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The Story of the Bible

by

Rev. Dr. Francis L. Keenan,

Professor of Sacred Scripture,
St. John's Ecclesiastical Seminary,
Brighton, Mass.

Five addresses delivered in the Catholic Hour
sponsored by the
National Council of Catholic Men
with the cooperation of the
National Broadcasting Company and its Associated
Stations

- I. The Storehouse of Religion
- II. The Title Guaranteed
- III. God's Written Message
- IV. Unfolding the Secret
- V. The Fostering Mother of Holy
Scripture



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AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION.

When the Apostles went forth to preach to all nations in loyal obedience to Our Blessed Lord's parting injunction, they found pulpits in diverse places. They heralded the Word in market-place, assembly hall, areopagus, and the domestic hearth. Travel-weary, they wandered from city to town in search of hearers.

Today, by the awe-inspiring provision of God's Providence, their successors can span these arduous journeys in a single Hour. The voice cries out from a desert place, and the millions of our country are gathered to hear it. The message of Christ gives to the radio its consecration.

The series on The Holy Bible profited by this opportunity of grace and presented to the American public the historic relationship between the Catholic Church and the Written Word. The addresses now printed portray in progressive sequence what the Bible means to us, why we accept and believe It, and how we understand and use It. The preparation has been influenced and the presentation determined by the attacks of unbelievers and by the fears and misapprehensions of believers.

The response throughout the country to the broadcast was most kindly, and is convincing evidence that sincere religious belief in the fundamentals of Christianity holds a healthy place in our national life. It is with ardent hope that true faith may increase that this pamphlet comes to you.

**THIS EFFORT IS HUMBLY DEDICATED.
TO THE SACRED HEART OF LOVE**

THE STOREHOUSE OF RELIGION

(Address delivered by Rev. Dr. Francis L. Keenan in the Catholic Hour, June 29, 1930)

The Bible is the most familiar book in the world. Its title is most readily recognized and its name most deeply revered. Hardly a home now receiving this message is without its sacred presence; no library is complete without it; no school is stranger to its inspiring story. By a hallowed practice of our forefathers, it has become a common medium for family records; there our names were written on the day of Baptism, and within its folds the sacred union in marriage is inscribed. High executives of government and proponents of Justice take their oath of fealty on its outspread pages. Leaders of thought in political science, literary excellence, or moral advancement vie with one another to quote its words that they may give strength to their own message. Historians cannot disregard it. Students of religion of all varieties of belief must count themselves inadequately prepared to preach and teach the true union between God and man unless first they have made themselves conversant with its inspired commandments. Other books are widely known among single nations or in passing generations; the Bible is supreme in every age and for all classes, and its widespread popularity cannot be stemmed until the consummation of the world.

Yet the Bible is unfamiliar to many of you who listen and agree. Although it enjoys a wider circulation than any other book printed, to many it is chiefly a name. It has been more diligently studied by friend and foe alike than any other work on

earth and has been placed at the disposal of more people in public and private places than any other reading we can mention; none the less I ask, how many of you who have seen it often, have held it in your hands, have talked about it, can tell me actually what it is? Knowing well that most answers given to this question are vague, confused, and even inaccurate, I have chosen to explain, at the outset of this series, the wondrous story of the Bible; to answer for you the simple question, What is the Bible?

The very name "Bible" suggests the answer. Taken from the Greek into the Latin and from the Latin into modern languages, it means "The Book", the supreme, unique book of all that have ever been circulated among men. Sometimes it is called the "Holy Scripture"; it is thus "The Writings", or "The Letters"; "The Literature", as we more commonly express it. So the Bible is the holy literature, and although composed of many books, it is called The Book. Another name is "The Word of God". This supreme and unique book is the hallowed library of God, for it contains as the substance of its consecrated pages God's written message to man. It does not contain all of God's Word, for there are many things which God spoke that are not written in this book; we do not call it the Revelation of God. What it does contain is God's Word, and in recognition of this we call it "The Word of God". This is the source of its supremacy, the well-spring from which the Bible derives its surpassing excellence and significance over all other literature, that it has God for its Author.

This is not yet the complete answer to our question. What is the Bible? This supreme and unique book is the Biography of Our Lord and Saviour

Jesus Christ. In the words of the sacred author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "God, Who at sundry times and in divers manners, spoke in times past by the prophets, last of all in these days hath spoken to us by His Son, Whom He hath appointed Heir of all things, by Whom also He made the world." The story of Christ is so intimately bound up in the history of mankind that its recital commences in the chaotic abyss from which this world was made, and concludes with the unfolded heavens in which this world will end. It recounts for us the first intimate union between God and man in the Garden of Creation and the abrupt fall by sin; the aching search for a Deliverer through the Old Testament, the joyful conquest in the Son of God. It is the brilliant sunrise, the the clouded noonday, the glorious sunset of man's pilgrimage.

The story is recorded in seventy-three books which constitute the Sacred Library of the Bible. The number is easily kept in mind if we recall that it is the number of Our Lord plus the seventy-two disciples. These books were written over a period of sixteen hundred years from Moses to John; they are the work of some fifty different authors; they vary in purpose, style and contents as widely as legislation differs from poetry and historical narrative from preaching. Yet they compose one book, a unique book, because in it many books become one; all having one primary Author, God Himself; all having one common theme, Jesus Christ, the Saviour. The Authorship of God is of such essential importance to the understanding of the Bible that it will be the subject of a special address; today we examine reverently the message which He wrote.

In order that we may understand that these

books were written at sundry times and in divers manners, we may take a comparison from the history of our own country. Let us represent to ourselves the kind of volume we should have if we collected together in one book the original documents of America's development. We should have first the story of our beginnings, or our Genesis; the hardy but rudimentary life of the Indians with their peculiar customs and notions, their abiding faith in the Great Spirit and their code of honor. Next we would read the diary of the Santa Maria to record the discovery of our land by the intrepid Columbus, who braved the uncharted seas to plant the Cross. We would comprise in this volume also the annals of the heroes of God, the first missionaries who followed at once: Joliet, Marquette, Junipero Serra, Jogues and Brebeuf, martyr-missionaries now honored by the highest dignity of the Church in tender recognition of their saintly sacrifice; they all came here, these and others less remembered, heroic priests of the Church, to claim our land for God as if by a new covenant, erecting altars wherever they went in testimony thereof, as did Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We should have the story of early migrations and abandoned settlements and quarrels and dissensions, and even treachery, not unlike the selling of Joseph to the Egyptian traders.

We must incorporate then a Declaration of Nationality and a Constitutional Legislation like Leviticus to complete the story of the liberator who freed us from the bondage of foreign tyranny and gave us the beginnings of national life, as did Moses and Josue to the Jews when they divided Palestine into thirteen original settlements. To complete our story we must include the crude but admirable recital of

the frontier warfare as the newly born nation fought for the further possession of the coveted land in the days of the Covered Wagon, as the Judges of old rose in Israel.

As the blessings of organized life in the Jewish commonwealth came in the reigns of David and Solomon, so in our settled period of the last century, in place of warriors, we developed men of letters. We include, then, in the same volume poems of Bryant and Whittier and Longfellow and Holmes and Poe, essays of Emerson and Hawthorne, the mighty warnings of Webster or Calhoun, to find some weak parallel for the Psalms, Proverbs, Wisdom, and the Prophets. We might even examine our own Civil War in the light of the division between Juda and Israel. We might continue the comparison further and list the complaints of those who protest that we are departing from the sacred traditions of our forefathers, and discover the danger of nationalism that develops such narrowness of outlook as produced Pharisaism from the Machabean days.

Enough has been said for our present purpose. Were we to group all these separate accounts, just as they appeared from the pens of their respective writers, the diary of Columbus and the annals of the missionaries beside the Declaration of Independence and the History of the Revolution and the literature of our nation, we should have indeed an invaluable library of original documents, a cyclopedic source-book of American History and American life. Would we have a book? No! The pages would be in juxtaposition, but they would not be linked together. No Pilgrim Father foresaw the Tercentenary at Boston; no Calvert foretold the religious liberty of the Constitution.

In the Bible we have a book, because in the Bible we have the golden thread which links together every incident, which makes diversity unity. The New Testament in the Old is latent; the Old Testament in the New is patent; that golden thread which intertwines the two until they form one book is the inspiring hope and expectation of Patriarch and Prophet and the joy and triumph of Apostle and Disciple—the Divine Life on earth of Jesus Christ.

This unity of the Bible is the gorgeous cyclorama of man's Redemption. In the center we behold Emmanuel, God Living with us, Messiah of the Jews and High-Priest of the Christians.

In a distant corner Adam and Eve raise their down-cast eyes to await the Conqueror of the Serpent, while St. John, at the opposite extreme, is wrapt in seraphic ecstasy at the victory over the dragon. Abraham rejoicingly foresees the day of Christ, the Seal of the Everlasting Covenant; Simon suppliantly asks God to take him to heaven, for he has seen the Light of Gentiles and the Glory of Israel in the Child of Mary. Jacob raises his feeble arms from his death-bed in Egypt to salute the Lion of the Tribe of Juda, the Expectation of Nations; the Wise Men from the Orient kneel before Him with regal gifts to honor the King of Kings. David from his throne in Jerusalem humbly attends the Lord who would make footstools of his enemies; Paul, a fiery persecutor, falls violently to the ground before Him, beseeching: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Isaias pierces with unerring vision the vistas of ages to point out the Child Emmanuel, born of the Virgin as a sign to Israel; the shepherds follow the good tidings of great joy from

heaven and adore the Child wrapt in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger.

Nearer to the Central Figure, the characters point more clearly and more directly—Daniel, Micheas, Zacharias, and Malachias—until the circle is completed in St. John the Baptist, who stands before Christ with both arms outstretched to Old and New Testaments alike, pointing to the Lamb of God Who taketh away the sins of men, and saying to all: This is He. An immense halo of glory bursts from the heavens to surround the servants of God with the brilliance of light, and the voice of the Father speaks to confirm it all: "This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him."

What is the Bible? From Genesis to Kings, from Job to Ecclesiasticus, from Isaias to Malachias, from Matthew to Apocalypse, it is Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever. Written in the desert of Arabia, the wilderness of Chanaan, the fortress of Jerusalem, the exile of Babylon, the metropolis of pagan Rome, the cities of Asia Minor, and the solitude of Patmos; diversified in its writers and scenes and style and construction as no other book, yet it is one in Christ Jesus. The moving spirit of God is in its every page; its writers are raised above the plane of ordinary human authorship; the revelation of Christ is its message; therefore it is unique.

In the painting of the Transfiguration by Raphael we see the unity of the Bible. Moses, representing the Law, and Elias, as the soul of Prophecy, are transfused in glory with Christ, the Central Figure. Peter, James and John, still on earth, prostrate themselves before the vision for terror at the revelation of glory. Legislator and Prophet of old

Pope and Bishop of the New Law thus meet in Christ; the one from the realms beyond, the other in the flesh.

One of the most inspiring journeys for the pilgrim to Palestine is the walk from Jerusalem to Emmaus. It is over the same road that Our Lord walked on Easter Day toward evening, the unrecognized companion of two sorrowing disciples. The scene is particularly holy to students of the Bible because here one of the most profound explanations of the Sacred Volume was made by the Master Himself. It is recorded for us by St. Luke in the 24th chapter of the Gospel. To the disheartened and perplexed friends, the Saviour gave the explanation of Calvary. Starting with Moses, He expounded for them His Own Story through the Books of the Old Testament, the while they pursued their journey together. Coming then to the same story that they had witnessed it in life, He lifted the veil as He sat at table with them, and showed Himself the end of the long preparation: the Star that rose out of Jacob, the Sceptre sprung for Israel, the Root of David, the Priest according to the order of Melchisedech, the Minister of the True Tabernacle, the Faithful Witness, Advocate with the Father; the Man of Sorrows, the Oblation and Sacrifice to God, the Stone which the builders rejected, the Sheep led to the Slaughter. As He neared the end of the recital, and they felt their hearts burning within them, He showed Himself the First-Begotten of the Dead, the Resurrection and the Life, the Head of the Body, the Church, the Author and Finisher of Faith, Lord of Lords and King of Kings, the Light of the World and the Prince of Eternal Peace—Christ, the Son of the Living God.

This is our infallible authority for the answer to the question, What is the Bible? It is the answer that St. Stephen preached to the Jews and for which he died; that St. Peter proclaimed on the first Pentecost; that St. Paul carried to the Synagogues; that St. Matthew made his setting of the Gospel. It is the answer summarized by Our Lord when the Jews questioned His authority: "Search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; it is they that give testimony of Me." That answer still echoes to the four corners of the world through the medium of the Catholic Church.

Thus understood in its purpose and presentation, the Bible is truly the Book of Books. No other book has received such encomiums or such tributes of reverence. Poets, statesmen, moralists have drawn upon it as the prudent householder of St. Matthew could draw out from his storehouse new things and old to fit every circumstance and crisis of life. Of the many unrestricted admirations which the greatest minds have offered as their feeble expressions of appreciation, which time does not permit us to recount here, none is more touching or more striking than that of Sir Walter Scott. About to close his life of literary eminence, the greatest of modern novelists said simply: "Bring me the Book." His son-in-law, solicitous to comfort the dying genius, bethought him of the many books which the gifted author had written at such laborious cost, and of the many others that had been the companions of his leisure hours. In his perplexity he asked innocently, "What book?" "The Book," came the quick reply. "The Bible—there is but One."

Truly it is The Book, and generations of men in all languages so recognized it unconsciously by

calling it The Bible, which means the Book of Books. It is the Book because, inspired of God, it reveals Christ, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End; a precious Book, a sacred Book, a religious Book,—aye, a unique Book, not only admired, but revered.

So is the Bible regarded today by the true leaders of religion, Catholic, Protestant and Jew alike. It is their veritable storehouse, and they honor it, according to their understanding of it, with the devotion of tender gratitude. It is their common meeting-ground, the sanest hope of a common understanding.

Three years ago it was my privilege to assist with a group of Scripture scholars of fourteen different nationalities at the Sabbath service in one of the oldest synagogues in Jerusalem. Many impressions, inseparably linked with the Synagogue of Nazareth two thousand years ago, remain with me now, but the clearest is the image of the solemn removal of the rolls of the Law and Prophets from the curtained book-press. The attendants moved about their sacred function with timorous reverence; a reading-desk, counted as sacred as the Synagogue itself, replaced the tribune or pulpit of the Teacher; with an awe-inspiring solemnity that might have greeted the appearance of the Messiah Himself, the curtain was drawn back and the sacred volume brought forth. The recollected attitude of the listeners spoke eloquently their veneration of the Word of God.

In Protestant churches the Bible reading is the solemn moment. The words of the minister may be moving and the hymns of the congregation uplift-

ing; the message of God from the Bible is something apart, and must be heard in perfect submission.

The experience of man, however, has seen nowhere such striking manifestation of the reverence to the Holy Bible as that shown in the Catholic Church, the Mother of Holy Scripture. How false is the statement that the Catholic Church has little interest in or respect for the Holy Word of God! How little do those who say it know the lofty tributes of Catholics, ancient, medieval and modern, to the Bible! Let one speak for all to us today, one from the Middle Ages, a monastic writer, known in all lands for his devout treatise, "The Imitation of Christ." Thomas a Kempis thus pays his meed of honor: "Whilst detained in the prison of this body, I acknowledge that I need two things, namely food and light. Thou hast, therefore, given to me, weak as I am, Thy Sacred Body for the nourishment of my soul and body, and Thou hast set Thy Word as a light to my feet. Without these two I could not well live; for the Word of God is the light of my soul, and Thy Sacrament is the Bread of Life. These also may be called the Two Tables, set on either side in the storehouse of Thy Holy Church. One is the Table of the Holy Altar, having the Holy Bread;—that is, the Precious Body of Christ; the other is the Divine Law, containing holy doctrine, teaching a right faith, and even leading most securely to the interior of the veil, the Holy of Holies. Thanks be to Thee, O Lord Jesus, Light of Eternal Light, for the Table of Holy Doctrine which Thou hast ministered to us, Thy servants, the Prophets, and Apostles, and Teachers."

The reverence of the Catholic Church for the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar needs no proof; it

is synonymous with Catholic worship. In placing the Book of God's Word on a table of equality with the Holy Eucharist, Thomas a Kempis has paid to the Bible the highest tribute of reverence that his saintly soul could conceive. In both he has seen Jesus Christ.

Enter any Catholic Church at the hour of Solemn Mass and see for yourself the same reverence today for the Holy Scripture. The deacon of the Mass is about to sing the Gospel. Reverently he places the Book on the altar beside the Tabernacle, and, profoundly inclined, kneels before the Two to pray that his heart and lips may be purified, as the communicant of the day has purified heart and lips by Penance and fasting. Solemnly raising the Book to his heart, he kneels before the Celebrant to receive the blessing, and proceeds in solemn procession to the place of honor, the right of the Tabernacle. No reading-table is used; a consecrated sub-deacon holds the opened Book in his arms, resting it on his forehead that he may obliterate himself and serve impersonally, while acolytes stand on either side with lighted candles to remind all that the Light of the World is to be shed anew in brightness and beauty. The deacon solemnly invokes the Spirit of God upon all the hearers; still he pauses; he makes the sign of the Cross on the page opened before him, on his own forehead, lips and heart that the sign of Christ may seal the solemn reading. Taking the censer with incense blessed in the Name of Him in Whose honor it is offered, he incenses the Book three times, the liturgical offering to Christ. In the religious chant of the Church he solemnly sings the Inspired Word appointed for the day; at each mention of the Holy Name of Jesus, the Celebrant, standing at the

Altar, reverently bows to the Cross, symbol of the same Christ contained in the Book. At the end the sub-deacon, his impersonal function completed, reverently carries the Book back to the altar, and hands it to the Celebrant, who kisses it with loving devotion in the name of the entire congregation, standing at reverent attention.

What does it all mean? It is the Catholic Church's expression of her deep reverence for the Bible. She is saying to her children: The Word of God is Christ.

THE TITLE GUARANTEED

(Address delivered by Rev. Dr. Francis L. Keenan in the Catholic Hour, July 6, 1930)

The literature of today is characterized by an independence of thought and a boldness of expression that alarm prudent men. The quest for knowledge is commendable and the courage of the pioneer in unexplored fields is praiseworthy; the mere pursuit of novelties is fraught with tremendous dangers. Experimentation in the laboratory of electrical science, biology, or even medicine, cautiously conducted, has brought us many blessings and we have reason to hope for greater benefits in succeeding generations. When the same method is used in the social order: in education, in government, and above all in religion, then we must bide our time lest we rush to disastrous conclusions. Extravagant language has been used to destroy the confidence of centuries in the fundamental institutions of both Church and State; it is refreshing to recognize in the maze of such aberrations the sane and sound and scientific utterances of the Catholic Church. This courageous attitude of the Catholic Church in defending the ancient truth has been most conspicuous in the study of the Bible, and it is my privilege tonight to explain it to you in her answer to the question: "Why we accept the Bible."

In order to understand the tireless vigilance of the Catholic Church over the Bible, we must recall that she regards the Bible, Old and New Testament combined, as the inspired Word of God, containing the Biography of Jesus Christ. She has possessed the Bible from the early years of her existence, and

defended it against insidious attacks of Gnostics, Marcionites, Ebionites and Valentinians over 1700 years ago. She sees in the attack on the Bible today in the name of scientific experiment, through higher criticism or historical development, what she saw in the first ages of Christianity, an attack on the Sacred Person of Jesus Christ the Saviour of mankind. For this reason the Church has set no limits to the defense of this Holy Book. It is not in the name of literature or history, for she allows many attacks on such books to pass without official notice. It is not because the Catholic Church depends on the Bible for her existence; she was able to teach souls the way of salvation and bring saints to Heaven before the Word of God was written in the completeness of the New Testament. She does not, therefore, defend the Bible in a desperate effort at self-preservation, for, even if the Providence of God had not preserved the Bible to our time, the Catholic Church would still be the pillar and ground of truth. Her reason is the same today as it has been in all the centuries; it is the zeal of St. Peter at Jerusalem, St. Paul at Corinth, St. John at Ephesus, St. Clement at Rome, St. Ignatius at Antioch, St. Polycarp at Smyrna, St. Irenaeus at Lyons, St. Jerome in Palestine. In that same zeal and spirit does the Church of today "preach the Word, in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke in all patience and doctrine, and do the work of an evangelist." She defends the Bible because she is faithful to Jesus Christ.

The Bible has both divine and human authority. The divine authority, known as the inspiration of the Bible, is the reason why we believe the Bible, and this will be the subject of our next address. The

human authority is the right of the human authors to be heard because they are competent and trustworthy writers; it is the reason why we accept the Bible.

In defending the human authority of the Bible, the Catholic Church has never deviated from her position. She teaches today, as she taught from the beginning, that the Bible is what it claims to be. The historical books, Genesis, Kings, and the Gospels, are records of history and are true; the didactic books, as Psalms, Proverbs, and the Epistles are inspiring instructions and are true; the prophetic books, as Isaiah, Ezechiel and the Apocalypse, are exhortations to the soul, and are true. These books were written in the time that they claim for themselves: the Pentateuch in the days of Moses, the Epistles of Paul during his missionary travels, the Gospels during the six decades following the Death of Christ.

In answering the question, Why we accept the Bible, we make the simple reply: Because its title has been guaranteed. If a man owns an estate which he has inherited from his forefathers for generations, it is known in the town as the Brown or the White estate, according to the family name. Somewhere in the hidden archives of the Registry of Deeds there is a title of its ownership, but the present occupants are not troubled about it; they pay their taxes and intend to pass on the property to their children. When an intruder comes upon the scene and appropriates a part of the property, they order him to leave. If he retorts that the title to the property is fictitious, the true owners do not agree with him and leave the estate; they investigate the title-deeds, and when they find them, they prove at

one and the same time that the intruder's charge is false and that their ownership is guaranteed. Such is the attitude of the Catholic Church to the Bible, her property from the beginning and to the end of time.

The Church received the Old Testament, complete and warranted, from the Synagogue as is attested by the Greek translation called the Septuagint and completed at least 150 years before Christ was born. The Church witnessed the writing of the New Testament and carefully preserved each portion of it as the Sacred Authors wrote. The Apostles were sent by Christ to preach and to teach; there was no command to write, as He, Himself, had not written His message, but had spoken it in synagogue, temple, lake shore, mountain side or desert waste. When the occasion presented itself, some of them wrote as the occasion demanded. Thus St. Matthew wrote to the Jews of Palestine, first in their own language, and afterwards directed the writing of the same message in Greek. St. Mark, companion and interpreter of St. Peter, at the request of the Christians in Rome, wrote for them the substance of St. Peter's preaching in that city. St. Luke, faithful companion of St. Paul, wrote two books for the benefit of his friend Theophilus, the first containing an orderly account of the Life of Christ from Birth to Ascension, and the second the story of the spread of the Church under the leadership of St. Peter and the missionary activity of St. Paul. St. Paul passed with religious enthusiasm and fervent zeal from city to city, establishing churches wherever he went; he then kept in close touch with the churches by letters, and these form the body of the Epistles of St. Paul. Likewise St. Peter, St.

Jude and St. James wrote letters to the nascent Church. St. John, the Beloved Disciple, youngest of the Apostolic College, was spared to the end of the century to watch over the beginnings of Christianity. Exiled to the Isle of Patmos, he converted his prison into a retreat of prayer, and, caught up in ecstasy on the Lord's Day into the vision of Heaven, wrote the profoundest and sublimest book of the Bible, consummation of Old and New Testaments alike, the Apocalypse or Book of Revelation. At the end of his blessed life, when the infection of heresy threatened the purity of faith, supplementing his three Epistles, he wrote his incomparable Gospel to his fellow Christians, that they might "believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing, have life in His Name."

These are the titles to the human authority of the Bible which the Catholic Church has accepted from the earliest centuries and has preserved to the present day. They are guaranteed by the earliest witnesses of Christianity. The amazing wealth of testimony to the authority of the Bible in the first 150 years of Christianity cannot be spread before you now. Time permits us to state only that every known Christian writing of the first and second centuries, even those recently discovered, quotes some section of the Bible, especially the New Testament, in words familiar to us, and all that make mention of the Gospels ascribe them to the days of the Apostles. One witness will testify to us what is substantiated for us by the Apostolic Fathers and the early Apologists. St. Irenaeus, born at Smyrna about 130 A.D., was the pupil of St. Polycarp, friend and companion of St. John the Apostle. He is a true witness of the universal tradition of the

Church in the second century because, after his early education in the East, he was made Bishop of Lyons in the West; he was called by his contemporary, Tertullian, "a most exacting investigator of every doctrine." He is a true link with the days of the Apostles because, through his teachers, the words of the disciples were still echoing in his ears. He was as competent to testify to the fact of the human authority of the Gospels as an historian of today would be to verify the fact of the Civil War. In his writing against the heretics, filled with St. John's purity of vision whereby, in the maze of philosophical windings of Gnosticism, he could behold steadfastly the Truth, he writes as follows: "Matthew published his Gospel among the Hebrews and in their language, at the time when Peter and Paul were preaching the glad tidings in Rome and founding the Church there. After their departure, Mark also, pupil and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down in writing what had been preached by Peter. Luke also, the companion of Paul recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterwards John, the disciple of the Lord who also leaned upon His Breast, did himself publish his Gospel during his residence in Asia."

These words of St. Irenaeus are typical of the testimonies of the early Church to the human authority of the Bible. They were not cited to the Christians of his day as something novel or doubtful; they are written to express what all recognized as true. They agree with what Papias wrote at Hierapolis, Clement and Origen at Alexandria, Tertullian at Carthage, Aristides at Athens, Justin Martyr at Rome. They stand unchallenged in history and have never been retracted. They indicate what clear

and forceful guarantees the Church has in history for her titles to the Sacred Books; thus they help us to understand why we accept the Bible.

It is not needful to emphasize the fact that the most certain authority of the Bible has been the object of distrustful criticism and slanderous misrepresentation. Radical sceptics, using the rationalistic principles of Reimarus and Lessing, Strauss and Baur, Renan and Drewes, have oversowed cockle in the field by disseminating false conclusions in the name of advanced learning. They employed their God-given talents to weaken, and if possible, to destroy the pre-eminent position which the Bible has had in our civilization. As we would expect, they have directed their attacks chiefly against the Gospels, hoping thereby to overthrow the High Priest and Mediator of the New Testament and enthroned in His stead a god of reason. They were the first intruders on the property of the Church to brand the title as fictitious.

In their hate they consumed themselves in excesses. Some of them accused the authors of the Sacred Books as deceivers or idiots and the stories of the Bible as myths or deceptions. Others transcended all the limits of historical study and common sense, and blasphemously denied that Jesus Christ ever existed. Through the fury of their attacks, the Catholic Church held tenaciously to her teaching that the Bible is true and that its title to human authority and belief is historically valid. The Catholic Church prevailed against them. No serious student today would propose such opinions as historical. Many people who have not the time or opportunity to follow the study and trace the question back to its sources are still misled by the specious

arguments of myths and fables; it is unfortunate that it takes a generation for the poison to circulate even after the remedy has been discovered and applied. In popular literature, even in editorial columns, these unscientific teachings are encountered spasmodically even today. The Catholic Hour has furnished us the opportunity tonight to correct the wrong impression still existing in the minds of many sincere and honest men, and to show them beyond dispute that the Bible is all that it claims to be.

It is not the radical sceptic that we need to consider seriously today, for he has dashed himself to pieces against the Rock of Scandal long ago. Our attention must be directed to the Liberal (Protestant) School, under the leadership of Harnack, Schurer, Julicher, Wellhausen, and Loisy. Called the historical-critical school, it has attracted attention by reason of its researches into ancient Christian and Biblical Literature. The method used was experimentation of a scientific kind. The student began with a hypothesis and then sought to make the literature prove it. One starts with the supposition that miracles are impossible and so rules them out of the Bible; another presumes that Bishops were not appointed by the Apostles and so rejects early documents which refer to them; a third sets out to prove that the Gospels are composed of a substratum of documents from unknown sources.

In marked contrast the Catholic Church has kept a clear mind on all historical questions. She proceeds on the supposition that what was true two thousand years ago is still true today, and so she searches to find the truth about the authorship of the Bible, whatever it may be. She has not been

deceived by the purpose of many of the Liberals; she sees in their activity a new attack on Jesus Christ. St. John wrote in his First Epistle: "Every Spirit that dissolveth Jesus is not of God." The Church sees in the method and results of these critics the same spirit that tried to dissolve Christ during His public life. The haughty arrogance of the Pharisees who refused to accept the evidence before their eyes when Christ bade them to believe His works, is the spirit of such critics. In a supercilious complexity of superiority, they look with disdain on those who still teach the Virgin Birth, the miracles of the Public Life and the Resurrection. Anything which destroys the witness to Christ they herald as brilliant and learned. Whether consciously or not, their effort has been to kill the witnesses to Christ, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and especially John, just as the Pharisees drove the blind boy from the Synagogue because he confessed that Christ had cured him, and even sought to kill Lazarus because, living, he gave testimony to Christ. It is not by accident that their study of the Old Testament has centered about the passages that bear witness to Christ: the story of Creation and the Promise of a Redeemer, called the Protoevangelium, or the First Gospel; the predictions of Isaiah, the Evangelist among the Prophets; the prediction of Christ's Day by Daniel, the Herald of the Gospel. Some among them do not wholly agree; they are like Nicodemus, who came timidly at night, or Gamaliel, who uttered faint protest, but remained indifferent. Others, sad to relate, apostates and traitors, have sold Him again like Judas Iscariot. Rightly does the Church regard the attack on the Bible as a new effort to dissolve Christ.

As the attack centered particularly on the Four Gospels, the Church took up the challenge and explored her own history to prove the title to her property. At the same time the critics made a most searching investigation by experimentation to prove that the Gospels were not written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The story has been one of high adventure. It is without parallel in all the history of literature. Ancient libraries have opened their most secret archives and have produced treasures whose presence was unsuspected; the Greek Monastery of the Holy Sepulchre at Constantinople yielded to Byrennios in 1873 the priceless manuscript containing the Didache, and the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai a Syriac version of the Gospel in palimpsest to Mrs. A. S. Lewis in 1892. Grammarians have busied themselves with the root constructions and idioms of Hebrew and Aramaic, Syriac and Koptic, Greek and Latin, in order that they might analyze and test every word of the Sacred Text in the crucible of criticism. In 1865 the Palestine Exploration Fund was organized in England, having as one of its leading aims "to contribute to the elucidation of Biblical problems", and is continuing to this day notable excavations in Palestine, drawing out of the tomb the secrets of the past. German and American universities still equip and finance their expeditions each year to draw from the hidden recesses of the earth the ancient witnesses to the customs and manners of the people of the Bible. The millions of dollars expended, the hours of toil, the personal sacrifices of living in a nomad's tent under a Syrian sun are believable only by those who have been on the scene itself. The story is almost like a romance.

What is the result of it all? It is another Resurrection. The Book of the Ages has won a new triumph. The traditional position of the Catholic Church has been vindicated. This we must emphasize, for the Critics do not mount the house-tops to announce their defeat. Mythicism, Syncretism, Accomodation, Evolution—all have yielded to the unmistakable evidence that the investigator of true historical sources has unearthed. The greatest of the enemies have conceded the Church's victory.

The recognized leader of Liberal Thought, Dr. Harnack, who so recently laid down his earthly labors, has written: "There was a time, and the general public is still at that date, when it was considered necessary to hold the most ancient Christian literature, including the New Testament, as a tissue of deception and falsehood. That time has now passed. For science this was a time during which she learned much, and after which she has much to unlearn. The most ancient literature of the Church is, on all chief points, and in the majority of details, true and worthy of belief from the point of view of literary history. I do not hesitate to use the word retrogression, or going backwards, for things should be called by their right names. In our criticism of the most ancient sources of Christianity, we are, without any doubt, in the course of returning to tradition." Later, to make his opinion unmistakable, he added: "My friends have taken offense at this statement of mine, although I have in part already established its truth. I now offer them a new proof, and I beg for their impartial criticism. We can now assert that during the years 30 to 70 A. D., and on the soil of Palestine, more particularly in Jerusalem,

this tradition as a whole took the essential form which it presents in its later development."

Similarly, Dr. Sanday notes that "the historian who tries to construct a reasoned picture of the Life of Christ finds that he cannot dispense with miracles. Eliminate miracles from the career of Jesus, and the belief of Christians, from the first moment that we have contemporary evidence of it, that is before 60 A. D., is an insoluble enigma."

In New York City last year, Prof. Torrey of Yale University stated at the meeting of the Biblical Society: "There is evidence, both new and old, which is destined, I believe, to bring about a great change in the present ultra-critical view of the writings which represent the earliest stage in the New Testament literature. I know of many arguments for the late date of the Gospels, but of no argument that will hold water."

The high adventure of criticism thus has reached the same conclusion which the courageous conservatism of the Church has ever taught. The Bible retains its historic position in the literature of the world; its title to human authority is guaranteed by friend and foe alike; its right to our acceptance is doubly proved; instead of dissolving the witnesses to Christ, the critics themselves have been dissolved.

The Books of the Bible are like a golden chalice. Made of the purest metal, we need not fear to have them tried. Pure gold is indestructible, and the gold of truth has withstood every test. As we admire the chalice for the symmetry of its lines, the rich jewels which adorn its cross, node, or calix, and the purity of its precious metal, so do we admire the Bible for the harmony of its records, the inspiration of its lessons, and the unquestionable authority of its Sac-

red Authors. More, aye, more than this: we rejoice that so priceless a vessel contains the Sacred Presence of Jesus Christ.

GOD'S WRITTEN MESSAGE

(Address delivered by Rev. Dr. Francis L. Keenan in the Catholic Hour, July 13, 1930)

It is easy for the Catholic to answer the question, Why do we believe the Bible? It is God's Written Message; "a letter," says Leo XIII, quoting St. John Chrysostom, "addressed by our Heavenly Father to the human race and conveyed by the sacred writers, the race being far away from its native country." This written message has been preserved for us in definite books by the Catholic Church, for She alone can decide what belongs in the Bible and what does not belong in the Bible. We believe this message because it is the Word of God.

All believers agree that the Bible is a unique Book because it has God for its Author. This is the testimony of the ancient Rabbinical School for the Old Testament, of the Reformers for the whole Bible, and of their followers today. The difficulty experienced is not to answer the question, Whether we believe the Bible, but rather, Why we believe the Bible.

The reason of this perplexity is clear. The fact that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, or that St. Luke wrote the Third Gospel, are facts of history that can be accepted on the evidence that guarantees the titles. That God was the Author inspiring both Moses and Luke is a fact that God must reveal if we are to know it. God has revealed it to man, and the Church, as God's representative and interpreter on the earth, has made it clear to Her children. This Divine Authorship we call the Inspiration of the Bible; this ecclesiastical approval we call the Can-

onicity of the Books. In simplest terms, as expressed by Msgr. Grannan, "God is the Author of the Book; the Church is the Publisher."

It is easier to state the answer to this question than to explain it. The fuller understanding of the Inspiration of the Bible is beset with great difficulties. Learned volumes have been written on the subject, and in some of the details Catholic theologians are not yet in agreement. It is always easier to describe the appearance of things than to explain the complexity of causes beneath. There are still unsolved problems, natural mysteries, in the familiar world about us. A child can turn on the radio, but the ablest scholar cannot tell us adequately how electricity transmits the sound. Nor can scientists explain by what process light produces sight through vision, or a living plant grows from a dying seed. Yet no one, for all that, denies the existence of sound or light or life. So in the mystery of Inspiration. We believe the Word of God, although our intelligence cannot entirely comprehend how the sound of God's voice is transmitted to us, how the light of His Truth is reflected to us, or how the seed of a higher life may be found in the pages of an ancient book. For this perfect understanding, we can await the fullness of the Light of Heaven. Precisely because our minds labor under the limitations of understanding, and because of the difficulties raised by the question of Inspiration, it is important in our explanation to strive for the utmost accuracy of expression. To attain that, it is best to use the simplest and plainest of language.

If we appreciate the fact that God has revealed His Truth to the mind of man, it is clear why we believe the Bible. Following on the revelation, the

inspiration of God's Written Message is the most reasonable gift that we could look for. The inspiration of the Bible is a part of God's plan to protect His revelation to man. Just as God did not abandon Nature when He created the world, but continues to exercise His Provident Care over the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, so when He revealed the higher life of grace and called us to be the children of Heaven, He did not leave us orphans. He sent the Paraclete, the Comforter, the Holy Spirit of Truth to watch over His Message to man. The call of Abraham, the Covenant with the Chosen People, the lofty sermons of the Prophets; these are well known as part of the work of the Holy Ghost. In a very special way the Holy Spirit exercised this guardianship over God's Revelation. When occasion prompted or required the writing of some part of God's message, then the Holy Ghost became in a most particular manner the Authority for the writings which the spokesmen of God composed. In a simple phrase, God Who spoke by the mouth of the prophets, also wrote by the hand of the prophets. This labor of the Holy Ghost we call the Inspiration of the Bible.

Left to ourselves we might wonder how God would communicate His Message to man. As Cardinal Newman has written: "Angels, you will say, must be appointed to this high office. Angels alone are fit to preach the Birth, Sufferings, the Death of God. And yet, my brethren, so it is, He has sent forth for the ministry of reconciliation, not angels, but men; not of some unknown nature and some strange blood, but of your bone and of your own flesh to preach to you." As Almighty God has seen fit to call men to be His Apostles and priests, so He

chose men to be the writers of the Bible. Moses He called from the Court of Pharaoh, Samuel from the sanctuary at Silo, David and Solomon from the throne of Jerusalem, Jeremias from the little village of Anathoth, Mark, Luke and Paul from their missionary journeys. To these He gave a special vocation additional to that which made them prophets or priests, the office of writing under His direction. Just as today aspirants to the priesthood follow their heavenly vocation, some late in life, others in continuance of their preparation, but all called as Aaron, so in the writing of the Bible the various authors of the Books answered a divine summons and offered themselves to the influence of God that they might write what God wished. As the priesthood is the exercise of God's power through God's priests, so the writing of the Bible is the transmission of God's written message through the instrumentality of God's secretaries. In both cases, God uses men to reach the hearts of men.

By understanding this extraordinary relationship between the Holy Ghost and the sacred writers, we understand why we believe the Bible. It is the supernatural influence of the Spirit of God on the sacred writer, urging him to write, enlightening him while writing, directing and assisting him to write just what God wishes and no more. In the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas, greatest of Catholic theologians, each book, therefore, has two authors, acting as one. He writes: "God as the First Cause, and man as His instrument; but not in such a way as to suppose that one part of the book comes from God only, and another part from man only. All comes from each, but from each in a different manner." Thus we understand that the Bible is all from God,

its source, and all through man, its channel. It is not correct to call it partly human and partly divine, but the two factors are everywhere present; it is all human because written by man and all divine because inspired by God. Expressing the doctrine in language familiar to our century, we may call it a joint authorship, understanding that God is the principal Author. We must recognize both in all parts of the Book to understand the Bible. The Holy Spirit could say to the inspired authors what Our Lord said to His disciples: "He that heareth you, heareth Me; he that despiseth you, despiseth Me."

This is the reason why the Catholic Church has believed the Bible from the early ages of her history. She has recognized in it God's Written Message. She has seen in it what Christ Our Lord pointed out in the Old Testament, a divine authority. She remembers that He spoke constantly of the Scriptures, that is of the Old Testament, but always as the Book of God. How strikingly does He teach it in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus! The Rich Man, tormented in the flame of the eternal prison, pleads that a messenger from the heavens be sent to his brothers at home to warn them, lest they too receive like punishment after death. The answer, so quickly given, is convincing: they have Moses and the Prophets; that is sufficient; more will not be gained by having one rise from the dead. They have already the Word of God!

The Church remembers also that when St. Peter arose to address the first congregation, numbering 120 souls, he reiterated the sentiments he had learned from the Master: "Men, brethren, the Scripture must be fulfilled which the Holy Ghost spoke

by the mouth of David." The same thought he wrote again in the Epistle at the end of his days: "prophecy came, not by the will of man at any time, but the holy men of God spoke, inspired by the Holy Ghost."

Likewise the Church treasures the admonition of St. Paul to his disciple Timothy: "Continue thou in those things which thou hast learned and which have been committed to thee, knowing of whom thou hast learned them. And because from thine infancy thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which can instruct thee unto salvation, by faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture, inspired of God, is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice."

From the Apostles, the early writers of the Church learned to consider the Bible as inspired. St. Clement of Rome calls them the "veritable oracles of God;" St. Ignatius of Antioch, "the divinest prophets;" Justin Martyr, "the divinely inspired;" Theophilus of Antioch, "the instrument of God." St. Irenaeus calls "Holy Scriptures indeed perfect, since they were uttered by the Word of God and His Spirit." St. Athanasius, "Scripture was written by the Divine Influence and the Holy Spirit was in the writers."

Such was the universal teaching of the Church when the official publication of the inspired books was made in the Council of Laodicea in 363, and in the Council of Carthage in 419. When called upon at the Council of Trent to declare what books were inspired, the Church published again the lists of the early councils. In our own days She made the same explicit and unmistakable declaration in the Vatican Council: that this alone is the official publication of

the Book of God. "The Church holds these books as sacred," declared the Council, "not because they were composed by mere human industry and were afterwards approved by her authority, nor merely because they contain revelation without error, but because, having been written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, they have God for their Author, and as such have been delivered to the Church Herself." The Catholic Church would be unfaithful to Her historic mission if She had not written such a preface to the volume.

The Bible itself will not give us a proof of its own inspiration. When our minds have been enlightened by the teaching of the Church and we know that God and man, conjointly, have written the Bible, then we can understand why the Bible is the Bible. There must be some power in that Book sufficient to account for its pre-eminent position and its far-reaching influence. Rationalists of our day acknowledge it as incomparable literature, less artificial than the Greek, elevating in its moral teachings, sublime in contrast with the writings of Assyria, Egypt or Babylonia. They call it the great Book of Man. They do not explain its greatness. If the Bible were merely human, like other books, it would suffer the same fate as other books. If it depended for its expression on the men who wrote its words, it could hardly survive at all. Surely it would not remain today the meditation book of the greatest saints, the authoritative source of highest morality, the storehouse of religion. To be all this, it must be the Book of God.

In the sacred writings we find the fruits of the two-fold authorship. Its profoundest thoughts are those beneath the words, the suggestion and stimu-

lus to holiness and right living, which we may reverently call the message between the lines. There is a hidden power in the homely simplicity of Biblical language, recognized in every book from Genesis to Apocalypse, which, like the amplifier, gives to the message at once a wider range and a truer tone. Read the Ten Commandments and you find yourself transported from the scene in the desert of Sinai and the tents of the wandering tribes to the broad expanse of human history. Open to the fiftieth Psalm of David, and as you follow its confession of guilt, plea for pardon and renewal of spirit, you are lifted far away from the transgression of David to an understanding of the goodness and mercy of God. Turn to a chapter of the Book of Proverbs: you forget the ancient Jerusalem of Solomon as the maxims penetrate and expand within your own soul. Come with me now to St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, the thirteenth chapter, famed in all literature as the perfect apostrophe to Charity; aglow with its burning and shining light, you transcend the dissensions of the Corinthians. Unfold but the very preface of the Gospel of St. John, and your soul is lost in the bosom of God.

This is no human genius. The river cannot rise above its source; the effect cannot be greater than the cause which produced it. The sacred authors, indeed, wrote as occasion demanded and to restricted groups; not directly to you and to me. Their words are become fountains in a mighty river that waters the soil of nations. They were but the instruments that God has used to preserve and protect His Written Message. By a condescension that can be understood only in the Incarnation, God thought with the writer, wished, remembered, and

expressed with him. Appropriating the words of St. Paul, we may say that the Holy Spirit emptied Himself to accomodate the knowledge of God to the mind of man. Without destroying or suspending the faculties of the writer, without making him the mere mechanical instrument, God has given him the special gift of writing for the benefit of all. He so united Himself to the writer that He made the writing His own. It is often said that only a literary genius can write the life of a great author; that only a saint can adequately appreciate and describe the life of a saint. How much more true is it of the Perfect Life of Christ, blending in one sublimity and humility, strength and sadness, courage and charity, divinity and humanity! Only God could write the Life of God. This He has done. Just as the priesthood of Jesus Christ makes all priests become one Priest, Christ acting in all; so the Holy Ghost makes all authors of the Bible become one Author, and all the books become one Book, God inspiring all.

Why do we believe the Bible? In the words of St. John, "If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater." As God cannot deceive or be deceived, and we know that God is the Author, we believe the Bible because in it we have Truth at its source. Whatever may be the testimony of the writer, be it a scientific, historical, or dogmatic fact, be it poetry or prose, this likewise is the testimony of God. The orderly narratives of the historical books, culled from various sources; the lofty flights of poetic genius; the thundeing denunciations of prophetic zeal; the burning enthusiasm or pointed moralizing of the Epistles; the rugged simplicity, cultured appreciation or meditative pro-

fundity of the Gospels—each and every thought as expressed on the page before the sacred author is true in the meaning that he gave it. We believe the Bible because it teaches us the truth. “If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is **greater.**”

UNFOLDING THE SECRET

(Address delivered by Rev. Dr. Francis L. Keenan in the Catholic Hour, July 20, 1930)

The Bible has been described, and quite aptly, as one message of divine love fashioned in one thousand shapes. Because it was not written by one man or by one group of men at one time, the unity of the Bible is not the uniformity that we find in other books. Its unity is traced in a complex design. In its composition it is like a gigantic mosaic in which variegated particles combine, under the guiding and directing influence of the Holy Spirit, to depict for us the revelation of the Word Who became Flesh and dwelt among us. A comparative unity may be found in the forty-eight states of the Union—*E pluribus unum*—one from many; or, more pertinently, in the Catholic Church, spread among many nations differing in race, government and tradition, yet united in One Lord, One Faith and One Baptism.

For this reason the Bible needs an interpreter to be understood. In the rolls on which the ancient parchments were folded and in the closed covers of our present books we see a symbol of the hidden lessons of Holy Scripture. As the book must be unrolled or spread out to be read, so the secret must be unfolded to be understood. Written in languages that have long since passed from daily use, directed immediately to an Oriental civilization, expressed in history, poem, allegory and parable, composed in time of combat and transition, and, above all else, containing the thoughts of Heaven in the words of men, it is evident to anyone free to use his reason that if the Bible is to be understood, it must have an

interpreter. As in a former address we saw that God found it necessary to protect its writing, today we learn how God has safeguarded its interpretation.

The Catholic Church has always taught and practised this doctrine, and she does so today. Her position on the interpretation of the Bible is historic and axiomatic. Prompt and clear is her answer to the question, How do we understand the Bible? It is by unfolding the secret. This is done by seeking the meaning of the authors of the book under the guidance of the official interpreter, the Church.

For the Bible is not self-interpretative. It tells us in its sacred pages that it does not contain all that God spoke to men, and this is one of the reasons why the meaning is not self-evident. St. Paul, in writing to the Romans, reminded them that faith comes, not by reading, but by hearing, and the Epistle of Paul is not greater than the word of Paul. St. John significantly notes that "many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of His disciples which are not written in this book." Being, therefore, but a partial record of God's revelation, it contains difficulties that are in some cases most profound. St. Peter, whilst commending the excellence of the Epistles of St. Paul, writes: "In which are certain things hard to understand, which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction."

It is the Church, founded by Christ, that was fully equipped to save souls, even before the New Testament was written. No greater Christians have ever lived than those first disciples who learned the Word of God without ever reading. Treasuring Christ's interpretations of the Old Testament, pos-

sessed of a full knowledge of the revelation of God, endowed with a continuous memory of the Gospel through the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, the Great Reminder, the Church alone can unfold for us the mysterious meaning of God beneath the sacred text.

Centuries ago St. Augustine wrote: "If there is no branch of learning, however easy and humble, which does not require a master, what can be a greater proof of rashness and pride than to refuse to study the books of the divine mysteries by the help of those who have interpreted them." Anyone who has studied the *Illiad* of Homer, the *History* of Tacitus, or the *Divina Comedia* of Dante, knows at once how true it is that the student must have notes, commentaries, and a teacher to understand a classic. How much more true this is of the Bible. For Holy Scripture is indeed different from all other books; it is the inspired word of God. Two authors, writing as one, composed each book; there is twice the need of guidance in understanding their mind, and twice the danger of misunderstanding it. The native of Palestine to whom the book was written originally may have understood it more readily; the native of America, reading it today, must ask with the Ethiopian, "How can I unless some man show me?"

The answer of the Catholic Church is so reasonable and accurate that we are not surprised to find it accepted generally today. When we visit the publishing houses of Bible societies now, we are impressed by the number of editions of the Bible, and of sections of the Bible, offered to the modern reader. We find on the shelves extensive commentaries and copious explanatory notes for both the scholar and the popular reader. What does this mean? It

shows us that they too are convinced that the Bible needs an interpreter.

To the intense study of Higher Criticism is due in large measure this change of attitude on the part of those who formerly did not agree with the Church in the need of an interpreter. By searching with passionate zeal into the authorship, occasion and purpose of each book of the Bible, the Critics have shown in bold relief that the individual books were directed by their authors immediately to particular audiences, and were phrased in language familiar to those who first received them. The same study has shown that the Bible is not a written philosophy, not a code of laws, not a scientific treatise. As Dr. Westcott sanely observes, "The Apostles, when they speak, claim to speak with divine authority, but they nowhere profess to give in writing a systematic exposition of Christian doctrine." In one of the recent commentaries to aid the reader of the Bible, the editors have summed up the conclusions of such studies as follows: "Behind the Bible there stands the continuous life of the people of God, the Jewish and Christian Church, and much in that life can be truly understood only by one who has shared it." Another has phrased his conclusion in the words: "How can a book be a religion?"

Truly, if Christ had intended a book, He would have written it. Not a book, but a Living Voice was the teacher of our religion in the beginning, and so it is today. The Living Voice of the Church instructs Her children, and that continuous life animates them, as they grow in wisdom and age and grace with God and men.

Since we need an interpreter, and we have one in the Living Voice of the Church, it is pertinent to

ask, How do we understand the Bible? St. Jerome, erudite interpreter of the Book, gives this advice to Paulinus: "I wish you to know that you cannot thoroughly understand the spirit of the Holy Scriptures without a guide to proceed you and to point out the way." Our guide is the Catholic Church. Under Her direction we understand the Bible in the most normal and natural way that the most important lessons of life are learned. It is in the same manner in which the citizen of the United States understands the Constitution. The analogy will help us to show how the Catholic not only understands and knows, but lives the Bible.

The American boy, early in life, becomes conscious of the fact that by his birth he has been enrolled a citizen of a great nation. He is grateful to his loving parents who have registered his name before he was able to give his consent. As the years advance, he learns the honored traditions of American life. The Constitution of the Country is not placed in his hands, and he is not yet told to read it. Even before he is acquainted with the background of American history, he learns one lesson that he never forgets, and that is the symbol of all other lessons of patriotism to him: he learns to salute the flag. He grows to respect it, to reverence it, to pledge his allegiance to it, and to the country for which it stands. He knows the significance of the thirteen red and white stripes, and of the forty-eight stars on a field of blue. He hears the glories of that flag, the heroic sacrifices that have held it ever aloft, and he longs to live under it and to reach the day when he too may contribute of his own power to the brilliance of its history. Inspired by the pictures and the statues set before him, he sees that obedi-

ence to law is liberty, and to serve the flag he must obey the Constitution of the land, the guarantee of liberty, equality and unity.

Time passes, and he reaches man's estate. He becomes a lawyer, physician, or business man. He finds that the foundation for citizenship has been deeply laid, for he learns with experience that there is no more important lesson in civic life than to honor the flag of his country. It chances now that he reads the Constitution. Its lesson is not strange to him; he already understands it. He may consult the original, carefully guarded in the Congressional Library in Washington, and he finds the handwriting strange and some the expressions confusing, but it is all familiar. Here and there he finds a passage that he does not comprehend. He does not attempt to decide the meaning for himself; he has the decision of the Supreme Court, the treasury of American tradition, where the secrets of the past are stored away. Officially and with authority, the Court interprets the Constitution for the people. The boy has not become a citizen because he read the Constitution; he was that from his youth. He becomes a better citizen if he has studied it and has absorbed and assimilated to himself the true meaning of the Constitution in the light of its authentic interpretation.

In a parallel manner the Catholic understands the Bible. It is the natural way, plumbing the depths of the best pedagogy. The Catholic boy is taught, not only that he is born into the citizenship of a great country, and to salute and respect and defend its flag; more than that, he is taught that he has been born again into the citizenship of the Kingdom of God by Baptism. As life unfolds, the secret

is opened out to him; the love which God showed to man in the first moments of creation, the fall into sin, and the promise of a Redeemer. The story of the faithful expectation of the Redeemer through the history of the Jews is then understood by him when he sees the crib erected in his church at Christmas time to tell him the story of the New Testament.

With the emblem of his country, the flag, he associates from early youth the banner of the Kingdom of God, the Cross of Christ. It is the symbol of the spiritual liberty purchased for him at so great a cost, and it becomes to him the explanation of the Bible. In the cross he studies the deep mystery of the New Testament. The arms outstretched to countless souls instill in his heart the truest democracy, the salvation of all in One. In the Cross the lessons of Bethlehem, Nazareth, Bethany, Olivet, Gethsemani, Calvary, are taught. Through the Cross he learns that perfect obedience is unmeasured love.

Later in life he reads the Bible with his devotional books, or in his study of religion, or in the Gospels of the Sundays. How familiar it all seems to him now. The Man of Sorrows is no mystery, whether in the Lamentations of Jeremias or in the Epistles of St. Paul. The more he reads the better he understands the Cross. He does not become a Christian because he reads the Bible; he is a Christian already by Baptism, and he has known the lessons of Christianity because the Church has unfolded the secret to him. He becomes a better Christian when he knows the Bible more intimately. If a particular passage proves too difficult for his understanding, then he turns to the Church, the Authorized Interpreter of the revelation of God, the Su-

preme Court of the Bible. He turns to her, not as to a most venerable human institution, as in our national life, but as a divinely instituted, infallible Court; a Court that has received this most solemn delegation: "He that heareth you, heareth Me."

Through the guidance of the Church, he has come to the knowledge of Christ, the Central Figure of the Bible. He learns to know Christ as the Apostles and their disciples knew Him. Others may consider Christ as a Teacher, a Physician, a Moralist; to the Catholic He is the Son of Man and the Son of God. The Cross has taught him that humanity died and divinity lived; that the two are reunited in glory, and through the Cross, man is joined to God. As from the flag he has learned the lesson of earthly devotion, from the Cross he understands the life of heavenly love.

The gift of understanding is a spark of the divine life with which God has blessed humanity. Through it we hear the voice of conscience, we discern the God of Nature, and we attain to the possession of Truth. Wrongly used, it brings disaster: dissension to the home, anarchy to the nation, chaos to religion. Properly guided, it is the medium of priceless blessings to humanity and the crowning glory of the individual. The differences between understanding and misunderstanding is the distance between truth and error, right and wrong, light and darkness.

As the citizen needs and finds an interpreter to open his understanding to the Constitution, the Christian needs infinitely more an interpreter that he may understand the Bible.

Deep-seated is our sincere acknowledgement of the millions that have been spent in our American

educational systems to train our understanding, and to those idealists of every generation who have sacrificed their comforts to develop its dormant life. Everlasting is our loving gratitude to the living voice of the Church that teaches us from our waking hours to the close of day how to understand the Bible.

On the road from Jerusalem to Gaza we see a chariot traveling towards the South. From all appearances a prominent person is passing; none less than a high official of the Queen of Ethiopia. In his hands he holds a scroll. He is deeply absorbed in its contents, frequently reading aloud to himself. Now a venerable figure approaches him, and hears the official read from the Prophet Isaias: "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter." Philip the Evangelist, for it is he, asks the puzzled reader: "Thinkest thou that thou understandest what thou readest." In all sincerity he answered: "And how can I unless some man show me?" Philip mounted the chariot and explained the meaning of that profound prophecy.

The distinguished stranger could unroll the book; the representative of Christ had to unfold the meaning. That question: "How can I understand," is still asked, and must be asked. Every earnest reader of the Bible feels the perplexity of the Ethiopian. The Catholic reader feels it, too, but he knows that he has another Philip, a greater Philip, the divinely appointed authority of the Church. With the submissiveness of the Ethiopian, we follow gratefully, humbly, gladly her infallible interpretation.

THE FOSTERING MOTHER OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

(Address delivered by Rev. Dr. Francis L. Keenan in the
Catholic Hour, July 27, 1930)

When the historical critic searches today for the lost manuscripts of the Bible, whether at Sinai, Constantinople, Fulda or Bobbio, it is most significant that he goes first to an ancient monastery. Again, when the archeologist discovers the ruins of a Byzantine Church in Palestine, whether at Samaria, Gethsemani, or Cariathiarim, he explores at once to find the ancient biblical site beneath. Significant indeed, because these reveal more eloquently than learned dissertations that the Church has ever been the Fostering Mother of Holy Scripture.

From the very beginning of her ceaseless activity in the salvation of men she has guarded the Written Word with jealous care, and has been tireless in watching over its destiny. As early as the year 200 she proclaimed through Tertullian against the enemies of the Book: "This is my property. I have long possessed it; I am the heir of the Apostles." Her fidelity to this trust is one of her strongest claims today on the gratitude and devotion of all believers. If we possess the Bible today, we owe it to the Catholic Church.

The most conspicuous example of this zealous vigilance is the translation of the Latin Vulgate. In the third and fourth centuries, those who sought to find the Bible in the language which they could read, the Latin tongue, were confused by the various translations. St. Augustine informs us that "in the

early days of the faith, every man who happened to get his hands upon a Greek manuscript, and who thought he had any knowledge, were it ever so little, of the two languages, ventured upon the work of translation." Under these conditions the Church's solicitude to bring the Bible to the people is clearly revealed. Pope Damasus, in the year 383, summoned the erudite Dalmatian, St. Jerome, to the task of preparing a translation which could be relied upon as faithful to the Bible. For a quarter of a century the indefatigable scholar buried himself in his task, and gave through the Church to posterity the greatest of the ancient translations of the Bible. He discovered a style befitting the task, and "cast the library of Oriental volumes into a form congenial at once to the declining Roman world, and the advancing Barbarians whose children would receive Baptism." Ruskin writes that by it "the severity of the Latin language was softened, like the Venetian crystal, by the variable fire of Hebrew thought; and the Book of Books took the abiding form of which all the future art of Western Nations was to be an hourly enlarging interpretation." If the heavenly wisdom of the Church had not secured the Bible in the Vulgate of St. Jerome, we cannot easily conjecture how it could have been rescued from the succeeding literature of the Goth, Frank and Saxon.

Because the period of the Middle Ages has been so misunderstood and so misrepresented, we must emphasize the fostering care of the Church during that much discussed era. We find the evidence today in unexpected ways.

Diligent students have counted over 8,000 manuscripts of the Vulgate that can still be seen in the libraries of Europe, all the product of the Middle

Ages. Mindful of the laborious task of copying by hand the entire text of the seventy-two books of the Bible, and knowing that the 8,000 still extant represent but a small fraction of the number of Bibles actually transcribed, it is evident to any thinking man that the Bible was safely preserved during that period by widespread use.

This thought is more deeply impressed upon us, when we see the number of commentaries on the Bible that have come from the Middle Ages with such fruitful results for succeeding generations. Not to dwell on the profound exegesis of Albertus Magnus, St. Thomas Aquinas, and St. Bonaventure, we may stress the Commentary of Nicholas Lyranus, the far-famed *Postilla*, which won the respect of the Jews in its own day, and which was used so extensively by Martin Luther 200 years later.

With the use of a commentary, or an explanation of the meaning of the words of the sacred text, we are accustomed to associate today the concordance of the Bible, or the arrangement of all the words according to subject matter. The presence of the concordance is striking evidence that the Bible is being applied to life. With the assistance of 500 Dominicans, in the year 1244, Cardinal Hugo St. Caro prepared the great concordance of the Vulgate for the use of preachers. It served as a biblical source for their sermons, to aid them in finding readily the subjects in the Bible for explanation to the faithful in the various languages then spoken. Historians have already enumerated sixty-four editions of this concordance, all of them before the Reformation.

The paved streets, the ruins of houses, the pillars of temples indicate clearly to the excavator that

he has discovered a town. Just so surely do these concordances, commentaries and manuscripts prove to us the active preservation of the Bible by the Church during the Middle Ages.

This evidence is stronger when we come to the age of printing. This blessing of Nature was used at once to serve the greater blessing of Grace. The facility of multiplying the copies of the Bible was appreciated immediately by the Church. The first great book to be printed was the 42-line Bible at Mainz, thirty-six years before Columbus discovered America. It is called the Mazarin Bible, after Cardinal Mazarin, and today is recognized as one of the most famous and valuable books in all history. Its value and beauty are so admired at the present time that within recent years three copies were sold in the United States for extraordinary prices, the last less than a year ago for the reputed sum of \$150,000. Since the Middle Ages this had been the prized treasure of a community of Austrian monks, and with bleeding hearts they sacrificed it to relieve their present economic destitution. It is a tragic but eloquent recognition of the invaluable service of the Church to the Bible.

The motherly care which guarded so faithfully the translation of the Bible into the Latin Vulgate brought it also into practically all the languages of Europe before the Reformation. The Bible appeared in Italian in 1471, Spanish in 1478, French in 1487. The German translations, at least eighteen in number, were widely circulated before Luther's New Testament, and at least five were complete before the year 1477. The English translations began as early as the eighth century with Venerable Bede, and according to the testimony of Blessed Thomas

More, Archbishop Cranmer and the Martyrologist Foxe, "the whole Bible was found in the Mother Tongue before Wycliffe was born." Far from neglecting the Bible in this period of religious peace, the Church made use of every opportunity consistent with the times to bring it before the people by her active preservation.

The story that charms us most by its appealing forethought is unfolded in the Bible of the Poor. With the truest instincts of Teacher and Mother, the Church provided also the famous picture Bibles for those who could not read. The sound educational principle of the object lesson was well known to her in the Middle Ages, as these publications convince us. For they were series of illustrations in pictures of the great events of Bible History, allegorized and moralized, and produced in picture groups to be circulated among those who had no opportunity to read. One of the best examples of the picture Bible from the thirteenth century has come to us in three parts, and they are guarded with jealous care at Oxford, London and Paris. In all, six hundred pages of the complete work may be seen, and these contain 5,000 illustrations. Thus did the Church preserve the Bible, even for those who could not read it. The poor had the Gospel preached to them.

To the Christians of the Middle Ages everything connected with the Bible was sacred. I need mention only the name to recall to you the unparalleled enthusiasm and devotion of the Crusades—the rescue of the Bible Land, hallowed by the footprints of Christ. Today we can hear a greater story, less known but equally inspiring, extending down from the Middle Ages to this year of grace 1930. It is the preservation of the Holy Places in the name of

the Church by the unarmed crusaders, the heroic sons of St. Francis, who have endured exile and its hardships, and often violent persecution unto death in their faithful custody of the sacred sites. For the past 700 years, and long before our modern exploration societies were thought of, these intrepid champions have lived in and have studied with true religious zeal, the Land of the Book.

The heritage of the Middle Ages is bequeathed us in the encyclopedic commentaries, so numerous in the Reformation period, of which Maldonatus, Cornelius a Lapide and the *Cursus* of Salamanca are well known examples. During the Reformation period, when the Bible was subjected to a new danger, the Church showed more than ever the instinct of a wise and provident Mother. In a maze of discordant opinions about the Bible, she published the true lists of the Books in the Council of Trent, repeating the decrees of the early councils, and with unusual prudence and caution, regulated the use of translations in this dangerous epoch.

When new problems arose in our century, threatening the very possession of the Bible, the same spirit that prompted Pope Damasus in 383 to summon St. Jerome to translate the Vulgate urged Pope Leo XIII in 1902 to organize the Biblical Commission for the express purpose of defending the Bible. Out of it today has developed the Pontifical Biblical Institute, created in 1908 by Pope Pius X, and dedicated to the exclusive study of the Bible. As this work of the Church continues through the century, aided by the scholarly contributions of universities and seminaries throughout the world, and particularly by the brilliant contributions of the Dominican School at Jerusalem, it is clear to the most short-

sighted that the Bible will be preserved for the future as it has been for the present, by the guardianship of the Catholic Church.

In this illustrious record of devotion and leadership, the Church has kept faith with the Bible. Lest the impression might be created that she has preserved only the Book, we must observe here also that the Church has kept the Book, and still keeps it, chiefly by using it. She has looked upon the Bible and everything connected with the Bible as a priceless treasure, committed to her by the Apostles. She has not been like the slothful and unprofitable servant of the parable who buried his treasure; like the good and faithful servant, she has used it to gain twice the amount of the talents. She has ever borne in mind the admonition of St. Paul to the Bishop Timothy: "All Scripture, inspired of God, is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice."

Great teachers in the Church have always followed this admonition. A few examples, the prototypes of all others, show it. St. John Chrysostom, Prince of Christian Orators, vividly placed the Life of Christ and the teachings of St. Paul before the people. St. Augustine illustrated the profoundest philosophy with the examples drawn from the Scriptures. In the Middle Ages, all of the popular preachers, Dominican, Franciscan and others, depended with faithful familiarity on the Bible. A conspicuous example is St. Bernard, whose language to the people is saturated with biblical expressions. That Book of world-wide fame, the Imitation of Christ, published more than any other book except the Bible itself, and in which "throbs the spiritual heart

of Medieval Christianity," is a beauteous tapestry woven on the texture of the Psalms and Gospels.

With the varied and unique ways of a true teacher, the Church still uses the Bible for our instruction and spiritual elevation. Who of us is not familiar with the Liturgical Year? In Advent we go with John the Baptist into the desert; we kneel with the shepherds before manger at Christmas. We adore Him again with the Wise Men of the East at Epiphany, the while we consecrate a New Year to His Holy Name. Penitential ashes on our foreheads, we fast with Him the forty days of Lent. Lamenting in the plaint of Jeremias we kneel in sorrow before the Cross on Good Friday. Recalling the hopeful promises of the Old Testament, we wait before the tomb with the holy women on Easter Saturday; when all is fulfilled, we rise triumphant with Him in the glory of Easter morning. With the disciples we stand on the Hill of Ascension; persevering in prayer with Mary the Mother of Jesus and His brethren, we welcome the coming of the Holy Ghost on Pentecost. Through the remaining feasts of the year we meditate on the parable and miracles of His Public Life until another Advent brings anew the message of hope. Day by day and every day the Church uses the biblical associations of the inspiring story to awaken in our hearts true devotion to Christ.

More especially is that lesson taught in the Holy Mass—the dramatization of the central event of all revelation—obediently done in commemoration of Him. The Sacrifice is surrounded with readings from the Old and the New Testament alike, and the Epistles and Gospels especially are read to the people that the application of the Bible to the day may not be lost. We hail with great joy the Liturgical

movement fostered today especially by the Sons of St. Benedict, for, in following the Liturgy of the Church, we are learning the Bible with the Church.

In the devotions of her children, the Church also teaches us the Bible. The official devotion of the Church, known as the Office or Breviary, which every priest must read each day for the space of about one hour, is practically the Bible divided into the days of the year. The daily meditation of priests and religious is centered about the Christ of the Gospels. The greater part of the famous exercises of St. Ignatius is devoted to reflections on the Life of Christ. The favorite prayer of the Catholic people is the great Bible prayer, the *Our Father*, taught first by Christ to His Apostles. Next to it is the *Ave Maria*, "Hail Mary", dear indeed to Catholic hearts, another Bible prayer, taken almost entirely from St. Luke: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women."

The Rosary! What memories of spiritual comfort surround that word! What is it but the repetition of the two great Bible prayers with devout meditation on the great Bible scenes of Nazareth, Bethlehem, Jerusalem. Is it surprising that it should be called the prayer-book of the people? We understand its powerful influence; it is the Bible unfolded to us.

The sorrowing way of the Cross, found in every church, and followed so devoutly, is surely a favorite devotion of Catholics. Here again the Fostering Mother leads us by the hand along the way of redemption from Pilate to the tomb.

Another brilliant chapter in the Church's preservation of the Bible for us is her contribution to

Christian art. It is a bright spot in the history of civilization, but it is not this phase which interests us today. That is but the body; we penetrate to the soul of Christian art and see it as the visualizing of the great events of the Bible. Enter a Catholic church and you are impressed with the devotional atmosphere. As you seek for its explanation, you will find represented on windows and frescoes the Life of Christ from Birth to Ascension in the favorite mysteries of the Rosary, or such familiar scenes as Christ healing the sick, blessing little children, forgiving the sinner.

The power of a single church to teach a whole scriptural theme was deeply impressed on me some six years ago when I happened upon a pilgrimage church in the Village of Weis in Upper Bavaria. It is a church visited by thousands and thousands of pilgrims from the surrounding towns; a penitential church where the faithful come to be reconciled to God in the Sacrament of Penance. I was struck first with the name of the church; it is dedicated to Christ at the pillar of scourging. The numerous frescoes and paintings all point to one lesson, the forgiveness of Christ. Over one confessional is the Good Shepherd, another Peter repentant, a third the weeping Magdalene, a fourth the dying thief. The same theme is carried out in the frescoes by numerous applications; David is led to sorrow by Nathan, and the prodigal son returns to his father's home. Crowning it all with an aureole of brilliant light is an outspread panorama of the judgment of the just. They are receiving the blessing of Christ at the Gate of Heaven where time will be no more. The casual visitor, much more the pilgrim, cannot miss this visualizing of the most consoling lesson of Re-

velation, God's forgiveness. Here is the soul of Christian art.

Frequently today we hear of another example of the Church's use of the Bible. Formerly, especially in the Middle Ages, in hundreds of places in England, France and Germany, sacred mystery plays, mostly biblical plays, were produced. Too few remain today, and of these the most prominent is the Passion Play of Oberammergau.

Again we hear the deep impression made by the soul-stirring religious drama. Read it in letters sent to your homes, or in the special articles written for the daily press. Catholics and non-Catholics alike are moved to tears of deep religious feeling, but it is no mere emotion. People confess readily that they leave the Passion Play with a newer and truer appreciation of the love and mercy of the sacrifice of Christ. They are fired with nobler, deeper, stronger resolutions to lead better Christian lives than the reading of the story ever brought them.

This, in truth, is the object of the Church's use of the Bible. In preaching, liturgy, devotion, art, drama—in all she finds the tremendous natural forces to instil in the lives of men the moral betterment contained in the Bible. Any Catholic who follows faithfully the Church in her teaching through these means has the essential knowledge and the true spirit of the Holy Scriptures.

We have called the Bible a treasure. The Church, realizing its priceless value, preserves, transmits and defends it. Like a wise teacher and loving mother, She uses this treasure in the various ways described for the sanctification and salvation of Her children.

The Bible has a meaning for all time. Some parts, like the ceremonial of the Old Law, have already served their purpose in leading us to Christ, as St. Paul expressed it. The essential meaning, the soul of the Book, has a pertinent solution for every problem of our day.

What are these problems? Anarchy of every shade has already inundated some nations, and we are informed of an insidious campaign to spread it even here. The Bible teaches us obedience to authority. It gives us the most perfect example that we could have in Christ Who went down to Nazareth and was subject to Mary and Joseph; Who was obedient even to the death of the Cross.

A new morality is proposed; in truth it is the destruction of morality by the perversion of sound ethical principles. Through the Bible we have the echoes of Sinai's thunder, and the gentle but firm Voice of the Sermon on the Mount.

We hear again that disruption threatens the home and family. It is the same problem that confronted Christ, and He solved it in those uncompromising words: "What God hath joined together, let no man rend asunder."

Catastrophes occur in the financial world, with thousands of victims. Here we see the fruit of a false gospel of material success and material prosperity: a gospel which will never bring peace and good will to men. We must heed the true Gospel: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, but in heaven, for where thy heart is, there is thy treasure also," and "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul."

Fundamental to all our social relationships is that word which will not pass away: the Charity of Christ: the lesson of love of neighbor taught so beautifully and completely in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

There are reasons why we talk about the Bible today and every day. My sole object has been to represent before you all plainly, clearly and uncompromisingly, the Catholic Church's relationship to the Bible. I wish to express to you my sincerest gratitude for the kindly reception given this presentation, reflected by so many letters from various States of the Union. It is my deepest hope, my heartfelt wish, that all people of these United States should understand the Bible better, and especially that central principle of Christianity—the one expressed by Him in Whom we all believe, Whom we love, Whom we try to follow and obey, Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who said in His Farewell Discourse, "By this shall men know that you are My disciples, that you have love one for another."

CARDINAL HAYES STATES AIMS OF THE CATHOLIC RADIO 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. That responsibility rests upon the National Council of Catholic Men

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 country-men. 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 work of dedication voices, therefore, the hope that this radio hour may serve to make known, to explain with the charity of Christ, our faith, which we love even as we love Christ Himself. May it serve to make better understood that faith as it really is—a light revealing the pathway to heaven: a strength, and a power divine through Christ: pardoning our sins, elevating, consecrating our common every-day duties and joys, bringing not only justice but gladness and peace to our searching and questioning hearts.

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