the obliteration of a city (Troy was never built again; it is "one with Nineveh and Tyre"), the scattering of a people and the commencement of a new civilization. In Shakespeare's "Hamlet" the queen's "posting with such dexterity to incestuous sheets" is incidental. The drama is in the main psychological. It takes place in the mind of the melancholy Prince. At the end, to give the groundlings the worth of their sixpence, Shakespeare, aware that psychology is caviar to the general, clutters up the stage with corpses.

Dante made brilliant use of an adultery: the incident of Paolo and Francesca; but to bring out the drama he had to pursue the lovers into hell. Hell *is* dramatic.

I repeat: sex-sin of itself is sordid, and drama cannot be made of the sordid. Stupidly ignoring that rudimentary principle, contemporary play-

wrights continue to ring the changes on the sex triangle; flirtations, tricks, lies, entanglements, escapades, dubious humor, all this reiterated with a monotony that is nauseating.

Even those dramatists who have a higher concept of their art go back and forth, to and fro, up and down, round-about in the same exhausted field like a farmer trying to scratch a meagre living out of a bit of rocky soil, while beneath his feet lie hidden oceans of oil; like a pioneer trekking a thousand miles in search of El Dorado, over mountains rich with treasures beyond those of "Ormuzd and of Ind."

Meanwhile, in the lives and legends of the saints there is enough raw material of drama to tax the genius of a Shakespeare or a Sophocles. The exploits of Anchises, Aeneas, and Dido in Virgil, of Agamemnon, Menelaus, Paris, and Helen of Troy in Homer are not so stirring as the adventures of Peter the fisherman and Paul the tent maker who went out to turn the world upside down and did just that; or of Leo the Great, alone on the Appian Way, defending civilization against the anarchy that threatened in the person of Attila the Hun; or of the aged Telemachus leaping into the Arena to die in protest against the murderous gladiatorial games; or of Francis, *il poverello* of Assisi, penniless, barefoot, ragged, confronting Saladin in his silken tent, a little mouse of a man venturing into a den of lions to persuade them to peace; or of Francis Xavier, all soul alone in the midst of a group of Buddhist Bonzes, charging them with their vices in the presence of the Daimio.

Notice, I do not urge any man to attempt the biggest theme of all, Christ before Herod, or before Pilate, Christ in Gethsemane or on Golgotha. We

have no Aeschylus, no Sophocles, no Shakespeare today; and if we had they would be well advised to leave the tragedy of Calvary to the unsophisticated peasants of Oberammergau. But why couldn't some ambitious and courageous dramatist put on the boards St. Paul, that restless little Jew from Tarsus —the only authentic, non-mythological Wandering Jew—"visionary" they called him, and "madman," who nevertheless conquered more worlds than Alexander? There's drama for you, every instant of it from the stoning of St. Stephen to the vision on the Road to Damascus ("Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? Who art Thou, Lord? I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest." What dialogue!) and through a hundred other equally thrilling incidents until the day when the Apostle in chains kneels on the Ostian Way, the sword of the headsman flashes in the sun, and the head of the little man who had challenged and defeated the Roman Empire rolls in the dust.

In the autobiography of Edward Gibbon there is a much quoted passage in which he says, "It was at Rome on the 15th of October 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol while the bare-footed friars were singing vespers in the temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first entered my mind." "Monks singing vespers in the temple of Jupiter" set fire to the historian's imagination. Have dramatists no imagination? Consider that theme: pagan Rome falls; papal Rome rises; emperors pass away, the popes do not pass away; the gods of the Gentiles, demons all, flee before the cross of Christ. Can the dramatists see no possibilities in that rich material? Or is it too big for them?

Very well, then, let the dramatist select a few

episodes here and there, and weave them together with no more dramatic unity than is to be found in "Victoria Regina." Take for example Paul before Festus, successor to Pontius Pilate. The Apostle comes into Jerusalem to make his private prayers at the temple. He finds himself the centre of disturbance. Leaders stir up the mob. The mob rages as only an Oriental mob can. Lysias the tribune sends Roman soldiers into the midst of the seething crowd "lest Paul should be pulled in pieces by them," as the Scripture says. Paul is taken into custody for safe keeping. Forty Jews bind themselves with a great oath that they will neither eat nor drink till they kill him. Paul's nephew, his sister's son, lying in wait, overhears their murderous plans. Paul sends him to the tribune. The tribune secretly and at night sends Paul to the Governor Felix at Caesarea under guard of two centurions, 200 soldiers, 70 horsemen, and 200 spearmen. For five days Paul is kept prisoner in Herod's judgment hall. The high priest from Jerusalem comes down with members of the Sanhedrin and one Tertullus, an orator. They flatter Felix and argue that he deliver Paul into their hands. Paul is permitted to speak. He does so with such effect that he frightens and almost converts Felix and Drusilla his wife. But Felix is venal, expects a bribe. Paul will give no bribe. He languishes in durance vile for two years. Felix, being succeeded by Festus, passes on the troublesome Jew to the new governor. Festus sits in judgment upon Paul, but like Felix he meets more than his match. In an attempt to "pass the buck", as we say nowadays, he suggests that Paul go up to Jerusalem. Then comes the magnificent speech of Paul: "I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews I have done

no injury, as thou very well knowest. For if I have injured them, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die. But if there be none of these things [true] whereof they accuse me, no man may deliver me to them: I appeal to Caesar." "Hast thou appealed to Caesar?" says Festus, "To Caesar shalt thou go."

Later Festus exhibits Paul to King Agrippa. Now *there* is a spectacle: Festus the Governor surrounded with grandeur to impress the King, addressed as "The Lord," a title rejected by the great Augustus; about his shoulders a gorgeous scarlet cloak is thrown; his throne protected by the fasces of the lictors, the swords of the legionaries, the gleaming armor of the Chiliarchs. What a setting for the poor little Jew from Tarsus! Yet undaunted he pleads so eloquently that King Agrippa says "A little more and thou persuadest *me* to be a Christian." In the end Agrippa says to Festus "This man might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed to Caesar." But to Caesar he had appealed. To Caesar he goes. Under Caesar he dies.

This, I submit, is superbly dramatic material. The man who could do that for the stage would go down in the history of the theatre with Shakespeare and Racine and Corneille, if his genius were commensurate with his courage.

The talents of playwrights are deteriorating from day to day because of a preoccupation with themes that are merely sensational, or sordid, or stupid, or vile, while there remains a world of eloquence and beauty and power, undiscovered and unexplored in the lives of the saints. Unexplored? Not altogether. Bernard Shaw wrote a play on St. Joan of Arc, and St. Joan, for the time being purified and

chastened him. Writing of the saint, he commenced to measure up to her moral and spiritual stature. Had he continued, with let us say Catherine of Siena, or Francis of Assisi, or Vincent de Paul, he might have gone to even greater heights. *"Cibus sum grandium"*, says St. Augustine, speaking of God. "I am the food of the full grown. Grow up and you shall eat Me." And that may be said of great dramatic themes. It takes a big man to do them; and the man grows big in doing them.

But if one is no giant, why not an easier task? For example, St. Agnes, beautiful, noble maiden of Rome, a child of 12 or 13, so young indeed that Pope Damasus—pope and poet—speaks of her as "hastening to martyrdom from the lap of her mother." She declares herself a Christian, undergoes a kind of third degree of mental torture, is threatened with the loss of her virginity, remains steadfast; is sent to a house of shame; a young man who casts a lascivious look upon her is struck blind: she dies like Joan of Arc in the flames.

The facts are few and simple, but around them have been written some of the most beautiful legends and poems of ancient times. For background the dramatist could picture the terrible immorality of decadent Rome. Against that background the sweet chaste virgin and her beautiful terrible death. Impurity has been dramatized too often. Why doesn't some one make a bold venture and dramatize purity? The unusual thing, the heroic, dramatic thing is not to fall—any one can fall—but to stand erect when all others fall. The Psalmist says, "a thousand shall fall at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand but it shall not come nigh thee." "Thou shalt walk upon the asp and the basilisk and

thou shalt trample down the lion and the dragon." *There* is poetry and drama. Why doesn't some one use it?

Speaking of the Psalmist, Robert Browning, a poet with a fine sense of drama, wrote nothing better than his tremendous "Saul." It is superb drama as it stands. But some one could whip it into shape for the stage. T. S. Eliot, not so much a poet perhaps as a philosopher, saw drama in the death of St. Thomas of Canterbury, and made a fine piece of it in his "Murder in the Cathedral." Tennyson's "Becket" is of course a larger and doubtless a more skilful play, a favorite with Henry Irving. The death of Becket before the altar in his own cathedral at the instance of the petulant King Henry II is magnificent theatre, but not more so than a thousand other episodes in the lives of the saints.

Since I am not a poet, or a dramatist, I can only attempt to present in simple narrative form, some of these episodes during the next few weeks. I could hope that my prose, though a wretchedly poor substitute for the poetry and drama that alone are worthy of the lives of the saints, may not be altogether unsatisfying.

LEO AND ATTILA THE HUN

Address delivered on November 14, 1937

In the first quarter of the fifth century of our era something was happening in Europe that had been thought impossible. The Roman Empire was breaking up. *Ave Roma Immortalis! Hail Immortal Rome!* had been the immemorial salutation of kings, of emperors, of the Senate and people of Rome, of patriots, friends, enemies, conquerors, captives, vestal virgins, priests, votaries of Jupiter, poets, orators, even of the Delphic Oracle. All, all had believed Rome to be indestructible if not altogether invulnerable. From the days of Vespasian and Titus who built the Coliseum there had been a popular superstition to the effect that neither the Coliseum nor the City would fall until the end of time. We have it in the lines of Lord Byron:

> "While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand.
> When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall:
> And when Rome falls—the world!"

Now Rome—be it understood—was not a city, merely. Rome was a city and a world, a city and a civilization. For 700 years, from the days of the Tarquin kings, Rome had been developing. By the time of the birth of Christ it had become a synonym for universal dominion. In our Gospels we find the significant sentence: "An edict went forth from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled." One man sitting enthroned by the banks of the Tiber scratches his signature with a stylus upon a tablet of wax, and in consequence a couple of peasants, a man and his espoused wife a thousand miles away, start a dreary journey to the city of their an-

cestors to be numbered in the Roman census. With equal ease the Emperor could set an army in motion. A word from him and a subject king is put to death, a city razed to the ground, a population decimated. At his command and for his purposes taxes are levied and tribute pours in over the famous Roman roads from the ends of the earth. He reigns from the Alban Hills to the Apennines, to the River Po, to the Alps, to the Rhine, to the Rhone, to the Danube, to Macedonia, formerly the kingdom of Philip, from which Alexander went forth to conquer, down the Hellenic peninsula to Athens, to Corinth, to the Isles of Greece, to Egypt, once the domain of the Pharaohs and of Cleopatra, eastward to Mesopotamia, where in an earlier day had been felt the iron rule of Darius the Mede, to Persia, where Xerxes had gathered his multitudinous hosts. The Roman legions had pitched their tents on the Tigris and Euphrates, had erected fortresses, palaces and—abomination of desolation!—had set up temples to their demon gods in the Holy Land of Solomon. Africa, from the Pyramids to the Pillars of Hercules that guarded the gateway from the ocean to the sea that the Romans called *Mare nostrum*—"our sea"—was Roman. From the Sahara in the South to the Firth of Forth in the north, from the Bay of Biscay to the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf, all, all was Rome, and the diverse civilizations that had been developed in all those far flung kingdoms had been welded into one by the genius of the incredible descendants of Romulus and Remus. All this, the city, the empire, the world, the aggregate of cultures, was Rome. "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof," said the pious King David. "The earth is mine and all the produce thereof," said the impious Caesar; "every

crop in every field, the metal in all the mines from Spain to Scythia, the fish in the seas, the very birds of the air, the fruit on every vine and branch. And men! every man in all the world shall bend the knee and salute me, Caesar! Divus! Augustus! Caesar, Lord and God!"

In a word Rome was universal and its ruler absolute. As Dr. Breasted says in his book *Ancient Times:* "The emperor became for a whole Roman world what he had always been in Egypt—an absolute monarch with none to limit his power. The State had been completely militarized and orientalized. With the unlimited power of the oriental despot the emperor now assumed also its outward symbols —the diadem, the gorgeous robe embroidered with pearls and precious stones, the throne and footstool, before which all who came into his presence must bow down to the dust.

"The gorgeous costume in which the Roman emperor now decked himself was copied from that of the Sassanian kings of New Persia. . . Oriental influence on Roman beliefs... was now affecting the notion of the divinity of the emperor. . . Indeed, the Roman Empire had now become like a vast sponge absorbing the life and civilization of the Orient. As a divinity, the emperor had now become an oriental Sun-god and he was officially called the 'Invincible Sun'. . . The inhabitants of each province might revere their particular gods but all were obliged as good citizens to join in the official sacrifices to the head of the State as a god. With the incoming of this Oriental attitude toward the emperor, the long struggle for democracy ended in the triumph of oriental despotism."

Obviously to the Romans and doubtless also to

the conquered peoples it was unthinkable that such a potentate should be dethroned and his empire destroyed. One might as well speak of the dethronement of God and the annihilation of the universe.

But none the less the incredible thing was about to happen. The first blow to the Empire had been struck when a little insignificant sect out of Palestine, called at first Nazarenes and then, even more contemptuously, "Christians," had looked upon the Emperor's assumption of the prerogatives of God as blasphemy and the worship of him as idolatry. He that was crucified at Golgotha dealt the first blow to the man enthroned in a golden court in the city by the Tiber. With that blow, struck at the prestige of Caesar, the Empire of Caesar, built upon tyranny, rapine, bloodshed, idolatry, commenced to wane. It has been asserted and denied that Christianity ruined Rome. The controversy has raged from the days of Tertullian and Augustine to the days of Edward Gibbon and of H. G. Wells, who in this matter only echoes Gibbon. I, for one, am not reluctant to admit that the Gospel was fatal to the Fasces, and that the apostles, covering the same ground as the legions, undid what the soldiers had done.

But the Christian religion alone did not destroy the Roman Empire. Under Constantine and for a hundred years after him, a reconciliation had been effected between the Church and the Empire. But it was too late. The excesses and orgies of Tiberius and Nero and Domitian, of Caracalla and Heliogabalus had set the pace for the people and the people had grown vicious, soft, degenerate. Fifteen hundred years ago or today, it is the same: a nominal religion will not save. Men may give lip service to the new God who dethrones the old idol, but still in their

heart and in their life continue their ancient cruelty, lasciviousness, obscenity. Gibbon quotes Ammianus Marcellinus, an historian who lived in the 4th century when Rome was ostensibly Christian: "Some nobles, who, unmindful of their own dignity, and of that of their country, assume an unbounded license of vice and folly. They contend with each other in the empty vanity of titles and surnames. From a vain ambition of perpetuating their memory, they affect to multiply their likeness, in statues of bronze and marble; nor are they satisfied unless those statues are covered with plates of gold. . . The ostentation of displaying, of magnifying, perhaps, the rent-roll of the estates which they possess in all the provinces, from the rising to the setting sun, provokes the just resentment of every man. . . The nobles measure their rank and consequence according to the loftiness of their chariots, and the weighty magnificence of their dress. Their long robes of silk and purple float in the wind. . . Followed by a train of fifty servants, and tearing up the pavement, they move along the streets with the same impetuous speed as if they travelled with post-horses; and the example of the senators is boldly imitated by the matrons and ladies, whose covered carriages are continually driving round the immense space of the city and suburbs. Whenever these persons of high distinction condescend to visit the public baths, they assume, on their entrance, a tone of loud and insolent command, and appropriate to their own use the conveniences which were designed for the Roman people. If, in these places of mixed and general resort, they meet any of the infamous ministers of their pleasures, they express their affection by a tender embrace; while they proudly decline the salutations of their fellow citi-

zens, who are not permitted to aspire above the honor of kissing their hands, or their knees. . . Yet should a fly presume to settle on the silken folds of their gilded umbrellas; should a sunbeam penetrate through some unguarded and imperceptible chink, they deplore their intolerable hardships, and lament, in affected language, that they were not born in the land of the Cimmerians, the regions of eternal darkness."

In a word Rome was rotten and ripe for destruction. And the destroyer was at hand. From the far borders of a mysterious *terra incognita,* out beyond even the far flung battlements of the legions, in a land called vaguely "Scythia" or "Tartary", a horde of savages (Mongols or Mongoloids we have learned to call them(started a tremendous push to the west and the south. They were the Huns, "The Terror of the World," and their greatest leader, Attila "The Scourge of God." Before them fled barbarians only less fierce than themselves: Goths, Vandals, and the subsidiary tribes, Franks, Lombards, Alemanni, Suevi, Belgae, Teutons, Saxons, Celts, and a half hundred others. They came swarming down upon civilization, like clouds of locusts before the wind, or like wild beasts of the woods before a forest fire, or, to employ the more familiar simile, like successive tidal waves inundating and devastating a continent. Down went the Roman wall at the boundaries of the Empire; back came the defeated legions. In a hundred years the work of a thousand had been undone. What Pompey and Crassus and Julius Caesar and Titus and Germanicus had won was lost to Alaric, Genseric, Odoacer, Theodoric. But though these were indeed barbarians, not at all squeamish about putting the whole population of a city to the

sword, revelling in blood and lust, carnage and pillage, they were, by comparison with the Huns, who pushed them from behind, mild-mannered gentlemen. Indeed the Goths, the Lombards, the Franks, if not the Vandals, once they had taken possession of Spain, Gaul, Belgium, Germany, North Italy, had been largely converted to some form of Christianity, orthodox or unorthodox, and were in process of becoming civilized.

But the Huns were savages. Attila boasted that where his horses' hoof had trod, the grass never grew again. His soldiers, without any true concept of the Deity, worshipped God under the symbol of an iron scimitar.

At the throne of Attila were gathered "a crowd of conquered kings to serve as guards and domestics around his person. They watched his nod, they trembled at his frown, and at the first signal of his will, they executed without murmur or hesitation his stern and absolute commands." But Attila was more than a fickle, cruel oriental; he had military genius. And he had numbers, vast numbers. In the army with which he overran the western world there were perhaps as many as 700,000 warriors.

Now imagine such a horde under such a commander moving relentlessly on towards Rome. In quick succession the towns of North Italy fell before them: Vicenza, Verona, Bergamo, Milan, Pavia, Turin, Modena, Padua, Aquileia. "What city," said Atilla, "in the wide extent of the Roman Empire can hope to exist if it pleases me to erase it from the earth?"

Who was to meet him? In the city of Rome there were no Gracchi, no Marius, Sulla, Pompey, Julius Caesar. The Roman people, as well as nobles in

whom the seeds of degeneracy had been sown as far back as the days of Nero, had been further demoralized by idleness and luxury, feastings and games, *panem et circenses.* They were in no condition to meet the "Terror of the World, the Scourge of God." The Emperor, himself a coward, a sybarite and a nincompoop, Valentinian III, appealed to the bishop of the city, Pope Leo I. Fortunately for Rome, for the Empire, for civilization and the Christian religion, Leo was the kind of man who could measure up to the formidable task of confronting and halting the savage Mongols. Even the infidel Gibbon, who seldom lays aside his scorn for Christianity, waxes enthusiastic in describing the mission and the success of Leo. He says:

"The genius of Leo was exercised and displayed in the public misfortunes; and he has deserved the appellation of Great, by the successful zeal with which he labored to establish his opinions, and his authority, under the venerable names of orthodox faith and ecclesiastical discipline. The Roman ambassadors were introduced to the tent of Attila, as he lay encamped at the place where the slow-winding Mincius is lost in the foaming waves of the lake Benacus. The barbarian monarch listened with favorable, and even respectful attention. . . The pressing eloquence of Leo, his majestic aspect and sacerdotal robes, excited the veneration of Atilla for the spiritual father of the Christians. The apparition of the two Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, who menaced the Barbarian with instant death, if he rejected the prayer of their successor, is one of the noblest legends of ecclesiastical tradition. The safety of Rome might deserve the interposition of celestial beings; and some indulgence is

due to a fable which has been represented by the pencil of Raphael and the chisel of Algardi."

By celestial or terrestial power, angels or the man, Rome was saved. Thanks to Leo and after him to a constant line of his successors in the See of Rome, savagery and barbarism never entirely destroyed civilization. Again and again the city has been devastated: its art and sculpture and architecture have been destroyed and its wealth exhausted a dozen times by tribute demanded by conquerors and paid out to them by a shamed and helpless population. But Rome as a civilization has never perished. All historians, regardless of their theological—or anti-theological—prepossessions, have admitted that the credit belongs to the popes.

The fact is significant for today. I have left myself little time to draw the moral. But perhaps I may say in a sentence that now once again barbarians are battering at the gates of a very sadly contracted civilization. Wars, declared and undeclared, far more savage than those of the Goths and the Huns, are in progress; perfidy prevails, such as would have shamed even an Attila who, though a bloody warrior, believed in keeping his oaths; complete breakdown threatens the last remnants of international morality; decadence, degeneracy, unnatural vice, effeminacy of the extremest type, are rife in all our big cities: and all in all, whether we see it or not, we are face to face with a peril perhaps greater than that of the fifth century when Attila and his Huns threatened the world. And now, as then, there is but one leader able to stand in face of the hordes of destroyers that are closing in on us and, with the power of the supernatural, to drive them back. That one leader today is where he was 1400 years ago, in

Rome. Valentinian and his Senate called upon Leo I: if the rulers of the world today will but call upon Pius XI and give him the plenipotentiary authority conceded to his illustrious predecessor of so long ago, he will achieve an equally miraculous result

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM AND THE EMPRESS EUDOXIA

Address delivered on November 21, 1937

The idea broached in the first of these talks—that the lives of the saints are rich in material for drama—is verified in the thrilling career of St. John Chrysostom. In line with that idea—I hope it is not fantastic—I beg leave to present, as it were, a scenario that could be worked up into a play for the stage or the screen.

Let us have first the *dramatis personae.*

John, called Chrysostomos, that is "golden-mouthed" or as we say today "golden-tongued," is one of the supreme orators of all time. His is a versatile genius; he has much of the classic grace of Cicero, the power and sweep and rhythm of Demosthenes, the prophetic zeal of Savonarola, the combination of philosophy and piety characteristic of Lacordaire, and the popular appeal of Daniel O'Connell. His master Libanius, a pagan, being asked which of his disciples was destined to the highest fame and fortune, answered "John! if the Christians had not stolen him from us."

Chrysostom is of the nobility, son of Secundus, a commander in the armies of the Emperor, and Anthusa, a mother worthy of a place by the side of St. Monica. It was Anthusa who drew from Libanius the exclamation: "Ye gods, what women there are among the Christians!"

In youth John was not immune to vanity and ambition, but thanks to his mother he was preserved, says one of his biographers "from the glittering

fascination of the idealized paganism taught in the schools of Antioch."

Recognizing in himself a tendency more dangerous than ambition—a passionate enthusiasm for the theatre, then, even more than now, a medium for the exploitation of vice—John applied the prophylactic. He retired to one of the monasteries on the wooded hills outside the gay city, and for six years practised a really terrifying austerity. Returning, he abandoned the profession of public advocate, in which he had been initiated, was ordained deacon, then priest, consecrated bishop of Antioch, and presently became Patriarch of Constantinople, the capital of the world.

* * * * * *

The second of the *dramatis personae,* "leading lady" (in the lingo of the theatre), is the Empress Eudoxia, consort of Theodosius the Great. She is young, beautiful, vivacious, temperamental; at times pious—sincerely or hypocritically—but habitually worldly, self-indulgent, perhaps more pagan than Christian, ambitious, imperious; when opposed, an exemplification of the saying "hell hath no fury like a woman scorned." She selects for companions three vain, vicious, intriguing women, Castricia, Eugraphia, and Marsa. These three evil women on occasion "rage with all the fury of drunken maenads."

* * * * * *

The third outstanding figure in this drama is Theodosius the Emperor, a Goth, born in Spain, whose twofold genius as general and statesman had won for him dominion over the Roman Empire, east and west, with his throne on the shores of the Bosphorus. He is a Christian, more militant than Constantine the founder of the city and of the dynasty.

An opponent of paganism, he destroys heathen shrines, outlaws pagan sacrifices, omens, witchcraft, and the obscene rites of the heathen. Also he is a "hammer of heretics"; he enacts severe penalties against Manichees and Arians. These laws, however, were not carried out, and the punishments were seldom inflicted, for, as his biographer and friend Sozomen says, rather quaintly, "the Emperor did not wish to punish but only to frighten his subjects that they might think as he did about Divine things." None the less, he could on occasion punish with savage fury. A riot arising in Thessalonica, in revenge he massacred 7,000 citizens. If this were a drama of *his* life rather than St. John Chrysostom's, it would be proper to tell of that crime and of the Emperor's penance done at the command of St. Ambrose. It is the Old Testament story of David and Nathan over again.

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Close by the throne of Theodosius, is the ill-omened Eutropius, once a slave and eunuch in the imperial palace; now prime-minister; in prosperity arrogant, in adversity abject; once rich, tyrannical, wielding the whole force of the Empire, but in a moment fallen so low that the courtiers and menials spit upon him, and members of the palace guard threaten to murder him. Chrysostom, though he too had suffered from Eutropius and had reason to despise him, saves the miserable wretch: "You shall not slay Eutropius," he says to the soldiers, "unless you first slay me. Take me to the Emperor!"

But that too is another story.

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One more chief actor in this crowded drama is the despicable Archbishop Theophilus, patriarch of

Alexandria, madly jealous of Chrysostom. He heads a permanent conspiracy, instigating a group of envious, vicious, greedy, worldly ecclesiastics to ruin John Chrysostom complains that they made of the Church a veritable whirlpool of intrigue: whispering, plotting, playing politics, wire pulling; a curious and scandalous coalition of clerics, courtiers, and wicked women of the queen's household. In all the history of court intrigue there has been none worse than that of Constantinople. Even at the Tuileries in the days of Louis XIV, there were not such cross currents of plots, counterplots, schemes, artifices, falsehoods, hypocrisies.

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Let that suffice for the *dramatis personae*. Now for the scene of the action. It begins in Antioch and shifts to Constantinople.

First, Antioch, third largest city of the world; the see of St. Peter before he went to Rome; the city in which the followers of Jesus were first called "Christians." When Chrysostom was born, it was still largely pagan: the Christians had come "out of the catacombs" only 20 or 30 years earlier as a result of the edicts of Galerius and Constantine. The pagan atmosphere had been only partly dispelled: in the theatres the performances were lascivious; in the hippodrome not only did the horses race but factions, the Blues and the Greens, fought. Often the riot spread over the city and took on the proportions of civil war. It is the Orient, where mobs go mad on slight provocation: Pontius Pilate knew those mobs, he had them in Jerusalem: Felix and Festus and Agrippa knew them in Jerusalem and Caesarea. The mobs of Antioch were perhaps wilder than either of

those we read of in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles.

At Antioch—to continue the picture—the pagan baths still remained, vast and architecturally magnificent, a city in themselves, with parks, playgrounds, lounging places, libraries, swimming pools, eating houses, central heating, flood lighting, and every sybaritic luxury. In the streets were uncounted statues, monuments, arches of triumph, wide boulevards, aqueducts running high into the hills. All in all it was a wealthy, prosperous, blatant, riotous city.

In its suburbs were the notorious groves of Daphne, stretching for ten miles along the River Orontes, a place of pilgrimage in pagan days, to which came devotees who sacrilegiously expressed their piety to the local goddess by rites of obscene debauchery. Slave girls were imported in thousands to perform the function at once of priestesses and prostitutes. The *Daphnitici mores*, the doings in the groves of Daphne, were a byword even to the Romans, not unacquainted with the orgies that had been held in the gardens of Nero. Juvenal, poet and satirist, complained that Antioch had taught Rome how to be vile. "The Orontes," he said, "has flowed into the Tiber."

When John Chrysostom was born in 347 the atmosphere, the memories, the corruption of heathenish abominations still lingered.

Where there is lasciviousness there is cruelty. Venus and Mars are worshipped together. Or, as a modern French writer prefers to say: "Lust is not barren. She brings forth a daughter, Ferocity." In the days just preceding those of Theodosius and John Chrysostom, Diocletian, last of

the persecutors, after slaughtering perhaps a thousand times more Christians than Nero, died a suicide. Maxentius, contender for the crown, was drowned in his armor, in the Tiber. Licinius was treacherously put to death. Constantine killed his eldest son, who might have succeeded him. Constantius, successor to Constantine, commenced his reign, like Herod of old and Lenin in our day, by "liquidating" all possible rivals for the throne. Constantius II died in battle while invading the territory of his brother Constans; Constans was murdered by his soldiers. Gallus was beheaded by Constantius. Julian the apostate died at the age of 37 in disaster and failure, probably shot by an arrow from the bow of one of his own soldiers: Jovian, who succeeded Julian, was suffocated after a reign of 8 months: Valentinian I died in a fit of anger: Gratian was murdered by his own guards: Valentinian II was found dead in a field on the banks of the River Rhone.

As with the emperors, so with their families, their prime ministers, the heads of their armies, rivals, usurpers, friends, enemies. Marcellinus, an eye witness, says that in those years the vultures fed not on common carrion but on the corpses of kings.

Now, into that world comes John Chrysostom. Inevitably he falls foul of a hundred enemies. The fact that he avoids politics and takes no part in court intrigue cannot save him. Cardinal Newman says "Chrysostom's gift of speech, as in the instance of two great classical orators before him" (Cicero and Demosthenes, I suppose) "was to be his ruin." But not his gift of speech alone. A man endowed with the divine gift of eloquence

may squander it, ministering to his own vanity and that of sycophantic friends and patrons. He will be "safe." But when to eloquence there is joined a godly zeal and indomitable courage, the orator cannot but stir up opposition. The greatest orators that ever lived were the Hebrew prophets. All of them, says Jesus, were slain. The last and greatest of them. John the Baptist was beheaded by the infamous King Herod at the request of the dancing girl, Salome. John Chrysostom was not unmindful of the fate of his namesake, the Baptist. But heedless of fate, he commenced a campaign, like John the Baptist, against licentiousness. Like John the Baptist, he attracted the common people. Indeed in all history there never was such a favorite with the masses. They flocked to hear him, as they had swarmed into the arena to see the gladiators or into the hippodrome to watch the races and join in the inevitable fracas that followed the victory of this jockey or that. Even in the house of God the congregation applauded the golden-tongued orator, shouted answers to his rhetorical questions, laughed outright at his satirical thrusts, writhed under his sarcasm, wept and groaned with him, and though they were fickle, emotional, volatile, like all Orientals, indeed like some of our own in this western world, they doubtless made holy resolutions while under his spell. It would seem, from the accounts of eye witnesses to this amazing action and reaction between preacher and people (we have by the way, short-hand reports of his sermons) that Chrysostom exercised an even more magnetic influence over the mind and heart of the crowd than Savonarola over the Florentines of the Renais-

sance era or Daniel O'Connell over the Irish of yesterday. In one of his sermons he says to the people, in phrases that remind us of Jesus and of St. Paul, "You are my fathers, my brothers, my sons, my limbs, my body, my life, my crown, my consolation, my anointing, my light." So great was his dominance over the citizens, first of Antioch and then of Constantinople, that he could have been the most powerful demagogue in history; so insecure were the foundations of the empire and of civilization that with a gesture or a cry he could have decided the fate of the throne and of the world. But he refused to play the demagogue. He spoke not of politics but of morals. He inveighed with terrifying effect against the vices of the rich and of the poor, against the corruptions of the clergy, the vanities of courtiers. With true oratorical instinct he descended from generalities to particulars: "He attacked avarice and luxury until a cry arose that he was trying to set the poor against the rich. He fulminated against immorality. He spoke of the popular shows of the theatre and the circus with execration. Nothing was too small for his indignant satire. He denounced the use of earrings, which would have maintained a thousand of the poor. He ridiculed the gold bits used for horses, the gold bracelets on the arms of menials, the rich carpets on the floors of the palaces, the walls incrusted with marble and ivory, the silver couches, the gold utensils. He advised the dandies of Constantinople to wear their magnificent boots on their heads instead of their feet. He rebuked the ladies for their silk robes and gold embroideries. He drew vivid pictures of the prevalent gluttony and frivolity. He did not hesitate to make his hearers laugh

at their own follies, while at the same time he gave vent to unsparing invective on the idle church attendance which led to no moral amelioration, and evaporated in excited applause of 'crocodilian tears'."

Eudoxia the Empress and her evil trinity of maenads, Marsa, Castricia, and Eugraphia, were not spared. As one writer says, "When he was painting in language of humorous scorn the picture of some faded and bedizened dowager, or of some 'lisping hawthorn-bud' of the court, there were ladies and courtiers who would grow uneasy, and would understand the smiles and meaning glances of their particular friends. Eudoxia, and the three ladies who formed her council vowed revenge, and joined themselves heart and soul with the enemies of Chrysostom."

Of course they "got" him. Such women always get their man—one way or the other. They stop at nothing. They have no scruples. The women at the court of Herod, as we read in the Gospels, were more deadly than the monster himself. As at Jerusalem, so at Constantinople. With spies who, failing to find evidence, manufactured it, with sycophantic courtiers playing into the hands of an angry empress, with jealous clerics only too eager to join in the hue and cry against the Archbishop—as if they were Pharisees and Sadducees and he were Christ again—it was not difficult to frame a case. The determining occasion was the erection of a statue to Eudoxia in front of the Cathedral. With characteristic Byzantine extravagance it was of solid silver, upon a column of porphyry supported by a lofty base. For a week or more public games were performed around the statue, with ribald songs, riotous choruses, in-

decent dancing, and the general demoralization that accompanied such carnivals in the Orient. It was like paganism revived, resurrected, rampant once again in the streets. It was too much for John Chrysostom. He opened his mouth and denounced the whole indecent exhibition. The Empress was infuriated. To her the Archbishop's protest was *lése majesté*. She besought the Emperor and certain servile members of the hierarchy to convoke a synod and depose the offender. John, refusing to be awed by the imperial wrath, delivered a sermon so devastating that all copies of it seem to have been confiscated and destroyed. But the commencement has been preserved in Sozomen's history: "Again Herodias raves; again she is troubled; she dances again; again she demands the head of John upon a charger."

That was the end, as he very well knew. Two attempts were made upon his life; he was imprisoned in his own home, and finally was deposed and banished. In chains he was taken across the Bosphorus to the Asiatic shore, and led away prisoner into the cheerless hinterland of Bithynia. He made no outcry and no resistance, fearing for his people if they should rise to rescue him, the fate that befell the 7,000 at Thessalonica.

Even so there was a tumult for which some of his followers paid dear. His church was set afire, as soon as he had left it, perhaps by his friends, perhaps by enemies. Serapion, a monk, known to be loyal to him, was seized and tortured with such cruelty as would have shamed the Persians or the North American savages. Others suffered the confiscation of all their property, were sent into exile, doomed to poverty and death.

One old chronicler says "The angel of the Church went out with Chrysostom." The golden candlestick of the Church of Constantinople was removed.

The Pope, Innocent I, protested against the injustice and cruelty inflicted upon the patriarch of Constantinople and his followers, but the Emperor of the East was hostile, and the Emperor of the West was beset with a thousand problems. Just then the barbarians were threatening Italy and Rome. So Saint John Chrysostom, illustrious orator, prophet, saint, was left to his fate. He might have said with Hildebrand: "I have loved justice and hated iniquity; therefore I die in exile." But his last words were even more worthy, more like those of Christ, "Glory to God for all that happened. Amen."

Is there any need of repeating the suggestion that here is drama supreme, even sublime? If it be thought sacrilegious to make a play of the passion and death of Christ (unless indeed it be done piously by simple peasants in the Tyrolese Alps) there can be no such tabu against a drama on the life, conflict, death, and ultimate vindication of John Chrysostom. Great masters have written of Antony and Cleopatra, Tristan and Isolde, Romeo and Juliet. Why should not some modern master dramatist, if we have one, take as his subject, if only for a change, Chrysostom and Eudoxia?

THOMAS BECKET AND HENRY II.

Address delivered on November 28, 1937

Eight Henrys have sat on the throne of England, but of them all only two, the second and the last, are remembered outside England. Henry VIII, the Bluebeard who married six wives and killed two of them, will of course never be forgotten. His amatory adventures make his fame—such as it is—secure. Also he has a distinct place in Anglican ecclesiastical annals as the first king who was also head of the Church.

The other unforgettable Henry of England is the Second. He was great grandson of William the Conqueror in whose person the French took possession of the throne of England, as did the Dutch in the person of William of Orange, and the Germans with George I.

In particular, the Irish have reason to remember Henry II, for it was under him that the traitor king of Leinster, Dermod, with Richard de Clare "Strongbow," introduced the English occupation that was to tease and torture the Irish from 1170 until 1916—seven centuries and a half of tyranny on the one side and martyrdom on the other.

However, in this present series of dramatic episodes, I am not concerned with Henry's invasion of Ireland, though that piratical expedition from the point of view of drama, not to say tragedy, was far more important than the episode I have in mind for consideration today. But since we are concerned not with dramatic episodes merely, but with dramatic episodes in the lives of the saints—and there was no saint at the invasion of Ireland—I have

selected the conflict of Henry II with St. Thomas Becket ending with the murder of the Archbishop in the Cathedral of Canterbury.

Let us, therefore, present in accordance with our custom in this course the *dramatis personae.*

Henry II, the first Plantagenet, had inherited two provinces of France from his father and two from his mother (provinces and the people were chattels in those days), and when he married his queen, Eleanor, she brought him a dowry of seven provinces more, so that he possessed one-third of France before he came across the Channel. In his twenty-first year he fell heir to the kingdom of England, and so became one of the most powerful sovereigns of the twelfth century.

In character he was not unlike his ancestor the Conqueror of a hundred years earlier, talented, ambitious, indefatigable, impetuous. One historian, the excellent and accurate Lingard, says: "He was eloquent, affable, facetious; uniting with the dignity of the prince the manners of the gentleman: but under this fascinating outside he concealed a heart that could descend to the basest artifices, and sport with its own honour and veracity. No one would believe his assertions or trust his promises: yet he justified this habit of duplicity by the maxim, that it is better to repent of words than of facts, to be guilty of falsehood than to fail."

He was an autocrat, jealous of power. He would tolerate no other authority than his own. It was his custom and his delight to humiliate and degrade any nobleman who might perhaps begin to be too prominent. Henry of course was not unique in that matter. Autocrats in all ages, perhaps most notably in

Russia today, use the "purge" to make sure that no contender will get the better of them.

Giraldus Cambrensis, the famous chronicler of the invasion of Ireland, who spent much time in the company of the King, describes him as prone to anger even to the point of apparent madness. He would rage, on occasion, like a wild beast, his face scarlet, his eyes blood-shot; and in that mood he would pour out torrents of imprecation. When one of his ministers of state ventured to say a good word for the Scots, Henry in a paroxysm "threw down his cap, ungirt his sword, tore off his clothes, sat down and commenced to gnaw the straw on the floor." When a page boy on one occasion presented a letter he didn't care to receive, the King tried to tear out the boy's eyes.

Yet on the other hand, this spasmodically mad monarch could be quite gentle, even charming and captivating. His successor, Richard I, "The Lion Hearted," has been called "Richard Yea-and-Nay." Henry deserved the same dubious compliment. Nowadays we call it Jekyll-and-Hyde.

The second important personage in the drama of "Murder in the Cathedral" is Thomas Becket, son of a rich and important merchant of London, a man of extraordinary ability and of a dominant personality. Educated in London, Oxford, Paris, Bologna, Auxerre, his native ability rounded and developed by travel as well as by study, Thomas, returning from the Continent, became the favorite companion of the King. Henry loaded the young courtier with favors, made him warden of the Tower of London, custodian of the Castle of Berghamsted, and allotted him 140 knights for his retinue. Thomas enjoyed this magnificence, entertained like a prince, joined the king in

his hunting trips and perhaps on less blameless pleasures, though even his enemies, who naturally were many—the basis of most enmity being jealousy—admit that Thomas was marvelously, supernaturally chaste.

He became chancellor of the Kingdom, the highest office in the State, virtually governor of all the domains of the King, in England and France, and he held that exalted office until the death of Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury in 1160. Thereupon—strange though it seem in this our very different age—the King insisted that his chancellor, with whom he was at the time travelling in Normandy, should succeed Theobald. Thomas protested, alleging many excuses, but being overruled, said to the King with characteristic courage and honesty: "Should God permit me to be archbishop of Canterbury, I should soon lose your majesty's favour, and the great affection with which you honour me would be changed into hatred. For your majesty will be pleased to suffer me to tell you, that several things you do in prejudice of the inviolable rights of the Church, make me fear you would require of me what I could not agree to: and envious persons would not fail to make this pass for a crime, in order to make me lose your favour."

Besides his protestation to the King, Becket, at least in the imagination of Lord Tennyson, made protestation to God. The poet puts the words in Thomas' mouth:

"Am I the man? That rang
Within my head last night, and when I slept,
Methought I stood in Canterbury Minster,
And spake to the Lord God, and said, 'O Lord,

I have been a lover of wines, and delicate meats,
And secular splendours, and a favourer
Of players, and a courtier, and a feeder
Of dogs and hawks, and apes, and lions and lynxes.

Am I the man? And the Lord answered me,
'Thou art the man, and all the more the man.' "

He was ordained, consecrated, installed in the primatial See of Canterbury. Presently his troubles began; his prophecies of a rift with the King came true. Henry had apparently imagined that with his favorite friend both chancellor of the Kingdom and archbishop of Canterbury, he, as king, could control Church and State. If so, he did not know Thomas. The union of Church and State in England under one head, the king, was not to be. Not yet. Not for 400 years yet. Henry VIII would succeed in subjugating the Church to the State, but he was to have the slippery sycophantic time-serving apostate Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, to help him. Thomas Becket was no Cranmer. His was an independent soul, unafraid of majesty, indomitable. As soon as he had taken Holy Orders, he put aside worldliness, lived abstemiously, in fact austerely; surrendered the Chancellorship and devoted himself with the single-mindedness of a Chrysostom or an Ambrose to the service of Holy Mother Church.

Now *there* were the makings of conflict and of superb drama: two strong men, conscious of power, inflexible, immovable, confronting each other for one more duel between the Church and the world, the spiritual and the temporal.

As usual, the State, personified in this instance by Henry, threw down the gauntlet to the Church,

represented by Thomas Becket. Also, as usual, the Church seemed to be beaten: the archbishop was annihilated by the king's fury. But once the crime is done, the crucifixion complete, the Church like Christ always ultimately triumphs. When Becket's blood stained the stone pavement at the foot of the altar and, as the realistic chroniclers tell us, his brains lay spattered over the floor, all Europe was aghast. Hilaire Belloc says the murder of Becket became recognized as "perhaps the most important fact of the early middle ages."

It's a mysterious Thing—this Everlasting Church. And paradoxical. When She thrives She fades; when She dies She lives. Kings, emperors, all sorts of worldly potentates fail to see that fact. From Herod to Nero, to Diocletian, to Attila, to Barbarossa, to Philip the Fair, to Napoleon, to Bismarck to Hitler to Lenin and Stalin, they blunder one after the other, and all in the same way. They never learn. They are not statesmen. A statesman, according to the adage, never makes the same mistake twice. Say also, a statesman doesn't make the same mistake that some one else has made. Too bad they don't read the Bible. There they would find history, philosophy, wisdom, experience, prophecy, everything. "Touch not my anointed," says God in the Sacred Writ. Kings are never so stupid as when they kill the priests or the prelates of God's Church.

However, let's drop the moralizing and return to the drama.

The conflict between Henry the King and Becket the Archbishop centered about two points: first, the immunity of the clergy from punishment inflicted by the State. In those days the Church had courts of its own and insisted upon its right to judge

those who belonged to the clerical state. There was wisdom in that custom, in an age when kings were arrogant and powerful and would in many cases be only too quick to oppress the Church by imprisoning the clergy or putting them to death. Let us grant that conditions are different today, and pass on to the other cause of conflict which is most decidedly *not* different today.

Henry demanded that Thomas should sign a document called "The Constitutions of Clarendon." One of those "Constitutions" reads as follows: "The custody of every vacant archbishopric, bishopric, abbey and priory of royal foundation, ought to be given, and its revenues paid to the king; and the election of a new incumbent ought to be made in consequence of the king's writ, by the chief clergy of the church, assembled in the king's chapel, with the assent of the king, and with the advice of such prelates as the king may call to his assistance."

That is to say, the king had his eyes on the revenues of the Church. In this he anticipated Henry VIII by four centuries. Furthermore, he thought he had the Archbishop and the Pope gagged and bound by another one of the "Constitutions" which forbade the excommunication of any tenant of the king, or officer of his household, without the king's permission. Shrewd! The king could appropriate the property or the funds of the Church and as Henry VIII did, later bestow them on tenants, officers, courtiers of his own choosing, pay his debts with them and what not. The only recourse of the ecclesiastical authority in such circumstances was excommunication, but there could be no excommunication unless the king agreed!

Yet another one of these cleverly framed "Con-

stitutions" reads that no archbishop, bishop, or priest, could go overseas without the king's permission. That is to say, there could be no visiting the pope unless the king said so.

Against those tyrannies Thomas stood like a rock. In retaliation the King fined him. Thomas paid the fine. The King fined him again, demanding an utterly impossible sum, 44,000 marks. Then came the "third degree." The king, face to face with Becket in the royal palace, threatens him with exile or death. A door opens behind the archbishop, a body of knights appears, their garments tucked up and swords drawn.

The contest went on, Becket in one instance seeming to waver, but he quickly recovered himself and again declined to surrender the Church into the keeping of the king. The Earl of Leicester, at the head of the barons, is sent by Henry into a convocation of the bishops to read sentence against Thomas. Thereupon the Archbishop makes a noble speech: "You know with what fidelity I served the king, how reluctantly, to please him, I accepted my present office, and in what manner I was declared 'by him free from all secular claims. For what happened before my consecration, I ought not to answer nor will I. Know, moreover, that you are my children in God. Neither law nor reason allows you to judge your father. I therefore decline your tribunal, and refer my quarrel to the decision of the Pope. To him I appeal; and shall now, under the protection of the Catholic Church, and the Apostolic See, depart.' As he walked along the hall, some of the courtiers threw at him knots of straw, which they took from the floor. A voice called him a traitor. At the word he stopped and hastily turning round, rejoined: 'Were

it not that my order forbids me, that coward should repent of his insolence.' At the gate he was received with acclamations of joy by the clergy and people and was conducted in triumph to his lodgings."

The people had the true instinct. From first to last they recognized the Archbishop as their friend and champion, the only buffer between them and the tyrannies of the King and the barons.

But the King and the barons were to have their way. Thomas had managed to get to France and to Rome. He saw the Pope and returned to his fate. The King, impetuous, hot tempered, unrestrained in speech, exclaimed "Will no one rid me of this pestilent priest?" Four subservient Knights, not ashamed to become assassins, at what seemed to them to be the suggestion of the King (their names are infamous, Reginald Fitzurse, William Tracy, Hugh de Moreville, and Richard Brito) hurried to the Cathedral, found the Archbishop praying before the altar and cut him down in cold blood in circumstances of appalling savagery.

The people mourned and threatened rebellion. The Pope summoned the murderers to Rome, treating them mercifully when they arrived, apparently stricken with repentance. The King protested innocence, went into deep mourning, refused for months on end to take any comfort in life and was in the end saved from the consequences of the crime, doubtless because of the prayers of the saint whom he had sent prematurely out of the world.

From that time forth Canterbury has been a place of pilgrimage. From all parts of England, from all corners of Europe pilgrims have come to Canterbury for 800 years. St. Thomas Becket, with his countrymen St. Thomas More and St. John Fish-

er, will be held forever in renown and veneration by all who love justice, hate tyranny, and dread the dominance of the State over the Church.

Today the worst portent to those who love liberty is the totalitarian state in which king or dictator may at will proscribe religion and deny the rights of conscience. Against the menace of the totalitarian state we may well invoke that champion of the free conscience and the free Church, St. Thomas Becket.

CATHERINE OF SIENA AND AVIGNON.

Address delivered on December 5, 1937

Every public speaker, indeed every writer or publicist in any medium whatever, is tempted at times to exaggerate the importance of the subject he happens to be discussing. He must therefore beware of superlatives. Exaggeration is poor art and bad argument.

None the less, while I thus warn myself of danger, I venture the sweeping declaration that St. Catherine of Siena is the most amazing woman in history. The century in which she lived was the most deeply demoralized that has been seen since Christianity began. Society, both lay and clerical, political and ecclesiastical, was in a condition of chaos, and in consequence she seems the more unaccountable. In the next century came Joan of Arc, whose career was so supernatural as to seem incredible. Yet Catherine had ten talents where Joan had but one. Joan's life centered around her king. Catherine was guide, philosopher, and friend, sometimes a very stern friend, to all the kings of Christendom. Joan started as a shepherdess and became a general. Catherine was a dyer's daughter, who came to be an oracle to all the world. Joan, when her king proved craven, appealed to the Pope. Catherine achieved ascendancy over kings and queens, and encouraged, admonished, upbraided, guided the Pope while still a girl in her twenties. Without what the world calls "birth" or "breeding" with no political or social prestige, with little or no formal education, Catherine dominated her century by sheer personality. Her genius was not intellectual like Hypatia's, or aesthe-

tic like Sappho's; her renown was not based upon preternatural wickedness like that of Messalina, or Lucrezia Borgia, or her infamous namesake Catherine of Russia, but upon the loftiest kind of genius: sanctity.

But since we are following in this course of talks the idea that the lives of certain saints afford material for superb drama, let us have as it were the setting.

When Catherine was born at Siena in 1348 the most devastating plague in history, the Black Death, was raging. It had appeared in Constantinople and Greece in the preceding year, passed like fire to Genoa, Milan, Siena, Florence, swept the whole Italian peninsula from the Alps to Sicily, leaped to Spain, to France, to England, to Germany, and finally to the entire European continent. It took a toll of life greater than that of any war that was ever fought. In all Italy one half the population perished. In certain localities the mortality ran as high as 65 to 70 percent. In the city of Paris the tumbrils carried off to the burial pits 800 bodies a day for a period of two years. In one small town of 1000 souls there remained only eight when the pestilence had passed. Twenty-five million persons in all died swiftly, terribly in the Black Death. Thousands untouched by the plague died of fear. Mothers forsook their babies. Husbands killed their wives, their children, and themselves. Fanaticism flared up; flagellants scourged themselves bloody in all the streets. Crime flourished, and debauchery. Some of those that escaped death, or thought they had escaped, indulged in hysterical orgies. Jews were murdered, 12,000 of them in one city, Mainz. Of all classes of persons priests especially fell victims to the plague

doubtless because they ministered to the stricken. In England half of all the clergy died, a fact that helps to explain the demoralization that ensued.

In a word the Black Death of the 14th century was the most devastating phenomenon of historical times. Petrarch called it *Il Trionfo della Morte,* the "Triumph of Death."

Another calamity of that tragic era was the abandonment of Rome by the popes in consequence of political disturbances. From 1305 to 1377 nine popes in succession lived at Avignon in Southern France. For those 72 years the government of the Church was under French influence. What with the machinations of kings, queens, and a corrupt court, the honor and prestige of the papacy suffered a blow from which it did not recover in two centuries. That fact helps to explain the success of the attempt, in the sixteenth century, to divide Europe against itself, and that in turn helps to explain what ails Europe today.

The "Babylonish Captivity" of the Church in Avignon was as scandalous as it was tragic. St. Catherine with tears and groans, persuasion, warnings, threats of the wrath of God, besought the Pope to leave the beautiful beguiling enervating Provencal country. Petrarch, great poet that he was and after his own fashion something of a saint, declared Avignon to be "the fountain of anguish, the dwelling place of wrath, the school of errors, the temple of heresy, a guilt-laden Babylon, a forge for lies, a hell upon earth." A drastic indictment, perhaps it seems hysterical. But St. Catherine says worse things of the papal capital in Provence. She organized an expedition—one of the strangest in history, herself at its head, her mother, a number of young men who

had been converted from their sins; an ex-criminal or two, a Dominican priest, some simple matrons of the Rosary Society type—this amazing cortege, part on foot and part on mule-back, made its way over the Alps around the Mediterranean shore to the French Babylon.

At Rome meanwhile there was desolation. The Lamentations of Jeremias over Jerusalem could be repeated of Rome: "Now doth the city sit solitary that was full of people! *how* is the mistress of the Gentiles become as a widow, the princes of provinces made tributary! Weeping she hath wept in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks: there is none to comfort her among all them that were dear to her! All her friends have despised her, and are become her enemies . . . The ways of Sion mourn, because there are none that come to the solemn feast: all her gates are broken down: her priests sigh: her virgins are in affliction, and she is oppressed with bitterness."

St. Peter's and St. John Lateran's were in ruins, roofless, open to the sky and to the elements. Grass grew on the floors of the churches; cattle grazed even at the foot of the high altar. The Coliseum and other monumental buildings became a quarry. "More marble was quarried at Rome than at Carrara" says Ludwig Pastor. Italy was dominated by tyrants, and overrun with bandits. Cities fought one another, while factions carried on feuds within their walls. Little armies of mercenaries imported from Germany, Brittany, Hungary, England, ranged up and down the land, selling their services to the highest bidder. One of the maddest, fiercest of these legions of desperadoes was that under the leadership of Sir John Hawkwood of whom they said that he was "an

Englishman Italianate, a devil incarnate." It was he who seeing two of his ruffians disputing the possession of a woman in a captured and looted town, drew his sword, cut her in two from head to foot with one blow as with a butcher's cleaver, and said "Each one take half." St. Catherine came face to face with this monster, overawed him, berated him as a school teacher might scold an unruly pupil, wrote letters to him and if she couldn't save his soul it must have been because his crimes had made him reprobate.

However, not only soldiers, brigands, outlaws, bands of hired gladiators contributed to the chaos in the Italian peninsula in that terrible 14th century. On occasion even monks, friars, clerics, fought and killed one another. The nobles were an especially murderous lot. Bernardo Visconti, despot of Milan, vicar of the Emperor, condottiere, was a monster, subject to paroxysms of bestial fury. He kept on his estate 5,000 hunting dogs, as wild as wolves. If anything went wrong with these beasts, their keepers were flogged, tortured, blinded. Two Franciscan friars who had the hardihood to remind Visconti of death and judgment, were first ridiculed and then burned to death. This raging tyrant who would be imprisoned today as a homicidal maniac, was Duke of Milan, patron of the fine arts, a lover of poetry, a Maecenas to writers, and into the bargain he was something of a Napoleon of military strategy. In an age of faith he was an infidel, fought the Pope, scoffed at excommunication. When the Pope sent a messenger to hand him a bull of excommunication, Visconti made the messenger eat the document, seal and all, then dressed up a lunatic in ridiculous vestments and had him excommunicate the Pope. He combined in himself, says Augusta Theodosia Drane,

the brutality of the 11th century, the astute cunning of the 16th, and the skepticism of the 18th.

Yet even this Mephistopheles stood in awe of St. Catherine, accepted her rebukes without remonstrance, and begged her to patch up his "reputation as a pious Christian." She wrote him, "to glory in one's human power is folly and madness; no man can be called Lord or master of anything here below; any one who revolts against Jesus Christ in the person of His Vicar on earth is mad."

Even that plain language the savage Bernardo accepted meekly and asked Catherine to pay a visit to him and his wife Beatrice Scaliger (La Scala), the "proudest, vainest, most ambitious woman of her time," who called herself Queen, and wrote for her own epitaph "Beatrice, Queen, the Glory of Italy!"

Far worse than Beatrice was the notorious Joanna, Queen of Naples, who, as some historians say, was the cruelest and most vicious woman that ever lived. Her contemporaries called her *Regina Meretrix,* which may just as well be left untranslated. But even this unspeakable creature respected St. Catherine, accepted her rebukes, listened to her admonitions and was on occasions for a brief spell converted by her.

Truly it was a wild and terrible world with more than its share of incredibly violent people. Ludwig Pastor, greatest of the historians of the Popes, says, "Hardly ever has a country fallen into such anarchy as did the Italian peninsula when bereft of her principle of unity by the unfortunate decision of Clement V to fix his abode in France." (I. 63).

Though I am as a rule rigorously refraining from preaching or moralizing in these talks, may I interject the remark that, if by an impossibility, the

papacy and all that it means were to be removed from the world today as it was from Italy in the 14th century, the world, like Italy, would fall a prey to anarchy.

The worst is still to be told. From 1378 to 1417, that is for 39 years, there was always an anti-pope, sometimes two anti-popes, each one creating cardinals, appointing bishops, and each one excommunicating the others. This was the most desperate condition in which the Catholic Church ever found herself—the Black Death, the Babylonish Captivity, and the Great Schism all in one century; what wonder that in exactly another century after the close of the schism, Luther was able to preach revolt and to a degree succeed? But if ever there was a vindication of the prophecy that the "gates of Hell should not prevail" against the Church it is in the fact that She survived that anarchy, reconstructed faith and morals out of the chaos, and regained Her position in the forefront of the moral forces of the world.

That She did so is due in no small measure to Catherine Benincasa, the dyer's daughter of Siena, whom we now call St. Catherine. Any one less courageous than this girl—she was only 20 when she commenced her public career and only 33 when she died—I say any woman less heroic or with a less robust faith would have accepted Hamlet's injunction to Ophelia, "Get thee to a nunnery;" but though Catherine did become a Dominican of the Third Order, she entered no convent. Her field of action was not the cloister, but all Italy, France, Europe, the world. She prayed as much as any cloistered nun, but she found time none the less to fight the battle for God in person all over Christendom. She intervened between feudists, confronted bandits, acted as

ambassador between warring families and cities. She interviewed every powerful personage, good, bad, wicked, devilish: more than once she stepped forth upon an actual battlefield, into the midst of blood and death; she went into prisons, converted murderers; renewed the faith of atheists; held a group of young men in the hollow of her hand and made saints of them; directed the activities of Raymond of Capua, master general of the great Dominican order; dictated while in ecstasy one of the most eloquent and moving books in the history of literature; wrote letters innumerable to kings, queens, dictators, tyrants, captains of soldiers; dealt on familiar terms with the Popes, came at their invitation to the papal palace, reminded them of their duty, warned them of the judgments of God, commanded them to clean house, called them by the pet name *Babbo mio*, "my papa." From the audience chamber of the Pope, she would go to the palace of the Jezabel of Naples, Joanna; to the madman Visconti and his "Queen" Beatrice; to the field camp of the murderous Sir John Hawkwood; to a jail, to a scaffold, to the hospitals, to a sick bed, to a pesthouse. Popes, priests, women, good, bad, and worse, young men, old men, saints, devils, bandits, kings, warring nobles, criminals at Rome, Genoa, Pisa, Florence, Naples, Avignon, everywhere, called this girl in her twenties "Mamma." A handsome dashing young nobleman, Stefano Maconi, used to ride like a Centaur through the streets of Siena at the head of a company of armed men, shouting the battle cry of his house, doing battle in the narrow streets with the forces of rival families. His own mother bade him put an end to these senseless feuds, and suggested Catherine as arbitrator (The saint was al-

ways arbitrating in these internecine wars). Stefano laughed and said "Tell her to say her rosary!" She did say the Rosary and the young fellow came like a dog to her feet. Under her guidance he made peace, went to Confession, and changed his life. Young fellows like himself, who had fallen under the spell of the saintly virgin, were nicknamed "Caterinati," be-Catherined (bedeviled, as it were, or bewitched). Maconi became one of them. On another occasion when a man unjustly condemned to death was cursing and reviling God, she went to his cell, calmed him, bestowed a supernatural peace upon him, went to the scaffold with him, knelt beside the block and when the axe fell, caught his head in her apron.

Of course she didn't succeed in all her attempts. But it is safe to say that if it had not been for the influence of St. Catherine of Siena civilization might have bogged down so deep that not even yet could it have come to the surface again.

I conclude as I commenced—with the expression of my belief that the character and career of St. Catherine of Siena are amazing in the highest degree. Here then is material for a noble drama, not mythological as in the Greek classics, not borrowed from old stories and legends or adapted from inaccurate chronicles as was so often the case with Shakespeare, but even though it be so startling and spectacular as to seem fictitious, nevertheless authentic; in other words, incredible but true; and what can be more dramatic than that?

ST. PAUL AND AGRIPPA

Address delivered on December 12, 1937

The essence of drama is conflict—conflict of persons, or conflict of forces. In the case of the apostle Paul and King Agrippa there is a conflict both of persons and of forces, and the drama is consequently heightened. First let us look upon the two men who are central figures in the action that took place at Caesarea in Palestine about 17 years after the death of Jesus at Jerusalem.

Agrippa was a Herod. Perhaps that tells it all. Of the many dynasties, great and small, short-lived and long-lived, that have graced or disgraced the pages of history the Herods are the most notorious. Not the Pharaohs, not the Ptolemys, not the Caesars, not the Sassanidae, not the Romanoffs, but the Herods are remembered as paragons of cruelty and lechery, past masters in murder, adultery, incest, sexual promiscuity. If there be any renown in achieving the loftiest heights or the nethermost depths of wickedness, that renown belongs to the Herods.

This superlatively wicked house commenced with Herod called "the Great," who occupied the throne when our Savior was born. His father, Antipater, had been a friend of Julius Caesar and Mark Antony. Caesar had bestowed Roman citizenship upon Antipater and made him procurator of Judea. It remained for the son to be King of the Jews.

Herod Agrippa II, like all the Herods, fawned on the Romans. A tyrant in Palestine, he was a lick-spittle in Rome. Claudius the imbecile emperor, and then Nero the incredible demon, were his friends.

There is sardonic irony in the fact that when St. Paul in the presence of Agrippa appealed to Caesar he was escaping Herod only to fall into the hands of Nero!

Herod Agrippa was not the only one concerned in the trial of St. Paul. The Apostle had passed through the hands of no less than three provincial nabobs before he reached the King, four before he reached the Emperor. All readers of the Gospel are familiar with the fact that Jesus in His passion was sent back and forth from Pilate to Herod and from Herod back to Pilate again. St. Paul was taken in charge first by Lysias in Jerusalem. But Lysias was only a centurion, a kind of captain of military police. He had sent his soldiers into the streets to rescue Paul from a mob that would have torn him to pieces, just as a police captain today, knowing nothing and caring nothing for the right or wrong of a case in dispute, sends his men into the midst of a mob to snatch away some one who happens to be the bone of contention.

Having picked Paul up, Lysias would have been glad to drop him like a hot coal. In fact he would have thrown him back to the mob, as one throws a chunk of meat to a pack of yelping hounds, as Pontius Pilate had thrown Jesus to the bloodthirsty fanatics in the streets of Jerusalem. Like his Master, Paul was about to be scourged but saved himself with three magic words: *"Civis Romanus sum,"* which even the great Cicero was wont to speak with reverence and pride, "I am a Roman citizen." Lysias awed, if not frightened at the realization of how close he had come to a crime against the Roman State, threw a cordon of soldiers around the prisoner, took him to the hall of the Sanhedrin. Here

and now occurred an incident characteristic of the always unabashed St. Paul. The high priest, a despicable person named Ananias, an appointee of Herod and like the Herods, tyrannical, rapacious, greedy, violent, profligate, who had been summoned to Rome but was saved from the consequences of his crimes by the perjury of an actor and a concubine, ordered St. Paul to be struck on the mouth. St. Paul, turning to the high priest, said "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall!" Some pious readers are surprised if not scandalized at this outburst, so unlike the patient forbearance of Jesus. They forget that Jesus had said just that and a hundred times more to the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Indeed "whited wall" is a toning down of Christ's own expression "whited sepulchre."

The trial proving nothing, Lysias had the prisoner brought to his palace for safe keeping. Forty young men, probably *sicarii,* hired assassins with daggers, doubtless at the instigation of the high priest, took a terrible oath that they would not sleep or eat until they had killed Paul.

But Lysias, gathering a formidable company of 400 soldiers, sent Paul by night over the 35 miles of bandit-infested road to Caesarea. Doubtless he heaved a great sigh of relaxation when the horsemen came back with the report that they had handed over the agitator to the Roman governor Felix.

Between Paul and Felix another dramatic episode occurred. Drama was always breaking out wherever St. Paul happened to be. Felix was a Roman but a loathsome specimen. As successor to Pontius Pilate, he had obtained his office by bribery. Pretending to prosecute the bandits that infested the famous Roman roads, he really shared the spoils of

murder with them like any modern politician who plays along with criminals. "Graft" is a modern name for an ancient evil. The "rake off" was not discovered or invented yesterday.

"Felix had been a slave in the vilest of all positions, in the vilest of all epochs, in the vilest of all cities." * The Roman historian Tacitus describes him in a sentence, "Antonius Felix exercised the power of a king with the spirit of a slave, cruel and lustful." Though ugly to the point of repulsiveness in personal appearance, Felix possessed some curious fascination which only women can understand (and perhaps only a certain brand of woman). He had enticed his consort Drusilla, a Jewess, sister of Herod Agrippa, away from her husband. And there they sat enthroned when St. Paul was ushered in to be tried. Here in itself is drama, a prince of saints, the high-minded, pure-souled, incorrupt champion of all that is good and holy, standing to be judged by a loathsome reptile of a man, with a runaway adulteress at his side. Unafraid, St. Paul preached to them of "righteousness and chastity and of the judgment to come." Felix was frightened, but like a good many other sinners he "bluffed it out" as men say, temporized, procrastinated. "I will hear thee again on this matter, but for this time go thy way." If the pagan was moved, what of the Jewess? Pilate's wife sent warning to her husband when Jesus was up for judgment, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man." But Drusilla had no warning to give. No dream had come to her, no vision. She was too far gone. "The mills of God grind slowly," says the adage. But they grind fast enough.

* Farrar Life and Work of St. Paul, II, p. 689.

In a couple of years, Felix was demoted, disgraced. He barely escaped execution.

He was succeeded by Festus, a better type. The new governor being installed, the Sanhedrin redoubled its efforts to get possession of St. Paul. When Festus went first to Jerusalem, the Pharisees stirred up the mob in the court of the Praetorium as they had in Pilate's day to cry for the blood of a victim. But Festus was no such blunderer and no such coward as Pontius Pilate. He stood his ground. He would throw no sop to bloodhounds. As a Roman —of the race of conquerors—he despised these bickering, quarreling, screeching, gesticulating fanatics.

But he knew not what to do with Paul. Lysias had passed him along to Felix, and Felix had bequeathed him to Festus. The Governor dared not kill him for Paul had claimed, and proved, his Roman citizenship. So what to do? He had summoned Paul once and again and again, in the hope of discovering either a crime for which he could be put out of the way, or wanting that, a solution of the problem. But all to no avail.

Festus was no more weary of the impasse than Paul. There was the saint in a dungeon vile, its walls bespattered with the blood of hundreds of Herod's victims. From that filthy prison he had been brought forth whenever the mood was on the procurator to interrogate him, and back he went again when the interpellation was finished. Back to the blood, the vermin, the dark, in chains with blasphemous bawdy soldiers to watch him and murderers to keep him company.

So the next time Festus had him up from his black hole to ask him "Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem?", Paul issued his ultimatum: "I stand at

Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews I have done no injury, as thou very well knowest. For if I have injured them, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die. But if there be none of these things whereof they accuse me, no man may deliver me to them: I appeal to Caesar." Then Festus having conferred with the council, answered: "Hast thou appealed to Caesar? To Caesar shalt thou go."

Still there remained one more chance for Festus to wash his hands of the unpleasant business without bothering the emperor in far-away Rome. No subordinate official likes to admit to his chief that he cannot manage affairs in his own bailiwick. Now it happened that King Agrippa, with his queen Bernice, was come to pay a visit to the Governor. Paul's name came up in the conference, "I should like to see him and hear him," said Agrippa. "You shall, tomorrow" said Festus.

They made a gala occasion of it. Festus, a new man anxious to make an impression, staged the affair with all the ceremonial allowed him by Rome. Agrippa and Bernice, not to play second fiddle to a subaltern, came, says the Scripture "with great pomp; and when they were entered into the hall of audience, with the tribunes and the principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth."

There, I suggest, is a scene for some artist accustomed to a large and brilliant canvas, or for a master dramatist with a flair for spectacle and a genius for making character emerge even from the midst of gorgeous trappings. I find what I think to be a brilliant and yet restrained description of the scene in Canon Farrar: "It was a show occasion designed

for the amusement of these princely guests, and the idle aristocracy of Caesarea, both Jewish and Gentile. . . The Herods were fond of show, and Festus gratified their humour by a grand processional display. He would doubtless appear in his scarlet paludament, with his full attendance of lictors and bodyguard, who would stand at arms behind the gilded chairs which were placed for himself and his distinguished visitors. We are expressly told that Agrippa and Bernice went in state to the Praetorium, she, doubtless, blazing with all her jewels, and he in his purple robes, and both with the golden circlets of royalty around their foreheads, and attended by a suite of followers in the most gorgeous apparel of Eastern pomp. . . Did Agrippa think of his great-grandfather Herod, and the massacre of the innocents? Of his great-uncle Antipas, and the murder of John the Baptist? Of his father Agrippa I, and the execution of James the Elder? Did he recall the fact that they had each died or been disgraced, soon after, or in direct consequence of, those inflictions of martyrdom? Did he realize how closely, but unwittingly, the faith in that 'one Jesus' had been linked with the destinies of his house? Did the pomp of today remind him of the pomp sixteen years earlier, when his much more powerful father had stood in the theatre, with the sunlight blazing on the tissued silver of his robe, and the people shouting that he was a god? Did none of the dark memories of the place overshadow him as he entered that former palace of his race? It is very unlikely. Extreme vanity, gratified self-importance, far more probably absorbed the mind of this titular king, as, in all the pomp of phantom sovereignty, he swept along the large open hall, seated himself with his

beautiful sister by the Procurator's side, and glanced with cold curiosity on the poor, worn, shackled prisoner—pale with sickness and long imprisonment—who was led in at his command."

The prisoner was a small man, not prepossessing in appearance. Two years in a dungeon had half blinded him; insufficient food had emaciated him and made him haggard; he was unkempt, his beard scraggly, his clothing ragged and dirty. He blinked as he came into the light like the martyrs as they stepped from the black dungeons of the Coliseum into the dazzling sunlight of the arena. He would walk slowly, painfully, stumbling perhaps, and he would seem for the moment bewildered with the pageantry. In this day the phrase was already current "butchered to make a Roman holiday." Did that idea leap to his mind? Did he say to himself, "If not butchered to make a holiday, exhibited to make a spectacle"?

At any rate there he was, the poor insignificant Cilician Jew face to face with all the pomp that the Orient could muster, perhaps even more gorgeous than that of Rome, with more ceremonial, etiquette, more bowings and bendings, prostrations, more kowtowing on the part of the menials and more *hauteur* in the bearing of the potentates.

But the little man is not impressed. Still less is he frightened. For it happens, despite those rags, that shaggy head, and untrimmed beard, that countenance dead white with prison pallor, there on the polished marble floor inlaid with mosaics of gold, standing barefoot, chained by his wrists and ankles, was a splendid specimen of man, man at his noblest and best, superlatively intelligent, courageous, fearing not mobs or kings or emperors, no more in awe

of Herod Agrippa than John the Baptist had been of Agrippa's grandfather. Men like John the Baptist and Paul have a way of being blind to ceremonial frippery and seeing only what is behind and beneath these disguises for impoverished souls, these substitutes for natural dignity, these masks invented to conceal the too obviously weak physiognomy of lechers, sybarites, tyrants. The little boy in the legend cried out "The king has no clothes on!" To children, prophets, seers, saints, no king has any clothes on. They see through cloth of gold, and silks and ruffles to the skin and through the skin to the soul.

So Paul stands before Herod Agrippa, pierces through the grandiose vesture, reads him as the Judge of the living and the dead will one day read us all, and, so far from being afraid of him or overawed by him, pities him. Paul must have thought of Herod what John the Divine later wrote to the bishop of the Church of Laodicea, "Thou sayest: I am rich, and made wealthy, and have need of nothing:. . . knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked?" (Apoc. 3:17).

In these talks I have been calling for a dramatist: at this point I think I shall have to call for an actor, one possessed of supreme talent, who could stand in rags on the marble floor of a king's palace and without so much as a word or a syllable convey to an audience the thoughts that rushed through the teeming mind of St. Paul as he stood for those first few moments before Festus the Governor, Agrippa the King, and Bernice the Queen. While Paul stands there saying nothing, Herod commences to squirm like Pontius Pilate on his throne when Jesus had

just stood and looked at him. "It is permitted thee to speak," said the king.

The poor, starved, ragged, seemingly forlorn prisoner, with gyves on his wrists and chains on his ankles, opens his mouth; and what eloquence bursts forth! And yet it was a simple tale—true eloquence is always simple: the story of his life, his short career as a persecutor of Christians, his part in the stoning of Stephen, his mad dash down the Damascus road breathing threats and slaughter, the vision, the brief supernatural dialogue that passed from heaven to earth and back again, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" "Who art Thou Lord." "I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest"; the blindness, and the falling away of the scales from his eyes, the retreat into the wilderness, the return, the attack of the Pharisees upon him, his answer, his trial, but more than all these things, his faith in God, in Jesus, in the Resurrection.

Festus the pagan, stirred to the depth of his soul, leaps to his feet and cries, "Paul thou art beside thyself! Much learning doth make thee mad." And Paul's sane calm response, "I am not mad, most excellent Festus: I speak words of truth and soberness." With unaffected eagerness, yet with perfect self-possession the prisoner calls upon the King to stand witness for him: "The king knoweth these things of which I speak. None of these things are hidden from him. Neither was any of these things done in a corner." With most disconcerting simplicity he looks the king in the eye and puts *him,* as it were, in the dock. "Believest thou the prophets, O King Agrippa?" A moment's hesitation. *"I know that thou believest!"* It is the king's turn to rise

from his golden chair: he exclaims, "A little more and thou persuadest *me* to be a Christian."

That is the climax. After that the drama, as in the classics, falls away gradually to its close. The king, the governor, Queen Bernice, and all the bigwigs of Caesarea leave the hall less pompously than they came in.

The poor little man from Tarsus has, with all the innocence in the world, with no guile whatsoever and no conscious histrionics, turned the tables on them all. He had been brought in to be exhibited. He leaves, master of the situation. Those that had expected a few minutes of diversion in the investigation of this strange person, who had thought, perhaps, to laugh at him, and in the amusement forget their ennui, their fears, their ever-present dread of evil, go away silent, perhaps conscience stricken. They didn't know it when they took their seats and the majordomo at a nod from Festus cried "Bring in the prisoner," that there was about to appear the man who would turn the world upside down, destroy Rome, the Caesars, the Empire, and all of them. But when he was led out again between his guards, his chains clanking on the stone floor, perhaps they felt a presentiment that this man might even blast Jupiter off Mount Olympus. He had shown power of a kind that is as disastrous to false gods as to puppet kings.

They took him off to Rome. He rejoiced to see the centre of the world. Two years he lived in humble lodgings, awaiting an audience with Nero. There is no evidence that he was ever summoned to the imperial palace. If not, it was just as well for Nero. The man who had discomforted Herod would

not quail before Nero. He could have given that monster a very uneasy half-hour.

The last scene in the Apostle's exciting life is one more procession from prison, this time from the Mamertine (probably) to the gate of the Ostian way, past the pyramid of Cestius, out three miles upon the Campagna, to the scene of execution. Paul is bidden to kneel on the road. He kneels. The swordsman stands by. The lictor reads the sentence of death. The reading concluded, the lictor stands back, the executioner steps forth, the long sword flashes in the sunlight, the head of the martyr rolls in the dust, his blood, like that of Jesus, bespattering the soldiers.

When they picked up his poor body and buried it, they put on his tombstone his own triumphant epitaph: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course. I have kept the Faith." The active, eventful, spectacular, even dramatic career of one of the noblest of men was at an end.

HEROD ANTIPAS AND JOHN THE BAPTIST

Address delivered on December 19, 1937

In the preceding talk of this series I commenced with what I dare say is a platitude: The essence of drama is in conflict of persons, of forces, of both. That was by way of introducing the story of the conflict between St. Paul and Herod Agrippa. Today, coming to St. John the Baptist and Herod Antipas, I feel obliged to repeat the statement that drama comes from conflict. Fate, as the Greeks called it, or Divine Providence, as we know it to be, often seems to work with deliberate dramatic intent. It was decreed on high that John, the holiest of men, and Antipas, one of the worst of men, should find themselves in the same generation in the same corner of the world. A clash was inevitable.

But before we come to the scene of action let us have the chief participants in the drama.

First, Herod Antipas, grandson of Antipater and son of Herod the Great. We shall understand Herod Antipas better if we take a look at his grandfather and at his father, that monstrous ogre called by a curious perversion of the meaning of words "the Great." This worst of the house of Herod, a bluebeard more wicked than any that the fairy stories have imagined, was an Edomite, of the Asmonean family, half Arab, half Jew. His education was Greco-Roman. By some strange process of natural selection he seems to have escaped all the good qualities of Arab, Jew, Greek, and Roman, and to have combined in himself all the evil of the east and the west, of Jew and Gentile. With his father Antipater

(who, by the way, was not king but procurator) Herod rose to prominence by the favor of Pompey the Great. When Pompey was defeated by Julius Caesar, the Herods, father and son, made a lightning change of allegiance, saved their skin and their political jobs. When in turn, Julius Caesar was stabbed "at the foot of Pompey's *statua,* which all the while ran blood," the two shifty Asmoneans turned their coats again swiftly and so cleverly as to stand in with Cassius, who with Brutus had murdered Caesar. When Octavian, later called Augustus Caesar, defeated every one in sight, including Antony and Cleopatra, both friends of the Herods, once again Antipater and his son were agile enough to leap to the side of the victor in time.

But Herod the Great was not merely a chameleon. He was a tiger, as cruel as he was shifty. He inaugurated his reign with multiple murders. He killed Mariamne his wife—one of his ten wives—her brother, her mother Alexandra, even her grandfather; one of his own brothers, his sister Salome (aunt of the dancing Salome), Hyrcanus whom he had made high priest, forty-five members of the Sanhedrin at once, and two of his own sons. Hearing a rumor that a third son, the eldest, planned to poison him, he sought permission from the Emperor to put him to death. The permission came when Herod was on his death bed, and the last official act of this incredible monster was one more assassination in his own family. Four days later he followed them all to whatever place is reserved in the other world for such a wicked brood. As if trying to prove that "the evil that men do lives after them", he provided in his will that when he should die all the leaders of the Jewish nation should be corralled in the

Hippodrome at Caesarea and butchered, because he had a sentimental desire to have tears shed at his funeral. His friend Octavian, Caesar Augustus, uttered an epigram that might well have served as an epitaph for his tomb: "It were better to be Herod's swine than Herod's son."

But even these bloody orgies were not the worst feature in the life of the Herods. Behind the multitudinous murders, and partly explaining them, was the basest kind of lust, too gross for explicit description. Suffice it to say that all of Herod's palaces were typical Oriental seraglios in which adultery, incest, amorous intrigue, and all manner of indecencies, served as a background for cruelty. St. John Chrysostom, in one of his famous sermons to the people of Antioch, comments with horror upon the fact that a gory human head just severed from the body should be served up at a banquet as if it were something to eat. What part, he cries, can feasting have with murder? But he seems to forget for the moment that with the Herods no obscenity was impossible. To feast and to kill, to make love one moment and to murder the next, to eat and drink and dance and on the same night to revel in blood, was as characteristic of the Herod family as of the fabulous Sultan in the *Arabian Nights*.

In such an atmosphere was reared Antipas, the particular Herod immortalised in history as the murderer of John the Baptist. He was a Herod through and through, cruel, lustful, crafty, suspicious, but with a little lingering superstitiousness that did duty in place of conscience and religion. Perhaps beyond all his other characteristics the one that stood out was slyness. Jesus refers to him as "that fox."

Like his father he was an adulterer, and as if adultery were not sufficiently base for a Herod, incestuous. On a visit to Augustus Caesar in Rome, to repair his political fences, he had accepted hospitality from his brother Philip, and with typical treachery had entered into an adulterous intrigue with Philip's wife Herodias, and promised to marry her after divorcing his own wife. Why these lecherous beasts should bother with such a formality as divorce is a puzzle, just as today it is amazing, that dukes and duchesses, adventurers and actresses, and their imitators in what is called ironically "high" society, should suffer the inconvenience of a six weeks' exile in Nevada, lie, cheat, and perjure themselves to get a diploma of divorce. Why bother? Nobody believes their lies; nobody, except perhaps that ridiculous, preposterous, tyrannical, mythical personage called "the Law"; nobody attaches any importance to their certificate except as evidence of successful prevarication. Every one beyond the age of ten knows that the sole motive that impels most of them is sexual restlessness and that the ultimate goal of some of them is nothing less than complete promiscuity. So why do such people bother either with divorce or even with marriage?

And now, John the Baptist, whose manner of life, even if he had never so much as opened his mouth, would be a thunderous condemnation of the Herodian lechery and bloodshedding. In the *Book of Wisdom* there is a passage that explains the inevitable persecution of the just by the unjust. No matter how deeply vicious men may become they retain, as men, conscience enough to feel the rebuke implicit in the life of a good man, and to be infuriated by the sight of virtue:

"Let us therefore lie in wait for the just, because he is not for our turn; he is contrary to our doings, and upbraideth us with transgressions of the law, and divulgeth against us the sins of our way of life. . . He is become a censurer of our thoughts. He is grievous unto us, even to behold: for his life is not like other men's, and his ways are very different. We are esteemed by him as triflers, and he abstaineth from our ways as from filthiness, and he preferreth the latter end of the just, and glorieth that he hath God for his father. Let us see then if his words be true, and let us prove what shall happen to him, and we shall know what his end shall be. . . Let us examine him by outrages and tortures, that we may know his meekness and try his patience. Let us condemn him to a most shameful death. . ."

And yet John the Baptist had not, as far as we know, any direct purpose of stirring up opposition, still less of instigating a revolution against the Herods. He had in mind just one idea, to prepare his own soul and that of his people for the Advent of the Messias. He was a voice crying not in the streets of the city, not in the squares of Caesarea or the precincts of the Temple at Jerusalem, where malcontents could hear him and be stirred to revolt: he was a voice in the wilderness; and he cried not "Rise! To Arms!" but "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." He had no personal ambition. Quite the contrary. It was his vocation to gather disciples and surrender them to Another, to do his unobtrusive work and then obliterate himself. "There hath stood one in the midst of you," he said, "whom you know not. The same is he that shall come after me; who is

preferred before me: the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose."

Surely there was no danger in this man. He was no rebel, no anarchist. Then why did Herod watch him with increasing alarm? The answer of course is that despots, dictators, tyrants watch everybody. "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown," we say. Yes, and nervous is the hand that carries a sceptre.

* * *

Now it happened, as I have said, that in the Providence of God, these two persons, antithetical in so many respects, Herod Antipas and John the Baptist, were brought close together.

John was baptizing in Perea on the far side of the Jordan. But that was one of the four districts that composed Herod's tetrarchy. There at a town called Machaera he had built one of his numerous palaces. In that palace was to be held the ever memorable banquet, that shares in history the notoriety of the feast of Belshazzar in Babylon. Within the castle wall was the prison of John the Baptist. I find a good description of the castle in Cunningham Geikie:

"Surrounding a large space with walls and towers, Herod built a city from which a path led up to the citadel, on the top of the ridge. The citadel itself was at one end of a narrow ridge, nearly a mile in length from east to west, and formed a last retreat in case of attack, but it was not enough for his magnificent ideas. At the other end of the ridge, he built a great wall, enclosing the summit of the hill, with towers two hundred feet high at the corners, and in the space thus gained built a grand palace, with rows of columns of a single stone apiece, halls lined with many-coloured marbles, mag-

nificent baths, and all the details of Roman luxury, not omitting huge cisterns, barracks, and storehouses, with everything needed for defence in case of siege. The detached citadel was the scene of John's imprisonment; a stern and gloomy keep, with underground dungeons, still visible, hewn down into the living rock. The fortress-palace, at the other end of the fortifications, at the time of the residence of Antipas and his retainers, was merry with their revelry, but the dungeon of John lay in midnight darkness. From his windows Antipas had a magnificent view of the Dead Sea, the whole course of the Jordan, Jerusalem, Hebron, the frowning fortress of Masada, the circle of Jordan, and the cliffs of Engedi, on the west, and of the mountains of Gilead, rising beyond the wild heights of Pisagh, on the north; but his captive, the child of the boundless wilderness, pined in perpetual night."

Herod, as we have seen, was part Jew and therefore had at least some little religiosity if not religion in his blood. It had been diluted and poisoned with two kinds of paganism, Arabian and Roman. The Arabian with his birth, the Roman by his education. But enough of pure Judaism remained to make him uneasy in the presence of a holy man in whom he could not but see some resemblance to the prophets of old. Indeed John exercised a fascination over Herod. The king in his palace sent again and again to have the strange prisoner brought up from the dungeon, and bade him talk. What the half-starved, emaciated, gaunt and haggard Baptist told the bestial monarch in those interviews is not recorded, but there can be no doubt that it was "plenty."

In a previous talk in this series we have recalled the fact that such ferocious men as Sir John

Hawkwood and Bernardo Visconti listened gladly to St. Catharine of Siena. The fascination of a saint is like the fascination of fire. It interests us, hypnotizes us even though we know it may in a moment devour us. The Gospel says that the king heard the prophet "willingly." So, John might conceivably have escaped death even though he threatened the king with the wrath of God. But John's mistake—a magnificent mistake, the kind of mistake that a divinely ordained prophet always makes —was that he incurred the hatred of the woman in the case, the intriguing, adulterous, passionate Herodias. For John had said to Herod, That woman, there by your side: she is by right the wife of Philip your brother; your relationship with her is not marriage but adultery, and worse, incest! *"It is not lawful* for thee to have her."

There is the climax, and there, as far as John's chance to live was concerned, was the end.

Since I am not writing but merely suggesting the drama that could be written around this tragic incident, I shall not immediately pursue the action to its swift conclusion. I permit myself to pause for a minute to remark that in all the history of human courage, nothing is nobler than the way in which the prophets stand up in the face of kings and tell the truth. A thousand years before John, Nathan confronted King David, told him the parable of the man who had exceeding many sheep and oxen but slaughtered the poor man's one little ewe lamb; caught the king off guard, and when David, the impetuous, fiery David, arose to his feet and cried, "The man that hath done this is a child of Death.", Nathan said, *"Thou art the man."* Thou art the

adulterer who stole the wife of Urias the Hethite and had him killed because he complained.

And a few years after John, St. Paul would stand before Felix and Drusilla, his adulterous consort, and preach into their very faces Sin, Death, and the Judgment to come.

Jesus Himself, Who might have lived and died in peace among His native Galilean hills, imprudently —as cowards and timorous persons say, *imprudently*—went up to Jerusalem, bearded the Pharisees in their den, and, with the common people listening, excoriated the hypocrites, pouring out upon them such a volcano of vituperation as has seldom come from the mouth of man. We may imagine how the Apostles and disciples, timid folk at first, protested to the Master, "Dear Jesus, this is a terrible mistake. You must not! These men have position and power. Good Master, it is not prudent! Talk to them as you talked to us on the shores of the Sea of Genesareth, gently, kindly. Dear good Lord, don't thrust your head into the lion's jaws. Jesus, dear good Jesus, be prudent!"

But there was fire in the eyes of the Master. He would indeed preach gentleness and kindness to innocent peasants on the mount in Galilee, but to the Pharisees He preached Death and Judgment and Damnation!

Now the prophets were like Jesus. True, they all paid for their rashness with their life. But life or death—does not matter to a prophet. A man ordained to the ministry of the Word is a traitor to God if he dissembles before the great ones. Of all misfits in the pulpit I think the most despicable is the court preacher, the "pulpit orator" who manages adroitly to keep in the good graces of

kings and other potentates by polite conciliatory sermons, while ostensibly preaching the Gospel. No man can tell the Gospel truth to powerful people and retain their favor. Jesus couldn't do it. St. John the Baptist couldn't do it. St. Paul couldn't do it. "If I did yet please men," says he, "I should not be the servant of God." St. John Chrysostom couldn't do it, as we have seen in his encounter with Theodosius and Eudoxia. St. Thomas Becket couldn't do it before Henry II. No truth-teller can escape condemnation in this world. To please the rich and the powerful, the sinners in high places, the rulers of the world of wickedness, one must be a sycophant; and no sycophant can be a prophet of God.

To resume the action of the drama.

Herodias bided her time, and at length she saw her chance. It came in the midst of a banquet—a drinking bout. The king, drunk, no doubt, but not too drunk to be immune to sex-stimulation, inflamed by the orgiastic gyrations of a dancing girl, rose unsteadily to his feet and babbled as the drunken do, something like this: "Salome, you are wonderful. I swear on my word of honor you can have anything you want, even though it be half my kingdom!" Salome dashes out of the banquet chamber and tells her mother. Herodias, cold sober and in full possession of her wits, says "The time has come. I have him. Tell the king you want the head of John the Baptist brought into the banquet on a silver charger."

The king, startled but still maudlin enough to think himself bound by an oath taken in his cups, consents. The headsman goes down to the dungeon. The murder is swiftly done, and the head of the prophet, still warm and gory, is laid upon the table

before the eyes of the king. I think the king is still looking at that head in eternity.

With that ghastly tragedy we conclude this exhortation to some playwright of genius to whip these superbly dramatic stories into shape for the stage. Next week, please God, we shall be concerned with something very different, the sweet beautiful story of Christmas.

CHRISTMAS

Address delivered on December 26, 1937

The facts of the Gospel are not only facts but symbols. Almost every event recorded by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, as having taken place historically in a certain spot, Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jerusalem, at a certain moment in time, happens again in various parts of the world from the day of the birth of Jesus until the end of the world. Christ was born in Bethlehem, in the year, says St. Luke, when Caesar Augustus ordered a census to be taken, that is to say in the year 749 from the founding of Rome. But Jesus is born again mystically—not indeed physically but none the less really—every day and everywhere since then. At the age of 12 and again at 30 He walked the streets of Jerusalem. He walks the streets of Jerusalem and London and New York today, not of course visibly, but just as truly as when with feet of flesh and blood He trod the pavements in the city of Solomon. He opened the eyes of the blind, unstopped the ears of the deaf, cleansed the lepers and raised the dead 1900 years ago in the Holy Land, and there is not and has not been one hour or one moment in all these ensuing centuries when those same miracles have not been repeated. He walked on the waters of the Lake of Genesareth in the days of Peter and James and John: He walked upon the waters of the River Thames in the days of Francis Thompson. He sat by the well in the village of Sichar, chatted with the Samaritan woman, disclosed to her the sad condition of her own soul and received her confession. And from that moment to the present, He has sat down

unexpected, uninvited perhaps, by the side of men and women in sin, and revealed themselves to themselves; He has stricken their hearts with compunction, listened to their confession and saved them. When the storm arose on the Sea of Galilee, He spoke a word "Be Still" and there came a great calm; when the storm of temptation arises in the heart of man again He calms the waves of passion, more tumultuous than the waves of any sea. In the Garden of Gethsemane when one of His own disciples drew a sword to defend Him, He said "Put up thy sword into the scabbard;" and I know not how many times in the intervening centuries the Name of Jesus God of peace has stayed the hand of one who would have slain a brother man. The Christ of the Andes — to cite one instance — has produced permanent peace between Chile and the Argentine. We could wish that the Christ of the Pyrenees and of the Guadarramas might have been equally successful in staying the fratricidal strife in Spain, and that the Christ of the Yangtsekiang could have made His voice heard above the noise of exploding bombs at least on Christmas day. Why it is that He, being God, does not enforce Peace, we cannot know; it is as much a mystery to us as the fact His will is not done on earth as it is in heaven. But this we know—having made man's will free He does not whip us into obedience as a man might whip a disobedient dog. He will have a voluntary sacrifice or none at all. Jesus would work His will and His way, gently, persuasively, not by violence, not by coercion, alluring rather than commanding. He draws us with the cords of Adam, that is to say with love, and He is tugging at those cords incessantly. The world, in spite of all its crime and cruelty, is softened by the

sight of innocent babyhood, so Jesus comes to us helpless on the straw in a stable.

In that cheerless cave in Bethlehem, He drew to Himself angels and shepherds and kings. That the angels should follow Him from heaven to earth, from the realms of eternal glory to the humble stable, is not amazing. They follow Him whithersoever He goeth. That the shepherds should come to adore Him is not strange either. They were poor, but not unenlightened. They had heard the prophecy read on many a Sabbath Day in the synagogue "Thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, art a little one among the thousands of Juda: [but] out of thee shall he come forth. . . that is to be the ruler of Israel." And they had heard the rabbis, reckoning from the prophecy of Daniel, declare that the fullness of time had come. So they were not altogether astounded, though they did indeed fear with a great fear, when the "angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them." And they were gently reassured when "the angel said to them: Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people. For this day is born to you a Saviour who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David." What they had heard from the Holy Book in the synagogue, all came back to them then. They realized that these strange events were the fulfillment of the prophecies: the long expected Messias was come. So they went into the city, with the hymn in their hearts and on their lips.

"Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plain,
And the mountains in reply
Echo back the joyous strain."

No, it was not strange that angels should sing or that simple shepherds should hear, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will." It is to be expected that shepherds, simple folk, untainted with skepticism, unbewildered by pretentious philosophies, should hear angelic voices and believe. "Blessed are the eyes that see the things that you see. For I say to you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them," says Jesus; and He adds, O Father, . . . thou hast hidden these things from the wise and the prudent and hast revealed them to little ones." But what is indeed amazing is that kings, wise men, scholars—we should call them nowadays—should come from afar to seek the new-born Babe and offer Him their gifts and their adoration.

Now it is this particular phase of the phenomenal events of that day in Bethlehem I would wish to emphasize. Let us then for the moment forget the angels and the shepherds and concentrate our attention on the wise men, and let us see especially if what has been said about the historical facts of the Gospel being forever repeated is not verified in this matter also.

How many kings of learning, masters of science and philosophy, sages, scholars of a class that is usually wise in its own conceits, have laid aside their intellectual pride and have come humbly to offer the homage of mind and heart to the Infant on the Straw, can never be known or estimated. To attempt the enumeration would be to call the roll of the master-minds of the last nineteen centuries.

It means little to the world at large, I suppose, if

we orthodox Christians speak of The Fathers of the Church and of theologians as among the great ones who have worshipped Jesus. These, we are told, would naturally pay tribute to Him. St. Paul, Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Tertullian, Origen, Clement of Rome and Clement of Alexandria, Cyprian, Jerome and Athanasius and Augustine, Bernard, Dante the poet supreme, Thomas Aquinas of the comprehensive intellect, Copernicus, Francis Bacon, Leibnitz, Descartes, Pascal, Agassiz, Faraday, Kepler, Sir Isaac Newton—I say it would matter little or nothing to a critical, skeptical world if we were to name these great men who have laid their tribute of faith and love at the feet of Jesus. For these were Christians. But when the unorthodox, even to the degree of unbelief, surrender their prejudices, forget to be skeptical and join with angels and shepherds and magi and saints in the chorus of praise of Jesus—when scholars whose proud intellect ordinarily inhibits their tongues from uttering any kind of prayer, not to say a cry of jubilation, when these men whose minds are all but permanently closed to any Divine impulse, sing with the rest of us *Gloria in excelsis Deo!* then I say it is a matter of interest and importance to a world that is, as Jesus said, "stiff-necked, hard of heart and slow to believe." Then is fulfilled the prophecy that Christ would bring low every height that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and lead captive every understanding unto His obedience.

I find to my liking a few paragraphs in a Life of Christ, published some fifty years ago, by Cunningham Geike. He says: "We all know how lowly a reverence is paid to Jesus in passage after passage by Shakespeare, the greatest intellect

known, in its wide, many-sided splendour. Men like Galileo, Kepler, Bacon, Newton, and Milton, set the name of Jesus Christ above every other. Jean Paul Richter speaks of Christ as the One who, being the holiest among the mighty, the mightiest among the holy, with His pierced hands lifted empires off their hinges, and turned the stream of centuries out of its channel, and still governs the ages. Spinoza calls Christ the symbol of divine wisdom; Kant and Jacobi hold Him up as the symbol of ideal perfection, and Schelling and Hegel as that of the union of the divine and human. 'I esteem the Gospels,' says Goethe, to be thoroughly genuine, for there shines forth from them the reflected splendour of a sublimity, proceeding from the person of Jesus Christ, of so divine a kind as only the divine could even have manifested upon earth.' J. J. Rousseau says, 'How petty are the books of the philosophers, with all their pomp, compared with the Gospels! Can it be that writings at once so sublime and so simple are the work of men? Can He whose life they tell be Himself no more than a mere man? Is there anything in His character, of the enthusiast or the ambitious sectary? What sweetness, what purity in His ways, what touching grace in His teachings! What a loftiness in His maxims, what profound wisdom in His words! What presence of mind, what delicacy and aptness in His replies! What an empire over His passions! What is the man, where is the sage, who knows how to act, to suffer, and to die without weakness and without display? Men do not invent like this; and the facts respecting Socrates, which no one doubts, are not so well attested as those about Jesus Christ. . . If the death of Socrates be that of

a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God.'

"Thomas Carlyle repeatedly expresses a similar reverence. 'Jesus of Nazareth,' says he, is 'our divinest symbol! Higher has the human thought not yet reached! A symbol of quite perennial, infinite character, whose significance will ever demand to be anew inquired into, and anew made manifest.' 'Jesus Christ,' says the exquisite genius, Herder, 'is in the noblest, and most perfect sense, the realized ideal of humanity.' "

To add some others not mentioned by Geike: David Friedrich Strauss, who wrote a Life of Christ but tried to show that a great deal of it was myth (he lived in an age affected with mythophobia), none the less was sufficiently subdued by the majesty of his subject to say "Christ stands alone and unapproached in the world's history," and he continues: "Jesus stands foremost among those who have given a higher ideal to humanity; it is impossible to refrain from admiring and loving Him. Never at any time will it be possible to rise above Him, nor to imagine any one who shall be even equal with Him. He is the highest object we can possibly imagine in respect of religion: the Being without whose presence in the mind perfect piety is impossible."

Ernest Renan, the rationalist, sometimes a scoffer, indeed occasionally somewhat of a blasphemer, concludes his *Vie de Jesus* with the remarkable outburst "Between Thee, O Jesus, and God there is no longer any distinction: Thy beauty is eternal, Thy Kingdom shall have no end. This Christ of the Gospels," he says, "is the most beautiful incarnation of God in the most beautiful of forms."

Immanual Kant was indignant when a critic

compared his teaching with that of Jesus. "One of those names," he said, "before which the heavens bow, is sacred; the other is only that of a poor scholar, endeavouring to explain to the best of his abilities the teachings of his Master."

Goethe, the great philosophic poet, who ranks with Homer and Shakespeare and Dante, calls Jesus Christ "The Divine Man, the Holy One, and type and model of men."

Finally, not to make the catalogue too long, Matthew Arnold says "Jesus comes forth from the True God, the Eternal Who makes for righteousness; His spirit governs the course of humanity."

Obviously it would be a labor of love to continue. I have in mind at the moment books written in praise of Christ by a converted atheist; by a writer of historical novels, whose religion or irreligion I cannot guess; by a famous journalist struggling against agnosticism; by a social worker who glorifies Jesus as a working man; by a very great philosopher and historian; by a literary critic —indeed these eulogies of Jesus by otherwise non-religious authors pour out from the press in an unending stream. Naturally, we Christians are proud and happy to know that our Master has power to subdue the rebellious minds of normally unbelieving men. And indeed if it be strange that the wise men of old came from afar to worship at the crib, it must be accounted even more wonderful that the wise men of modern times, who accept no prophecy as divine and who see no miraculous star, should none the less come from a far land, a very far land, the land of unbelief, of skepticism, of irreligion, even in some instances from the *ultima thule* of atheism, to lay their tribute at the feet of Jesus. This is a

greater conquest than that of the hearts of the shepherds, a more astounding miracle than the appearance of an unaccountable star in the heavens. Perhaps it is the greatest of all the triumphs of that innocent and apparently helpless little Baby that He has subjected to Himself the minds of proud scholars and won the hearts of those who but for Him would have no heart.

Isaias had declared, and John the Baptist had repeated, "Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill shall be laid low." At the crib of Jesus the double prophecy is fulfilled. Humble folk are exalted to stand side by side with angels and kings; and the pride of philosophers is brought low, so low that they are at the foot of a manger in a stable.

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.

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	920 kc
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