

McIntyre, Bonaventure
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CHARACTERISTIC CHRISTIAN IDEALS

by

Bonaventure McIntyre, O. F. M.



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Rev. Bonaventure McIntyre, O. F. M.

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

(On Sundays from August 16 to 30, 1936)

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EXEMPLIFYING THE CHRISTIAN IDEAL IN OUR DAILY LIVES

Address delivered on August 16, 1936

It used to be our proud boast that America was the most prosperous country on the face of the earth. America, as such, was very nearly one hundred per cent self-satisfied when a world war, an epidemic of influenza, and lastly the worst economic depression of modern times, made us qualify our boast of happier days. Death is usually the sharpest harbinger of God, but for some strange reason it seems that the depression, which brought such terror to high places and such agony to humble alleys, has saddened people more than millionfold carnage of war time. Can it be that our canonization of soft living has taken us so far from sanity and balance?

In spite of all our troubles we must surely realize that we are still the spoiled children of the earth, living as we do in this land of strength and beauty gripped to the breast of the world. Statue of Liberty fronting the sea, ships flying the flags of all nations passing beneath her feet into the port of New York, city of mighty towers, shining spires, noise, speed, heaving energy, as if something colossal were being born every minute, as it truly is in that amazing metropolis. And north and south and west of it smaller duplicates, cities shrouded in smoke, shot through with flame, where toiling, sweating men are snatching the fabric of a new world from the mouths of fiery dragons.

And beyond the towns a galaxy of grandeur lying around every few hundred miles. There are pine forests that make the Schwarzwald seem like a bit of woodland, there are sky-piercing mountains.

And for sheer beauty there are gardens hung with golden oranges, framed with roses that fountain over old walls and trail thier petals in the oceans that lap many a city's feet along our double sea-board. Endless fields of white cotton, where men and women, children of the sun, bearing heaped-up baskets on their heads, stepping proudly as monarchs as they go, sing only as the children of haunted spirits can sing. And harvesters driving their chariots of a thousand invisible horses through seas of golden grain rippled by the wind into burnished waves that match the summer's sun. And churches and schools in a network from city to city, from sea to sea, proclaiming to the world that here—where anything approaching the age of one hundred is already venerable, where there are very few of the ancient arts, where there is no dust of the ages—we, too, are taking the most direct route to the highest quest, we are also building men for God.

One hundred years ago travel was by stage coach, on horseback, by canal boat—for that wonder of wonders the Erie Canal had just been completed and opened. The first railway had just been built to carry the granite for Bunker Hill monument from Quincy quarries to tidewater, and the rails were of wood. The Western frontier of our civilization went little beyond the Mississippi. Beyond that lay the great American desert, home of the Indian, the coyote, and the buffalo. The population of the country did not exceed twelve million.

What stupendous changes have come to pass! A network of steel from coast to coast; people fly across the continent in a few hours; they telephone across the world as if it were a whispering gallery.

One hundred years ago Napoleon fretted out his soul with impatience in Moscow for news of what might be going on in Paris. Today the speed of the lightning express is already forgotten and they can send a radio schedule around the world seven times in a second. The great American desert is now a checkerboard of noble states and at least one hundred and twenty five million people live between our Eastern and Western shores.

All very wonderful, is it not? You would expect this land of ours to match the mythical Utopia and that we should be having paradise on earth; but the bitter fact is, we have more money, more food, more power than at any time in our history or in the history of any nation under the sun, and yet our people seem to be more helpless, more destitute, more confused than ever before. All the ingenuity of man has been exploited to make this a perfectly comfortable place to live in and now we have discovered that our very speed has confused us, our very plenty has beggared us, and we seem to be living in a runaway world and the leaders are having a difficult time in recapturing the reins and stopping the runaway.

In Greek mythology you read about a daring youth named Phaeton who tried to drive his father's chariot which was the sun. He lost control of it in mid heaven and Appolo's fiery steeds ran off into unknown regions of the sky in and out among the stars, hurtling the chariot over the pathless spaces. Phaeton saw the world going afire, but he was unable to stop the destruction he had started. To prevent a universal conflagration mighty Jupiter launched a thunderbolt which not only struck the

driver from his seat, but blotted him out of existence. It is not a nice picture, but isn't it true that there have been months in recent years when the country seemed to be not so far from one of those national upheavals which are as little discriminating as a tornado. In the wake of such devastating things can be found the corpses of the good and the bad, the debris of institutions that are venerable and useful as well as those which are cankerous from evil. Now, thanks be to God, we are gradually coming back. Now more than ever before we need the reign of patience, common sense, and real religion.

Acquit me of seeming to be violently direct if I point a lesson from all this without which all my talking might be no more than pleasant rhetoric. A moment ago I made bold to say that we are living in a runaway world. We have served ourselves well enough, but as a nation have we not failed God? There are so many millions who do not believe in God, who deny the divinity of Jesus Christ, who have no comprehension of the supernatural, who know nothing about religion except to ridicule it along with yokels, altogether making us a generation of poor sophisticates which knows no other law than its own will. The thing it wishes to do is right. Whatever runs counter to its whims is wrong. Are we inviting ruin with our eyes wide open? We have tried to run away from God and He has allowed us to run into a blind alley.

In spite of all our troubles we have not learned that the great question is not how fast the wheels of progress are turning but how steadfast are our feet in the ways that lead to God. In spite of the wreckage strewn about us we have not learned that a na-

tion's true greatness is not to be measured by clime or natural resources or material civilization, but by the refinement, the decency, the virtue of its people. In spite of the fact that no machine has yet been invented which can supply us with an ounce of common sense, the flash of an idea, a sip of love, or two years of life, we seem to prefer our futile efforts with their consequent melancholy and despair to a wholesome return to God. If you love your country pray today that America with its inversion of values, with its lack of spiritual anchorage, may soon find its way back to fervent Christian living, that over the smaller sounds of fear and greed and rebellion a mighty prayer may soon ascend on high to the God of nations, begging for that humility which will smother foolish self-complacency and give us in its place true life of the spirit and contentment again. We know that genuine happiness is not in the power of this world to give or to destroy.

The astounding mystery of God's love for mankind may be discovered here and now for if we turn to Him for help today, like homesick children crying in the night for comfort, there will be no Jovian thunderbolt, no Pilate's "What I have written I have written", but now, as on the night of His Passion, He will wipe the tears and blood from His face and speak of hope to millions of broken hearted men and women who scourged and mocked Him but a moment ago. In this modern crisis the Church holds up to the gaze of humanity the everlasting symbol of the religion which has its roots in the love of a broken heart, the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ. Pilate's cry of mockery, "Behold your king", has become her watchword. Through Him peace on

earth to men of good will, may still sing its way through the blur of martial drums and discordant strife; through Him our lives may be transformed into something brave and worthy with all broken dreams mended and all weary scars healed. As Richter said so beautifully of Christ: "The purest among the strong and the strongest among the pure, Christ lifted with his wounded hands empires from their hinges and changed the stream of centuries. Let us give Him the service of our hearts and be happy again. There is no salvation in any other."

Religion is not easy and we can not take it easily. God's love is a serious matter and we must take it seriously. He will not be denied and mocked forever. The world is His, the bond is signed and sealed in His Blood, His Cross will always have to be the great summing-up of life—and we shall never understand anything about our life or achieve peace of mind until we put on Christ and go the entire way with Him, walking every pathway with Him, thinking with His mind, loving with His heart. This is to live magnificently before angels and men, for the energy of Christ can surge through our hearts from the Mass and the sacraments and prayer, like a strong happy tide of fresh, purling blood. Then, by the grace of God, the poor tattered garments of everyday life may become the very stuff of the king's robe. In one word, we must make our religion the paramount thing in life else we shall fall slain in the very vestibule of heaven.

The spread of Christ's Kingdom on earth is conditional upon the zeal of those who belong to it. The good tidings promised to shepherds and kings and all the people of vanished years were neither

myth nor fancy. If we are brave enough to exemplify the Christian ideal in our own lives we shall surely lead the way back to Christ the King by enlisting ourselves under His banners with more simple faith, with more fervent love, and with constant prayer. So shall we be able to teach the world again the Master's secret, which can make of life a broad, shining river of contentment flowing on under the common sunlight from the source and center of the world's heart, a heart that is human and divine, the very Heart of Jesus Christ.

Christ our Lord gave humanity its lesson in the art of living twenty centuries ago and the lesson is very plain: the only life that matters is the one lived in our own souls in loving union with God. The silence, the obscurity, the obedience, the commonplace life among the hills of obscure country folk, were His commentary on the glories of the world. All human dreams of greatness come toppling down in the presence of Nazareth, where the Real Presence was hidden for thirty years. Even today there is a charm about the place—quiet, peaceful as it was in the days when He viewed it from the hills above the village, snow-clad Lebanon in the distance above, and the happy little silver sea glistening in the sun below. There He watched the children playing in the market place, the unhired laborer at the vineyard gate, the farmer winnowing his grain, the sparrows being sold in the market place. Even in the company of others He lived in a great solitude and often “He went into the mountains alone to pray”.

We are all on the verge of wonderful things; a tiny veil separates us from the splendour of God. We

stop short because we do not realize the possibilities that are ours, how even in mean streets and in narrow surroundings a soul may grow to the fullness of the life of Christ. His own life was apparently narrow and confined and it grew more narrow and more confined until one day He had only room to walk between the armed guards who led Him to His death. Many people want religion to be a matter of rapture and ecstasy; they look for signs and wonders and find it hard to believe in the splendours of faith, the throbbing love of God, the marvels of grace, because they do not see fiery fingers writing in magic letters across the sky-line of life. Most of us must travel a well-worn road and by carrying the cross along that road our full Christian life will come to its real stature. To be a mere man, to work back of the counter, to weary oneself at a desk, to be a teacher in school, to be a laborer in the fields, to be a tired woman in the home, may be expressing your dignity as children of God in drab, work-a-day life. Signs and wonders and even understanding of it all may never be granted to us and life's complex meaning may never become clear until we are carried down the sunset crimson hill to the valley of peace, and the book of judgment will be unfolded and the soul may read "Well done, good and faithful servant." Our Lord did not put anything wonderful before us to achieve in this world, except to know Him, to love Him, to serve Him in this world in order to be happy with Him forever in the next.

ST. FRANCIS, INTERPRETER OF THE CHRISTIAN IDEAL

Address delivered on August 23, 1936

We cannot read the mind of God ever; but to us, seeing as in a glass darkly, one thing seems perfectly clear: that the really great characters of history are those who have striven most mightily to spread His Kingdom on earth, to fling the sceptre of His domination over the nations of the world. The rise and fall of dynasties, the doings and deaths of kings, are but bursting bubbles on the waves of change. Look deeper and see the tide that rises and swells in obedience to the will of God signalized in its tremendous beatings by the lives of men who were most closely associated with Jesus Christ in the work of rebuilding the world in His name.

Through the ages their footsteps have been on the hills. Free souls, undaunted champions of Jesus, watering every corner of the world with their blood, carrying His name and His message at the peril of their lives under the Chinese wall, in the Siberian snow-castle, in the cinnamon-grove of Persia, in the African jungle; preaching Jesus and Him crucified in every land from the rising to the setting of the sun. To be sure, the saints of God usually have a sort of common level in the calendar of the Church. They were all good and just. But in religious communities the brethren may be forgiven a very pardonable pride when they provide a distinguished cultus for their founders and particularly brilliant lights in the department of canonized saintship as well as of scholarly attainment.

And so I think you will acquit me of bad taste if I

say that in all the galaxy of God's heroes, in all the bright harbingers of the Prophets down the corridors of the centuries, there has been none brighter, none more human, none more beloved than the poor little man of Assisi whose love for Christ was a burning flame, a sweet contagion that overflowed on all creatures and changed the face of the earth.

The beloved St. Francis of Assisi has been called, even by those not of the faith, the most perfect pattern of Christ that nineteen centuries of Christianity have produced. Men have written much about the middle ages—Protestants more than Catholics—but the magnet of that olden, golden day seems to be preeminently the singing Saint of Assisi. The children upon whom his mantel has fallen love to call him the singing saint, because his life was in very truth a song of love for God and of tenderness for every creature that came from His hand. He was God's own troubadour and his spirit was sweet as a carillon of silver bells that reached across the world and found echo in the souls of men, glorifying the most drab and commonplace existence. A poet—aye, a poet-saint, the inspiration of Dante and Giotto—who could dream dreams beautifully fantastic of places back of the hills where sunsets go down, who could weave palaces dazzling and spires of incense housing musical chimes up in the clouds of God's heaven. A poet-saint who spoke the language of the birds and who communed with the haughty roses that ran riot about his beloved Portiuncula; a poet-saint who spoke not the language of logic, perhaps, but like his Master before him, the language of love for all creation. A sympathetic saint with the strong soul of an archangel and with:

the tender heart of a child, to whose blessed magnetism and witchery the world has thrilled in every century since his passing. No son of thunder, but a prophet of consolation, an optimistic saint whose gentle laughter has rippled 'round the world. The universe meant more to him than a mere march upon roses to paradise; for he did not ignore the black shadows on life's canvas. He suffered as only the highly sensitive can suffer, in soul and body and when he died he was quite blind. Even as when Dante entered the Empyrean, blindness fell upon his eyes which was at last removed that he might gaze upon the glories prepared for the saints of God. And so did Francis insist that the inner meaning of the aggregated sufferings of mankind was an invincible triumphant love, and to this did he hold against every sorrow of the intruding years and therein did he find perfect joy. And this was not a chimera but the result of deep Catholic conviction that there was an exquisite beauty and loveliness at the very heart of life, because Jesus, Eternal Beauty, was enthroned above it all in His snow-white purity in the rosy sun of dawn but smiling down with human sympathy—the lover of men for ages.

It do not hesitate to say that Saint Francis was in the first place a poet and that this spiritual complexion was responsible for his especial pattern of sanctity—not in the sense that he was merely a singer of sublime songs. True poets are strange people; the priests and prophets of the world, given to universal thinking and having in their dreams a nucleus of thought older than the hills or the sea, the toga of their empire reaching back into the past and down into the future; and paradoxically enough,

this imaginative type, gentle on the surface but inflexible underneath, makes the finest executive, possessing all the nervous energy of a sensitive soul—not the small, saving executive, but the executive of wide dreams which genius can cause to come true—given to preaching panaceas, reforms, crusades with pentecostal fire that sweeps everything before it. Such a dream, daring, magnificent and evangelical was responsible for the crusade of the three orders that St. Francis launched against the degenerate society of his time, emancipating the middle classes and giving the death blow to feudalism. And just as surely as every maxim of his rule came from Rome, so surely did every yearning of his heart come from the gospel of Christ; and nothing was dearer to him than to restore all things after the pattern of the gospel, to build again in the world a very real democracy based upon the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, a flourishing kingdom spanning all nations and joining all skies, a kingdom where the lowly might sit above the proud and where the gentle in spirit might be exalted above the dignitaries of this world; for the cornerstone of this Sodality would be a love so great it would break down the barrier of caste and eschew political interest, which has taken its toll of millions from the days of the Ptolemies. Once more, as in the days of the infant Church, each to all would be brother, banded together by the wonderful alchemy of Christ; there would be a place for the Umbrian peasant, the robber, and the outcast of the people. The centre of the kingdom was Jesus and its circumference would be the whole of humanity even as God made of one blood all the nations of the earth.

Born in Assisi, a town of Umbria in Italy, on the twenty-sixth of September, eleven hundred and eighty-two, he seemed destined to become a wealthy merchant, as was his father before him; but the young Francesco gave so generously to the poor that his father soon relinquished this project. This generous disposition, remarkable from his early years, led him to make a promise that he would never refuse a petition for alms. One day, while he was crossing the plain of Assisi on horseback, he sighted a leper approaching him and holding out his diseased hands for alms. The fastidious boy was frozen with horror but the graces of God conquered when he remembered that promise. He dismounted, embraced the leper and gave him an alms. He again mounted his horse, turned to wave a farewell, but the vision had vanished and Francis was all alone on the plain of Assisi. The chroniclers say that an angel of God, in the guise of a leper, had come to test the sincerity of his promise—and Francis was not found wanting.

In twelve hundred and one the inhabitants of Assisi went out to war against Perugia, and Francis, who was then nineteen years old, was wounded in battle. During the days of his convalescence, God spoke to his heart and in the silent watches of the night pleaded with him to abandon the world with its veneer and false ostentation, but Francis was not able to understand the language of heaven. When the days of his illness had passed he returned to his olden ways in Assisi, to his love of rich dress and fun and pleasure. His lute called softly to the answering stars and through the dusky streets of the Umbrian town, companioned by a merry throng in quest

of joy, gayest of them all went Francis of Assisi. "The flower of youth" they called him—joyous of soul, his life a festive dance, a swinging, chiming roundelay. But there came a day when above the lilt of his song the voice of God did penetrate the revelry and did thrill the soul of the carefree boy forever. And then the slumbering streets and the dew-sweet lanes no longer wakened to his minstrelsy, for he had become the troubadour of God. He sang a new song and attuned his voice to a nobler theme; he began to sing of the bliss of pain and the gain of loss; he began to tread the trails of higher romance with poverty as his bride.

Heretofore he had given his money to the poor; he now stripped himself of his beautiful clothes to cover their poverty. He was still romantic enough to dream of becoming a great warrior and he set out to take service in the army of Walter of Brienne. Shortly afterwards he was told in a dream to return to his own country. Arrived there, while praying in the church of San Damiano, the crucifix became vocal and spoke to him in the words: "Go, Francis, and repair thou my house, which is falling down." Thereafter events followed one another in rapid succession; the audience with Pope Innocent the Third the next day; the foundation of the first Franciscan Order in twelve hundred and nine; the reception of St. Clare on Palm Sunday in the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli; the approval of the Rule for the Third Order; the departure of St. Francis for the East and his appearance before the Sultan who had placed a price on every Christian head, but who so admired the simplicity of this little man from

the West that he issued orders for more lenient treatment of his Christian prisoners.

So much for the life of St. Francis as men knew it. We know now from the records of his intimate companions—the best exponents of his life beautiful—of those long nights of ceaseless prayer, of his continual mortifications, of his frequent ecstasies, of that tender love of the Master which enabled him to see worlds of which our purblind eyes do not dream. He loved God and His Christ so intensely and so simply withal, and in them he loved every creature under the sun. Read the testament of the beloved Assisian saint. Read how he preached to the birds back of Rivo Torto and how the birds came at his call to listen to his praises of their Maker. He called to the fields and the valleys and the mountains to worship God with him. To his beautiful soul it was entirely clear that the birds were up at the peep of dawn to honor God with their matin chants; that the lilies of the field were lifting up their shining faces in mute thanksgiving to the Creator; that the stars were grateful and that they arched His path with light when He walked the world at night time scattering benedictions.

This beautiful love of God and nature went on increasingly until he deserved to receive the very kiss of the Godhead, the Stigmata. The five wounds of Christ crucified were imprinted on his emaciated body and from that day until the end of his life was like one of those silent sunsets which are so beautiful that they seem to make music in the air. And on the day he died, when he welcomed his little sister Death, he passed out of this world singing a verse from the psalms: "Bring my soul out of prison that

I may praise Thy name; the just await me until Thou reward me." So passed out of this world one of the most human of the saints of God; and we reverently believe, according to the tradition in our Order, that his simplicity merited for him the throne in heaven which Lucifer had forfeited by his pride.

Little brother Francis, apostle of simplicity and gentleness and other worldliness, was dead and the larks began to sing his dirge. Such lives as his are deathless and the message of his life is, perhaps, the supreme spiritual necessity in an age which is so pride-girt, artificial, and selfish. May some measure of his spirit descent upon our own lives to bless them, to turn them to gentler, more fragrant Spring.

THE CATHOLIC IDEAL IN EDUCATION

Address delivered on August 30, 1936

There is a polarity in the spiritual world and if you do not cling to one pole you drift to the other. When a person does not want to believe a certain thing it is wonderful how he can step right over it and never notice it. Give him a book that will explain his difficulty and he lays it aside and gives himself all sorts of excuses for not reading it. Too busy, more important things to read, will read it later on—and he never does. But if he comes across a book, no matter how ignorant or unfair or superficial, that sneers at religion, he will gravitate to it as a mouse goes to a piece of cheese, and absorb it poison and all.

It is pitiful to see people weakly surrendering their faith before the dummy weapons of braggart objectors who would collapse under expert investigation. So I say to you at the beginning: if man or devil ever insinuates anything against God's teachings do not be so foolish as to honor the insinuation and thus dishonor God. Rather meet the insinuation with a swift act of faith and, if need be, make your inquiries later through an expert.

Not so long ago a man came to me with a difficulty arising from a train of thought suggested by a remark made by his employer, a supposedly educated man, certainly a successful business man, but without religion of any kind. The point of his remarks had been that the generations are getting smarter all the time and now that people know more of science they need less of religion. I think that the

question is precisely this: *Is mankind getting smarter?* Was the world war, with its unprecedented waste of money and human blood poured into filthy ditches, a proof of increasing human wisdom? Is the depression, the result of man's mismanagement of the plenteous gifts of God, any indication of growing smartness? It is true that recent generations have had mechanical inventions and a knowledge of material forces which our ancestors did not have. Are we therefore smarter than our ancestors because we are enjoying the fruits of work begun and carried on by them? Is the man who drives the latest model automobile smarter than the man who put the first clumsy horseless carriage together years ago?

More information about material things, more ways of using them—we could scarcely help having these in contrast with those who had to do the pioneering—but are we intellectually superior to them? Does this generation reason more clearly, more deeply, more honestly, than the people of past centuries? Would it not rather seem that we have the moving-picture mind, the tabloid taste, the shot-in-the-arm variety of conduct, in place of good entertainment, solid reading, and steady unhysterical behavior. We must remember, too, that mechanical invention is far from being the highest manifestation of genius. The greatest genius is exercised in the realm of pure thought. The non-religious headlines of our day are very far from rivalling the intellectual powers of St. Augustine or of St. Thomas Aquinas. A man may invent a new machine, but if he is so foolish or dishonest as to deny the existence of God his genius is very limited indeed. He might

laugh at the suggestion that a tiny clock could invent itself, but if he shuts his eyes to the order and beauty in the universe, the thousands of huge planets revolving about vaster suns at dizzy speed, yet with such precision that their slightest movements can be predicted to the second centuries in advance; if he refuses to give the name of God to the Artist who colored the rings of Saturn and the petals of the rose; if he refuses to give the name of God to the Power which directs the planets, makes the human heart to beat, the human mind to reflect, and has given us by deliberate design all the mechanism of loving and hating, of living and dying; if he refuses to see a force in men which is not material, something besides a handful of potash, a great deal of water, and the two gases, hydrogen and oxygen; if he refuses to admit in men an invisible, imponderable equation which makes one man different from another—a spiritual soul which is back of each man's thinking and yearning—such a man shows either incompetency or dishonesty in one of the most urgent and elementary applications of the human intellect. Religion is the logical consequence of the existence of a Creator, and a generation too smart to be religious would be very dull indeed.

The human mind, if it is going to keep sane, must have a crucial idea or assumption about which its activity revolves, and around this focal point a man will build up his thinking. It happens that God has created the material universe to suit Himself and if a man sees that and constructs his mental universe beginning with the point that is eternally real, that is God, the world about him will coincide more or less, as he thinks clearly, with the world as

God made it. But if he gets out of touch with reality, God and God's world, he will be impelled by some primary need of his nature to substitute something for God. It is a peculiar thing that just as soon as a human being thinks he has got rid of the idea of God he begins to put something else in its place. He will make a deity of science, for example, and a man who flatters himself that he is too wise to accept the Apostle's Creed will swallow the glib credos of every shallow sophisticate. He will believe that at last when all the people have been sufficiently educated there will be a mighty silent, bloodless revolution under the knife of Karl Marx, doctor of the proletariat. He will believe that he himself has become one of the esoterics who after long ages has thrown off his shackles of medieval Catholicism, has advanced through the Reformation and the French Revolution to the age of freedom, which will now lay aside warfare along with thumb-screws, inquisitors, goblins, devils, private property, marriage, prisons, priests, poverty, and death. At last the torch of reason is alight and by common consent the whole race will have discarded the curses of the ignorant past as toys are discarded by children at maturity. Without realizing it the man has put himself in the place of God; but there always comes a day when he has to reckon with the fundamental facts all over again and he finds that men have not changed essentially during the whole historical period. For example, there was plenty of idealistic talk ringing in men's ears in 1914 when the ghastly, revealing world war broke into their dreams and the awful spectacle of humanity's strength and humanity's weakness was thrust before our vision once more.

Standing in an immense darkness of doubt and futility, if he is at all fairminded he must see that no merely human system or philosophy or creed can ever effectually relieve the gloom of godlessness,—not the best intentions of a Buddha, a Mohammed, a Luther or a Kant or a Huxley. All of them only thickened the confusion of tongues. None has dared to say the final word. Above them all arises the luminous and all-merciful figure of Jesus Christ, saying what no other dared say without seeming ridiculous: “I am the Light of the world”. Not even Moses could say that and be taken seriously by millions of men for nineteen centuries. If such a man could only stumble out of the darkness of his mind into the light of grace at such a moment, what a joy of discovery he would experience to find that Christ is not merely an historical character, but also a wonderful Saviour. If he could find himself on bended knees, like Thomas the doubter in the upper room saying: “My Lord and my God”, he would find himself at home in the heart of God.

Even for the most fair minded man there will be difficulties—for it does seem that God’s Providence functions badly at times. Could he, for example, believe in the goodness of a God who could stop a war and would not do so? He cannot doubt the power and he surely cannot accept the malevolent Deity of the Dualist Manicheans. But he might help himself by the application of common sense; he might remember that God gave men a capacity for all good things and men might reject the capacity. If men were not free to reject the gifts of God and do evil they would be no more than puppets that are worked with wires pulled off-stage. He might see

that God meant men to be like Him of their own free will; we must be good because we want to be good and not because we are forced to be good. And the test of goodness would be the liberty of choice, the freedom to take the good or the bad.

He can see clearly that sin exists, that it is spread through the race like an infection which grows worse instead of better as men advance in civilization, and that it will not yield to anything which is not superior to human nature itself. One man's vanity, another's ambition, another's duplicity—from one to another the cursed thing spreads, each sin spawning other sins that go on breeding and multiplying and spreading over the whole earth. No human formulae can stop it because, somehow, all human things are tainted with it.

In a universe so mechanically perfect certainly there must have been a bad lesion where a man is concerned. Whatever theory one might hold about creation there must have been a time when man was perfect, too; when he was gloriously, happily part of the divine harmony, as birds sing and beasts run from Creation until now. There must have been a time when man committed his first sin. By some crime or blunder man broke a natural harmony existing between his Creator and himself and that harmony now can be restored only by suffering. It seems to be a fact that all merely human efforts to avoid suffering end by making the matter worse. It can be conquered only by accepting it. If that was not the lesson which God meant to teach the world when He sent His Son, as Christianity teaches, to a short life of poverty, self-denial, misunderstanding, and a felon's death, then there is no answer. And

that can not be. Divine majesty has not explained fully, but there is humanity, there is suffering, there is Christ on the cross. Christ on the cross fits the facts of life and nothing else does. Yes, there is a problem of evil and there is a mystery of suffering, but instead of fearing the world's challenge, "Where is thy God?", the Church, which does not promise you a perfect world, which will not allow you to patronize the sermon on the mount and forget Calvary, points to the Son of God agonizing and dying on the cross to show the way we must live and die. Here, here in the very heart of the world, is our God.

You see the Christian ideal after all, is moral rather than intellectual, just as surely as the Christian dispensation is a school for saints rather than a school of philosophy. Not that the Church slights anything like intellectual advancement. Every year you see the broadening and deepening of the educational curriculum in her schools and colleges to meet the urge of that curiosity, that scientific impulse, with which the Creator has endowed the soul of man. This wonderful Alma Mater of the world's best civilization realizes that while the message of Christianity never changes, almost every other advance is but shifting enlightenment. The scientific knowledge of yesterday is ignorance today. The most brilliant discoveries of yesteryear will be obsolete in a decade. She insists that there must be a great deal more involved in getting a real education than merely learning to know the delights of literature, the wonders of science, and the records of history. She has seen theories of education come and go, but she knows that in every genuine system that has been advanced from the days of the Hebrews

and Greeks, there has been this thread of agreement, differ as they may concerning method: they must all agree that the primary purpose of true education is not so much to make the clever man and the clever woman, but the good man and the good woman. In other words the development of character is to be the thing of paramount importance. Take, for example, the rigid training to which she submits the clergy. She emancipates them from every domestic tie and submits them to a rigorous course of study for long years so that they may be able to pursue every department of scholastic attainment as well as of virtue, to the end that they may become for every nation holy, intelligent leaders of God's people.

Bishop Spaulding said long years ago that the highest vision the mind can reach does but show us that God loves the good and that in the kingdom of God upon earth there is only one aristocracy, the aristocracy of virtue. Did not the Founder of the kingdom in the long ago take unlettered fishermen for his princes; did He not take the blind, the deaf, the dumb, and the halt, for His retinue? And like a torch passed over the tops of the centuries that lowly yet sublime ideal has been transmitted to this day, when the Church points to men of honor and women of virtue, all those who reverence conscience as king, as belonging to God's peerage, which is the only true nobility on the face of the earth.

I will not rehearse at greater lengths the distinctive purpose of Catholic education. The Catholic school does not lay claim to superiority over other schools on purely secular grounds; it does insist that it is equal to, as good as, any other school on purely secular grounds and that it guarantees a more thor-

ough education in the true sense of the word, if education means, and it certainly does, etymologically and practically, the bringing out of what is best in man. The care of the immortal soul is the keynote of Catholic education. We believe with the certainty of divine faith that beneath this earthly garment of flesh and blood there dwells a soul made to the image and likeness of God. From the unbeginning years God cast His net over the world and in its soft meshes wished to harvest all the souls of men. For love of these souls He allowed His Son, the pale, bloodstained Galilean, to die on the Cross twenty centuries ago. By these tokens the soul of the last and least, the soul of a child unborn, means more in the eternal scheme of things than the thousands of worlds which do not make a constellation of thousandfold gems all set in one signet and flashing from the right hand of God's omnipotence. That is why we build these schools at the cost of colossal expense in money and tremendous self-sacrifice on the part of the thousands of men and women who devote their lives to the teaching of American Catholic youth; they make of their work a labor of love, a holy priesthood. We are proud of Catholic schools and colleges which uphold in every quarter the best traditions of American political and social life as handed down by the Fathers of our Country. We are proud of these schools as organizations which redound with so much credit to the cross and the flag, the purest, most puissant emblems of law, order, and Christian civilization which ever saluted the dawn.

CARDINAL HAYES STATES AIMS OF THE CATHOLIC HOUR

(Extract from his address at the inaugural program in the studio of the National Broadcasting Company, New York City, March 2, 1930.)

Our congratulations and our gratitude are extended to the National Council of Catholic Men and its officials, and to all who, by their financial support, have made it possible to use this offer of the National Broadcasting Company. The heavy expense of managing and financing a weekly program, its musical numbers, its speakers, the subsequent answering of inquiries, must be met. . . .

This radio hour is for all the people of the United States. To our fellow-citizens, in this word of dedication, we wish to express a cordial greeting and, indeed, congratulations. For this radio hour is one of service to America, which certainly will listen in interestedly, and even sympathetically, I am sure, to the voice of the ancient Church with its historic background of all the centuries of the Christian era, and with its own notable contribution to the discovery, exploration, foundation and growth of our glorious country. . . .

Thus to voice before a vast public the Catholic Church is no light task. Our prayers will be with those who have that task in hand. We feel certain that it will have both the good will and the good wishes of the great majority of our countrymen. Surely, there is no true lover of our Country who does not eagerly hope for a less worldly, a less material, and a more spiritual standard among our people.

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

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