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Christian
EDUCATION

in an Age of Confusion

JAMES P. TWOHY

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Christian Education In An Age Of Confusion

A series of four addresses delivered on the CATHOLIC HOUR, from August 7, 1949 to August 28, 1949 by Mr. James F. Twohy, of Minneapolis, Minnesota. This program is produced by the National Council of Catholic Men in cooperation with the National Broadcasting Company. At present, the CATHOLIC HOUR, is now in its nineteenth year of broadcasting.

BY
JAMES F. TWOHY



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SOME NOTES ON OUR SOCIAL DISORDER

Talk Given on August 7, 1949

When I was asked to broadcast on this Catholic hour, my first impulse was to fly from temptation. I belong to a generation (now pretty gray about the temples) which grew up in a mild mistrust of what we called the "professional Catholic." To our generation, this gentleman was suspect on two counts: he might be seeking to capitalize his religious affiliation for some personal benefit, or, again, he might be holding himself forth to the world as a representative Catholic. On either count, our rather primitive mistrust had, I think, a certain healthy validity. The first count, if true, would be, of course, wholly contemptible; the second, a pharisaical denial of what every Catholic knows, namely, that no one can ever safely assume that he is truly representative of our Faith. Catholicism, after all, is in some respects a State of Becoming as well as a State of Being. Indeed, it is never a point of arrival so much as a continuous spiritual journey, in which a sure test of progress, for the highest prelate no less than the lowliest parishioner, is a decent humility of

heart. We preferred, therefore, to leave public apologetics to the professional philosophers, who were usually our priests and pastors as well, while we tried as best we could to make our rough job of earning a living conform to the great gift of our Faith.

Today, however, that Faith is bitterly beset by demolition forces converging upon it. The attack is not from the Red left only; it comes also from the Black right, and the bewildered middle. Our modern society stands at one of the major turning points in human affairs, but it is broken into so many helpless fractions and conflicting philosophies that it is tragically ill prepared to meet this sudden challenge of history. It is so desperately in need of the unifying and healing teachings of Christ that anyone calling himself a Christian, even though he be but an every-day laymen immersed in business, is bound to stand up when his name is called and give what testimony he can of the faith that is in him.

In this spirit, as a Catholic and as an American, I should

like to speak of our Christian Education, and the opportunity it affords us to serve God and our country in this age of confusion. I shall not speak here of the doctrinal age of confusion. I shall not speak here of the doctrinal belief which informs our schools, nor limit these observations to Catholic education only. I would include also those valiant little American schools and colleges, besides our own, which are likewise dedicated to Christian education. Insofar as they and we safeguard our ancient inheritance, like seed-corn in time of famine, we are co-trustees of that imperishable Christian culture which created our Western Civilization, and is so needed today to help save it. Any system of education needs a central unifying principle by which man's search for knowledge can be rationally related to the ultimate end which Nature and Nature's God have given him. Around that principle Christian education made our Western culture an organic whole. The abandonment of that unifying principle has led us step by step into the deep disorder which is the Sign of our times.

For education, after all, can never be considered in a vacuum,

apart from the scheme of life which gives it shape and direction. Education is not an entity, a thing like soap—it is a method, a process, like washing; it is not an organ of society like the heart or brain, but a function like metabolism. If it is not rooted in community beliefs, it becomes a lifeless thing, for it must reflect the basic principles and ethics of the community it serves. Before we can examine present day education, therefore, it seems necessary that we first consider the profound disorder of our modern society, in which all its systems of education are imbedded, as the natural reflectors of its broken thought and divided energies.

Today our country is re-arming for the third time in as many decades. Deeply as we hate it, it seems a necessary course in the face of dangers confronting us. Even as we do so, however, with misgiving and dismay, we are conscious that ultimate peace can never be achieved by force alone, that force has no life or meaning save in the thought which animates it. America is the productive master of modern war, and woe to those who would bait or incite this young Republic to loose again its terrible thunderbolts! But our people

hunger for peace. And they are coming to realize that the great armed conflicts already endured have been but the cutting edge of a worldwide revolution,—a revolution long in the making, which will probably be known to the future not as another 30 years war, but as the Great Upheaval of the Twentieth Century, an upheaval in which its wars were so many linked and appalling chain reactions. Unfortunately, we need to be strongly armed in this bloody era of force and violence, but a thousandfold more we need to search out the causes and solution of this upheaval. It involves the social, moral and spiritual values of the Race, and we know that ultimately—when the last gun is silenced—these values can only be settled on the plains of human reason, with the sword of the Spirit.

I have said that this revolution has been a long time in the making. There is little doubt that it received its great thrust and impetus some four hundred years ago with the fateful destruction of spiritual unity in the western world. Now this statement, of course, is not to disparage the invaluable human energies released by the historic events of that time. Still less is it to impugn the motives which

activated them. Some of the founders, and millions of the adherents of that famous movement over the centuries have been men and women of the highest probity and virtue, just as all too many of the Church leaders were then as now infirm and false stewards of their Master, that oldest affliction of the Church. It is not the intent of these observations, therefore, nor is it perhaps within any human competence, to assess with accurate praise or blame the good or evil in the break-up of religious unity. Let the hard fact suffice us here that it certainly unleashed the forces which have spread through the world and wrought our modern chaos. The destruction of the spiritual unity of Western society, so obscured in the abuses and passionate conflicts of the time, created that radical channel change in the main stream of western thought and action which was to lead, not to the true reform sought and needed, but to the ultimate and complete fragmentation of the human community.

Once the great Rock was cleft, a multitude of little springs poured out, sparkling innocently enough in the mountain air, but now converging upon us in a

swollen flood of devastation. In the realm of thought, it validated pure subjectivism and eventually the flight from reason. In morals, by a twisted interpretation of the sacred sovereignty of the personal conscience, which no Christian could ever deny; it burned the libraries, so to speak, of rational sanctions and objective data, and substituted as the emotional rule of conduct the "Flash justification" of what any individual "feels" to be right. In economics, it severed the proper connection of economics with ethics as a definite phase of moral conduct, and transferred it to a separated and sealed department of action with its own amoral and leaky laws. In political science and government, as pointed out by Father Wilfrid Parsons, it split the natural and mutual relationship of liberty with authority, and set one at war with the other. In its sharp oscillations of loyalty between these severed halves of one whole—now making the State the enemy of man as in the individualism of the 18th century, and again his all-powerful master,—as in the Statism of the 20th—it lost the Christian concept of the good society; the concept of a great community wherein liberty is *guarded* by

authority, under Reason and the Law. Today the community of man lies in a welter of confusion. Its nuclear unity has been exploded with an atomic fission hardly less terrifying than the like phenomenon in physical matter which so shocked the world only four years ago yesterday in Japan. Christian belief, as the centripetal force holding western culture together, has been torn out, and the void has been stuffed with a succession of credulities expanding and dissolving like a string of colored soap bubbles.

For it is no accidental by-product of modern thought that our society lives with no fixed convictions or definite moral criteria. Incertitude is the activating principle of modern thought. Its categorical imperative is that man *must* be restless, aimless, rootless, and unhampered by certitude, as a very condition of the motion and change which it calls Progress. A philosophy which is hinged upon what can be touched, measured and proved by sensory experience and statistical data, which holds every absolute concept of the Good, the True, the Beautiful to be an illusion, can only accept and indeed rationalize the natural consequences of

its system of thought. That system, forever glorious for its engines, apparatus, medicines,—all the dazzling discoveries in the physical universe with which it has so enriched mankind, has served also as a dark lantern bearer to lead us into a moral wilderness,—a wilderness in which men have lost the unifying and ultimate meaning of their existence. Our modern civilization is like a magnificent liner, the ship's band playing and all lights brilliantly ablaze, which steams full speed ahead in a great Circle, its Destination marked Nowhere.

Our generation stands in a twilight of ever deepening anxiety. Master of how to live with no remembrance of why, loaded with goods but with no vision of the Good, man has made a religion of his own energy, a dark culture for their own sake

of his physical accomplishments. How, with thunder on the left and right, and something like terror growing in his heart before a worldwide spectacle of human misery and defilement, it is no wonder that he is desperately rifling his own treasury of factual knowledge for the lost secret of his destiny. He remembers that every civilization has rested upon the agreed standards and disciplines of its own culture, and that the life of every culture in history has been its Creed,—the accepted moral code of its people. The paramount problem for all men of good will and good faith in this desperate hour of confusion, is to find some unifying principle of common belief, which alone can ingather the vast means and magnificent techniques of our shattered civilization and give them significance and order.

PRESENT STATE OF OUR EDUCATION

Talk Given on August 14, 1949

Last Sunday, I tried to identify some characteristics of our social disorder. The Break-up of the Sixteenth Century, which shattered the spiritual unity of the Western World, formed also the modern schools and fertilized them with its abundant energy. There was, however, one unplanned elimination—God was gradually dropped from the curriculum. I suppose that some of the religious reformers, earnest seekers of God as some of them were, have been stirring in their graves about it ever since. Even with the rise of Nationalism in the seventeenth century, the new schools were beginning to repudiate metaphysics and theology or at least to disregard them. This trend quickened in the Rationalism of the eighteenth century; and in the industrial materialism of the nineteenth, it came to full fungus growth in that materialistic hypothesis, within the framework of the natural sciences, which is the matrix of modern education.

It is true that the old Theology died hard in this rising secularism. The Christian faith,

particularly in England, had a way of popping up on the academic parapets, like the ghost of Hamlet's father, to vex the peace of the new court. Its epistemology persisted in the English universities, like an evening rustle in the old elms and ivy, long after its bones were thought decently interred; it crossed the Atlantic to thumbprint the early Yale and Harvard and Princeton, and our early school system, and fragments of it are lodged forever, as we know, in the great documents of our own revolution. These manifestations, however, were contemptuously dismissed by the rising naturalism as the last contortions of an organism dying of dismemberment—as indeed it was.

The magnificent rise to power and wealth of those western states which quit the church, especially when compared with the failing fortunes of the Latin States which kept the Faith, gave the new thought that glowing prestige of worldly success, which so often passes for virtue with even some of the best of men. Splendid facilities and

apparatus were provided its schools, and ivy-hung temples to house them; savants and pundits of great distinction were assembled, were trained and duly ordained in the new thought, and in the affluence of an expanding economy, a new hierarchy of learning was gradually sealed within the air-conditioned structure of a perfect positivism.

Now it is difficult to discern error in the culture of which one is an inseparable part, a bit like trying to remember good health in the Alpine village where every citizen has a well-developed goiter. Over the gates of our great universities was carved their noble dedication to the free mind; how were we to know, from the inside, that this was but a counterfeit freedom—the spurious freedom of an enormous room, in which our minds were held in the protective custody of its positivist assumptions? During the self-confident first decades of this century, for instance, our best universities and the truly great professors who gave them fame and luster, were alike imprisoned within the then fashionable belief in a mechanistic determinism in the universe. It was our inescapable system of intellectual reference, and while a great ferment of

happy activity went on within the enclosure, its walls were patrolled by nineteenth centurions, whose breast plates and spears were the new bigotries of science and the glittering superstitions of the sceptic.

The Christian colleges of that time, though separated from these famous institutions by a space no wider than the railroad tracks, were in another sphere so far as any effective counter influences were concerned. They were struggling to keep the Christian philosophy alive in a world quite as alien and almost as hostile as that which confronted the earliest Christianity. Moreover, their facilities and meager means were pitifully inadequate in an educational era famous for brick wealth and playground affluence, their social placement did not wear the fashionable new look, and even their ancient intellectual prestige was here or there sadly eroded and tarnished.

For three hundred years, the Christian philosopher has been thrust outside the main current of western thought. His status had become uncomfortably like that of the ladies who used to follow armies; he was tolerated in his sequestered place but was never, never expected to mix in

the maneuvers. The new masters of the expanding economy—their successes duly blessed by the hierarchy of their own secular schoolmen—regarded him at best as a fading decoration on their civilization and a convenient caterer on occasion to their injustices; they assigned him a department of “religion” to play in, with the proviso, believe it or not, that religion must always be something secret and intestinal and shall never intrude upon the organized culture and business of living! It is within this encircling Sahara that the American Christian schools were stubbornly established and have been precariously maintained.

For the Church has always recognized that any system of education must express a philosophy of life. According to her philosophy, the end of man is to save his soul. To this end, she holds that all the vast network of society is organized, including its schools, its governments, the Church itself. Around this living principle, the machinery of knowledge is operated in the Christian schools.

Not that the curriculum in these schools is restricted by doctrinal exposition. For a thousand years, the Church was

the historical trustee of the entire treasure of humane learning in the Western World. While she exhibited human weakness enough over the centuries of her magistracy, her system of thought, of its very nature, can never rightly limit the extension of knowledge, nor describe any circumference of intellectual inquiry so long as God is at the center. She takes for her province in her schools the entire range of human life, physical, aesthetic and spiritual, not with a view to reducing it in any way, but in order to elevate and perfect it in accordance with the example and teachings of Christ. Christian education does not demand that young people be removed from the society in which they must love their neighbors and save their souls; nor require them to stunt any faculty or renounce the activities of this life. Rather it seeks to unify all these by giving to each activity its due relation to all others, and by giving to all something like a sacramental character by relating it to the supreme reality which is the love of God. It is this ideal which the Christian schools have tried to keep alive in modern life, usually with a flat wallet, too frequently with insufficient talent and enlight-

enment, but always with a brave heart.

And the heart needed to be brave, up to the turn of this century, to establish these frail institutions over against our great universities; brave, indeed, to hang in their porches the small lamp which remembers the City of God even within the incandescent City of Man.

But even before the guns of 1914 shattered the world's peace, all this had begun to change. A creeping disquietude was overspreading our universities, a presentiment that something was terribly wrong with the system. In the bleak disillusionment which followed World War I, this intellectual disquiet was transfixed by the rising Marxism like a wasteland illumined by forked lightning. Dialectic materialism at first seemed not only compatible with economic liberalism, but, in fact, its logical extension. Had it not grown in the same soil of naturalism, under the egis of science, with the selfsame rejection of all supernatural values? Out of a common lineage, it offered a new salvation to the worn-out liberal. It offered his scepticism a certitude, his polite agnosticism a definite atheism, his famous open mind a tightly closed the-

sis which reduced the tentative principles of his halting humanism to a logical plan of action—and all in the name of man and his glory, his own every shibboleth and creed.

It is no wonder that the modern intellectuals, already disillusioned by the war, were split asunder by this new materialism. Many of them, indeed, parched and long lost in the desert of incertitude, rushed to this gleaming mirage. In the nineteen twenties and thirties, perhaps seventy-five percent of American intellectuals, were more or less openly encouraging, if not advocating, atheistic Communism. For Communism, after all, is a kind of theocracy of its own, however inverted; its metaphysics, which Hegel formed by reversing the old scholasticism, offered the weary mind, spent with speculation, an absolute system with a beginning and an end—a long-lost sense of “belonging” within a closed and integrated camp.

Now that the camp has risen in grim force against Western Civilization, most of these intellectual fellow travelers are groping their way back to their old uncertainties. They have discovered to their horror that Communism in motion is not at

all the democratic progressive leftist movement they had naively believed. It is the logical extension of a philosophy which seeks the clue to life in an economic formula of materialism, within which, by whatever violence or dismemberment, it would force all the mysterious ardors and aspirations of the human spirit. In the secular universities, as among the leading liberals of the Western World, atheistic Communism is slowly taking shape as a monstrous political Reaction, a nightmare in the dark disorder which enfolds our society.

But to identify the nightmare is not to cure the disorder. The breakup of modern society into separate bits and pieces did more than shatter the Christian concept of the human community as one family under God, seeking its difficult spiritual evolution through His love and His laws. It also split the very nature of man—sealed off his will from his conscience, his work from worship, his intellect from spiritual insight, his energy from any informing faith. In his soul, as in the headlines, in the court proceedings, in all the living records of our time, we find the same criss-cross pattern of abundant skill inter-

woven with futility and frustration. Are we shocked by the sensational suicide of one of our most devoted public officers, one of our most idealistic ambassadors, and one of our young and success-crowned playwrights? By the bewildering behavior of prominent politicians or of great scientists who seem all innocently to have assigned their splendid prestige and talents to the forces of darkness? These are but manifestations of our disorder at a high level of thought. They are multiplied throughout our society: in the doctor whose brilliant techniques are so often severed from his ministerial purpose in society; in the lawyer whose indenture to justice is so often smothered in brilliant surrebuttals; in the newspaper expert whose cult of newsroom cynicism so often defaces the truth or even scoffs at its existence; the same pattern of disorder—splendid skills divorced from a fitting and ultimate meaning. Is it any wonder then, when we get down to that caked mass-thinking of our people, in the offices, the country clubs, the nightspots, along the highways, that we hear such disturbing echoes, in whatever polite language, of the drugstore sneers, or the whinneying laugh of the

street corner for the ancient virtues of our Race—that we find life lived by the hour in a sub-human routine of nervous activity without meaning or ultimate purpose?

The Communists are not the cause of our trouble. Their pattern of living, like much of our own, is but another baleful symptom of moral and spiritual sickness. To cure that sickness

in our country is far more than just another school exercise for our leaders of thought. It requires the patient, honest cooperation of every last one of us. It is probably the price of survival for our young and beloved America, for America's mysterious destiny as a budding culture, and a new and fruitful civilization on the earth.

A CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO SCIENTISM AND THE LIBERAL MIND

Talk Given on August 21, 1949

Last Sunday I tried to identify some causes of our social disorder as they are reflected in the present State of Education. Today I would suggest a possible approach, by the Christian mind, toward resolving this confusion.

A severe estrangement exists in our country between the Christian mind and the minds of Science and of Liberalism. Even in the present crisis, when all three are linked together in a vital struggle against the expanding Communism, they operate in a bad climate of misunderstanding and mistrust, a climate in which the bacteria of communism can multiply and spread. In my opinion, it is necessary and it is possible to translate this deadly disunity into a working way of living together, without appeasement or the compromise of precious convictions. This statement does not ignore the deep prejudices which will nullify all but our most heroic efforts to that end; but, after all, we have history to remind us that our very civilization may depend upon our re-

sponse to this challenge, and in each of the camps now walled off from one another, we have leaders of good will and of great good faith who are searching for a way.

I have purposely separated Scientism from the Liberal mind in these addresses. By the Liberal mind I do not mean a political form, as the opposite of conservation. I mean the economic and philosophic Naturalism which is the ruling thought in modern life. While it is true that Science and Liberalism have closely interpenetrated, especially during the past century, it can be shown, I think, that the two are quite distinct and separate in character and purpose. Liberalism unlike Science is a philosophy of Life. The frightful muddlement of modern Liberalism, as I have been trying to show in these remarks, began when their tap root in Christian belief was severed and it divorced itself from the mind of God, the source and bond of all order. From that tragical event ensued all of its modern aborrancies,—its natur-

alism centered in man, its secular progress revolving in a moral nihilism,—all the bewildering distortions which have caused so many to turn away even from its humane and benevolent purposes.

Scientism on the other hand is not a philosophy of Life. It is a method of work. Its business is with Facts, not with Truth,—except, of course, as all facts are concrete pill boxes surrounding the citadel of Truth. The scientist, to be sure, shares the common quest of all humanity as to his personal origin, his spiritual faculties, the mysterious nature of his destiny. But this quest concerns him as a man, and indeed as a child of God—though that filial murmur in his blood may be very faint and muffled in our day. As a scientist, however, a scientist as such, he never generalizes, and he holds abstractions and universals, the tools of the philosopher, in grave suspicion. His basic method is Analysis; his subject matter is Quantity; his approach is the patient statistical study of phenomena in his particular field. His findings he records in the stenography of higher mathematics in order to test, prove and predict. As pointed out by the late Le Comte du Nouy, an eminent

scientist in his own right, “the aim of Science is to foresee, and not as has often been said, to understand. Science describes facts, objects and phenomena minutely, and tries to join them by what we call laws, so as to be able to predict events in the future . . . There is no scientific truth in the absolute sense. The phrase ‘ad veritatem per scientiam’ is an absurdity.”

It is manifestly absurd, therefore, as well as pathetic, that modern society should turn to these great technicians for a solution of its moral maladies. And yet it is easy to understand. The rush of discoveries and inventions by Science in the past seventy-five years symbolizes one of the most dazzling eras in human experience. It has made ours the Scientific Age. What more natural, therefore, than for bewildered man to turn to these doctors of his physical liberation as to the sooth sayer, the medicine man, the new prophet of the tribe, for a diagnosis of his spiritual sickness? And it must be said that this natural confusion of values and boundaries by the public has been abetted occasionally by a lesser Scientist. There is hardly any scientific slogan more familiar to the public than the Scientist’s

rigid disclaimer of any authority outside "his own field" as he calls it. It is one of his sternest rules to preserve his complete objectivity. For example, the doctor of the throat, as every layman knows, will not travel an inch south of the clavicle. The astronomer is mute on biology—although the poetic legend persists that biological behavior is somehow connected with the moon. And yet, now and then, we discover a scientist giving out elaborate spiritual readings to the public—though "the field" is separated from his own, not by a very thin partition, on a horizontal level, as with brother scientists, but in kind and character, in a vertical plane of cognition. Happily, these footnotes to our disorder are not the general habit of our great scientists.

Indeed, despite the limitations of method imposed by science upon itself, we find today among outstanding scientists, no less than among leaders in other fields of thought, remarkable evidences of spiritual searching. In spiritual decay, it is surprising to find among present-day scientists as much religious interest as we do. There is definitely a movement in Science away from Materialism and

toward Spiritual Reality and spiritual decay, it is perhaps surprising to find among present-day scientists as much religious interest as we do. There is definitely a movement in Science away from Materialism and toward Spiritual Reality and Religion. It is true the movement is hesitant and frequently very vague. After all, it has to break the habits, the quarantine and isolation of a century and more of materialistic thought. But today we have men like Eddington, Millikin, Whitehead and Compton carrying on the precious tradition of Newton, Faraday, Maxwell, Ampere, Pasteur, by illuminating their scientific work with brave spiritual affirmations. These affirmations, it is true, are not usually expressions of Christian truth, but they are genuine gropings of great minds for God. They are only flickerings in the surrounding darkness. But if only as reminders of that terrible darkness, they are the faint intimations of hope,— of hope in that century of unity yet to come, when man's accumulated knowledge will be illumined by the spiritual light of faith, and the great scientists will dedicate their new discoveries to the glory of God our Father, as part of

our spiritual evolution within His love and His laws.

In quite another way, there are flickerings along the Liberal horizon. It would be folly to minimize the depth and intensity of antagonism toward the Christian philosophy in the modern Liberal mind. Here is not the detached indifference of Science, preoccupied with Research, but a worldly ferment of prejudice, enlightenment, and pride. Some of its current expressions about the Church could hardly comfort the Kremlin more if they were designed to that end. Of course, they are not. They are the bright blossoms of bewilderment and decay in the shattered community which we have been discussing. We can no more debate them than we can rebut the monstrous vegetation which is said to have sprung up in the soil of Hiroshima after the atom bomb. Nevertheless, the higher Liberalism, all unwittingly perhaps, is putting out its own hints toward an understanding. Having discovered the wolf's teeth in the Little Red Riding Hood of its earlier flirtation, it is doing its brave best to man the barricades against atheistic Communism.

But, alas, we cannot defend the barricades of the intellect

behind a Maginot line of defensive negation. On the mental plane, no less than the field of arms, the old football slogan applies, that the only good defense is a vigorous offensive. It is a sorry fact that the Liberal leaders of Western thought are sunk in their own uncertainties. They now know Communism for what it is, but even as it advances upon them with the cold steel of a ruthless plan, they have no firm and fixed conviction with which to meet it. They are the victims of their own unbelief, haunted in the day of battle by doubts of their own cause. The terrible fate of the modern Liberal in his brilliant career of unbelief is that he has finally lost his Faith even in his own Liberalism. He begins to see that society cannot survive without incentives and sanctions higher than the humanistic tinker toys which he designed, and yet he is chained to his old scepticism. He is the agnostic who cannot believe and yet understands the desperate need of Faith. So in seminars and editorials and textbooks, he is striving to design some consensus of belief, some new formula of Faith which will again bind the masses of men together,—even though he himself, may think it

but a necessary myth within a noble purpose. The mood is earnest, intellectual, self confident: if a religion is what we need, we will make one! Did we not wrench the secret of matter out of uranium? We will make a scientific analysis of all the great religions, East and West, which have made friends and influenced people. We will mix them together and stir them with the democratic dogma, deep freeze and high heat them, and by the patient trial and error of the laboratory, we shall produce the compound we need. Then, since a popular acceptance is necessary, we will float the compound in a solution of Rousseau and Hume, with a tincture of Locke and dash of Freud, and serve it from a single streamlined school system in sterilized bottles marked "DRINK ME."

Well, we may be sadly sure that Faith, though it can be killed can never be made to live by such methods. Faith is not to be compounded by Science, in the laboratory, as a special vitamin in time of plague and panic; nor yet by Philosophy, screening the world's religions, East and West, to extract the secret of their power. Faith is never the *opposite* of Reason. Natural

Reason remains always the sovereign instrument of man in his search for Wisdom and Truth as well as Knowledge. Faith is a gift of God offered in rational terms. To him who accepts the gift, it becomes the Lamp of Reason, the ignis ardens of the Intellect, by which man's life, through Knowledge and Love, may become one with God's own. In essence, Faith is a supernatural gift, the respiration of the living soul, and not all the medicine men of all the schools will ever conjure it up by learned incantations.

Certainly the rulers of the Politburo are too tough to be exorcised by such incantations. They hold that Western Secularism will accept atheistic Communism whenever it can be made surely successful, that such acceptance is imbedded in the philosophy of pragmatic Liberalism. But they know that their ultimate doom is sealed unless they are able to smash the bastion of Christendom looming in their road to Glory. The Church must be destroyed or they are done for.

It is popular in some quarters to picture the struggle between the Kremlin and the Vatican almost in the lurid colors of the comic strip, as of two distant

and alien Powers. This distortion may be more than the light-hearted idiom of the football field, the prize ring, the gangster movie, more, even, than an expression of our confusion of all values. It could be a writing on our banquet wall, in strange characters, to foretell the death of Western man. For the struggle in Europe between the Politburo and the Church is not a mere clash of systems, of ideologies. It is atavism against the human spirit—a war to the death by Hatred and raw Force upon the deepest defenses of Western Civilization — the ancient loyalty and love, the dignity and fortitude of the Christian soul.

This is a breathless hour in

the spiritual evolution of man. It is no time for idle rhetoric, for petty smugness. If we would serve God and our country in this critical time, we need to look inward hard and long. Perhaps, too, if we look through the broken windows of Europe with the eyes of Faith, we may see the same familiar Figure, moving among the ruins, which appeared after Calvary on the road to Emmaus. Christ is with us always, as He said; not in the tabernacle only, but along the hedges of the world and at the lattice of the heart. The Christian approach to our confusion must first be geared to His living presence among us—to its definite duties, to its joyful and undying Hope.

TESTAMENT OF FAITH

Talk Given on August 28, 1949

I trust that these reflections, over the past three Sundays, have not seemed too generalized and theoretical. My purpose has been to help identify the nature of our problems, in order to offer a few suggestions for what they may be worth, toward a plan of action. It is a bit like roadbuilding, surely as rough and tough a form of direct action as I know; before we can even begin, we need the blue-prints, the profiles and grade stakes, of the job to be done.

The American Christian is confronted today by a pagan force which seeks to wipe out our Western Civilization and to forge a new mastery of the world. It has linked America with the Church as the two arch-enemies which must be destroyed. Against our country, it levels a campaign of organized propaganda to defame us before the world and undermine our strength at home and abroad. At the same time, its frontal attack upon the Church in Europe probably surpasses in brutality and cunning anything experienced by Christianity in its long history of persecution. It has forced

millions of Christian families into bondage, a bondage of terror from which there seems no present escape, not even underground, not even within modern catacombs. For their natural leaders, their spiritual shepherds, are subjected to a new form of martyrdom: a diabolic design by which the Christian martyr is first made by sheer force a partner, out of his own mouth, in his own disgrace and destruction. It is too bad for us if we do not see clearly what history will surely record, that a new mystery of evil is loosed upon our generation, and that its holy expiation is taking place every day in the muted agony and the hidden sanctity of untold Christian lives.

We need not fear that this sinister attack will ever overcome the providential conjunction of our faith and our country. These two hold our love and loyalty within a single Latin word, *pietas*, which means both piety and patriotism. And the soul of our resistance is that evangelical virtue of the Christian—a serene and invincible Hope.

Our resistance, however, cannot be defensive only, and we must not permit our assailant to choose the battle ground or name the weapons of war. It is not by matching force against force, cunning against cunning that America and the Christian spirit can afford to challenge atheistic Communism. That would be like wrestling with Antaeus, who rose from each fall with redoubled power because the dark earth was the source and renewal of all his strength. Our resistance must be lifted off the ground. Our weapons must be the true principles of democracy. Our real strength must be in the Lord.

For the great upheaval of the Twentieth Century, as we must never forget, is not a war of atom bombs and chemical poisons, though we need to be armed against both in this tough age. It is a revolution for the regeneration of Society, and the salvation of men. The Soviet Dictatorship, which deluded so many before it suddenly materialized in our western windows, like a faceless apparition of Destruction, is not the cause of our confusion. Communism is but a symptom of disease, the atheistic and deadly offshoot and by-product of a world-wide disorder.

After all, the Russian people did not develop Communism. It was foisted upon them by men outside the borders of Russia. Marxism is a poisonous weed of the West, grown and nurtured in our secular philosophy. Its ideology was spawned in Germany. Its seizure of power was first worked out by Lenin and Trotsky in the libraries of Paris, London and New York. It was implanted in Russia by force. It is maintained by totalitarian propaganda, by the remembrance of past exploitation and vicious abuses, and by the police power of the toughest dictatorship probably in human history. It is a logical extension of Western Materialism, that lethal threat to our Christian inheritance, even if there were no Soviet Dictatorship to give it immediate and deadly menace. The problem of Christian Education is not merely to help hold and contain the Soviet menace; it is also to concentrate all of our intellectual and moral force upon the economic ills and the spiritual nihilism among ourselves which helped to give atheistic Communism life, and which still feed and nourish it.

A healthy approach by Christian Education to this age of

confusion can be stated, I think, in two simple propositions.

The first proposition is that familiar act of any Christian in all matters of conduct: the need to examine his own conscience. We American Christians have some house cleaning of our own to perform if we would be fully helpful in this critical hour.

It is true that we have the great gift of Faith, within which is embedded, as we know, the certain cure of all confusion. But our faith is not a cheap fire insurance policy, nor yet a self-working formula of salvation. Its force lies in what we do about it in our every-day lives, with our Reason and Free Will. For example, we talk much and rightly against secularism as the deadly poison in modern life, that secularism which centers all human activity in worldly success, instead of in God. But we have developed a pretty bad brand of secularism of our own. It appears in our schools and colleges, in our worship even, and it infects our lives with its own false notions of respectability and success. It is reflected in our timid and tip-toe attitude toward anti-Semitism, toward the labor movement, toward the Negro, toward the many grave conflicts and gross injustices in our social

and economic life which cry out for a brave, Christian treatment. We think and talk of the Church as if it were a bureaucratic organization, almost as another "pressure group." We compute its values so often in terms of real estate and physical establishments, even of wealth and political influence, that it must seem to many that our fight on Communism is merely a partnership with the masters of a frozen economic order, in fear of change, or the loss of property—instead of a fearless following of Christ as the one Hope of the atomic future.

No sane man, I take it, would disparage the physical establishments of the Church as necessary instruments of salvation in a world of matter and spirit. The Church, in all its world-wide institutions, is holy because it is the mystical Body of Christ on earth—much as our bodies are holy, as the temples of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the very organization of the Church, so essential to her mission in a mass-organized age, is serving today in Europe as the last barricade against chaos. But even as her venerable establishments are being ruined or taken away, even as she is stripped of her garments like her Divine Founder,

she is emerging, bereft and unarmed, as the lonely defender of human dignity—the majestic defender of man, as a social being and as an inviolable soul. Christian Education must invoke its ancient code of reason and of law and order against the red-eyed demagogues and adventurers who would tear our civilization apart. They always appear, like looters, in a time of public calamity, to promote new rackets and new terrors. But Christianity has no true Kinship with those dominant economic powers which have despised its teachings for three hundred years and would now use its sacred vestments as a cloak for their greed and injustice. In Europe, even to escape the firing squad, Christianity is not going to creep back into a chamber of lethal gas.

We in America need to light our own torches anew in the eternal fire of Christian spirit—to discover again, in moral revolution and spiritual adventure, that rightful inheritance of every Christian—a perfect fearlessness of risk, of change, of any material upheaval, so long as the Spirit of the Lord is there.

The second proposition derives from the first. It is that we are members of a pluralistic society

in America, and, as such, our duty is to work together with all men of good will to make our society a just order. We should waste no time, as I see it, in backward efforts to reduce our modern life to the monolithic society of the Thirteenth Century, say, as it centered in the Church. Every Christian, no doubt, must hope for one fold and one shepherd. Moreover, every Christian knows that the one supreme reality of his life, never to be foresworn or compromised, is his Faith. Nevertheless, the complete fragmentation of society, as we have roughly tried to outline it in these reflections, is as definite and irreparable, so far as the human mind can reach, as the fate of Humpty-Dumpty. As Christians and as Americans, we should seek all possible areas of co-operation with our fellow citizens in order to discover as best we can a Unity amid our diversities—working with the scientists who have filled our barns with their marvelous harvests, with the men and women, under the banner of Liberalism, who have struggled to extend Democracy and human Freedom. This cooperation need never be predicated upon moral appeasement, or upon the crackpot notion that

one religion is as good as another because they all are merely subjective and relative. There need be no yielding of principle or conviction by anyone in the building of those democratic fences which make good neighbors. The bright banner of Freedom must not be left to the forces of Confusion to commit more dark crimes in its holy name. The true concept of Freedom must be reclaimed by us Christians, for it is ours—the live coal in all its burning beauty at the core of Christian belief. Likewise, we must never surrender control of the deep flowing stream of Democracy to those who have choked its channel. That pure stream does not belong to the pretenders who have filed their false claims of riparian rights. Democracy rises in the teachings of Christ: the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of all men, the priceless value of the human soul. It has flowed through all the muddy centuries, in the theology of the Christian faith. When it is damned off from the eternal mind of God, its Fountainhead and its Outlet, as it has been so often before and is today, it can become just another stagnant and pestilent back-wash to breed disorder and sickness of

thought. As Christians, no less than patriots, it is our duty to help dig down again to that living stream of true Democracy which has disappeared under the rocks and soil of David Hume and Herbert Spencer, of Rousseau, and of Marx, and to release its life-giving waters to the uses of men. The Church has no ready-made blue print of a new social order or a better economic system for this seething century. The Kingdom of Christ, as we know, is not of this world, and all these changing systems are but so many trivial inches on her mighty reel. But her mission is the salvation of all men, and the search of mankind for greater economic freedom and a more decent dignity in order to fulfill his spiritual destiny will have the support of every Christian the world over who has not forgotten that, where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

Within these two propositions, self-examination in a spirit of humility, and cooperation in a spirit of brotherhood, we American Christians can help to make whole our shattered society. To fuse and anneal the intellectual, moral and spiritual forces of the human family, is the great need of our time. The critical need will never be met by a totalitar-

ian streamlining of American thought and habits. Such uniformity is the pattern of the slave state; the genius of democracy is in our differences. Our problem is the Challenge of History to all Freemen. Our response must be to find a Unity in our diversities, which is long-legged English, after all, for *E Pluribus Unum*. This simple motto of our fathers may well be the Key to the mighty destiny of our Young Republic, now hidden in the mysterious folds of God's providence. America today, in terms of moral cohesion and spiritual unity, is a wild welter of confusion—but in the strong beat of its young pulses, we Americans feel the rhythm of sighs for the past—the past which is always so decent and orderly when it is over and done with—nor yet to fear the turbulence of the future. We need never fear the future! Christianity holds the future in its memory—as truly today as on that afternoon in Judea when our Lord remarked as casually as a bolt of lightning: **BEFORE ABRAHAM WAS, I AM.**

Our basic contribution to these days of anxiety, both as Christians and Americans, is to live our faith up to the hilt—not so much in high disputes and

pretensions, as in all the bread-and-butter dealings and duties of our daily lives. Millions of our fellow citizens are living their own good lives according to their lights. If we do the same, with no compromise of conviction, but in a spirit of Hope and Christian charity, we can rely on God's grace to make our efforts effective, in *His* way, and His good time. We may even live to see the dawn of Peace over the Earth—a peace not of imperialism or empire, or of any tyranny over the bodies or the souls of men—but a Peace of World Order, under God, guided by reason and the law. If, however, this beautiful possibility, like the gorgeous illusion of the movie fade-out, should prove unreal, and beyond the capacity of poor bedeviled human nature, no Christian will lose heart. Temporal power can never be the touchstone of virtue to the Christian—nor worldly success, the cause of his joy. We have but to remember the human and homeless Christ, the poorest of the poor, walking the roads like any displaced person, and winning eternal life for all men out of what, by any worldly standard, was His failure, disgrace and death.

In these rough and tumble times, our program as Christians and patriots may impose harsher assessments upon us than we think: a forbearance in the face of calumny, a fortitude even in defeat and disaster. But our Faith and our Hope are not the frail filaments of today's good fortune. Whatever may befall, we shall not stand alone. Hovering over us, walking mysteriously among us, is the Spirit of millions and millions of men, women and children, living and dead, the illustrious and the nameless, the sinners and the saints—the mighty host of Christendom in a great cloud of invisible witnesses moving in upon us from twenty centuries

of Faith and Loyalty. We belong in that timeless procession. From its simple beginning by the Galilean Shore it has reached this troubled day of ours over the granite passes of history—not to take rest among us like a still-life frieze of spent splendor or of past glory, but to replenish our faith and our love with its incorruptible youth. As we move forward into the stormy future we may lift up our hearts, for it is we who carry the hope and the promises of the future. We know that when our faith has made us one with our Lord, one with His will, and with His love, only then will it be the Victory which overcomes the World.

THE PURPOSE OF THE CATHOLIC HOUR

(Extract from the address of the late Patrick Cardinal Hayes at the inaugural program of the Catholic Hour 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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