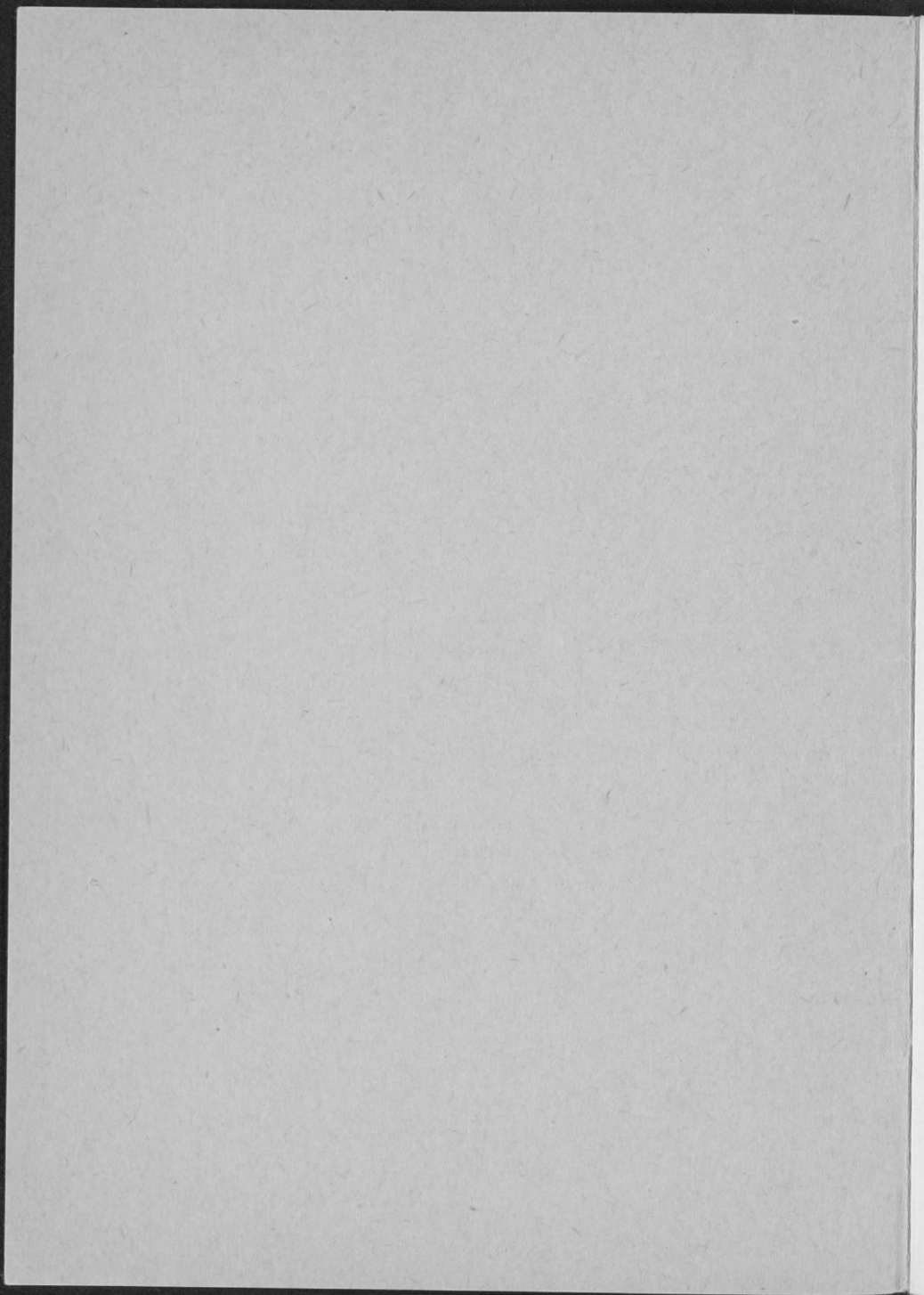


Carney, Thomas A.
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The "Lost" Radiance of the Religion of Jesus

by
Thomas A. Carney





The "Lost" Radiance of the Religion of Jesus

by

Rev. Thomas A. Carney, Pastor of the Shrine
of the True Cross, Dickinson, Texas.

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

(On Sundays from August 1 to 29, 1937)

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DEDICATION

To the one person in the world, who if she were living, would see no imperfections in this humble pamphlet—to My Mother—I affectionately dedicate this series of national broadcasts.

FOREWORD

Christian apologetics, considered formally as that department of dogmatics which deals with defensive facts and proofs that vindicate the truth of the Catholic religion, belongs more especially to the field of professorial teaching. But the purpose and end of apologetics belong as well to the field of Catholic preaching. The point of difference in the matter is that the preacher is freer than the professor to vary his method of presenting the truths of the Catholic religion.

Among the vast number of people in a national radio audience there are many who are unaccustomed to close and logical thinking. It has been my intention in this series of addresses, to try to reach that particular stratum of society by, as it were, flashing a spot light on particular parts of the "organism" of Catholic teaching and, by doing this, to allow these people to view the truth in action. I believe that the beauty of truth, as it appears in action, will convince some who would not be impressed by logic alone and will impress some so as to impel them to seek the logic behind the beauty.

Perhaps, the most immediate and the most truly personal problems the individual has to face, not only in these days but at all times, are those concerning the service he must render, the leadership he must follow, the moral principle by which he must be actuated, the type of living he must evince, and the loyalty he must maintain. In this series of addresses, therefore, I have endeavored not so much by the ordinary method of apologetics but more by a factual presentation of the beauty of Catholic teaching on these important problems, to show truth in action. And, if I have succeeded in bringing even a few closer to the Church who would otherwise have remained far away from her I am content.

CHRISTIAN SERVICE

Address delivered on August 1, 1937.

A writer in a current periodical ventured the rather optimistic opinion that the American people "are bent upon a search for the highest type of religion." Then, by way of identifying that religion, he further stated that one of its principal elements would be "the rediscovery of the 'lost radiance' of the religion of Jesus, the practical application of His ethics, His idealisms, His aspirations, His sense of the harmony of things seen and unseen."

In the series of addresses that I begin today, I should like to show, not indeed by argumentation, but simply by presenting a cross section of Catholic teaching on practical, everyday things, that the "radiance" of the religion of Jesus Christ has not been "lost", and that "His ethics, His idealisms, His aspirations, His sense of the harmony of things seen and unseen," have been preserved faithfully in the teachings of the Catholic Church. I begin with the homely but timely subject of Christian Service.

Perfect service is love *in action*. To dedicate oneself to ideal Christian service is to give the most convincing proof that one's heart is dominated by true Christian charity. "Love is expansive of itself," says the Angelic Doctor of Aquinas. It does not hold itself in, but goes outside in quest of objects for its well-wishing, and actively bestows its benefactions. "Love God with the strong right arm", dear old Vincent de Paul used to say. And he meant the arm of service. The Catholic Church, in like sentiment, would say: "Love thy neighbor with the strong right arm of service."

I should like to point out some of the qualities that make for the ideal Christian service of our fellow man.

I always experience a distinct emotional stir when I recall a certain sculptor of Grecian legend. They had chided him because he persisted in fashioning the upper surfaces of the capitals which surrounded the pillars of the lofty temple with his usual exquisite workmanship and care. "Why waste your skill where no human eye can ever behold it," they said. The old man must have been majestic as he drew back his chisel from the stone, squared his bent shoulders, lifted his great brows, and replied solemnly: "The gods will see it!" He was right in motive, grandly, nobly right. The old man would have made an excellent Christian.

We believe that no service is of real value unless it has God as its motive in one way or another. The Catholic Church teaches, by implication, that even though a man should gain the whole world, he could still lose his soul. With equal startlingness, she teaches that a man might spend his energies fully in the service of his fellow men and still be a failure, still be unworthy of any reward beyond that which men themselves can bestow, still deserve nothing from the hands of God. Conceivably, she says, a man might build an empire and then be buried eternally in hell, while some forgotten mother who has done little else but rock the cradle might at last find herself high up in Heaven next to the all-blessed Mother of God.

The ideal Christian renders his service primarily for the eyes of God. "God will see," he says to a chiding world.

Our divine Lord has pointed the way in this as in

all else that is Christian. He said: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me." His Father was ever His inspiration. And at the end, when the curtain was about to fall upon the drama of Calvary and He cried: "It is consummated!", His mind was still on His Father.

Again, worse off than a deaf, dumb, and blind pauper, is a man who lives to himself selfishly. Lonely he is too, even though he lives in marble halls. As the waters and fruits were ever just out of the reach of Tantalus, so the lovely things of life are ever just beyond the grasp of selfish men. They lead empty, hungry lives even in the midst of plenty. A writer of verse, whose name I do not know, has shown the predicament of selfish souls quite aptly, I think. I quote the verses:

I have seen men stand looking wistfully out,
On the Bay of Heart's Desire,
And say, "When my ship comes in I will have
All the things to which I aspire."

One would have fortune and one would have love,
Thus fell the words from the lips;
And I wondered, as I looked at the men,
If they had sent out any ships.

When our ships come in! Do we really know
What we are talking about?
For how can our ships come back into port
If we never have sent them out?

God so loves generosity that He makes giving a condition of getting, even in the natural order of things—of getting, I mean, the really worthwhile things of life.

The Beloved Disciple sums up the generosity of the service of the Divine Exemplar Who "went about doing good", in a statement truly astounding. He says: "But there are also many other things which



Jesus did; which, if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written." (John 21:25).

In my mind's eye I can see that Divine Exemplar taking time to caress a little child and, over protest, smilingly calling others to Him. "Suffer the little children. . . to come unto me". (Matt. 19:14). I see Him standing outside the little town of Bethania, weeping. Mary has fallen down at His feet, lamenting, as Martha had lamented a few minutes before, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." But "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister Mary, and Lazarus", and He had walked a long way to be with them in their trouble. "Where have you laid him?" He asked. And then, the miracle—"Lazarus, come forth." And Lazarus arose alive! (John 11:5, 32, 34, 43). Another day, He had climbed a slope leading to Naim. A figure of overwhelming misfortune met His eyes, a widowed mother walking in front of the coffin of her only son who had died in the flower of his youth. Jesus might have joined the procession respectfully with His escort and have accompanied her to the cemetery. Custom would have warranted that. But He did more. Gently He said to the mother: "Weep not." Then turning to the dead youth, in a tone of irresistible authority, He commanded: "Young man, I say to thee, arise." "And he gave him to his mother." (Luke 7:13-15).

Now, it is the gloom of Calvary. And "bowing his head, he gave up the ghost." (John 19:30). Browning's poet took up the chisel and hammer to carve the "One Word More" his hand could not paint on canvass. Christ bore crucifixion and shed the last drop of His Precious Blood to speak His "one word

more" to man. "*Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*" (John 15:13).

Small wonder, after such example of generosity of service, that the Church places on the roll of her canonized saints only those whose service has been proved heroic; that Catholic missionaries, women as well as men, bury themselves in the wilds of Africa and endure untiringly the hardships of far Eastern climates in service of their fellow man; and that Popes write long encyclicals instructing and exhorting the faithful to Catholic action, to Catholic service!

Finally, when all is said and done, one's service will be judged greatly by what one is. Even the natural effectiveness of service is dependent greatly upon one's personal spiritual and moral worth. Emerson was not far wrong when he said: "What you are, speaks so loudly we cannot hear what you say." Certainly, at any rate, the *spiritual effectiveness*, both subjective and objective, is greatly dependent upon what one is. (This is not the place to speak of sacerdotal and sacramental validities, nor to debate the probabilities affecting supernatural merit.) I am speaking of course of *ideal* Christian service. And I wish to emphasize the fact that the Catholic Church teaches that ideal Christian service cannot be rendered unless one's soul is pleasing in the sight of God—unless one is, therefore, in the state of sanctifying grace. Hence, virtue and Godliness are essential qualities of ideal Christian service. The Church bids us build our souls strong supernaturally if we would serve well.

People thought the old smith foolishly careful as he wrought so painstakingly every link of the

great chain he forged in his dingy downtown shop. But the old smith worked on. The time came when that chain lay coiled on the deck of a great ocean liner, fastened to a huge anchor. It wasn't needed for years. But one night came a violent storm. The ship was being driven rapidly toward the rocks. Sure destruction was near. Anchor after anchor was dropped. Chain after chain snapped like thin pieces of thread. As a last resort the huge anchor was dropped into the sea. The great chain slowly uncoiled and ran out to its full length. Suddenly it became taut. A thousand lives depended upon that chain! A thousand hearts stood still, wondering if it too would snap! The huge anchor strained at the chain. The vessel's weight surged against it. A sudden lurch and the vessel settled back! The great chain held! And a thousand lives were saved! "Build your lives strong" says the Church "you who will stand the *strain* of Christian service." Only the grace of God can give Christian strength. An Apostle who spent himself in the service of his fellow men affirmed: "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me." (Phil. 4:13).

Christian Service—that has been my theme. The assurance of one's success will come, I think, only after death. At judgment we shall get the verdict. As to the favorable indications here below—well, there are some. Perhaps you can gather one of them from the narrative with which I conclude. A sweet epitaph is carved on the headstone of the grave of a little child I have read about. It was put there by her playmates. It reads: "It was easy to be good when she was with us."

CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

Address delivered on August 8, 1937.

I have before my mind's eye a scene out of the distant past. I see a huge bronze image with the head of an ox and the body of a man. The image is hollow. And from behind, through an opening, a great fire has been kindled within. A live baby is taken from the arms of its mother and placed in the red hot arms of this incandescent creature of the hands of men, while pagan priests dance wildly about and blow trumpets and beat drums to prevent the screams and cries of the innocent victim from reaching the ears of its deluded mother. This is a human sacrifice to the god Moloch.

I come down to within two centuries of the Christian era. Another scene presents itself. A whole nation is engaged in three days of drunken revelry and orgiastic acts of worship. The bacchanalia are in progress—the bacchanalia, so shameful in their immorality that even a licentious senate a little later prohibited them.

It is revolting to read the historical record of such spectacles. But one is unspeakably horrified to know that this mass corruption was the result of teachings and laws, in both instances, imposed by authority on a people who represented the acme of material progress in its day and in whose minds religion and religious ideas occupied a very prominent place—the Phoenicians, masters of maritime commerce, and the Roman conquerors of the world!

In both instances the people were the victims of a pagan leadership that had lost its contact with the appointed teachers and preservers of the Divine Revelation.

I come next to the beginning of the Christian era and am confronted with still another scene. This time it is the Chosen People of God. I see among them divisions and sects. I see some puffed up with their reputation for sanctity and learning, their supposed superior knowledge of the Written Law and the traditions of the Ancients, setting themselves apart and holding all others in contempt, perverting the sense of the law on most important points, holding rigidly to certain exterior practices of worship but disregarding interior purity of heart. I see others openly rejecting the Books of the Prophets, denying the immortality of the soul, arrogating to themselves a character of strict justice yet actually indulging in a sinful laxity of moral practice. And still others attributing to themselves the power of healing both bodies and souls and yet, by a strange contradiction in logic, professing sheer fatalism.

These were the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes—who, together with other sects, formed a distorted travesty of Divine Truth. These are the very people to whom the preservation of truth was divinely committed. And this mass condition was brought about by a *leadership* that had gradually become coarse, proud, hypocritical, and so materialistic that it placed human man-made traditions above the prescriptions of the Law of God.

I have given you a cross-section of the darkness of antiquity.

The Christian era dawned. Then came the *Splendor Patris*, that Exceeding Brilliancy from the Father of Lights, Jesus Christ, sent by the Father to reilluminate and illuminate completely the paths of

men with truth, and to show them the way to happiness both on earth and in Heaven.

This Leader presented to the world the incontestable credentials of His miracles as a testimony of His divine claims and mission. But the pagans, steeped in sensuality, were slow to recognize Him, and the Chosen People, stiff-necked and proud, would not receive Him and in jealous frenzy took Him to Calvary and nailed Him to a cross. Only a handful recognized and followed the Light!

And, through the centuries, though countless millions in increasing numbers have recognized and followed the leadership of Jesus Christ and have found the promised happiness, a sensual world has been blind to this Light, notwithstanding its exceeding brilliancy, and stiff-necked and proud worldlings have striven to keep the Christ, their Saviour, nailed helplessly to the cross! Today, a well planned, well organized effort is being made in the world to set up false lights of leadership. Active propagandists of false philosophies and false theories of life are blinding some, maddening others, and threatening all with destruction. Powerful leaders of great and honorable nations have seized the reins of government of both State and Church, and, using arrogance and force to accomplish their ends, fervently practice an absolutism that places the State above the individual in such a way as to make the individual the puppet of the State and the slave, body and soul, of one man's will.

From "The Watch Tower of the Christian World" a message warning of this has come repeatedly. I quote from that warning message: "In public life sacred principles, the guide of all social intercourse, are trampled upon; the solid foundations of

right and honesty, on which the state should rest, are undermined; polluted and closed are the sources of those ancient traditions, which, based on faith in God and fidelity to His law, secured the true progress of nations. . . Instead of the great law of love and human brotherhood, which embraces and holds in a single family all religions and peoples with one Father Who is in Heaven, there enters hatred, driving all to destruction. . . Confronted with so much impiety, such destruction of all the holiest traditions, such slaughter of immortal souls, such offenses against the Divine Majesty, we cannot. . . refrain from pouring out the bitter grief of our soul, we cannot refrain from raising our voice, and, with all the energy of our Apostolic heart taking the defence of the down-trodden rights of God, and of the most sacred sentiments of the human heart that has an absolute need of God."

Not the Sovereign Pontiff, whose words I have just quoted, but I visualize the "impiety" and "destruction" for you!

Christian charity and justice have so far departed from the world that some government leaders deliberately foment or tolerate the fomenting of unrest, riots, and bloodshed, among the poor and laboring classes, and, at times, seek to achieve their ends through brutal terrorism! It is of public record that millions of poor people have been refused food and forced to starve to death because they opposed a dictator's farm policies! Hundreds of diseased children of the slums have been huddled together, with stomachs recently filled by government food, and mowed down by government machine gun fire, for lack of a better way to deal with them! Leaders have heartlessly shot and

chopped with axes large numbers of their fellow men to "purge" a political party! Entire countries have been forced to yield their civil and religious liberties and to submit to the throttling of their speech and their press! Children have been regimented under the instruction of neo-pagan, humanistic, state religionists, to the ruin of their faith! And millions of them have been taught to hate God!

Is it to be wondered at, then, that the Catholic Church, through her Supreme Head, should beg and plead with the world to return to the leadership of Jesus Christ? "Let us", says Pope Pius, "let us not permit. . . the children of this world to seem wiser in their generation than we, who by God's goodness are Children of Light. We see these men cunningly select and train resolute disciples, who spread their false doctrines daily more widely amongst men of every station and of every clime. . . Let, then, all men of good will stand united. . . Let them seek, not themselves and the things that are their own, but the *things that are Jesus Christ's*."

Oh, indeed, we need to turn to the *Splendor Patris*, the Light that illumines the world! We need the light of truth that shines forth resplendent in the teachings and example of Jesus Christ! We need the spiritual leadership of Christ the King!

Upon us as individuals rests a duty to keep the Light, Christ and His teachings, before us, and to govern our private and public lives by that Light—a duty to protect our own thoughts and our country's policies from the blinding and burning and searing influence of false lights—a duty to crystallize in our thoughts and our national policies the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Tear out of your hearts, urges the Spirit of

Christ, pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, and sloth—those seeds of selfishness and sin! "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice." For "what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul, or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26). You who would understand good government, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And, you who would know the great commandment, the "fulfilling of the law" (Romans 13:10) must "love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. . . and thy neighbor as thyself." (Matt. 22:37-39).

This is the Light that shines in darkness. These, and a thousand more like them, are the principles of the Ideal Leader which the Catholic Church presents to us—the principles of Christ the King!

And not only does the world need the "Light" of leadership but it actually craves—craves, as the burning desert cries out for the soothing rain—the unction of the Divine leadership of Christ, that unction of which the great Lacordaire speaks, which softens hearts and makes them happy.

Or, if I may put it another way, human hearts, in this ruthless world, are longing for the Divine touch that alone can make the music of gladness vibrate within them. Legend tells of a strange instrument. It hung on an old castle wall. "No one knew its use. Its strings were broken and covered with dust. Those who saw it wondered what it was and how it had been used. Then one day a stranger came to the castle gate and entered the hall. His eyes saw the dark object on the wall and, taking it down, he reverently brushed the dust from its

sides and tenderly reset its broken strings; then chords long silent woke beneath his touch and all hearts were strangely thrilled as he played. It was the Master, long absent, who had come back again to his castle."

In every human heart there hangs a harp. Some of them are dust-covered; and the strings are broken; and they hang silent on the wall. If only the Master could find these hearts! How quickly He would repair the strings broken by sin and sweep away the dust of neglect! What music He would make in them.

"Oh! could the tender Christ but brush away
And o'er the slumbering tones his fingers sweep,
A world would pause to catch the echoing chord
Of music wakened 'neath the touch of God."

Let men roll, if they will, the thunders of their eloquence or scatter the flowers of their poetry, let them diffuse the light of science or elaborate programs of economic security and social justice—they shall still fail, fail utterly, if they do not, at the same time, make Jesus Christ King of their hearts, if they do not make His commandments and counsels and example the basis of all thought and action, if they do not make Him the Leader of their Lives!

CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE

Address delivered on August 15, 1937.

One of the severest shocks I received in my student days came as I was preparing to write a paper on the Philosophy of Modernism. A book by a famous American professor was placed in my hands. I read it. Suddenly, to the astonishment of my youthful mind, there before my eyes that professor, after much surprising unorthodoxy, boldly laid down as a legitimate philosophical conclusion that it was all right to take a "moral holiday" once in a while! Of course, even though so inexperienced at that time, I knew that some men did that sort of thing. But that a leading light of a great American university should teach that it was justifiable—well, I confess I blushed with intellectual confusion! The book, needless to say, dealt with the philosophy of pragmatism. Morality and truth, it taught, are not stable. Whatever works, in the long run, is right. If that happens to be a "moral holiday," well and good!—I have seen much since that day. And I have long since stopped being shocked even at professors.

The point of this narrative is that I believe that the sad spectacle of world conditions today is understandable and to be explained chiefly by the fact that the bold conclusion of that professor and the principles from which he drew it have become, under the patronage of one intellectual or political group or another and taught with incidental changes, like a musical theme played in variations, quite the accepted doctrine and practice of vast organizations of men as well as of individuals.—Not so very long ago, in a certain large city of our country, thirty-

four editors, educators, and ministers gave their published approval to a humanistic teaching that scrapped the "old forms of piety, prayer and belief," snapped its fingers at the supernatural and agreed to let science rule conscience.

Perhaps you think I am unduly alarmed or pessimistic. I wish I were. But I am not! In fact, so universal is the lack of stable moral principle in the world today that the present Sovereign Pontiff in an encyclical on "World Distress" makes it plain that he sees no remedy for world conditions until men first turn back to the practice of righteousness. "Nothing", he says, "remains for us therefore save to invite this poor world that has shed so much blood, has dug so many graves, has destroyed so many works, has deprived so many men of bread and labor, nothing else remains for us, we say, but to invite it in the loving words of the sacred liturgy: 'Be thou converted to the Lord thy God.'"

The Catholic Church teaches that the practice of moral principle should come before everything else and that all else will fall into its proper place if a man practices moral principle. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." By the practice of moral principle, quite evidently, I mean the directing of one's life according to the Divine Will, the following of the dictates of an enlightened conscience, the observance of the laws of right reason and divine authority.

What the world needs more than anything else, and as a preparation and groundwork for all planning that makes for the individual and social welfare, is a stimulation of interest in and respect for and adherence to the moral code taught by Jesus

Christ and interpreted and enforced by His Church.

The atrocities in Spain are rightly placed at the door of Communism. Communists hate the Church because they hate God. But I make bold to say that the responsibility for these atrocities is indirectly and remotely due in great part, to a failure of certain leaders and influential persons in Spain to measure up to the moral principle that was rightly expected of them as Christians, before the atrocities came upon them.

A recent article in a weekly magazine, quotes the *Colosseum* as saying: "What we have got to explain is why the view that the Church is bound up with the interests of the rich is so widely held by the working class in Europe. In the eyes of many, if not most, intelligent workers, the idea that Catholicism could possibly be mentioned in the same breath as 'working class' interests seems laughable." He then remarks: "The question is: Why have the Communists been able to persuade the Spanish laborer in whose veins flows the blood of a Catholic ancestry reaching back to Columbus or further, that the Church of his forefathers is the great obstacle to his social betterment? Why have they been able to arm this same Spaniard to fight against the bishops and priests of that Church as his deadly enemies? The answer would seem to be because the worker in Spain had been gradually coming to the same conclusion himself." These men have been prevailed upon to confuse the Church and her teachings with the blameworthy conduct of some influential individual members of the Church who hide behind her skirts and to believe that the *Church* is the guilty party and not the *individual members*. This condition has always been a heartache to Mother Church.

To quote Charles Devas: "She (the Church) must journey through the centuries bearing as the heaviest of her trials and the greatest hindrance to her success, the daily shame of her unworthy members and be well content if she can save at their death those who have been a disgrace to her through their life."

There are "wreckers" in the Church and out of it. Do you recall the old time hideous practice of professional wrecking? It was a "racket" that for sheer heartlessness makes our modern "rackets" look childish! Men, we are told, set up false lights on the shore to deceive vessels and lure them to the rocks to be wrecked. Then they plundered the wreckage as it floated in. There are in modern society wreckers worse than these men, lacking all principle, who deliberately prey on the souls as well as the bodies of their fellow men!—By way of digression, it is said that when one of those old time wreckers was examining the plunder washed in to the shore, a dark object was deposited at his feet. By the light of his lantern he looked into the face of his own son who long ago had gone to sea! I am wondering how some fathers and mothers will feel when, on the day of judgment, they find their neglected and scandalized children among the wreckage they have wrought! But, that is by way of digression.—There is only one way to prevent wrecking, whether it be the wrecking of others' lives or of one's own, and that is by the constant practice of moral principle!

The Catholic Church is strong in her condemnation of those "Sunday Christians" whose financial position puts them in prominent pews at the Sunday service and who, by a kind of Dr. Jekyll and Mr.

Hyde transformation, grind the poor with unprincipled heartlessness the other six days of the week. "Religion," wrote the great Leo the Thirteenth, more than forty years ago, "teaches the rich man and the employer that their working people are not their slaves; that they must respect in every man his dignity as a man and as a Christian; that labor is nothing to be ashamed of if we listen to right reason and to Christian philosophy, but is an honorable employment enabling a man to sustain his life in an upright and creditable way, and that it is shameful and inhuman to treat men like chattels to make money by, or to look upon them merely as so much muscle or physical power." Two-thirds of the economic and social evils of our day, I believe, are due to the lack of Christian principle in persons of this class alone!

In a world which condones sex immorality and tolerates the bedraggling of matrimony to the utter disregard of the marriage bond and marital obligations, the Catholic Church holds up the image of the all-pure Mother of Jesus Christ and demands of her children that they strive to be like her. Like the lily that, floating in the black sullied waters of a foul bog, lifts its snow-white petals towards God's blue sky and pours forth its fragrance unceasingly, the Church charges her children to preserve their moral integrity in a world of foulness and impurity! "Hold your faces towards the blue sky of Christian innocence," she urges. And, "Blessed are the clean of heart," she encourages.

In matters of private morals or public practices the Catholic Church insists not only that a man form a judgment concerning the rightness or wrongness of his acts, but that he form a correct enlight-

ened judgment, as far as he is able. And she lays down the inexorable law that the conscience resulting from a correct and true judgment must always be followed when it commands. There are no moral holidays in the teachings of the Catholic Church!

The principles that the Church teaches in order to form an enlightened conscience in her children are not simply the unfolding of natural and divine law but the more perfect interpretation of the natural and divine law in the light of Christian teaching. "Thou shalt not kill," she quotes from the decalogue. But she adds, with Christian idealism, that "Whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment." "Thou shalt not commit adultery," she quotes. But, she adds, whosoever lusteth has already committed sin in his heart.

What wonders could be wrought if the ideal Christian principles taught by the Church should take hold of the Christians of the world! It is said that, in the course of excavations made some time ago on the site of the ancient city of Pompeii which was destroyed by an eruption of Vesuvius, thirty eight skeletons of Roman soldiers were discovered. Scholars have conjectured that the captain and his men, rather than desert their post without the word of command, preferred to be buried beneath the glowing streams of hot lava. And it may well be so. Such loyalty to earthly command is not unknown to us. What wonders could be wrought if that same spirit of idealism were to take hold of Christians, if Christians were equally as faithful to the everyday moral principles of their lives, if Christians were equally loyal to their God! Give me thirty million American men and women with such a spirit of

loyalty towards the moral teachings of Jesus Christ—give me just half of the actual number of so-called Christians in America, filled with this loyalty to ideal Christian principle—and within a very short time I will give you an entire nation in peace and contentment and a hundred million saints!

CHRISTIAN LIVING

Delivered on August 22, 1937

The Temple of the Sun! What a magnificent edifice it was in the ancient days when Baalbek was the glory of all Syro-Phoenicia! Baalbek, the city of Baal, is now a little village. And the temple is in ruins. Thus passes the glory of the world! But, I am told that nearby the ruins of the great temple (some of the pillars are still standing) is the quarry from which came the stones out of which the temple was built. And, most interesting to note, in the quarry, almost detached from its rock, dressed and ready for its place in the temple, is an immense column, seventy feet long. A vacant place in the temple was left for it. Yet for thousands of years that monolith has lain there in the quarry—useless! It never found the place to which it was destined!

How like men are things, sometimes! What countless millions of men have lain among the wastes and ruins of life “pale ghosts of glorious might-have-beens.” They were made with a noble destiny but the places they were meant to fill remain vacant in God’s temple! How few men have fulfilled their noble destiny!

The Catholic Church is perennial in her pleadings that men measure up to the highest ideals of Christian living. And she makes it plain what she means. The ideal Christian life, she explains, is the one that realizes in itself what God has a right to expect of it, the one which achieves the high purpose for which man was created, the one which measures up to full stature in supernatural character.

Not all, by any means, have heeded the plead-

ings of the Church. She scans with pitying eye countless failures among her own children along with countless others who are not hers.

It may be interesting, and certainly it will be instructive, to study the causes of these failures.

First I place a *lack of the use of intelligence in the ordering of life*. And I mean this both for the powers that influence the lives of individuals and for the individuals themselves.

Most governments and many social groups have so fallen under the spell of "specialization" that they have forgotten (or beclouded their notions of) the nature of the human individuals whose lives they seek to order. The famous surgeon-scientist, Dr. Alexis Carrel, in his book *Man the Unknown*, has offered a piece of sound advice to such governments and groups. He says: "Man must now turn his attention to himself, and to the cause of his moral and intellectual disability. What is the good of increasing the comfort, the luxury, the beauty, the size, and the complications of our civilization, if our weakness prevents us from guiding it to our best advantage? It is really not worth while to go on elaborating a way of living that is bringing about the demoralization and the disappearance of the noblest elements of the great races. It would be far better to pay more attention to ourselves than to construct faster steamers, more comfortable automobiles, cheaper radios, or telescopes for examining the structure of remote nebulae. What real progress will be accomplished when aircraft take us to Europe or to China in a few hours? Is it necessary to increase production unceasingly, so that men may consume larger and large quantities of useless things? There is not the shadow of a doubt that

mechanical, physical, and chemical sciences are incapable of giving us intelligence, moral discipline, health, nervous equilibrium, security, and peace."

And the famous scientist's recommendation that a "center of synthetic thought," an "Institute of Man", be begun in which a "synthetic" rather than an "analytic" study of man, a co-ordinating of our knowledge of him as a whole, be carried on by great minds capable of such work, is not to be taken lightly. Neither is his suggestion that the experiments and specializations of one scientist should not be interrupted by his death but carried on over a long period of time. (I am wondering whether the Holy Father has not some such thing as an "Institute of Man" in mind in the forming of his new Academy of Sciences. Dr. Carrel, though not a Catholic, is a member of that Academy.)

It would be a great help to ideal living if human beings were not so dissected by the social, economic, psychological and other experts, and numbered and catalogued so carefully by the specialists, but rather were *studied and legislated for as human beings*, wonderful composites of many things indeed, but above all *rational human beings*.

And the individual himself—I find a crying need in him for the intellectual element, especially in the ordering of his religious life. There are too many whose religious beliefs are founded on nothing more than pure sentiment and a kind of pious wishfulness. Too few can explain intelligently and satisfactorily, even to themselves, why they believe what they believe. The result is that, when the test comes to the scientist, the educator, the businessman, the politician, or the man in the street, he fails and falls because he has no solid foundation for his beliefs. The

Catholic Church teaches that a man must *put his mind* into his religion if he will *keep his heart in it*. That explains her elaborate system of Catholic education and her stringent laws governing things dangerous intellectually to faith.

To put what I have been saying briefly, ideal Christian living (the full measure of supernatural character) cannot be achieved without an appreciation of the nature and value of it. Intelligent appreciation of true values is necessary to ideal Christian living. The Englishman, Lord John Lawrence, while in India, nearly lost for his queen the Koh-i-noor, the famous Mountain of Light diamond, because his native servant thought it was only a piece of glass! There is food for thought in that incident.

A second cause of failure would be, I think, *a false notion of virtue*. Virtue is often thought of abstractly, especially by a certain class, large in number, of so-called practical two-fisted men, as weakness, pusillanimity, cowardliness, timidity, backbonelessness—something that will do for women and children, or for weddings (to be respectable), or, strangely contradictorily, at the deathbed. A virtuous man is looked upon by such hardy gentlemen as a milksop, a visionary, a jellyfish weakling. That virtue is "*the habit of acting according to the right order of things*" they seem not to have learned. That a practical two-fisted saint like Paul of Tarsus was a virtuous man, they have not known. I wonder whether the religious fanatics and pious frauds that cloak themselves with the apparent garb of virtue and parade as paragons of right living (they are to be found in nearly every city and town) may not be

responsible for this false notion of virtue that proves such a fruitful source of failure in Christian living.

Finally, there is the "clatter" cause, if I may use the term. Millions of people are so deafened by the noise and clatter of common task work that they never hear the sweet music of the higher life. A visitor once wished to hear the chimes of Saint Nicholas in the old tower at Amsterdam. He got himself up into the tower and saw a man there wearing wooden gloves and pounding on the keyboard. All he could hear, up in the tower, was the clatter of the keys under the wooden gloves and the harsh clanging of the bells above. Yet, out in the city and beyond, there floated entrancing music. A peasant in a field stopped his plowing to listen in silence, enraptured by the marvelous bell notes from the tower. An artisan ceased his work and bowed his head.—Aren't most of us too close to the material everyday things of life—too close to hear the sweet strains that are in the air, the divine inspirations that point to the ideal way of Christian living?

The Catholic Church recognizes these causes and warns repeatedly against them. But she does more than merely warn.

The Church begins early to inculcate actively the necessity of ideal Christian living. Lispering children recite with her: "God made me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world and to be happy with Him forever in the next." From her pulpits, year in and year out, she cries: "Remember thy last end!" "Be ye perfect even as your Heavenly Father is perfect."

At the mother's knee, in her schools and colleges, through pious associations, study groups, her sacred confessionals, she teaches, teaches, teaches! And the

burden of her lessons is always: "Be ye perfect!" The acquiring of virtue, the development of supernatural character, the living of the ideal Christian life must come before every other consideration in her scheme of conduct.

Virtue, in general, is a habit of doing right. One must work to grow perfect in the particular virtues. And in this, the Church teaches, the will to do right is what counts most on the part of the individual. But the will cannot act without being moved by the intellect. It must have a moving motive.—I have read of a physician who had a habit of taking morphine secretly. He tried five cures and failed to break the habit. But one day his little daughter saw him taking the "shot" and in her innocence ran up to him and said: "Oh daddy, do that to me!" That was enough. He had at last a motive that moved his will. It was the envisioning of that little one as a fiend one day like himself. He never took another dose of morphine. If one keeps the powerful natural will in motion habitually by powerful supernatural motives, supernatural virtue follows as effect follows cause.

Then, there is the necessity of humbly relying upon God for one's sufficiency. And here the Church presents her doctrine of public and private prayer and the sacramental system of grace. These she offers as aids, nay as necessary means, to ideal Christian living. Well does she know that

"We are but organs mute, till a master
touches the keys—
Verily vessels of earth into which God
poureth the wine;

Harps are we, silent harps that have
hung in the willow trees,
Dumb till our heart-strings swell and
break with a pulse divine."

Finally, "with desolation is all the land made desolate, because there is no one that thinketh in his heart." Meditation, especially prayerful consideration of the life of Christ, is important.—It is said that Michelangelo sat blindfolded while another read to him repeatedly the story of the Crucifixion of our Divine Lord. Then, when his soul was thoroughly imbued with the scene, he carved his masterpiece. While using all the other means taught by Mother Church for ideal Christian living could one do better than climax his efforts by saturating his soul with the Spirit of Christ?

In conclusion, if, with the truant in the "Hound of Heaven," most Christians feel themselves failures and repeat after him in sad soliloquy

"My days have crackled and gone up
in smoke,
Have puffed and burst as sun-starts
on a stream

And now my heart is as a broken fount,
Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt
down ever

From the dank thoughts that shiver
Upon the sighful branches of my mind."

if, I say, most Christians feel that way, especially in the presence of their crucifixes, may it not be because they have not turned to Mother Church for light and guidance and—the tender touch of her comforting hand?

CHRISTIAN LOYALTY

Address delivered on August 29, 1937.

The record of valiant Christian loyalties is not confined to the annals of the early Christian martyrs. Each passing age of the Christian era has cited its honor roll of heroes. And current history is making a modern counterpart of the ancient martyrology.

Recently, Father Manuel Jove, a Spanish Claretian, and fourteen clerical students, were executed in Cervera, Catalonia. These citizens of Spain and sons of Mother Church were offered *their freedom if they would blaspheme God*. Steadfastly, the entire group declared their "*Nonpossumus!*—We cannot do it!" A soldier took a crucifix from the person of Father Jove and handing it back to him demanded that he throw it on the ground and trample upon it. The stalwart priest refused. The ruffian band then tore the crucifix from his grasp and shouted: "If you do not do as we order, we shall force this crucifix down your throat." And savagely they beat the head of the gallant Claretian with the crucifix he would not defile. Finally, the fifteen Christian men were massacred!

In the same sad country, maddened followers of the red flag stood Marion Espar, a Barcelona attorney, up to shoot him. (His offense was that he was a Christian.) "My poor brothers," cried Espar, "I pardon you. I offer my blood for you. Long live Christ the King!" And as the hot lead hissed through the air to the heart of this Christian gentleman, the last words of his heroic speech echoed from the hillside: "Long live Christ the King!"

These are the deeds of greedy godless men who have got a strangle hold on a Christian nation and

seek to choke out of it the last spark of religious life. This is the spirit of Satanism that is abroad so universally today that no less a leader than the Vicar of Christ himself was prompted to cry out to the world: "If we pass in review the long and sorrowful sequence of woes that, as a sad heritage of sin, mark the stages of fallen man's earthly pilgrimage, from the flood on, it would be hard to find spiritual and material distress so deep, so universal, as that which we are now experiencing. . ."

It is not surprising, then, that a call has gone out from the Holy Father summoning all the world to spiritual arms, a call for a united front against the evils that beset our lives, a call for Christian loyalty!

Pleadingly the Shepherd of Christendom writes: "The same charity of Christ moves us to turn once again to you, venerable brethren, to the faithful in your charge, to the whole world, and to exhort all *to unite and to resist with all their might* the evils that are crushing humanity and the still greater evils that are threatening."

The "evils," he says. And what are these "evils" that call for a revival of the spirit of Christian loyalty? His Holiness calls them by name.

Greed—"the accursed hunger for gold." That is named first. "From greed," he says, "arises mutual distrust that casts a blight on all human dealings; from greed arises hateful envy which makes a man consider the advantages of another as losses to himself; from greed arises narrow individualism which orders and subordinates everything to its own advantage without taking account of others, on the contrary, cruelly trampling underfoot all rights of others. Hence the disorder and inequality from

which arises the accumulation of the wealth of nations in the hands of a small group of individuals who manipulate the markets of the world at their own caprice to the immense harm of the masses. . ."

Nationalism—exaggerated nationalism, based on egoism. That is named second. "Right order of Christian charity," says the Pope, "does not disapprove of lawful love of country and a sentiment of justifiable nationalism; on the contrary, it controls, sanctifies and enlivens them. If, however, egoism, abusing this love of country and exaggerating this sentiment of nationalism, insinuates itself into the relations between people and people, there is no excess that will not seem justified. . . In public life, sacred principles, the guide of all social intercourse are trampled upon; the solid foundations of right and honesty, on which the state should rest, are undermined; polluted and closed are the sources of those ancient traditions which, based on faith in God and fidelity to His law, secured the true progress of nations."

Atheism is the third and last named by the venerable Holy Father. And in powerful and stirring language he presents the picture of it: "Profiting by so much economic distress and so much moral disorder, the enemies of all social order, be they called Communists or any other name, boldly set about breaking through every restraint. This is the most dreadful evil of our times, for they destroy every bond of law, human or divine; they engage openly and in secret in a relentless struggle against religion and against God Himself. . . Today, . . . atheism has already spread through large masses of the people: well organized, it works its way even into the common schools; it appears in theatres;

in order to spread, it makes use of its own cinema films, of the gramophone and the radio. With its own printing presses it prints booklets in every language; it promotes special exhibitions and public parades; it has formed its own political parties and its own economic and military systems. This organized and militant atheism works untiringly by means of its agitators, with conferences and projections, with every means of propaganda, secret and open, among all classes, in every street, in every hall; it secures for this nefarious activity the moral support of its own universities, and holds fast the unwary with the mighty bonds of its organizing power."

The loyal Christian is called upon to resist, with all the fervor and zeal of an indignant Christ driving out the money changers from the temple, but with Christ-like prudence and restraint and full regard for the laws of charity and justice—to resist, by all lawful means, especially by prayer and penance and personal perfection of life, these monsters that are crushing some and threatening all the nations of the world!

Let me describe, in some detail, the Christian whose loyalty the reigning Pontiff calls upon and whose consequent willingness to bear spiritual arms against the evils of our day the Catholic Church approves.

He will heed the words of the strong man of Tarsus who climaxed his battles for Christ by bowing his neck to the axe of the executioner: "Put you on the armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil: for our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the

world of this darkness, against the spirit of wickedness in high places. . . Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of justice: in all things taking the shield of faith wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one: and take unto you the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God." (Ephes. 6:10-17)

"Fear is the beginning of wisdom." Perhaps many a man would never have saved his soul if he had not, at first, been brought to the feet of his God by a wholesome fear of the eternal judgments. From fear men may rise to perfect love, looking upon God as their Father and obeying Him because they love Him. And so, in the loyal Christian the gifts of Piety and Fear of the Lord will stir to life.

Socrates was once asked whether he considered the King of Persia a happy man. "I cannot tell," answered the sage, "for I do not know whether he is proficient in knowledge and virtue: they alone make men happy."—The loyal Christian, standing on the shoulders of Socrates, understands that only the will of God is a safe guide to his living—the will of God which embraces all knowledge and leads to virtue. The gift of Knowledge will, therefore, show itself in him.

I see the loyal Christian wary of the deceits of the devil and chary of the dangers to his salvation, under the influence of the gift of Counsel. I see him studying, nay praying, that he may see more clearly the mysteries and intricacies of Revealed Truth, as the gift of Understanding awakens within him. I see him eager for the things of the spirit, relishing with holy delight the things of God and

directing his whole life and all his actions to the greater honor and glory of God, as the gift of Wisdom surges through his soul. Finally, in the face of a world whose self-sufficiency and sensual appetites crave a release from all restrictions and whose philosophers demand the dethronement of conscience and the retrenchment of personal responsibility, of a world which despises reason, logic, and all the processes of mind that make for truth and beauty and goodness, of a world in which the *selfishly* rich and the *selfishly* powerful crush under the wheels of special privilege and social injustice the poor and the laboring man, he stands forth courageously and with unwavering resolution seeks to do the will of God in all things, the will of men notwithstanding! Under the spell of the precious gift of Fortitude he marches on!

Christian loyalty!—Perhaps I could not better sum up the sentiments I should like to express concerning it, as I conclude, than by quoting from the pen of Dr. M. D. Babcock through his well loved poem *Be Strong*:

“Be Strong!

We are not here to play, to dream, to drift;
We have hard work to do, and loads to lift;
Shun not the struggle—face it; 'tis God's gift.

“Be Strong!

Say not, “The days are evil. Who's to blame?”
And fold the hands and acquiesce—oh shame!
Stand up, speak out, and bravely, in God's name.

“Be Strong!

It matters not how deep entrenched the wrong,
How hard the battle goes, the day how long;
Faint not—fight on! To-morrow comes the
song.”

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