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# CHRISTIANITY'S CONTRIBUTION TO CIVILIZATION

by

Rev. James M. Gillis, C. S. P.,  
Editor of the "Catholic World"

Nine addresses delivered in the Catholic Hour, sponsored  
by the National Council of Catholic Men, with the  
cooperation of the National Broadcasting Com-  
pany and its Associated Stations.

(On Sundays from October 25 to December 20, 1931)

- I. The Sources of Civilization.
- II. The Principle of Personal Moral Responsibility.
- III. The Principle of Tolerance.
- IV. The Principle of the Brotherhood of Man.
- V. The Exaltation of Womankind Under Christianity.
- VI. The Principle of Mercy.
- VII. The Principle of Enthusiasm.
- VIII. The Principle of Optimism.
- IX. The Prince of Peace.



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**Bishop of Fort Wayne**

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## AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

One of the reasons for the following discussion of new and superior elements brought into the world by Christian civilization, was the belief which I hold, that Christianity and paganism are now once again contending for the mastery of the world. I think I see in present conditions a repetition of those which prevailed in the later patristic age. There is of course one obvious exception—at that time Christianity was coming and paganism was going. Signs of a return of paganism are not wanting for those who claim that Christianity, in its turn, is being thrust aside.

Very recently a large work appeared in two volumes in which Christianity is treated as a saga (half historical, half mythical), and indeed a saga that has come to its conclusion. The author of this work seems to think that Christianity is obsolescent if not obsolete. I consider that thesis unworthy of discussion. It is too obviously false. It indicates, however, a trend of thought that may be more or less prevalent. If there are any who consider Christianity done for and who think it would be an advantage to the world to become once again pagan, I hope they may find some suggestion of an answer in the following pages.



**DEDICATION**

To my much admired preceptor and well beloved friend,  
Bishop Shahan.

## THE SOURCES OF CIVILIZATION

(Address delivered by Rev. James M. Gillis, C.S.P., in the Catholic Hour, October 25, 1931.)

The title of this series of talks, "The Contribution of Christianity to the Civilization of the World," is perhaps a sufficient indication that I make no claim for Christianity as the first and only civilization. The patriarch Job, being teased and tortured by those who are called, ironically, his comforters, turned on them and exclaimed with surprising sarcasm: "No doubt ye are the people and wisdom shall die with you." We Christians must beware lest we lay ourselves open to a similar shaft: "So, *you* are the people! Civilization was born and will die with *you!*"

Of course, there were civilizations, dozens of them, before Christ. They came and went like nations and dynasties. I have seen in the British Museum mummies embalmed by the Egyptians 2,600 years before Christ, and as early as 2,000 B. C., the Egyptians—those wonderful pioneers of civilization—had developed reading and writing, mathematics, agriculture, commerce, shipping, art, law and the science of government. Egyptian civilization—and with it, the Babylonian and the Assyrian—waxed and waned, developed, decayed, died, not only before Christ but before history. So, too, had that of the Hittites, who flourished for a thousand years and had perished yet another thousand years before Christ. Sodom and Gomorráh had become in Christ's time mere names for decadence. But before there could be decadence there must have been efflorescence. Sidon and Tyre remained in existence, but

the glory had departed out of them: all their pomp was of yesterday.

As for the more remote civilization of India and China, nothing was known of it in the Mediterranean world, and most of us know little or nothing of it even now. When Mahatma Gandhi recently referred to the ancient glories of the Hindus, one very popular and presumably well-educated journalist demanded to know what those glories were. He spoke ignorantly. There was a vast and wonderful civilization in India long before the Christian era.

Almost as far away as India, but in the opposite direction, was a little island in the western ocean which had developed a culture of its own, quite independently. Ireland was a home of art, literature and general scholarship centuries before St. Patrick heard the Macedonian cry, "Come over and help us." They needed help in religion rather than in general civilization.

As for Greece, that astounding little country, not half the size of England, she had achieved, as early as 400 years before Christ, a civilization so superb that it is even yet the wonder of the world; so exuberant that it overflowed and enriched all its contemporaries and indeed all posterity. Even now, the arts and letters, the architecture and sculpture of pre-Christian Greece remain an inexhaustible source of inspiration.

The Semitic civilization—or more particularly the Jewish—may have lagged behind the Greek, the Egyptian and the Assyrian in art and architecture; there are no Pyramids in Palestine, no Sphinx on the banks of the Jordan, no splendid ruins in Judea like those of Thebes and Karnak, or even like those



amazing piles that have been discovered in the midst of dense jungles in Mexico or Indo-China. In sculpture the Jews of course did little or nothing. They were forbidden to make unto themselves graven images. But in literature they more than held their own. There is more eloquence in Isaias than in Demosthenes, and for spiritual exaltation (which is after all the supreme quality in literature), the Jewish prophets far outran the Greek poets and dramatists. Of the Psalms of David, a modern non-Christian, non-Jew, John Cowper Powys, has said:

“The Psalms remain, whether in the Latin version or in the authorized English translation, the most pathetic and poignant, as well as the most noble and dignified of all poetic literature. The rarest spirits of our race will always return to them at every epoch in their lives for consolation, for support and for repose.”

And nowhere in any pagan literature will you find so bold and beautiful an attempt as that of the Book of Job to penetrate and to solve the mystery that more than any other has been the theme of literature and drama from the beginning, the mystery of pain and of evil.

But enough of that. If I have thus rapidly referred to a few of the ancient civilizations, it is only by way of preparing for the idea which I now ask leave to propose: Our contemporary civilization is an amalgam of all that has gone before: it is a *mélange*, a *potpourri* of elements from the Egyptian, the Assyrian, the Phoenician, the Arabic, the Indian, even the Chinese, and—lest we forget—the Irish.

When we were children, our school teachers used to suggest a little game in geography which could be

played at home. We were to consider the foods and drinks at the breakfast table and ask "Where did the coffee come from?" "Mocha and Java, or Brazil." "The bread?" "From the wheat fields of Minnesota." "The sugar?" "From Cuba." The oranges from California, the grapefruit from Florida, and so on, until we discovered to our surprise that even our breakfast had come from all corners of the world.

As with our food and drink, so with our culture. Our art we have from Greece, *via* ancient Rome, modern Italy and France. Our law comes from Rome, dating as far back as the twelve tablets, 450 years before Christ, modified and developed by the Tarquins, and in later centuries by Augustus Caesar and Justinian. The civil law of Rome came into Britain with Julius Caesar, the ecclesiastical law with Augustine. Both civil and ecclesiastical Roman law went into the making of Magna Charta, and Magna Charta inspired the Constitution of the United States.

Our literature came from Greece—again *via* Rome, and from Palestine *via* England. The incomparable masterpiece of English literature is the Bible, which of course is a translation from the Hebrew and even more directly from the Greek Septuagint made at Alexandria in Egypt. The King James version is eloquent and beautiful because it managed marvelously to capture and to communicate the atmosphere of Biblical times: it is not altogether a new creation.

There is no dishonor in that. The Hebrew writers themselves had profited by what they had learned from Egypt. It is said in the book of Exodus that when the Israelites went out of the land of Egypt,

out of the house of bondage, they "stripped" the Egyptians, as the Douay Bible expresses it, or "spoiled the Egyptians," according to the King James version. They took away with them as spoils "vessels of gold and silver, and very much raiment." But far more important for civilization is the fact that they took away with them, according to their capacity, the learning and the culture of the Pharaohs. "Moses," says the Scripture, "was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." What Moses took from Egypt he passed on to us through the Old Testament and the New, through the Holy Land, Greece and principally Rome, which after all has been the chief dispenser of culture and religion to Europe and through Europe to America.

So, culture and civilization have passed from one country to another. We are heirs of all the ages; we have borrowed from every land and from all peoples. We may speak glibly of "Modern Civilization," but civilization is not modern: it is principally ancient and medieval; the modern ingredients are relatively few. Least of all is there any such thing as an American civilization, a one hundred per cent American civilization. "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" says St. Paul, speaking of the gifts that came to man from God, and the same question may be repeated in regard to the civilization that passes from man to man, from people to people. What have we Americans that we did not get from Europe, or from Asia, or even from Africa? It is a fact in the history of culture that one man directed the course that European thought was to take a thousand years. His ideas and expressions are to be found wherever there is any systematic Chris-

tian philosophy. Catholics and Protestants dispute over him as the Greek cities disputed over Homer, as to who should have the right to claim him as their own. His name was Augustine. His home was in Africa. It is not difficult to find traces of Augustine's thought (somewhat misunderstood indeed) in the theology of the Puritans and, as every American knows, our indigenous civilization, good and bad, is largely a product of Puritanism. Just at this moment that may seem a back-handed compliment, but make no mistake, the Puritans deserve something besides condemnation.

But to resume: civilization, ancient, medieval, modern, *any* civilization is like an ocean fed by many rivers. If there were no rivers there would be no ocean. If we were to stop up all the streams that contribute to our modern civilization, that civilization would disappear and we should have in place of an ocean, a desert of barbarism.

When the Catholic Church was the chief custodian of western culture, and to a certain degree the creator and to a greater degree the director of civilization, she was not ashamed, and not afraid to take over and to embody whatever she thought good in all the civilizations with which she came into contact. In Rome, for example, there is a church in honor of the Blessed Virgin built upon the site and on the foundations of a temple of Venus. The Pantheon, a temple dedicated to all the gods, was baptized and consecrated to Christ, with no more change than was involved in toppling over and sweeping out the idols. Michelangelo, after gazing long and intently upon the dome of the Pantheon, said, "I will reproduce it and place it in the skies."

He was a master artist in his own right, but he was not too proud to learn from the masters who had gone before him. In this case, as sometimes happens, the pupil surpassed his teachers. The dome of St. Peter's is vastly more sublime than that of the Pantheon.

To cite one more instance out of thousands: The high column of Marcus Aurelius was made into a memorial of St. Paul by the simple expedient of taking down the emperor's statue and putting up the Apostle's.

In these cases and a thousand others, the substitution was symbolic of the triumph of Christianity over paganism, while at the same time the beauty of pagan architecture and sculpture was left unharmed as an inspiration forever to Christian artists. Catholicism borrowed from all the heathen—except the Vandals and the Philistines. She never feared what more timorous people have called “pagan infiltrations” into Christianity. Some elements of paganism are welcome to filter in, for not all paganism is vicious. Much of it is beautiful and true. It does not all come from the devil. God created the heathen as well as the Jew and the Christian. A pagan poet has uttered a sentiment quite in the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount: *Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto*: “I am a human being: therefore nothing human is alien to me.” The Church is indeed divine, but she is also human and she does not despise anything that is human. Fanatics in her place and having her power, would have obliterated every trace of Greco-Roman or Renaissance art, as the soldiers of Cromwell smashed stained glass windows in the

English cathedrals, knocked the heads off the statues of the saints, and destroyed the crucifix wherever they found it. The Catholic Church never suffered such brain storms of bigotry. The statues of the emperors, good and bad, Nero and Domitian, as well as Augustus and Trajan; even those who persecuted the Christians most violently (Marcus Aurelius, scholar and philosopher that he was, did that) are preserved carefully; indeed the statues of gods and goddesses, Jupiter, Bacchus and Venus are housed in the very palace of the Vatican. If certain narrow minds and small souls are thereby scandalized and express their dissatisfaction rather violently, the Church endures their criticism with equanimity. Catholic means universal, and one cannot be Catholic without a broad tolerance for all that is good and true or beautiful, no matter whence it comes. If the Church had been vindictive and had acted the vandal, not only the Church herself, but all Christianity and all humanity would have been the sufferer.

As with architecture, sculpture and all the fine arts, so was it with philosophy. St. Augustine, the master-mind of Christendom, drew largely from Plato, with respectful and even affectionate acknowledgment. Indeed he spoke of Plato as a Christian before the Gospels. St. Thomas Aquinas built the stupendous structure of his thought, the *Summa Theologica*, upon foundations laid by Aristotle.

Dante, as all the world knows, was inspired by Virgil. He might have said of Virgil what Ben Jonson said of Shakespeare: that he venerated him as much as any man could "this side idolatry."

Two centuries after Dante, the Renaissance was a deliberate and highly successful attempt, made under the eyes of the Church, to recapture "the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome."

And here it must be confessed there arose a real danger. Poets and painters, essayists, dramatists, *litterati* in general in a mad excess of admiration for Greco-Roman culture would have swamped Catholicism in paganism were it not that Catholicism is too vigorous and too vigilant ever to be engulfed.

Providentially, when culture threatened to crush morality and religion, there arose in the very center of the Renaissance, the city of Florence, a monk, Savonarola, austere as John the Baptist, fiery as Jeremias, who slashed about with eloquence and zeal as with a two-edged sword, in defense of Christian faith and Christian virtue.

Such prophets have never been wanting to the people of God. There is always an Elias, an Isaias, a Jeremias, a John the Baptist, a Chrysostom, a Savonarola to excoriate the people who go "fornicating after strange gods" (to use the vigorous phrase of the prophets) and to cry, "Return ye, return ye unto the Lord your God!"

Let us not deny that there may be need of a prophet in our own times. We should never oppose civilization, the arts, the sciences, literature and culture, but if civilization gets soft with too much refinement and threatens to go rotten, it would be a godsend if some John the Baptist would come in from his desert—gaunt, haggard, clad only in a loin cloth, stalk fearlessly into the centers of civilization and castigate us for our corruption.

Have we indeed come in the present age to such an emergency? Has art become so pagan, the drama so obscene, literature so immoralistic, education so desperately anti-religious that the time has arrived for the Church to cry "Anathema," and to resort to interdict and excommunication in the endeavor to save civilization—to save it perhaps even from itself, the perversion and degradation of itself?

If the Church ever does so act, there will be many to misunderstand her, and to cry aloud that she stands in the way of intellectual and esthetic advance. The Church will not be deterred by that calumny. Her history will be sufficient answer to that. The Church that has for ages carefully guarded all that she could salvage of the Greco-Roman civilization, the Church that has her center at Rome where even the stones in the street cry out to testify that Catholicism is the foster-mother of culture, the Church that placed two of the Medici family upon the chair of Peter, can afford to smile at the allegation of Puritanism or Manicheeism.

However, I do not say that the Church contemplates any rigorous criticism of our contemporary civilization. I see no signs of it. The steady old Church is not easily stampeded. She does not suffer from the modern ailment of "nerves"; she will go on, as always, tolerant of all true civilizations, vigilant when they are threatened with corruption or degeneracy, ready at all times to supply as a panacea for the ills of civilization (as I hope to show in succeeding discourses) the principles embodied in the highest, best, purest of all civilizing instruments, the Gospels of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.



## THE PRINCIPLE OF PERSONAL MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

(Address delivered by Rev. James M. Gillis, C.S.P., in the Catholic Hour, November 1, 1931.)

Some twenty-five or thirty years ago, a celebrated German scholar, Adolf Harnack, wrote a little book entitled *Das Wesen des Christenthums*. It was translated into a dozen, perhaps a score, of languages. In English it is entitled *What Is Christianity?* The vast and tragic battle of Modernism was fought around and about that little dissertation.

Now it may seem odd that men should be asking 1,900 years after Christ, "What is Christianity?" But it is stranger still that so few seem to have hit upon the true answer. One primary feature of Christianity, and perhaps the most fundamental, is the doctrine of the dignity of the individual soul, a doctrine of immeasurable importance, not only for religion but for civilization. If I were asked, therefore, what is the first contribution of Christian philosophy to the civilization of the world (and I do ask myself that question, for this is my topic—"What Christianity Has Contributed to Civilization") I should answer that Christianity, more than any other philosophy, more than any other religion emphasizes human dignity and in particular the highest form of human dignity, moral dignity consequent upon the natural freedom of the will.

Some adversaries of the Christian religion profess to be scandalized because we preach the Gospel of the fall of man and because in consequence we inculcate humility and self-abasement. We call

ourselves miserable sinners; we constantly cry, "Have mercy, O God, have mercy on us!" Also we preach submission and docility. We speak of Christ as our shepherd and we refer to ourselves as sheep who follow Him. Nietzsche, the exponent of the doctrine of the superman, used to laugh at us and despise Christianity as a "sheepish" religion. But even more, Our Master took upon His own tongue the prophecy that had been spoken of Him: "I am a worm and no man."

So, our enemies, perhaps even our friendly critics, ask, "If you are sheep, if you are worms, how can you be men? If you humiliate yourselves, how can you prate of human dignity, and how dare you claim that Christianity is the chief exponent of human freedom?"

The answer involves an analysis of our mysteriously complicated human nature. The bewildering and even baffling creature called man is not one simple harmonious substance but a composite of contradictions. Human nature is a bundle of paradoxes. We may be, as certain biologists and physiologists allege, brothers to the brutes, but the magnificent paradox is that we are at the same time kin to the angels. We confess that we have the passions of animals, but we have also none the less the aspirations of saints. We are slime of the earth and yet children of God. We are poor miserable sinners, conscious of our helplessness and ashamed of our infirmities, but we are also children of God, heirs to the kingdom of heaven.

Shakespeare knew that paradox; he says:

"What a piece of work is man!  
How noble in reason!

How infinite in faculty!  
In form and moving how express and admirable!  
In action how like an angel!  
In apprehension how like a god!  
The beauty of the world!  
The paragon of animals!"

But close upon that brilliant eulogy of human dignity comes the question:

"Yet, to me what is this quintessence of dust?"  
There you have the paradox: "noble," "infinite," "angelic," "godlike," and "the quintessence of dust." If any one knows not that contradiction he knows not man. All philosophy, all poetry, all drama, pathos, tragedy, yes and comedy too, is in this sad, mad, comic, tragic, pathetic self-contradiction, human nature.

Now of Jesus Christ, the Scripture says with profound significance: "He knew what was in man and needed not that any man should tell Him." He called His followers sheep but in the next breath He exclaims, "Have I not said ye are gods!"

The latter term of that paradox concerns us now. Christianity, in contradiction to many another philosophy, ancient and modern, teaches the doctrine of free will, and with free will, its corollary, moral responsibility; the only doctrine that makes man master of his fate, captain of his soul, dictator of his own destiny, the only doctrine, furthermore, that can serve as a sure foundation either for the building or the rebuilding of civilization.

Greco-Roman philosophy and Greco-Roman religion taught that man was a puppet in the hands of the gods. Multitudinous deities who dwelt in the

skies or on the top of Mount Olympus pulled the strings, and men and women down below danced to the will of the gods. The *Iliad* of Homer, which is at once the poetry, the philosophy, the theology of the Greeks, commences with the wrath of Achilles. But the wrath of Achilles is only a reflex on earth of the anger of the gods in the heavens. Man is wrothy, he goes to battle, he sheds blood, he devastates provinces, he destroys cities, he achieves glory, but it is all predetermined by the gods and therefore automatic and inevitable. "As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods; they kill us for their sport," says Gloucester in *King Lear*. There in a phrase you have the essence of pagan philosophy, and incidentally the weak spot in pagan civilization. Man is not master of his fate; fate is master of man.

If you seek the most fundamental solution of the historical question, why did the ancient Mediterranean civilization crumble, leaving only fragments of itself in our modern civilization, like the fragments of its sculpture and architecture in our modern museums, you have the key to the answer in Greco-Roman stoicism, fatalism, the doctrine that man is not master of himself and of the world but a victim, driven hither and thither at the pleasure and caprice of the gods.

The Oriental civilizations, virtually all of them, labored under the same curse. Fatalism was even more pronounced, more rigorous and more generally accepted in Asia than in Europe. To this day hundreds of millions of Asiatics remain under the spell of the paralyzing philosophy of fatalism, and to that fact, I imagine, more than to any other, more than to climate, overcrowding, more than to the opium

habit, or subservience to tyrannical rulers is due the backwardness of Oriental civilization.

Now, curiously enough, there are fatalists here in our midst in America, philosophers, psychologists, scientists, educators, who reject the Christian doctrine of freedom of the will, and teach determinism. Take for example, those evolutionists who are at the same time materialists. Their theory is that man is an animal, totally and exclusively an animal, a highly evolved animal no doubt, the latest and perhaps the last stage in animal evolution, but substantially, essentially an animal and nothing more. Those who teach this doctrine are often very learned, indeed they possess a virtual monopoly of the world of education. Being learned, they know how to weave words and manipulate arguments impressively and with great plausibility. But behind the verbiage which conceals or disguises their philosophy, the idea remains that there is no soul, no free will, no moral responsibility. These modern Occidentals are fatalists not less than the Orientals. Determinism is fatalism. If a man's will is not free, nothing he does can be either virtuous or vicious, nothing is good or bad, right or wrong. If the actions of man, no matter how much he may fancy himself to be master of his own life, captain of his own soul and all that, are determined by his heredity and environment, his physical and psychical constitution, his "urges," his "complexes" and his "hormones," if morality be only conformity with custom and immorality be only rebellion against the local ethical code; if in a word all our actions, those that we call good and those that we call bad, are really predetermined either by forces within us or by the

society that surrounds us, we are once again, like the ancient Greco-Roman Stoics, puppets in the hands of the gods, not now an ancient god Zeus, or Ares, or Athene,—but the great modern god Machine.

Only the other day, on the occasion of the death of Edison, a statement was printed with a great flourish of authority by the head of a newspaper syndicate that reaches many millions of readers that our civilization is that of the machine. And not very long ago, a play was given for several months on Broadway in which the hero said his prayers to the great god Dynamo, and in the end with pseudo-religious ecstasy threw himself into the machine as an act of supreme immolation.

When I was reading that play there leaped automatically to my mind the closing words of Wordsworth's sonnet:

“Great God! I'd rather be  
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;  
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,  
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;  
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;  
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathéd horn.”

Indeed I'd rather be a heathen and worship Triton or Zeus or Vishnu or Moloch, who after all, though monsters, were conceived as human monsters, than this modern god of steel and brass, of cogs and gears, of frightful power and infinite remorselessness, the great god Machine.

Let us not be deceived or deluded with the smooth phraseology of philosophers and scientists. If there

be no freedom of the will, we are in the grip of irresistible mechanism. And what doth it profit us to have gotten rid of one mythology, that of Greece and Rome and Carthage, that of India and China and Japan, if we fall into the maw of a more merciless mythology? The Greco-Roman mythology was at least picturesque. It produced poetry and art, sculpture, and a magnificent architecture, a rather considerable though a deficient civilization. But the mythology of the machine is not even beautiful; it is not fruitful of poetry, or literature, or religion, or any other element of civilization. Man doth not live by bread alone. No, nor by mechanical contraptions and scientific conveniences alone. Civilization is something more than an assemblage of cleverly contrived "gadgets" and devices. The soul of man cannot be saved by Dynamo.

In the course of a three-cornered debate a year or two ago, wherein a philosopher, a *litterateur* and an Arctic explorer (the last named representing science) took part, it was admitted by the scientist that science has no power to solace the afflicted heart or give peace to the distracted mind. "What does it matter to a girl abandoned by her sweetheart," he said, "whether the theory of Einstein be true or false? Or can the wound in her spirit be healed by the knowledge that light travels 186,000 miles a second, or that man can fly around the world in ten days? Scientific facts are hard and cold and comfortless to a broken heart."

There is no poetry in determinism, no substantial philosophy, no drama. The Greek dramatists who believed theoretically in fate got their dramatic effects by having man defy the gods. There

was at least some semblance of freedom in that. But though there be dramatic possibilities in Ajax or King Lear defying the lightning, flinging a challenge in the face of heaven, there is no drama in defying or challenging a machine. Eugene O'Neill's play *Dynamo* is a *tour de force*, a dramatic curiosity, and to tell the truth, a rather silly piece of business.

However, I am not primarily concerned with drama, poetry, art, literature and other lesser accompaniments of civilization, but with morality, without which no solid civilization is possible. Now if there be no free will, there is of course no moral accountability, and where there is no moral responsibility, nothing is either good or bad, right or wrong, except by a fiction. If that kind of science and that kind of philosophy are to prevail, wherein virtue and vice are only words without substance, the foundations of the world are shaken and the structure of society is doomed to collapse. If the world does yet hold together, more or less securely, it is due to the fact that the multitudes have not yet accepted, indeed have not yet apprehended, what the materialistic evolutionists and the mechanistic moralists have been trying to convey to them. If ever they do apprehend and accept the theory that man is not free, and that therefore no one is responsible for his actions, then shall you see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place; then will appear the ultimate catastrophe.

Against that universal *debacle* of civilization, the only safeguard is a belief in essential, immutable right and wrong, in moral responsibility, in free will, the philosophy that is taught in these days almost exclusively by Christianity.



## THE PRINCIPLE OF TOLERANCE

(Address delivered by Rev. James M. Gillis, C.S.P., in the Catholic Hour, November 8, 1931.)

It often happens that a common word, universally employed, is rather generally misunderstood. Take, for example, the word "religion." Everybody uses the word. Some people talk *for* religion, some talk *against* religion, but all talk *about* religion. Yet if you were to cut into an argument on religion and challenge the contestants to stop arguing, define the term, and not commence again until they could agree upon the meaning of the word, that would often be the end of the debate.

And so of many another high-sounding but vaguely understood word,—“Patriotism,” “Freedom,” “Liberty,” “Philanthropy” and a thousand more.

In all the vocabulary of modern religion there is no more familiar term than “toleration” and yet perhaps seven out of ten of those who use the word have never clearly defined its meaning even in their own minds. Some refuse to define it because they have a half recognized suspicion that if you define toleration clearly—too clearly—you may have to change your mind about it, and a change of mind can be a very painful procedure.

Other persons don't define the word “toleration” because they never define any word they use. They are fluent—even eloquent—in conversation and in argumentation, but it would cramp their style cruelly if you were to say “Now let's see precisely what you mean by that word.” They are adept at flying behind a smoke screen, but if you get them once in the clear, you can bring them down at the first shot.

Now, not that I am anxious to bring any one down, or that I intend to argue—I don't—but simply because I abhor hazy, lazy thinking, I suggest that we should define toleration before we attempt to discuss it.

Let us therefore clear the atmosphere, dissipate the fog, blow away the smoke screen by explaining what toleration is *not*.

And first it is not indifference. Indifference is pagan not Christian. Voltaire in his essay on Toleration calls attention to the fact that Julius Caesar, conqueror of the Gauls and the Britons, made no attempt to compel them to abandon the Druids. He didn't care whether they worshipped trees, or stocks or stones, the sun, the moon and the stars, or a black rock on a blasted heath. Indeed it was the permanent policy of Rome to permit all tribes and nations and peoples to bring along their own gods and goddesses when they came into the Empire. In consequence, there was a grand conglomeration of heathen deities in the eternal city, gods from Greece and Egypt and Assyria, the gods of the Germanic and Celtic tribes, the gods of the conquered Carthaginians, all added to the multitudinous gods and goddesses indigenous to the Italian peninsula. The streets and squares of the capital of the world were cluttered up with statues of Isis and Osiris, Baal and Astarthe, Athene and Diana, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, and the rest. One of the Emperors, in a burst of what he thought to be toleration, built a Pantheon, a temple for all the gods, and there the Oriental gods and the Occidental gods, the gods of the home and the farm, the gods of the city and the state, lascivious gods and bloodthirsty gods, gods of peace and gods

of war, found place cheek by jowl in the one universal temple.

The pagans thought that to be toleration. But to the Christian, and I may add to the Jews, it was profanation, abomination. The Hebrews said a prayer every morning and night: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is One God. He will have no gods beside Him." And the Christians had a prayer that was like a battle cry, "One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism." For this they were considered intolerant by the Romans.

So, as I have said, it is all important to define toleration before you either praise it or damn it.

In our own day there are some—perhaps they are a majority—who commend toleration in the pagan sense. They have a very convenient and comfortable maxim: "One religion is as good as another." They protest against dogma and in that very protest is concealed a dogma. It is sometimes expressed: "It makes no difference what a man believes." It is cruel, as I have remarked, to check up the indifferentists and demand to know precisely what they mean. "One religion as good as another?" Mohammedanism as good as Christianity? Buddhism as good as Christianity? When the King of England, who is *ex officio* head of the Anglican Church, goes over into Scotland, he worships, they say, in the Presbyterian kirk. That seems liberal and tolerant. But when he goes to India, does he worship successively and indiscriminately at a shrine of Vishnu, in a Buddhist temple, and in a Mohammedan mosque? How far does "toleration" go? Where and when must one cease to be liberal? It's all very well to be broadminded and all that, but what about being a turncoat, or a

trimmer? And is it not held a virtue to have the courage of one's own convictions?

In Chicago there is, or at least there was to be, a temple of Bahaism, a kind of modern Pantheon where all religions are supposed to meet and mingle. Is that the true American idea of toleration? And if so, is it also the true Christian idea? Are the followers of Jesus happy to have Christ and Mohammed and Buddha under the same roof, on adjacent pedestals?

And what about the poor savages? They have gods, a good many gods, too many gods. Shall we leave them to their gods and their gods to them? Commander Peary, Arctic explorer and discoverer of the North Pole, strongly advised the Christian Churches of the United States to leave the Esquimaux alone. "Let them have the religion they have always had," he said. "Don't bother them with Christianity." He considered himself the apostle of toleration. And, it must be confessed, his idea was the logical conclusion of the prime dogma of indifferentism, "One religion is as good as another." If that slogan be true, the Esquimau's religion is as good as ours.

If the policy of leaving them alone is good for the Esquimaux, why not for the Indian? There are those who say that we have corrupted the Indian with our civilization; and I dare say some maintain that we corrupted them with our religion. When Columbus landed, he christened the island San Salvador, raised a cross and had the priest celebrate Mass before anything else was done. In his letters to the king and queen he declared that his first and chief concern was that the Gospel should be preach-

ed to the savages. Was that a mistake? Should he have left them to their Manitou and not upset them with news about Jesus Christ?

And as with the Esquimaux and the Indians, so with the black man. When he came here, he came in chains from the jungles of Africa. Should he have been allowed to bring his gods with him, his Mumbo Jumbo and his Bingo Bango, or whatever he called them?

Some perverse thinkers (they would prefer the designation, independent thinkers,) will answer all these questions with a bold affirmative: "Certainly. Let us be tolerant, one hundred percent tolerant. Let every man have his own gods and his own religion. One religion is as good as another." That may be called toleration, but it cannot be called good sense, and still less can it be called Christianity. Christ never uttered the easy fallacy that one religion is as good as another. If that were true He need never have come. His people had a religion, but He came to give them a better one. He died to give them a better one.

Indifferentism therefore is not toleration. It is a counterfeit of toleration.

Secondly, agnosticism is not toleration.

The prevailing philosophical and theological theory of our day is that truth, ultimate truth, fundamental truth is undiscoverable. That theory, invented a generation or two ago, and hitherto exploited principally by philosophers at various universities, has now reached the man in the street. Only the other day I picked up a metropolitan newspaper and read these startling sentences:

"There is no truth. There never has been a truth.

There never can be an absolute truth. Two and two make four because in our average every-day life, we have found it convenient to think so. On another planet it might make five or three. And just as morals are merely a matter of geographical latitude and longitude, so does truth depend upon the hour, the place and the surrounding circumstances."

Now I must confess that it bewilders me that one who has arrived at that *ultima Thule* of negation, should continue to exercise himself with intellectual activities. If there be no truth, why pursue truth? If you cannot recognize truth when you catch up with it, why run after it? When Christopher Columbus sailed west in search of undiscovered land, it would have been a melancholy joke, what with mutinies on his hands and starvation looming up, if there hadn't been any land to find. So too all study, all research, all exercise of the mind is a sad occupation if there is no such thing as truth. Of course Columbus was mistaken in a minor detail. He thought he had found India. But he knew he had found something, it was *terra firma*; you could get off the ship and stand on what was there. You could pitch a tent on it and live on it. It wasn't a mirage. The plight of the courageous mariner and his men would have been pitiable if the land they hoped to find had been as unreal and non-existent as the mythical Atlantis.

Now no sane scholar would go faring forth on the difficult and turbulent sea of philosophical and theological thought, if he were persuaded beforehand that there is nothing to find. You may opine that he enjoys the sail; but I doubt if one enjoys a sail when he realizes that he is lost in mid-ocean. Yet

this is the agnostic idea: we are all lost, hopelessly lost; and what is more, there is no sun, no moon, no stars, no compass. We sail around and around on the sea of thought but we never know where we are, and we never arrive.

However, I am not now discussing agnosticism as a philosophy, but as a condition of mind that produces a form of religious toleration. If a man does really believe that no one can know the truth, I can understand that he should be tolerant. If you cannot tell whether you are right and I am wrong, or whether I am right and you are wrong, then of course it should be the easiest thing in the world for you to be tolerant towards me, or for me to be tolerant towards you. But that is not really toleration.

The agnostic cannot even say with the indifferentist that all religions are equally good. He thinks they are all equally no good. And that, too, is not toleration. That's presumption. And if the agnostic who thinks no religion any good none the less is polite about my religion, that is condescension, and condescension is a particularly offensive attitude of mind.

Agnosticism is in effect plain apathy, lethargy, the paralysis of thought. If put into practice, it would be the end of all intellectual activity and therefore of all civilization. If some one challenges me to say how it is that although the philosophical world, the intellectual world, the educational, academic, university world is agnostic, civilization does not come to a standstill, my answer is easy and confident. First, the academic world is not the practical world. And second, even the intellectual world is not really agnostic. The intellectuals are just as dogmatic as

any one else. They are just as sure of their agnosticism as the dogmatist is sure of his dogmatism. The dogmatist says "I'm right and I know I'm right." The agnostic says "I don't know whether I'm right or wrong," but he doesn't mean it. He's just as sure of himself as the other fellow. Genuine agnosticism would be a pathological condition. I repeat, it would be intellectual paralysis, and intellectual paralysis would stop civilization dead in its tracks.

Now, therefore, the only person who is really capable of being tolerant is the man who has convictions, is sure of them, doesn't doubt them, but doesn't blame any other man for not having the same convictions. The orthodox Christian believes that his religion is absolutely true. He believes, on the other hand, consistently, that any religion which contradicts this is false, at least in the points of contradiction. Yet he does not arrogate to himself any personal superiority and does not impute to the one who differs from him any personal inferiority, and consequently he treats his fellow man not with condescension, however polite, however skillfully concealed, but with *bona fide* brotherly love.

And if one asks how can such a condition of mind and such a course of action be achieved, I have only to answer, by the imitation of Christ.

Jesus, be it well understood, was no indifferentist, no agnostic. He was too much in earnest to be a trifler with truth. He was too sane to believe that truth is undiscoverable. He was no philosopher in the Athenian sense of the word, seeking ever new theories, playing with them, knocking them back and forth, to and from his fellow philosophers as



one plays a game of battledore and shuttlecock. He was no agnostic, making guesses at the riddle of existence, entertaining a whimsical and gently cynical doubt of the worth of His guesses. Jesus was no Socrates, suggesting intellectual problems to a select group, debating them all day and leaving them unanswered.

No, Christ's yea was yea and His nay was nay. He spoke not as the Scribes and Pharisees, but as One having authority. Again and again, the astounding utterance fell from His lips: "It hath been said of old . . . but *I* say unto you." With sublime self-confidence He gave command "preach my Gospel. He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be condemned. Upon you I build My Church. If any man will not hear the Church let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican." And as for truth—the existence of truth—he declared with none of the frenzy that marks the fanatic, but with the calm assurance of divine certainty, "*I am* the truth."

And yet—now here is the heart of the matter—with all that assurance, that dogmatism (if you care to call it such) He was tolerant, infinitely tolerant—more than tolerant, affectionate with those who had not the truth.

The Samaritans, whom He knew and admitted to be heretics, He treated with no less brotherly love than His own people. The good Samaritan, be it remembered, was not a member of the one true Church. The Tyrians and Sidonians, who were heathen, he proposed as having more spiritual discernment than many of the chosen people. "For if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the miracles that have been

wrought in you, they had long ago done penance in sackcloth and ashes" (Matt. xi, 21).

Now if it be a paradox that Christ was dogmatic and yet tolerant, dogmatic in teaching, tolerant in practice, be it so. Christianity, like all transcendental truth, is paradoxical. It behooves every Christian to be like Christ, unwavering in doctrine but endlessly kind, patient, affectionate in his dealings with his fellow man. This and this alone is Christian toleration.

## THE PRINCIPLE OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN

(Address delivered by Rev. James M. Gillis, C.S.P., in the Catholic Hour, November 15, 1931.)

The history of the human race, from the beginning until now—from the time of the clash between Cain and Abel just outside the gate of the garden of Eden, until the clash between China and Japan in Manchuria—has been largely a history of injustice, cruelty, bloodshed, warfare; of the hatred of man for man and of nation for nation. The annals of mankind are written upon pages that are blotted with tears and smeared with blood. If one can imagine some tremendous tragic music in the Wagnerian manner, a kind of super-opera on the story of the race of men upon earth, its dominant theme might be “man’s inhumanity to man,” and from time to time the chorus of the people would burst forth with a hymn of hate, sounding loud and shrill like the Marseillaise from the mouths of the “reds” of the Midi, moving on Paris to guillotine the king and to inaugurate the Reign of Terror. I will not exaggerate: these excesses, I say, occur “from time to time.” Not every page and paragraph in human history concerns warfare and bloodshed; there have been periods of peace—too few and too short indeed; but all in all, tragedy and sorrow loom larger than peace and happiness in human annals. If a history were written with the wars left out, it would make a thin book. Ask even the school children for the big names in history and they will reel you off a catalogue—Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar,

Hannibal, Charlemagne, Napoleon Bonaparte, Washington, Wellington, Foch, warriors all. To all intents and purposes, for school boys and girls, Plato and Aristotle have not existed, or Seneca, or Justinian, or Telemachus, or Francis of Assisi, and stranger yet, the last name that comes to their lips as that of a Great Man, is Jesus, the Name that should head every list unless indeed it should be spoken all alone.

From these significant facts you may surmise the prodigious task—are we tempted to say the impossible task?—of the same Jesus Christ who came into the world to save man from Satan, but who is obliged to commence His work by saving man from man, to change the history of man by changing the mind of man, re-creating the heart of man. The recognized great of the earth, those who are commonly called heroes, undertook a relatively simple work; they went forth to conquer, not to convert. They made no appeal to the mind and heart of the foe—those whom they were pleased to call the foe;—they were content to smash and slash their way through flesh and blood to victory. If ever we become civilized, we shall marvel that the fame that rests on bloodshed alone could ever have been thought magnificent. The only true Conqueror is the One who comes among men, finds them at one another's throat, persuades them to peace, and teaches them love in place of hate.

Now this, I take it, is the primary purpose of the Saviour of the World, and so He inaugurated His work with the preaching of the Brotherhood of Man. The phrase has become trite with over-use; there are those who speak it trippingly off the tongue

thus: "The Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of God," but in too many instances it means no more than if they had said A. B. C. D. and U. V. W. X. Y. Z. It is recorded that Sarah Bernhardt could declaim the alphabet so eloquently as to bring tears to the eyes; that is, she could speak something that had no meaning of itself, and make it sound like a thing of exquisite beauty; but there have been those who can perform the contrary miracle; they can take something extremely beautiful and made it sound, to borrow a phrase from King Solomon, "like the crackling of thorns under a pot." "The Brotherhood of Man" is not a formula to be mouthed like a savage incantation. It contains in three words the rehabilitation of fallen man, the restoration of a kind of paradise on earth, the re-creation of the human race, a universal beneficent revolution.

To drop generalities, let us be specific: the Brotherhood of Man means the destruction of race hatred, root and branch. It means that the Japanese must not despise the Chinese, nor the Chinese hate the Japanese; it means that the ages-old feud between the French and the Germans—a feud as savage, as foolish and as needless as the feud of the Hatfields and the McCoys in the Kentucky mountains—must cease. It means that the obdurate, ingrained, inveterate dislike of the Celt for the Saxon and of the Saxon for the Celt must be torn out of the heart, the Irish heart and the English heart both, in spite of seven hundred years of aggravation; it means that all talk of the "Yellow Peril," or the "Pan Slav Peril," or any other peril must cease. Shakespeare says, "There's nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so." That saying needs interpretation.

But there is one point-blank pronouncement that needs neither interpretation nor qualification; if you *think* Yellow Peril, or Black Peril, or Brown Peril (I suppose the Brown Man and the Yellow Man in the Orient talk about the White Peril, just as in Mohammedan countries they call Christians infidels, in retaliation perhaps because we call them "the unspeakable Turk,") I say if we think and talk Peril we create Peril. The Brotherhood of Man knows no color line. There is neither Greek nor Barbarian, bond nor free, says St. Paul, and so in the brotherhood of man there is neither Brown nor Yellow. Furthermore, let us dare the full truth—with God there is neither White nor Black. If we have the mind of Christ, we must therefore drop all contemptuous designations of our brethren. There are no "niggers," no "greasers," no "Bohunks," no "Wops," no "Dagoes," no "Micks," and, by the same token, no "bloody Sassenachs." The Brotherhood of Man sweeps wide and cuts deep.

Years ago, I heard an Englishman say, with a little sly dig at his own people, that the English, as world conquerors, divided all tribes and nations and peoples under the sun into three categories: "Englishmen, foreigners, natives." When the Brotherhood of Man prevails, there must be no connotation of contempt attached to the word "foreigner," and as for "natives," the Englishman, and every other man who colonizes and rules amongst savages, must learn to say in all sincerity on occasion, "You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din." Do I hear some one retort, "If the Brotherhood of Man means that we must surrender our ages-old disgust and contempt for the 'lesser breeds without the law,' the

Brotherhood of Man will never be realized." Well, if it is never to be realized, we shall never be civilized, or most assuredly, we shall never be Christianized. For myself I don't accept that word "Never." There is an old adage: "*Never* is a long day."

However, be that as it may, the Christian doctrine is clear enough; you may find it dramatically expressed in the vision of St. Peter: "He saw the heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending, as it were a great linen sheet let down by the four corners from heaven to the earth; wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts, and creeping things of the earth, and fowls of the air, and there came a voice to him: 'Arise, Peter, kill and eat.' But Peter said: 'Far be it from me; for I never did eat any thing that is common and unclean.' And the voice spoke to him again the second time: 'That which God hath cleansed, do not thou call common.'" The meaning of the vision, of course, is that Peter was to preach the Gospel, not only to Jews but to Gentiles. There are no clean races, and none unclean—with God! If any man or any race considers some other race as "beasts," or "creeping things," he has not caught the first lesson of the Gospel.

And since we have mentioned Jew and Gentile, let us say without flinching that the Jew is in the Brotherhood of Man, along with the rest of us, and the simple fact is that the Christian who despises the Jew is no Christian. I shall not halt to make any qualification of that statement. Pontius Pilate, in the only praiseworthy action recorded of him said: *Quod scripsi, scripsi*—"What I have written, I have written." I borrow the idea, *Quod dixi, dixi*—"What I have said, I have said," about Jew and

Gentile, and about Black Man and White Man and Yellow Man. If we are to make exceptions here and exceptions there, our Brotherhood of Man is going to vanish into thin air, and—what is more important to me—if I don't preach the Gospel of Christ as it stands, if I tamper with it and modify it to suit the predilections or the prejudices of this or that race, I am not preaching the Gospel. In that case I should be preaching race-discrimination, the antithesis and contradiction of the Gospel. What God hath made clean do not thou call unclean. No race is to be treated as a leper race. The Black Man or the Yellow Man or the Brown Man or the Red Man is not obliged to go off among the tombs and the rocks and cry aloud by way of warning the passer-by "Unclean! Unclean! Touch me not for fear of contamination. Unclean!" In the human race, if you believe Christ, there are no untouchables. We are all brothers. If we are not brothers of one another, we are not brothers of Christ; if we are not brothers of Christ, we are not Sons of God.

Now it happens, as if by Divine Providence, that here in America we have a better chance to exemplify the Brotherhood of Man than at any other place or at any other time in history. On Pentecost Day at Jerusalem there were gathered together "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, Egypt, and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews also, and proselytes, Cretes, and Arabians." There was indeed material for the Brotherhood of Man, but here on our own soil we have all those and dozens more. The United States is a microcosm, a little



world; we have fellow citizens of all races and bloods and colors. We need not go over seas to practice brotherly love. We need not cross a frontier or a border line even though it be an imaginary line. We touch elbows with all mankind: we stand and sit and work and play, cheek by jowl with every breed that ever came from the hand of the Creator.

Now if we despise one another, hate one another, if as St. Paul said to the Galatians, we "bite and devour one another," let us not dare call ourselves Christians. We may call ourselves pagan, heathen, or what you will, but not by the sacred name of the One Who was Brother to all mankind.

And yet there are some—not a few, I fear,—of our fellow citizens who consider themselves very godly, who make a brave pretense not only of being Christian but of being a superior kind of Christian, and not only superior Christians, but superior Americans, whose stock-in-trade is race-hatred and the building of barriers between brother and brother. They love to stand and sing, patriotically, as it were,

"I love thy rocks and rills  
Thy woods and temped hills,"

and that indeed is well, if they mean it, but it would be more to the purpose if they would love their fellow man at least as devotedly as they love the rocks and the rills, the woods and the hills. After all, a nation is not made of mountains and rivers;—a country is more than its scenery. At about the same time when, as a young child, I learned to sing "My country, 'tis of thee," I learned also to "speak a piece" entitled "What Constitutes a State," and at least a few of the words still come back to me:

“Not high raised battlements or labored mound,  
Thick wall or moated gate;  
No! Men—high-minded men,—  
These constitute a state.”

We cannot love our country unless we love our countrymen. If within our own land we sow dissension between race and race, we are no less traitors than if we took up arms against our native land. If the races that we despise were to turn about and despise us, we should have civil war, and the most intense and vicious type of civil war, race war, and doubtless with it the most disastrous of all kinds of war, religious war.

And what we say of the relations of man with man inside the nation, is equally true of our international relations. If, for example, I love not the Italian in America, how can I make pretense of loving the Italian in Italy? If I hate the German here, how dare I say that I love the German abroad? And so on: if I go through my own land making lines of demarcation between man and man, people and people, what hypocrisy it is for me to send emissaries to Geneva or anywhere else with a view to smoothing the relations between nation and nation.

Furthermore, if I am a poor patriot, I am a still worse Christian. St. John says: “For he that loveth not his brother whom he seeth, how can he love God, whom he seeth not?” If I love not my fellow American, how can I pretend to love mankind?

But until we love one another unaffectedly, cordially, there never can be peace, there will be no end of war. Whatever other elements enter into the making of war, economic, political, diplomatic

elements, no nation will ever go to war if we remember the duties that devolve upon us as members of the Brotherhood of Man. Indeed if we realize that vision, that dream, that project of Jesus Christ, the Brotherhood of Man, the Kingdom of God will come upon earth.

## THE EXALTATION OF WOMANKIND UNDER CHRISTIANITY

(Address delivered by Rev. James M. Gillis, C.S.P., in the Catholic Hour, November 22, 1931.)

The late Bishop John Lancaster Spalding, attempting to explain why our civilization is not more advanced, wrote in one of his scholarly essays, "the low level upon which the human race has been content to dwell is attributable in no small measure to the injustice done to woman." I am confident that the lamented bishop would permit me to add the word "dishonor" to "injustice." Injustice and dishonor done to woman were a fatal flaw in the ancient civilizations, and the dishonor, if not the injustice that is still woman's lot may yet be the cause, above all others, of the collapse of contemporary civilization.

Perhaps I run the risk of being accused of over-emphasis, so let me explain that I do not consider the condition of woman the *only* index or criterion of civilization, nor do I delude myself with the notion that there is no important morality but sex morality. If commercial morality or political morality becomes too debased society may be wrecked, but I repeat, no civilization is healthy, no civilization can live unless it upholds the dignity—and I mean especially the moral dignity—of woman. If you wish to improve the race you must commence with the improvement of woman. You cannot bring man to heaven if you leave woman in hell.

Before the coming of Christ, under paganism, (and all the world except Palestine was pagan)

woman was in dishonor. She was rated as a thing, an object, a chattel, not a person. In savage times a man went hunting—today for game, tomorrow perhaps for a wife. What he brought home was his own, his booty, his prey, be it bird, or beast or woman. He went to war and returned with trophies and spoils of victory, a head, or a scalp, or wampum or a woman. He possessed his woman as he possessed his hunting dog, his furs and feathers, his battle axe or his tomahawk. The savage could say in all seriousness what Petruchio said with simulated anger of Katherina:

“I will be master of what is mine own.  
She is my goods, my chattels, she is my house,  
My household stuff, my field, my barn,  
My horse, my ox, my ass, my anything.”

I say “the savage”, but in truth that particular feature of savagery was carried over into the customs of civilized peoples. In all Greek literature woman was the subject of mockery and persiflage, or—when writers turned serious—of vituperation. The Greek poet Hesiod called woman “an accursed brood, the chief scourge of the human race.” Aeschylus agreed. “Woman,” he said, “is the direst scourge of state and home.” Socrates, the philosopher supreme, made a daily prayer of thanks that he had been born neither a slave nor a woman. Aristotle defined woman as a truncated man—a man marred in the making, a mistake, a failure of the Creator. Plato in his ideal *Republic*, anticipating the ugly materialism of the most advanced modern eugenists, gave to woman the place in society that a

stock raiser gives to a brood mare on the farm. And he approved the Greek custom of exposing superfluous female infants on the mountain side to be devoured by wild beasts.

Socrates, though his life was the cynosure of the eyes of the nation, publicly and shamelessly exalted his concubine above his wife. Pericles, the bright particular star of Greek civilization, took his wife to a lecture given by Aspasia, known to be a courtesan and his mistress. Can we imagine a modern king or president doing anything so shameless? And Pericles, be it remembered, was not considered a scapegrace. He was the George Washington of his day. True, in France under Louis XIV, Louis XV, and Louis XVI there was similar shamelessness, but the Louis' knew that the State could not survive it: *Après moi le deluge*—"After me the deluge," said one of them.

In Rome in the days of the patriarchs, and later the kings, a man could imprison his wife or his daughter, scourge her, sell her as a slave or kill her and be immune to punishment or even to trial. In the later Republic and the Empire, the Roman women were emancipated, but when they became free, they became, as with us, too free. Women went down into the arena to contend for prizes against actors and gladiators. They boxed, and fenced and wrestled, they ran naked in races with men, they took part in obscene plays and performed orgiastic dances as they do today in America upon the musical comedy stage. The Lupercalian and Bacchanalian orgies have survived in Mardi Gras festivals and New Years' carnivals, but the survival, bad as it is, is innocent and chaste in comparison with what took

place in the grove of Daphne at Ephesus, or the gardens of Nero at Rome.

Furthermore, women debauched not only domestic life, but political life. They mixed in politics, indeed in some cases they dominated politics. As one historian has said: "Women were the mistresses of the masters of the world. The tribute of nations was squandered on their adornment." The supreme example of such excess is, of course, the ruin of Antony by Cleopatra.

In short, at Rome and Athens and Antioch and Corinth and Ephesus, was verified the maxim, *Corruptio optimi pessima*—"The worst is the corruption of the best." A poet and dramatist of the seventeenth century, Thomas Otway, has written well of paradoxical woman—woman good and woman bad, woman saint and woman devil. In one play he apostrophizes her:

"O woman! lovely woman! Nature made thee  
To temper man: we had been brutes without you."

But again he exclaims:

"What mighty ills have not been done by woman!.....  
Destructive, damnable, deceitful woman!"

Beyond the boundaries of the Roman Empire, among the barbarians, there was less profligacy, but more brutality in the treatment of woman. Roman historians, Tacitus, Suetonius and Julius Caesar, have given dreadful details of the savagery with which the barbarians treated their women. Among the Teutonic tribes, if a man killed a woman capable

of being a mother, he was fined the amount that we should call six dollars; if she was not capable of motherhood, the fine was two dollars. There was no concern about marital fidelity upon the part of the man, but if a wife were disloyal to her husband, she suffered atrocious punishment. And yet if Julius Caesar speaks the truth, he found among the British a condition of female depravity to which history, even Roman history, hardly furnishes a parallel.

In Ireland, centuries before St. Patrick came, there were two kinds of marriage (as indeed there were at Rome) and one of these forms was, in effect, the nasty and wicked thing that is called nowadays trial marriage or companionate marriage. It would be amusing if it were not tragic to see certain contemporary agitators attempting to introduce as the supreme achievement of modern progress an institution that was outmoded and discarded as vicious and uncivilized 1500 or even 2000 years ago.

Also, in ancient Ireland,—extremely ancient—as in all pagan countries, marriage was an outright sale of woman by her father to her husband. That paganism also has been revived, equivalently if not absolutely, in high society of Europe and America, though it is now generally the mother, not the father, who sells the daughter. Again in Ireland (we have more historical records of ancient Ireland than of other non-Roman countries) one man slave was reputed to be worth seven female slaves or 21 horned cattle. Women went to war, and in general there was no recognition whatsoever of what we have learned to consider woman's prerogatives, or even woman's elementary rights.

I need scarcely add that these conditions, as far



as Ireland is concerned, were modified in later pagan times to such a degree that women became judges, rulers, even queens. But taking the world by and large, it must be said that before Christ, woman was in a condition of unspeakable degradation—unspeakable indeed, for I have not dared tell the half of it. For those who crave more facts along this line, I recommended as an unsensational, scientific historian, Dollinger. But perhaps we may sum up the facts in a phrase of Merivale: "Woman was degraded in her social condition because she was deemed *unworthy of moral consideration.*" Woman was held to have no more relation to morality than a stock or a stone. She was, as we have seen, a thing, a chattel, at most an animal. As for man's attitude to woman, perhaps we may borrow a bitter sentence from Tennyson:

"He will hold thee, when his passion shall have  
    spent its novel force,  
A little better than his dog; a little dearer than  
    his horse,"

and apply it universally as a description of man's opinion of woman in pagan civilization and in barbarism.

Such, then, was the condition of the world when Jesus came. Obviously He faced the task of revolutionizing society. And how could that be accomplished? By preaching? You can work no such miracle by mere preaching. The greatest preacher that ever lived, St. Paul, speaks of the "foolishness not re-create the face of the earth by speaking of preaching." Let us make no mistake. Christ did

words, however beautiful, however touching and eloquent. Those who heard Him gave testimony, enthusiastically: "Never man spake like this man," but they would have been the first to add "never man lived like this man." His life was more than His speech: His example was more than His gospel. Say rather, He *was* His gospel. But Jesus not content with offering Himself as our guide to eternal life, presents to us also a woman, Mary His Mother. "Son", said He to the beloved disciple, "Behold thy mother: Woman, behold thy son!" The Catholic Church with swift and sure instinct caught the mystic meaning of that word from the Cross. Mary is mother, not alone to John, but to every disciple who loves the Master and is loved by Him. In Christian thought and life, therefore, Mary is exalted, and in Mary, womankind. The Church went forth, preached Christ and Him crucified, Christ and Him glorified, but also to the world which had degraded and debauched woman, she preached Woman exalted and sanctified. She cried aloud, "Behold your mother! Behold Woman as Woman was meant to be: *Immaculata, Integra, Casta, Inviolata*—"Woman immaculate, chaste, inviolate." To the libidinous Greek, the corrupt Roman, the barbaric Goth, she preached Woman, now no longer Woman as personified in Venus or Isis or Diana. No Aspasia or Cleopatra, or Boadicea, no goddess of lust, no patroness of sybarites and profligates, no Amazon, but "Mother maiden meek and mild," sweet and pure and altogether lovely.

Thereupon was inaugurated a new type of civilization, a civilization in which I will not say woman was restored to her pristine condition as the equal

of man, but in which woman was understood to enjoy a certain superiority over man. It should be a source of never-ceasing wonder, and to women I should imagine it to be a source of joy and glory, that in the Christian dispensation not a man but a woman was endowed by God with the highest vocation and is venerated with the most respectful and affectionate devotion. With Christ Jesus, of course, we compare no one. We hold Him not only man but God. As God He is first and no one is second. He is alone. But of all mere humans, we believe and teach that not John the Baptist, not Paul, not Peter, not even John the Beloved Disciple, not any man, but a woman—the woman *par excellence*, Mary,—is supreme.

And the result? An historian of civilization, not himself a Catholic, not I fear, even a Christian in the strict theological sense, an unbeliever, Lecky, quite unconcerned with controversies between one school of Christians and another, says: "The world is governed by ideals, and seldom or never has there been an ideal that has exercised a more salutary influence than the mediaeval conception—the conception of the Virgin". . . "There is little doubt that the Catholic reverence for the Virgin has done much to elevate and purify the ideal woman and to soften the manners of men." (*Rationalism in Europe*, iii, 234, and *History of European Morals*, ii, 389).

True, except that the veneration of Mary is ancient as well as medieval; and I dare say more: the history of western civilization would have been radically different had it not been for the emphasis placed upon womanly virtue, womanly dignity, womanly sanctity by the Church. There was a civiliza-

tion in India but in that civilization they practised, and perhaps they still practise *suttee*, the burning of a widow upon her husband's funeral pyre. There was a civilization in Egypt, but it was dominated by Isis, a shameless deity; there was a civilization in Babylon, but there too was a lascivious goddess Ishtar. In Greece there was Ariadne, in Rome Venus. They were one and all glorified symbols of carnal lust: the worship of them caused deterioration and degradation of the people, and so became the cause of the collapse of the civilization that they dominated. It may be true to say that war ruins a nation, or plague ruins a nation, or the assaults of barbarians break down the walls that protect a civilization. But war and pestilence and the onslaught of savage tribes cannot produce national disaster unless the nation is first enervated, devitalized, demoralized by vice, particularly the kind of vice that prospered under Isis, and Ariadne, Ishtar and Venus, the vice that is antagonized, checked, controlled if not altogether obliterated by the gospel of the Sanctity of Woman, personified in the Blessed Virgin Mary.

It is my purpose in these short talks, to expound a few simple elements in the philosophy of history, rather than to preach sermons. But I cannot deny myself the opportunity of saying that if this modern world of ours goes mad once more, like ancient Greece and Rome and Egypt and India, debases woman and glorifies sex-sin, it will collapse just as inevitably as any of the civilizations whose wreckage is strewn over the surface of the globe. Whatever evil influences may conspire to destroy us—warfare, commercial and political dishonesty, hypocrisy in

high places, scandals in religion—not any of them, not all of them, can be fatal to our civilization if we preach and practise the Christian principle of the honor and glory and virtue of woman. Under God the fate of the nation and of all this, our civilization, depends not so much upon man as upon woman.

## THE PRINCIPLE OF MERCY

(Address delivered by Rev. James M. Gillis, C.S.P., in the Catholic Hour, November 29, 1931.)

There is no more characteristic difference between paganism and Christianity than that indicated by their attitude toward the virtues of mercy, kindness, forbearance, pity. These virtues, now universally considered desirable and beautiful, were either unrecognized in pagan civilization or, if recognized, repudiated. The Greeks and the Romans, and still more the Carthaginians, the Babylonians and Persians, considered mercy a weakness of character. They would have scorned the suggestion that it might be a virtue. The Romans—a martial and virile race—would have argued that the very word “virtue” embodies the word *vir* and *vir* means *man*. In other words, virtue is something manly. But mercy is womanish. As a matter of fact, it would have been difficult to find mercy and pity even in the women of pagan civilization. The bitter line of the modern poet Kipling, (who, by the way, has written more than one line that seems to mark him a woman hater,) “The female of the species is more deadly than the male,” was verified at least in the Roman amphitheatre when the life or death of a fallen gladiator depended upon a gesture of the spectators, and the Vestal Virgins were generally the first to turn thumbs down.

As for “gentle Jesus meek and mild,” the pagans would never have taken Him for God. Their gods were cruel, murderous, bloodthirsty, pitiless. There was no such thing in pagan ethics or pagan religion as forgiveness of injuries. Plato, though the noblest

and gentlest of the great figures of antiquity (with the possible exception of his master, Socrates), nevertheless congratulated the Athenians on having shown in their relations with Persia a "pure and heartfelt hatred of the foreign nature." In Rome whenever there was civil war—and civil war was very frequent—the victor generally slaughtered the vanquished, not only in the heat of battle, but in cold blood afterwards.

Indeed it is not too much to say that relentless, shameless cruelty was one of the basic elements of paganism. When the Greeks or the Romans or the Medes or the Persians or the Phoenicians went to war and were victorious, they did not sign an armistice, to be followed by a treaty of peace, and the payment of indemnities and reparations. In our own day many observers have complained that the Allies at Versailles treated the conquered Central Powers with little generosity or magnanimity. But Julius Caesar, or Germanicus, or Scipio Africanus would have been amazed if the winner of a war did not move on the enemy's capital city, sack it, slaughter the majority of the inhabitants and make slaves of the remainder.

When Hindenburg capitulated to Marshal Foch, or when Robert E. Lee surrendered to Grant, or Cornwallis to Washington, the victors treated the vanquished with compassion. But when Julius Caesar conquered Vercingetorix he dragged him hundreds of miles in chains to Rome, humiliated him in the victory procession and ended by killing him. Any other procedure would have turned the Romans against Caesar as a weakling, and the van-

quished king of the Gauls himself would have despised Caesar if Caesar had taken pity on him.

As a consequence of many wars and the practice of leading the vanquished away into captivity, the Greek cities first, and afterwards Rome, were filled with slaves. The Greeks made slaves of the Persians and Macedonians; in turn under Alexander the Macedonians enslaved Egyptians, Persians, Indians, and the Romans finally made slaves of the Macedonians, Greeks, the Gauls and a dozen other peoples. A census of Attica, the state of which Athens was the capital, showed 20,000 citizens and 400,000 slaves. In Sparta there were 30,000 citizens, 244,000 helots (real slaves) and 120,000 *perioeci* who were subject to their Spartan masters in all save the right of life and death. At Corinth there were no less than 460,000 slaves. At Rome, in the year 5 B. C., it is estimated that there were 650,000 slaves. At times, in certain cities slaves outnumbered freemen 20 or 25 to one.

These slaves were all, or almost all, white men and women; many of them better educated and more highly cultured than their owners. Yet they were treated as beasts or as "animated instruments." The great Roman moralist Cato, who represents the highest ideal of Roman virtue, kept slaves, trafficked in them and threw them off his premises when they became too old for service. Slaves had no rights, and were treated without compassion. Cicero tells of a slave who was crucified after having his tongue cut out, not that he had been guilty of any fault, but because he had happened to see his mistress commit a crime. When a noble Roman (Pedanicus Secundus) was assassinated in the time of Nero, four



hundred slaves were executed because they had not prevented the murder of their master. The hands of slaves were cut off because of some minor carelessness, such as the breaking of a vase. The emperor Caesar Augustus ordered his steward, who was a slave, to be crucified because he had by mistake ordered a trained quail to be cooked.

The more robust male slaves were often trained as gladiators, and, as every one knows, the gladiators were compelled to butcher one another to make a Roman holiday. On one occasion at least, a monster battle was held in the Coliseum to amuse the Romans, and it did not conclude until every one of 10,000 gladiators had been killed. Plays were enacted with most horrible realism. One actor who took the role of a robber chief was actually nailed to a the cross and his eyes were plucked out. Hercules, the mythological hero, was supposed to have been burned alive, so when the exploits of Hercules were represented, a slave was burned to make the scene real. These facts are reported by the pagan Romans themselves, as well as by other eyewitnesses of unimpeachable veracity. The great Seneca is often quoted as saying: "The more I go amongst men, the less a man I return." What he really said is that the more he mingled with men *in the amphitheatre* the more sensual, the more savage, and more inhuman he felt himself. He tells of going to the theatre at midday and seeing, as an interlude, gladiators fighting with clubs and swords but without armor. "The only end," he says, "for all engaged can be but death; they go to work with fire and sword and there is no respite until the arena is empty of combatants."

It is noteworthy that these cruelties were often

associated with lust. Arnobius, a Christian who lived under the Emperor Diocletian, about 300 A. D., says:

“At these public amusements, there are seated the collective people and senate, consuls and consulars, while Venus, the mother of the Roman race, is danced to the life, and in shameless mimicry is represented as revelling through all the phases of meretricious lust. The great mother, too, is danced; the Dindymene of Pessinus, in spite of her age, surrendering herself to disgusting passion in the embraces of a cowherd. The supreme ruler of the world is himself brought in, without respect to his name or majesty, to play the part of an adulterer, masking himself in order to deceive chaste wives, and take the place of their husbands in the nuptial bed. . . . The very same assembly that assisted at these lascivious comedies one morning, on the same or following day glut themselves with the carnage of a gladiatorial fight. There again they all are reseated, priests and senators, ministers of state and their wives, and the vestal virgins and people of all ranks and classes, to drink in and dwell on the sweet draughts of human blood flowing in streams, and to feast their eyes on the gaping wounds and convulsive throes of dying men.”

In consequence of all this cruelty and bloodthirstiness, “life became a drug on the market.” Dollinger says (*The Gentile and the Jew*, ii, 298): “People saw numbers put to death every day for mere pastime. Nor had life any more to offer to thousands who had emptied the intoxicating cup of pleasure to the very dregs. Contempt of life and suicide were the order of the day, and the Stoic creed contributed to the

general inclination by setting up a theory of suicide, and enumerating a variety of cases in which a man should and ought to make away with his life, with honor to himself and the approbation of the wise and good. Life, according to this view, was one of the indifferent things; if it became a burden, it might be thrown aside unhesitatingly, like a cast-off garment. Seneca was astonished that a greater number of slaves did not make use of this simple means of emancipating themselves. Marcus Aurelius recommended 'retiring from life,' if a man did not feel himself strong enough to maintain a certain moral elevation. Cato committed suicide and his example acted on the Romans who succeeded him. Pliny took it to be the act of a great soul to give itself the *coup de grace* after a calm and thoughtful survey of the grounds."

The gladiators, as every schoolboy knows, sometimes rose in rebellion, as under Spartacus and Cleon. Crassus conquered Spartacus, erected 10,000 crosses along the route from Capua to Rome, and crucified 10,000 of the rebels. It was not strange or unusual, therefore; when the Emperor Nero,—a pupil, by the way, of Seneca,—falsely accusing the Christians of the conflagration which he himself had probably started, saturated some of them with oil, fastened them to posts and burned them as torches in his garden. These and a thousand other available historical details, some of them too ugly to be spoken, many of them too cruel and obscene even to be written, will enable us to visualize slightly the magnitude of the task that confronted Christ and His early disciples when they attempted to humanize and to Christianize the ancient pagan world.

Worst of all, cruelty was part of the *religion* of paganism. Within and without the Empire, amongst civilized peoples and savages the gods were believed to be merciless, vengeful, bloodthirsty. The Phoenicians called their god Moloch: they built him a statue of iron, heated the statue red hot, and on solemn occasions threw into his horrible arms infants snatched from their mothers' breasts.

The Greeks and Romans even in the days of their highest civilization believed in a god of war and battle. The Greeks called him Ares, the Romans Mars. The highest spot in Athens, the spot by the way on which the philosophers met, the spot where St. Paul preached to them, was named Areopagus, "the hill of Ares," and from the word Mars, as everyone knows, comes our word "martial," war-like. Ares, Mars, was therefore a god who drove men to frenzy in battle and made them rejoice wildly in carnage. His name was associated with quarrels, dissension, murder and madness.

Early and late, human sacrifice was offered in Greece, not only to Ares, but to other gods; Zeus, Dionysos, Artemis, Apollo and Poseidon, whom we call Neptune. Even in cultured Athens "it was the custom to maintain certain people considered worthless and unprofitable in order to sacrifice them as an atonement on the occasion of any public disaster" (Dollinger, vol. 1, page 240). When Nero slaughtered the first Christian martyrs, he probably had it in mind not only to punish them as alleged incendiaries, but to propitiate the gods.

At the annual festival of Apollo, in Athens, and in every other Greek city, two persons were decked out gaudily, conducted beyond the city limits, and

compelled to leap from a rock, or they were burned alive and their ashes sprinkled on the sea.

All over the world, such cruelties were done in the name of religion, on the theory that the gods thirsted for human blood. In Mexico the Aztec cruelty was hideous; in India and Polynesia, in Egypt and Persia, in truth in almost every quarter of the globe, such monstrously savage religious rites were performed as cannot be recounted in detail.

Now, into that terrible world came Jesus, and He made it the very first feature of His work to reveal to man in His own Person the nature of God. He came, not like Jupiter the Thunderer, not like Siva the Destroyer, not like Ares or Mars, to devastate the world, not even like a human conqueror, Attila, Napoleon, Ghengis Khan or Mohammed, but gentle, kindly, preaching pity and mercy. I daresay that of all the high and holy and beautiful truths revealed by Christ there is none that appeals to us more than the revelation that God is no cruel monster, but a Father of mercy and love.

Not all Christians, however, have thoroughly assimilated that fact. Even the Apostles were slow to grasp it. On one occasion, while Jesus was making His way through a village of Samaria, and the inhabitants treated Him rudely, James and John said, "Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from Heaven, and consume them?" And turning, He rebuked them, saying: "You know not of what spirit you are. The Son of Man came not to destroy souls but to save." And He spoke to all the people: "You have heard that it hath been said: 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you not

to resist evil: but if one strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him also the other . . . ' You have heard that it hath been said: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thy enemy'. But I say to you: Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you." And *this* was the noble gospel preached to slaves and gladiators, to the poor, the oppressed, the down-trodden, as well as to the powerful and those in authority. This was the gospel that regenerated the world, and that made the continuation of the abominable cruelties of paganism impossible. In whatever degree the world has become civilized, it is due to the influence of the meek and humble Jesus who taught men to conquer cruelty with kindness.

Let us admit, sadly, that the gospel of non-resistance, endurance of evil, non-retaliation, kindness, mercy, pity, has not yet made its way into every corner of the world, indeed not even into every corner of our heart. Our personal paganism dies hard. The tiger in us retreats slowly, snapping and snarling the while. If the world is not yet humanized, let us not blame the world too much. We might better blame ourselves. Perhaps *we* are not yet perfectly humanized. If there remain in us any trace of vindictiveness, unwillingness to forgive; if we are unrelenting to those who have done us wrong; if we seek revenge; if we refuse to suffer injuries meekly, we are only perpetuating the paganism that Christ came to obliterate. If we truly desire the humanization and the Christianization of the world it would be well for us to commence by humanizing and Christianizing the little world that is our own heart.

## THE PRINCIPLE OF ENTHUSIASM

(Address delivered by Rev. James M. Gillis, C.S.P., in the Catholic Hour, December 6, 1931.)

In the centuries immediately preceding the coming of Christ, there arose in the Greco-Roman world certain philosophies of life and ethical systems showing some striking similarities with Christianity.

The Stoic philosophy especially in its moral aspects seems to have had much in common with the Gospels. In the Discourses of Epictetus, the philosopher who though a slave was wiser and more civilized than any Roman of his day; in the orations of Cicero and still more in his letters and treatises; and perhaps most of all in the Meditations of Marcus Aurelius who, being Emperor, was at the other extreme of the social scale from Epictetus, there is a dignity of thought and an occasional sublimity of utterance that remind one of the Sermon on the Mount or of a Kempis's precious little book "The Following of Christ."

Nevertheless, the Stoic philosophy at its best was impotent to re-create the moral and spiritual world. It lacked fervor, warmth, and hence dynamic power. It remained a philosophy, a system of thought; it never became a religion that could apply the torch to man's heart and set it ablaze. The Stoics neglected the heart while concentrating upon the mind and the will. Christ made no such mistake. "For He knew what was in man." And by the same token, He knew that although you illuminate the mind and stimulate the will, if you do not warm the heart, you only divide a man against himself.

Shakespeare says:

“Tell me where is fancy bred  
Or in the heart or in the head?”

If I may borrow the idea while changing the key word and ask, “Where is Religion bred, Or in the heart or in the head?” the answer must be, in both heart and head. Pascal knew that. “The heart,” he said, “has reasons not known to the mind,” and the poet-philosopher Tennyson suggests the idea even better when he speaks of “heart and mind according well.”

But Stoicism, I say, neglected the heart. The Stoics taught men to “take things philosophically,” as we say, that is, with resignation, with submission to fate. They taught men to smile in the face of adversity, “to grin and bear it.” They cultivated serenity, —even, it must be confessed, a forced, artificial serenity, tranquillity, mental poise, emotional equilibrium. That philosophy, though the Stoics knew it not, approaches perilously close to Buddhism and its Nirvana. The Greeks had a name for it, *apatheia*, “passionlessness,” but it is really stagnation and paralysis. Man cannot be passionless unless he be dehumanized. The problem is not to eliminate passion, but to purify and sublimate passion.

Furthermore, the Stoics made another mistake: they remained contemptuously aloof from what they called the vulgar strivings of unenlightened men. One of their poets wrote the familiar sentence *Odi profanum vulgus et arceo*, “I hate the vulgar horde and I shun them.” The Stoic doctrine forbade worryment, apprehension and all manner of mental anxiety. In the face of wars and revolutions, earth-



quakes, volcanic explosions and indeed of any catastrophe they boasted themselves "serene, indifferent to fate."

Consequently, in their literature, as in their life, there is a sort of frigidity that prevented the Stoic philosophy from stirring man's affections. Generally speaking it is as coldly transcendental as that of the modern Ralph Waldo Emerson. The hard-hammered epigrammatic style of the New England successor to the Greco-Roman Stoics sometimes simulates fervor, but it cannot inflame the heart any more than the light in the body of a glowworm can kindle a fire in the grass. To use another illustration: the difference between Stoicism, ancient or modern, and Christianity, is the difference between a marble statue and a flesh-and-blood human being. The religion of Jesus Christ is warm-hearted and whole-souled. "I am come," said He, "to cast fire upon the earth: and what will I, but that it be kindled." Christianity, therefore, was not a serene, calm, cool philosophy making its appeal to the inner circle of the intellectual élite. It was a living flame burning its way across the face of the earth with the swift advance and the universal sweep of a prairie fire. It was an overwhelming force, tearing down and building up; "every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low"; it toppled idols from their pedestals and razed the temples of false gods to the ground: then it cleared the ground of all the crumbled moral and religious débris, constructed a new civilization and re-created the moral world.

Now the man who was the supreme embodiment of this power, after Christ, was St. Paul. The Stoics

could not understand him. How could they appreciate such a firebrand? His heart was burning and bursting, his words came flowing hot, he was a total stranger to philosophic calm, he was utterly lacking in poise. He made no attempt to attain emotional equilibrium. He blurted out his words, he tore the classical Greek into shreds and tatters, and corrupted it with a jumble of Hebrew idioms. The intellectuals counted that sacrilege, and I can imagine that some of the polite scoffers in Athens told him that he should have polished up his diction before addressing the Academy.

As with his preaching, so with his writing. There is nothing in his Epistles of the exquisite phrasemaking of Marcus Aurelius, or the jeweled sentences of Epictetus. He smashes all classical standards, plunges along breathlessly, impetuously delivering his soul of its pent-up emotions. Read those Epistles and you may feel the warmth of his great heart burning through the cold print after nineteen centuries.

But what that ancient world did not understand is that the blunderer and sputterer, the man beside himself, was alive, afire with divinity and that unlike the ultra-refined who were polishing their phrases and chopping their logic in the lounging rooms of the luxurious baths and in the porches of the Academy, that man was tearing up the foundations of the old world and building a new world before their very eyes. When they awoke out of their intellectual trance, the work was largely done.

But I must not convey the impression that this world conquest was achieved by the one solitary passion of enthusiasm. We have all known men

of one idea, or of one passion, and we are, with good reason, afraid of them. We call them fanatics or monomaniacs. But what is it that saves the enthusiast from being a madman? Some would say: "A touch of humility," and that is good. Others say "A saving sense of humor," and there is wisdom in that. Again, it might be said: "A decent respect for the opinions of mankind and for authority," and that is indeed a strong anchor to windward. But above all these things, the one saving grace that prevents enthusiasm from degenerating into madness is *Love*. The genuine fanatic is a universal hater. He hates sin, he hates the devil, he hates bad men, he hates good men if they stand in his way, he hates authority,—on occasion he hates rebellion against authority; he hates subjection, he hates delay, he hates injustice; sometimes he hates justice; he hates thousands of persons and things,—but he loves nobody and nothing.

Now, such a man is the antithesis of St. Paul whom I take as an outstanding example of the enthusiastic Christian. The passion behind his enthusiasm was not hatred, but love. The supremacy of love is stated with incomparable beauty in his eternal classic in I Corinthians, Chapter xiii: "If I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy, and should know all mysteries, and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing. Love is pa-

tient, is kind; envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up; is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil . . . Now there remain faith, hope and love, . . . but the greatest of these is love."

Love was the saving grace that made St. Paul a world-conquering Apostle, instead of a futile, blustering, ineffectual fanatic.

In consequence St. Paul took the ancient Roman world by storm. It was not prepared for such a tornado of enthusiasm. All the world knew that it needed saving; for underneath the appearance of civilization it was a violent and cruel world, passionate and unnaturally wicked. Yet it cried aloud for saving, but none of the philosophers knew how to save it. One school of them, the Peripatetics, were so called because they walked up and down, forward and backward on what we might call a campus, all the while discussing, debating, talking, everlastingly walking and talking. Or they sat themselves down, as in St. Paul's day, upon the summit of the Acropolis, high, remote, aloof from the throngs in the market place. But the Christian apostles knew that the world cannot be saved by those who sit or walk and talk, still less by those who despise the common people and refuse to mingle with them. The Christians did not waste their energy in the intellectual calisthenics and the philosophic pitter-patter of the academies. We read that on Pentecost Day, as the Apostles were gathered together awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit, "there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house . . . And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were

of fire!" They burst forth from the house, with the light of God upon their brows and a new enthusiasm flashing from their eyes. Their tongues were loosed and so fervently did they preach the good news that the cynics and scoffers said, "These men are full of new wine."

Yes, new wine that ran through their veins like fire. Christ had come to cast fire upon the earth and now at last it was kindled. Christianity is Life, Power, Energy, a dynamic thing. It is not an intellectual theory, to be tossed back and forth from mind to mind. It is rather a flaming torch that passed from Jerusalem to Antioch—from Antioch to Ephesus, from Ephesus to Corinth, to Rome, to Gaul, to Britain, to Erin, to America, to the Orient. It climbs mountains, it crosses oceans, it penetrates jungles, it breaks down barriers. Christianity was the first civilizing force that passed through and beyond the Roman wall, for the standard of the cross has been planted in regions to which the Roman Eagle never attained. It cannot be stopped by bloody persecution, it cannot be ridiculed out of existence, it is not to be explained away by philosophy or so-called science. Its progress is not halted by political maneuvers and machinations. The Christian religion has a sweep and a power and a conquering force that are not to be denied.

Sometimes indeed there are those within the fold and perhaps within the inner circle, the hierarchy, who seem to imagine that our religion is only a conservative force—our critics would say reactionary force—that its primary function is to cry "Stop!" to a world that is running too fast. Friendly outsiders, wishing to praise us, tell us that they value

our organization as a bulwark, a bulwark against this and a bulwark against that. But we are no mere bulwark; a bulwark is static, it sits heavy on the earth.

Nor are we a drag, a drawback to the progress of civilization. Sometimes indeed our leaders, like good generals, cry "Halt!" But again, the command comes "Forward!" and we move on resistlessly.

The intelligentsia, the academicians, the critics, the cynics and the everlasting fault-finders cannot see that Christianity marches ahead. That's because they themselves have grown dizzy running around in circles. They do not discern what is happening in front of their eyes any more than the Areopagites discerned that St. Paul was precipitating a revolution.

Only one thing could possibly stop Christianity dead in its tracks, and that is an excess of caution, of timidity, of what is sometimes misnamed discretion. Discretion is very well, but we must not have too much of it: *ne quid nimis*. And caution must never extinguish the Pentecostal fire, the fire that was kindled by Christ, communicated to the Apostles, carried by them east and west to the ends of the world, the fire that even now after all these centuries does not die down, but flames ever anew, the fire of enthusiasm and love that is Christianity.

## THE PRINCIPLE OF OPTIMISM

(Address delivered by Rev. James M. Gillis, C.S.P., in the Catholic Hour, December 13, 1931.)

One favorite intellectual diversion of philosophers and common people both is that of classifying the human race into, for example, the good, the bad and the indifferent; or capitalists, proletariat and bourgeoisie, or more simply, "the rich and the poor." Social welfare workers sometimes speak of the "washed" and the "unwashed." A certain humorist, considering the speed with which automobile juggernauts tear through our crowded streets, divides us all into "the quick and the dead."

There are thousands of such classifications. But today I ask you to consider the division of the race into optimists and pessimists. And I hope to show more or less conclusively that optimism is Christian and pessimism is pagan, though I shall not deny that some Christians are pessimists and some pagans seem to be optimists.

Let us admit that it is difficult for a deep thinker or a man of wide worldly experience to be an optimist. One of my own favorite authors, whose essays I like better than any one else's, Canon Sheehan, in his beautiful and thoughtful volume, "Under the Cedars and the Stars," declares that "the world's greatest literature is tinged with melancholy," that "all deep thought is sombre thought," and that "sadness is the handmaiden of philosophy."

He recalls the half-comical remark made by some cheerful idiot to Samuel Johnson: "You are a philosopher, Dr. Johnson. I, too, have tried to be a phil-

osopher, but I couldn't; cheerfulness was always breaking in."

As with philosophers, so with poets—every great poet is a philosopher. "Dante," says the learned canon, "gnashed his teeth at the world." His visage was so deeply wrought with anguish that even the urchins in the street called him "the man who has been in hell." Hamlet, the embodiment of the highest thought and deepest emotions of the incomparable Shakespeare, complains that "the world is out of joint" and cries:

"O curséd spite  
That ever I was born to set it right."

His brow is "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," and he soliloquizes upon "The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune . . .

"The whips and scorns of time,  
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,  
The insolence of office and the spurns  
That patient merit of the unworthy takes."

Cardinal Newman, a man of genius not unfit to be named in the exalted company of Dante and Shakespeare, has a desolating passage in his *Apologia* on "the greatness and littleness of man:" "The disappointments of life, the defeat of good, the success of evil, physical pain, mental anguish, the prevalence and intensity of sin, the pervading idolatries, the corruptions, the dreary hopeless irreligion, that condition of the whole race, so fearfully yet exactly described in the Apostle's words, 'having no hope and without God in the world,' " and, says he,



“all this is a vision to dizzy and appal; and inflicts upon the mind the sense of a profound mystery, which is absolutely beyond human solution.”

Those of us who are not philosophers, or poets, still less men of genius, can nevertheless feel in some measure,

“The heavy and the weary weight  
Of all this unintelligible world,”

the business world, a kind of battleground of relentless, and too often conscienceless competition, no, not a battleground, but rather a jungle in which men rend and tear and devour one another with the cruelty of sabre-toothed tigers; the political world riddled with graft, at its lowest a sordid, nasty world wherein men without scruple or remorse blacken an opponent's character and progress into office by means of humbug, buncombe and demagoguery; the political world in which deceit masquerades as diplomacy, and the practice of lying for one's country has been developed as a fine art; the judicial world in which men swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, and then promptly perjure themselves; the judicial world wherein a prosecuting attorney is permitted to shout and bulldoze and browbeat defenseless witnesses; a world wherein justice seems to be kicked back and forth between the attorneys for the prosecution and the defense as if the law were a game, a game in which all the tricks of forensic oratory may be employed to put an innocent man into jail or keep a guilty one out; the world of international affairs in which nations solemnly pledge themselves to renounce war, yet go fiercely ahead with the increase

of armament, and at the first provocation turn their backs upon all compacts and leagues for peace.

Sometimes there seems to be only one way of getting away from it, and that is not to think. And there are indeed multitudes of persons who seem to say: "Don't make me think, don't *let* me think." They avoid Hamlet and Lear and Othello, they shun Goethe and Dante as they would a plague, they take to fiction as an escape from reality, that silly kind of fiction and even sillier popular drama in which, in defiance of logic, truth, natural law, and verisimilitude there is always a happy ending, the villain is always unmasked and defeated, the hero always triumphant, and the heroine always rescued before harm has actually reached her.

Again, people plunge into pleasure, they run from the dining table to the theatre, from the theatre to the cabaret or the speakeasy, to kill time, to kill thought. With them amusement is no longer a pleasure, it is a drug. Above all things they shrink from introspection or meditation because they dread the sight of their own soul; they abhor religion because religion persists in asking the question: "What's it all about? What are you doing, and where are you going?"

If we can believe the poet, Lord Byron, the pleasure seekers do not succeed in escaping from themselves. He had experience, quite too much experience, and he cries bitterly:

"What exile from himself can flee  
To zones though more and more remote  
Still, still pursues where'er I be  
The blight of life, the demon thought!"

Yes, to such as he thought is a demon. So, the pleasure seekers make a desperate effort to eschew deep thought altogether. They say, "Why should I put wrinkles in my brow, furrows in my brain, perplexity in my soul by thinking? I am no Hamlet. Hamlet was mad. Too much thinking made him mad. I am no Dante. You say he *was* in hell. I say he *is* in hell. I have seen his bust, and it looks like the portrait of one of the damned. Let Dante go to his Inferno, let Hamlet moon and meander, rave and storm and end by cluttering up the stage with murder, but as for me, I say, Why worry? Why attempt to puzzle it out, why not 'eat, drink and be merry?'"

I may be mistaken, but I do imagine that there is a fair number of persons in this neo-pagan world of ours who attempt to regard life as a holiday; they sail along on the surface as it were of a smiling tropical sea, never looking beneath to see the hideous incredible monsters that lurk in the black depths. They resolutely ignore poverty, crime, sin, slums, hospitals, prisons; they pass these things by as the Pharisee sniffed and passed by a leper, or as a Brahmin coldly ignores an untouchable pariah. And it must be confessed that for a time they seem to go along serenely.

But in the long run, it won't do. It won't do. They shall not escape what Unamuno calls "The Tragic Sense of Life," in that manner. Voltaire couldn't do it, jest and scoff as he would. His horror over the Lisbon earthquake proves that he couldn't be unconcerned about tragedy in the world. And curiously enough, one of the very best answers, and at the same time a cutting rebuke to those who claim to be

able to live without thinking, comes from Jean Jacques Rousseau. He says: "The internal void is never felt but in hearts made to be filled. Shallow hearts are never conscious of a vacuum." Instantly the great sentence of St. Augustine, the world's deepest thinker, leaps to mind: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in Thee." Some one else, a French writer of the last century, adds the gloss: "That which saddens and torments you is the truest greatness of your heart."

And that brings us face to face with our real problem: Considering the disappointments and disillusionings of this earthly career, how shall we avoid bitterness, cynicism, pessimism? Knowing what we know, permitting ourselves no illusions, suffering no hallucinations, doing no violence to truth and conscience, how can we maintain the attitude and still more the spirit of optimism? Before I attempt to answer that question, let me insist that pagan philosophers, ancient and modern, have found no reply. There come to my mind a few verses which fairly describe, I think, the *ultima Thule* of Greco-Roman paganism, generally alleged to be the happiest and the cheeriest of all pagan civilizations:

"On that hard pagan world  
Disgust and secret loathing fell  
Where deep weariness and sated lust  
Made human life a hell."

That was spoken of Greco-Roman paganism. Oriental paganism even at its best and highest, Buddhism, was and is even more desolate. The first article of its creed is that existence is a

curse, and that the only way to escape the curse is to cease to exist, not merely to die but to be swallowed up in nothingness. Nirvana, though this is sometimes disputed, means oblivion. The devout Hindu purified yet more and more by a series of lives on this lower sphere, finally attains the complete annihilation of the desire to exist, slips into the abyss. He has ceased to be, here or elsewhere, in heaven, on earth, or in hell. He literally is no more.

The modern pagans are scarcely, if at all, less despondent than the ancients. Ten thousand evidences might be given, but permit me to quote you only one—from Bertrand Russell:

“That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves, his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms, that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noon-day brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system; and that the whole temple of man’s achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand.”

I think I have never read a more dismal paragraph than that. Surely it is the nethermost depths of hopelessness. It is a sort of philosophic nihilism.

Now what can be the cause of this dreary, hopeless, pessimism? I find an answer where perhaps you would never suspect it, in Frank Harris’s “Con-

temporary Portrait" of Thomas Carlyle. Harris, once famous, then forgotten, now enjoying a little renewed notoriety on account of the recent publication of his life of George Bernard Shaw, says of Carlyle:

"He had a strong sad face, the saddest I ever studied;" and now from this curiously unlikely source comes the explanation: "Much of the profound sadness in him came, I think, from his utter disbelief. He had sought desperately for some sign of God, some trace of a purpose in life, some hint however vague, of a goal however distant, and had found nothing."

What a remarkable verification of the indictment of paganism by St. Paul in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans that was both a record of fact and a prophecy. Writing later to the Ephesians he gives the reasons of pagan degradation and despondency: "They have," he says, "no hope of the promise, and are without God in this world."

And now we are come to the ultimate basis of Christian Optimism. Christianity is the religion of the Incarnation, and the Incarnation means that God has dwelt on this earth, indeed that God has never left the earth. We have hope because we have God in this world.

Robert Browning's triumphant line that sounds like a bugle—"God's in His heaven: all's right with the world,"—might be amended and then adopted by us: God is not only in His heaven, God's in His world, and *therefore* all's right with the world.

The Christian does not delude himself with the lie that there is no misery here below; he does not

take refuge in the literature of escape; he does not selfishly turn away from his brother's sorrow with the churlish cry "Am I my brother's keeper?" He does not plunge into sensual pleasures as into a Lethæan bath; he does not attempt a brainless, thoughtless existence, as if he could make himself a mollusk, or a machine. He does not deceive himself, nor will he allow others to deceive him. With eyes wide open, and mind alert, he sees, he knows, and yet he remains an optimist, because he believes not only in God but in the Providence of God. Our God is no absentee, dwelling in cold isolation "out beyond the shining of the farthest star." Our God is here now, on this very earth. His presence, it is true, does not annihilate evil any more than the corporeal presence of Jesus Christ annihilated sinners in the streets of Jerusalem and on the hillsides of Galilee. But the influence of God is at work here and now as it was then and there, and the outcome is always the victory of good over evil. Life is a battle, we are on the battleground, so enveloped in smoke and dust, so excited with the clash of conflict, so bewildered by the rush of opposing forces that we cannot at the moment tell how goes the fight at this or that sector. But we never question the outcome of the general engagement. Our Commander has never been permanently beaten. God is not beaten. A thousand times the world's condition has been so desperate that it seemed as if all must be lost, but the ultimate catastrophe never happens. The world is always saved. Civilization goes on, not because civilization has inherent power to rescue itself, but because God sees all, knows all, directs all. This is our Christian belief and in this belief we fight on,

never despairing, never doubting the final triumph of good over evil.



## THE PRINCE OF PEACE

(Address delivered by Rev. James M. Gillis, C.S.P., in the Catholic Hour, December 20, 1931.)

Christ is called the Prince of Peace, and no one who has absorbed the spirit of the Gospels will deny that Christianity, rightly apprehended and universally applied, would abolish warfare and inaugurate peace on earth.

Strangely, perhaps we should say miraculously, when Jesus came, no war was actually in progress and there had been no war for twelve years throughout the Roman Empire. True, peace had been imposed by power, it was peace under arms, peace uneasy like a fitful, restless sleep. As one writer has put it, "The world seemed to sleep under the wing of the Roman eagle." He might have added that if any province or kingdom had awakened and tried to escape from under that wing, it would have been torn to pieces by the talons and the beak of the terrible Roman Eagle.

But peace, such as it was, existed for the first time in 700 years when Jesus Christ was born.

John Milton puts it beautifully:

"No war, or battle's sound,  
Was heard the world around;  
The idle spear and shield were high uphung;  
The hookéd chariot stood  
Unstained with hostile blood;  
The trumpet spake not to the arméd throng:  
And kings sat still with awful eye  
As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by.  
But peaceful was the night

Wherein the Prince of Light  
His reign of peace upon the earth began."

And a greater poet than Milton, poet and inspired prophet, Isaias, had predicted, "they shall turn their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they be exercised any more to war"; and speaking symbolically as it were in an ecstasy or vision, he continues: "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid: the calf and the lion . . . shall abide together . . . They shall not hurt, nor shall they kill in all my holy mountain, for the earth is filled with the knowledge of the Lord."

Alas for the ecstatic vision; alas for the prophecy of peace, for at least as far as this earth of ours is concerned, the prophecy has been made void, the vision is unrealized, the heart of the Prince of Peace is broken. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not: . . . The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it." And in nothing have we failed so dismally to measure up to the expectations of Christ as in the matter of war and peace. Non-Christians, even the Turks, followers of the bloody Mohammed, the heathen Chinese, the smart and skeptical Japanese allege with scorn that we, the followers of the gentle Nazarene, have deluged the world again and again with blood;—and to be frank, we dare not tell them that they lie.

Believe me, my friends, I am weary of the attempts of Christians to defend warfare, to justify

bloodshed, to condone cruelty. It would be better to confess our sin, to cry *mea culpa* and to resolve upon amendment. When one goes to confession, he tells his sins, he makes no excuses, he says nothing to palliate his guilt. Of course we *could* excuse ourselves, saying: "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak;" or "I am human, only human;" and all that. But if we make excuses, we only cast suspicion upon the sincerity of our repentance. Indeed, an excuse may be one sin more. The French have a saying, *Qui s'excuse s'accuse*: "He who excuses himself, accuses himself."

So I, for one, refuse to apologize for the fact that we Christians, though we call ourselves disciples of the Prince of Peace, have perpetuated wars, rumors of wars and threats of wars almost unintermittently for nineteen centuries. The nations, as such, are not Christian; diplomats in action ignore the Gospel; the Sermon on the Mount has not yet been written into any national constitution; kings and congresses, presidents and parliaments, yes even leagues of nations and world courts, though they give lip service to the Man of Galilee, do not invite Him to sit at council table with them: in fact they would be as much embarrassed by His Presence as Herod was embarrassed by John the Baptist, gaunt, unkempt, uncouth—and *unafraid*—in the lascivious and murderous court of Jerusalem; as embarrassed as Pontius Pilate face to face with the innocent, silent Nazarene. There was no room for Jesus at Versailles and no place is reserved for Him at Geneva. Putting it plainly, Christ is frozen out. Governments are conducted, war is declared, and peace is concluded by what one acute and frank historian,

Sir Philip Gibbs, has called "the same old gang," the non-Christian diplomats. True, the personnel changes, but the old methods remain—methods that have a thousand times been tried and found wanting. The rulers of the world call themselves "realists," they might more truly say "materialists." They consider Christ and all advocates of permanent peace idealists—nothing is so foolish to them as idealism; they cling to the old out-moded materialism—nay to militarism.

Those, therefore, who are responsible for modern war are generally not Christian—even nominally Christian—but when this explanation has been made and when all other excuses are alleged, the fact remains that warfare, no matter how it originates, when waged by Christians is an anomaly, a contradiction of the spirit if not the letter of the Gospel, a stumbling-block to the non-Christian, a monstrous blasphemy that shrieks in the face of heaven. Warfare crucifies Christ anew; "Christ is in agony until the end of the world," said Pascal. He will be in agony until the end of the world unless we put an end to warfare.

St. Paul, bold and blunt and honest as always, excoriated his well-beloved Corinthians (perhaps he excoriated them all the more fiercely because he loved them so deeply): "It is absolutely heard," he says, "that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as the like is not among the heathens." He was not afraid to tell them on occasion that they were worse than pagans. And I verily believe that if the fiery Apostle (afire with love of God and man) came back to earth today, he would cry to us, "I hear absolutely that there is bloodshed among you,

and such bloodshed as the like was never among the heathens." And how could we deny it? In St. Paul's time, men fought one another with spears and swords and javelins, but these were toys beside our hideous shot and shell and shrapnel. In a siege the ancients would man a battering-ram, but what was that compared with guns that shoot a ten-ton projectile 20 miles and pierce 12 inches of steel? The beseiged, in turn, would throw down burning embers or boiling pitch upon the besiegers, but burning embers and boiling pitch are a laughing matter compared with poison gas that eats out a man's lungs and drives him insane. Our modern battles, vast, hideous, demoniacal, with machine guns and tanks and flame-throwers and gas bombs, with subterranean and submarine mines, with flocks of aeroplanes, a mile or two miles high in the air, riddling one another with machine gun fire, or dropping terrible death from above the clouds upon defenseless cities of non-combatant women and children; such incredibly cruel warfare would have horrified Julius Caesar or Hannibal or Alexander or Genghis Khan, to say nothing of St. Paul or of Jesus. Truly in this at least we are worse than the heathen.

During the Russo-Japanese war, an American artist drew a cartoon that has left a brand upon my memory all these years. It was a simple picture—a blackboard with some such figures as these written as it were in chalk: The Battle of Lexington, casualties, 329; Bunker Hill, 1504; Brandywine, 1700; Gettysburg, 5670 killed, 26,000 wounded; Sedan, 25,000; Port Arthur, 120,000; Mukden, 300,000. Under the blackboard was the sardonic legend "The Onward March of Civilization." But in the World

War, after civilization had marched onward for yet another generation, there were 9 million deaths and 21 million wounded. As for other casualties, blinded, gassed, paralyzed, insane, starved, it is too horrible for the tongue to speak or the imagination to picture. And the World War is not over yet. It has only commenced. The war with its aftermath may even yet ruin the world.

Yet, God forgive us, we tolerate war; some of us justify war or apologize for it. Shall I say the full truth,—some who bear the name of Christ, *glory* in warfare, write hymns of hate, stir up the smoldering passions of men with inflammatory speeches to precipitate war and when war has been declared and is under way, they fling to the winds all truth, all tolerance, all mercy, all sanity. They go berserk; they run amok. Upon platforms or street corners, in theatres, in workshops, in training camps, they appeal to the bloodlust with the fury of madmen. And then with incredible inconsistency, if not hypocrisy, they go to church on Sunday, fold their hands piously, sing hymns sanctimoniously, and tell Jesus, the Prince of Peace, that they love Him, and love all mankind in His name and for His sake.

On the day when the World War broke out, happening to be in Lyons, in the heart of France, I witnessed the frenzy of a mob singing the bloodcurdling Marseillaise, *Q'un sang impur abreuve nos sillons*: "Let the foul blood of our enemies drench the furrows of the fields." When that most furious of all hymns of hate was written, the *sang impur*, the "foul blood," was that of the reigning house of Bourbon, and perhaps that royal blood was indeed foul. But in 1914 the French sang it again, and this time

the "foul blood" was that of men, their brethren across an imaginary boundary line, men no more to blame for the war than those who sang the song.

But we need not go over seas to find bloodlust, and insane hatred. In our own Civil War, did not the Southerners sing: "Avenge the patriotic gore that flecked the streets of Baltimore, and be the battle queen of yore, 'Maryland, My Maryland' "? And in that same poem are not the men from beyond another imaginary line called "Northern scum"?

And we were no better on this side of the line. Did we not sing in the Battle Hymn of the Republic that God, the God of battles, was with our arms, that He had made our cause His own? Did we not see Him "trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored" and hadn't we a vision of a "gospel writ in burnished rows of steel"?

My dear fellow citizens, and may I address in particular my fellow Christians, let us make no defense of this madness. Toleration of warfare, glorification of warfare, while we bend the knee to the Prince of Peace, is a wild anomaly. I know there is room for argument about just and unjust war, but at this moment let us have no argument. One thing at a time. Let us get the undeniable, indubitable fact into our minds: warfare, any warfare, is a monstrous evil, and Christian warfare is a preposterous contradiction in terms.

For all these nineteen centuries we have been lagging behind Christ. It is time that we should catch up with Him, or at least approach nearer to Him.

What can we do practically? One thing we can do, the first thing: we can utterly obliterate from our souls hatred of our fellow men. A second thing

we can do: when war threatens we can refuse to permit any man, even though he appeal to us in the sacred but much abused name of patriotism, to whip up our bloodlust; and a third and final thing we can do: we can rise in our numbers and in our might and demand that our government shall be conducted on Christian principles; that our nation, in its contacts with other nations, shall conduct itself as an individual who is truly Christian conducts himself toward all his fellow men, with tolerance, forbearance, forgiveness of injuries, with patience and mercy and love. Impossible? Not at all! Cannot an individual be a Christian? And what is the nation but an aggregation of individuals? If the Sermon on the Mount is good for the individual it is equally good for a whole people. Let us be genuine Christians ourselves and demand that those who direct our destinies shall be in all their dealings with foreign nations, followers of the gentle Nazarene, the Prince of Peace.





## CARDINAL HAYES STATES AIMS OF THE CATHOLIC RADIO HOUR

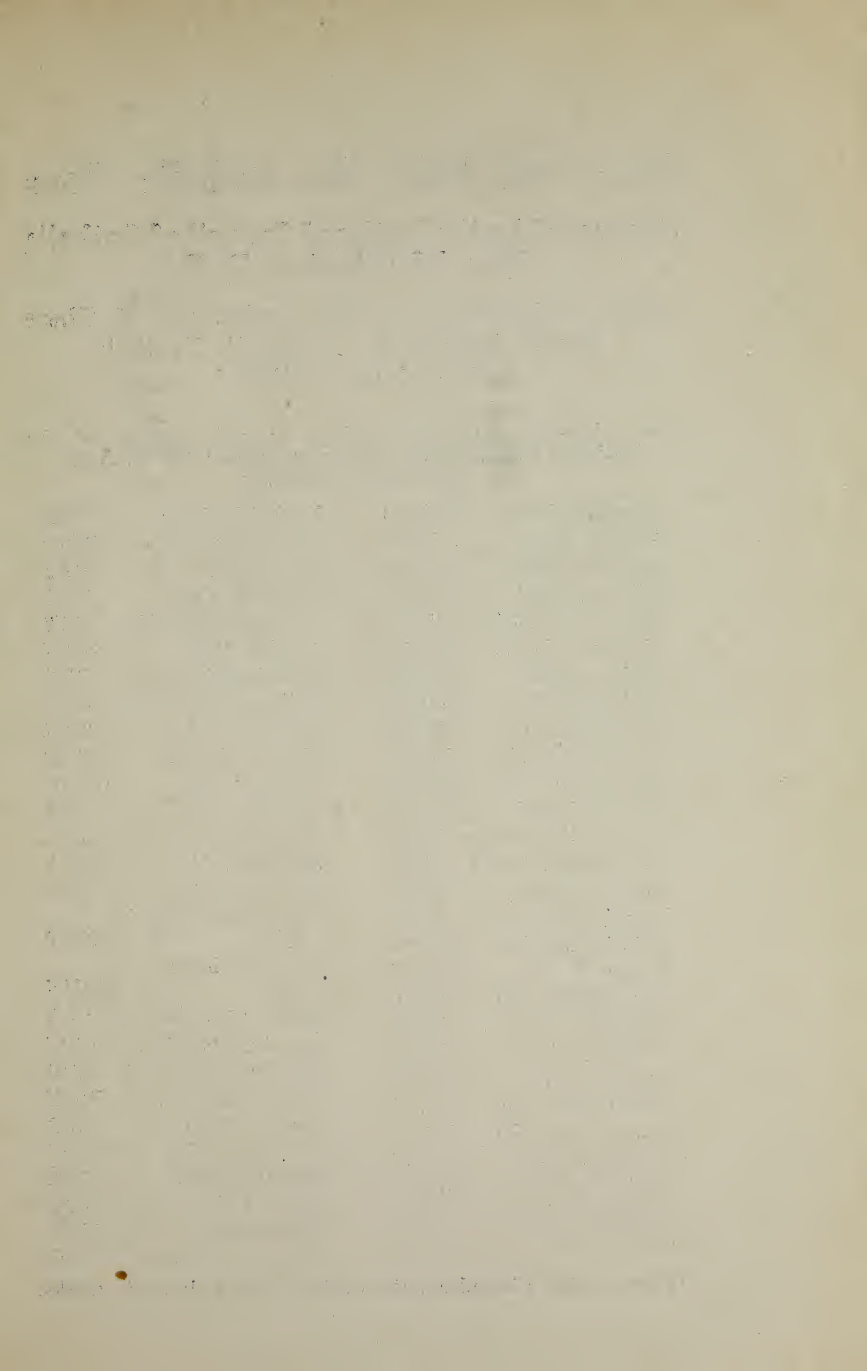
(Extract from his address at the inaugural program in the Studio of the National Broadcasting Company, New York City, March 2, 1930).

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

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

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

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



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