

# CHRIST TODAY

by

Very Reverend Ignatius Smith, O. P., Lector of  
Sacred Theology, Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor  
of Laws, Catholic University of America.

Six addresses delivered in the Catholic Hour, sponsored by the National Council of Catholic Men with the co-operation of the National Broadcasting Company and its Associated Stations.

(On Sundays from April 3 to May 8, 1932)

- I. Christ Our God.
- II. Christ at Home.
- III. Christ the Workman.
- IV. Christ and Wealth.
- V. Christ the Citizen.
- VI. Costs and Compensations of Christianity.



National Council of Catholic Men  
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1814 Massachusetts Avenue  
Washington, D. C.



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## PREFACE

These sermons were delivered over the Catholic Hour on the six Sundays following Easter, 1932. The generous response with which they met renews the conviction that all persons regardless of religious creed, are vitally interested in Christ and what He demands of humanity today. They confirm St. Paul: ". . . preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ our Lord; and ourselves your servants through Jesus" (II Cor. iv, 5).

The fact that a vast subject had to be compressed within the compass of sixteen minutes made plain speech necessary and made fuller development impossible. It was not difficult to meet St. Paul's injunction: "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? So likewise you, except you utter by the tongue plain speech, how shall it be known what is said? For you shall be speaking into the air" (I Cor. xiv. 8, 9).

The Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas, expresses a truth that makes deep knowledge of the personality and activity of Christ imperative: "*Tota actio Christi fuit nostra instructio*"; all the actions of Christ were done for our instruction. We have tried to present some of these lessons with the hope and the prayer that you be "doers of the word and not hearers only" (James i. 22), and with the certainty that "not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (Rom. ii, 13).

"Jesus Christ, yesterday, and today; and the same forever" (Heb. xiii. 8)! Christ today means happiness today and forever. Christ today will be Christ forever.

Dedicated to Christ the Incomparable  
With the Prayer that He will arouse in all Peoples a **Holy**  
Curiosity about Himself.

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## CHRIST OUR GOD

Address delivered by Very Reverend Ignatius Smith, O. P.,  
in the Catholic Hour, April 3, 1932.

I present to you this evening Christ our God. In the failure of agencies that are merely human and of experiments that are not divine it is opportune to ask our people to turn to a helpful One who hath stood in the midst of us and whom we appear to know not.

The character and the teachings of Jesus have been subjected to a searching scrutiny that is unique. Before His birth there was divinely aroused curiosity about His personality; Herod sought an investigation of Him as a Babe; the pitiless light of investigation was centered on Him during the three years of His public life; every century of the last nineteen hundred years has competed with its predecessor in analyzing the character of the Messiah. Friend and foe, animated by love and hatred have laid bare every word, deed and motive of the Master. But the more He has been attacked, the better He has been known. The more pitilessly His teachings have been carded the greater became the power of Jesus among the teeming millions of this world.

More than seven hundred millions in the world today are professedly Christians, accepting as their Master the Babe who was born in Bethlehem and who by His own power pierced the solid rock of the tomb in His Resurrection. Hundreds of millions of others, while not acknowledging the sovereignty of His Kingship are unstinted in their praise of His marvelous character and undying power. Among

all of these there is unabating interest in Him during these days of unrest and uncertainty. Men are anxious to know what Jesus would do, what He would be like and what He would say were He to come back with us today. To answer these questions is my intention during this series of talks. I begin by presenting to you a double question that is as old as Christianity itself.

One year before He died Jesus is alone with the Apostles at the foot of the mountain near Caesarea Phillipi. The populace that usually followed Him from place to place is left behind and Christ and His associates kneel in common prayer. Arising, Jesus addresses to them this question: "Whom do *men* say that the Son of man is?" The Apostles answer: "Some John the Baptist, and others some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets." Jesus said to them: "But whom do *you* say that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." I present this double question to you tonight. Whom do men in general say that Christ is? Whom do you who believe say that Christ is?

Some men say that Christ is the greatest humanitarian this world has ever seen. He loved the poor and downtrodden. He fed the hungry. His heart went out to the unfortunate. He defended the outcast and gave consolation and encouragement to the afflicted.

Others say that Christ is the greatest teacher and preacher the world has ever heard. His teachings are adaptable to all men of all time. They are simple and easily understood and yet they reach down into the very soul of every great problem of



life. They gripped by the magnetism of His personality, the audiences that listened to Him; they leap over the barriers of the ages to hypnotize with equal power the peoples who read them today.

Others say that Christ is the greatest statesman the world has ever produced. He wrote the platform on which all constructive civilization rests. He formulated the program which enduring nations have followed. He outlined the policies the departure from which has spelled ruin for governments and disastrous misery for peoples for almost twenty centuries.

Others say that Christ is the greatest reformer and uplifter the race has ever produced. He battered down the class distinctions of wealth, power, social prestige and learning, and built a common democracy based on the equality of all men before God. He scathingly rebuked the deceivers of the people.

Others say that Christ was the noblest man on all the great stage of human history. He was strong, courageous, pure, sociable, religious, patient in suffering, independent in persecution, sincere, determined and merciful.

These and many other laudatory answers are given, my people, by persons of every religious persuasion to the question that Christ once proposed and would propose again today: "Whom do *men* say that I am?" The answers are true but unfortunately they are only partly true. And if Christ were with us today He would turn to believers, as He once turned to Peter, and ask: "Whom do *you* say that I am?" And down through the corridors of time, from hundreds of millions of throats, picking up

volume at the turn of each century, picking up harmony and resonance from the sanctuaries of every nation, energized by the voices of the seven hundreds of millions of Christians in the world today, raised on high by the religious voices of America, from the temple, from the home, from the workshop, from the market place, and from the office comes the symphony of living faith: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." It is this confession that He demanded in Palestine; it is this same confession that He would demand today were He to return to us. With all its consequences, it is this confession that He would demand. If the Divinity of Jesus Christ were not a reasonable truth it would have been crushed long ere this under an avalanche of criticism. I am concerned with the groundwork of faith, rather than with the background of unbelief. If it were not a reasonable truth it never could have attracted the attention and commanded the belief of the greatest minds in history. It is a reasonable truth.

I leave it to you to read the pages of the Old Testament and to find there the divine assurance that into this world would come in the fullness of time, the Son of the living God. I leave it to you to read there the promises of God about the family, the time and place of birth, the circumstances of the life and of the death of Jesus, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity and the Judge of this world. I leave these tasks of reading to you but I ask you to come with me into the city of Jerusalem to hear Jesus speak.

It is a strange crowd that assembles there under the protective shadow of the stately temple,—Scribes, Pharisees, Apostles, friends of Jesus, watch-

ful Roman soldiers, merchant princes come by caravan from the East, the wealthy and idle of the city, the native workmen who tarry awhile entranced by the unusualness of the speaker. It is very similar to any audience that Christ would face today in one of our large cities were He to return. Listen to Him speak. He is proclaiming that He is God. Catch as you stand at the fringe of the crowd a few sentences of His message:

"I and the Father are one. All things whatsoever the Father hath I have also. So long a time I have been with you and you have not known me . . . He that seeth Me seeth the Father also." The people understand Him. Scribes and Pharisees note His remarks. They will serve well as evidence of blasphemy in the trial that they plan for Him. Christ is proclaiming that He is God equal to the Father in all things. Snickering and scoffing greet Him as He continues: "If I have spoken to you of earthly things and you believe not how will you believe when I speak to you of heavenly things? You scorn my words? Behold my works!"

You are pushed aside as a lane is cleared in the crowd. You see brought up to Jesus a man stricken with the palsy, trembling and writhing in every muscle. One word from Jesus and the afflicted one is restored to health. You see the man, blind from birth, brought to Jesus and with one word He gives Him sight. You step back instinctively as you hear the cry: "Unclean! Unclean!", and as the leper gropes and staggers into the presence of Christ. With kindly voice Jesus cleanses him. You drop your head in bewildered awe as the body of one dead is carried to Christ. You watch as divine power seems

to emanate from the sacred body of Christ; the corpse trembles in a spasm of life and leaps in the full power of manhood to the ground. You understand then, with the crowd, that Jesus speaks the truth, that He is God. You may change your mind later on when you realize the change that this belief must make in your life. But you accept the evidence that He is God.

You follow the believing thousands as they rejoice in the continued manifestations of His divine power. You see Him multiply the loaves and fishes in the desert; you see Him calm the storm at sea; you see devils slink away at the command of His divine voice. You stand at the foot of the cross on Calvary, you hear the thunder roll and the lightning snap, you feel the earth rock and tremble in a mighty spasm, you watch the graves of the departed open and you see the dead walk about the earth; you witness these mighty protests of nature for the crucifixion of its God. You stand by the empty tomb from which, by His divine power He has risen, and you are prepared for the question of Christ: "Whom do you say that I am?" The centurion fleeing from Calvary, beating his breast intones the mighty chorus of faith: "Truly this was the Son of God." You answer with the teeming millions of this day and of the past: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." The heavens open and the voice of God the Father resounds: "This is My beloved Son. . . . hear ye Him."

If Christ were to return to us today the first message He would deliver would be the one that He so incessantly declared in Palestine: "I and the Father are one." And how this belief changes the char-

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acter of His teachings! They are not merely the noble suggestions of a wise man; they are the commandments of a God. His request for a place in our hearts, in our thoughts, in our lives are the commands of a God. His demand that He be recognized as the leader whom we are to follow is the manifesto of a God. Heaven help that we answer in our lives what was spoken by Thomas: "My Lord and my God!"

## CHRIST AT HOME

Address delivered by Very Reverend Ignatius Smith, O. P.,  
in the Catholic Hour, April 10, 1932.

Intelligent and constructive piety sends thinking men and women to Christ when the problems of the home are under discussion. They recognize that the most important institution of society from prehistoric times to the present day is the home. They are preachers of every denomination, thinkers of every creed and nation, and dispassionate statesmen who build for the future on the recorded experiences of the past. There is a stirring optimism in their confidence that the home can weather the storms that are beating against it. They are convinced that the future of religion, of government and of civilization itself depends on the integrity of the home and upon the successful efforts to provide for all men this citadel of privacy, this laboratory of citizenship and this sanctuary of love and affection. They turn with increasing eagerness to the teachings and the example of Christ.

The most arresting fact in the life of the Divine Christ is that He selected an humble home in which to live. By His divine power He might have commandeered one of the palaces of the Caesars, flung in magnificent array along the Mediterranean. He might have taken up residence in one of the mountain recesses of Palestine or among the hermits in the desert. But He chose to live in a home at Nazareth and there to pass His babyhood, His boyhood and the toiling days of His manhood. To know that Christ selected the home on which to place divine sanction and eternal approval is of inestimable con-

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solation to those who spend even the smallest human effort to make and to keep together a home. A warning it is to those who are tinkering with home peace and domestic happiness to know that they are undermining a pillar of society that was ornamented by the living presence of the Son of God.

Because you are interested in your homes I think you will be interested in the deportment of Christ at Nazareth. The Gospels are strangely reticent about the conduct of Jesus at home but tradition, a knowledge of Christ's country, and reverent imagination, help us to envision it.

Picture a little square house of brick or stone covered with sun dried clay and whitewashed. A long courtyard in front. A bake oven in the corner and all surrounded by a wall of loose stones. Close by is the carpenter shop where Joseph worked and where Jesus learned His trade. Step inside the house. Just a few rooms. A scarcity of furniture. A table; a few stools; rugs; mats and cushions. A little oil lamp burns in the corner and the hearth is in the center of the room. There is a closet for the linen and a mortar for the grain. The house is overcrowded, for, besides Jesus, Mary and Joseph, you find there the widowed sister Mary, with her children, the cousins of Jesus, sometimes called the brothers and sisters of the Lord. There are no comforts, no luxuries; there is deep concern about daily bread. This worry is written on the face of Joseph through whose labor the family is supported. Such is the home Jesus chose to live in and to make happy. Thus does He teach us that comfort, luxury, financial security and pleasure plentiful may be found in a residence that is not a real home while a poverty

stricken hovel down along your railroad tracks may radiate through the ringing laughter of its children and the aroma of mutual love and sacrifice the spirit of a genuine home.

The home at Nazareth was blest by the careful attention, not part time attention, of a loving mother. Mary was uncomplaining in her labors; unselfish in her sacrifices; glorying in her responsibilities to her home and to her child; alert in the protection of her partnership with her spouse and with her God; careful in the instruction and the example she gave her son. From the notes struck by the life of such a mother, there rises, even today, the melody and harmony of a truly happy home. The home in which Jesus lived was a sanctuary of love where love of Mary for Joseph, of Joseph for Mary, love of parents for Jesus and of the child for His parents was ennobled and elevated by a mutual love of God and a recognition of the place of God the Father in the affairs of the family.

In such a home Jesus learned the lessons of obedience and religion by which He advanced in wisdom and grace before God and before men. You can picture Him running errands for Mary; you can visualize Him sweeping the carpenter shop for Joseph. You can imagine Jesus manifesting more and more those attractive habits which in His public life made Him the unforgettable ideal of all time. Kindly, merciful, considerate of the needs of all, self sacrificing and eager in the tasks of the school to which He was sent. Keen in learning the law and scriptures at the synagogue.

He passed from boyhood to manhood and accompanied his parents to Jerusalem each year. He was



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a consolation to the home when the death of Joseph plunged it into sorrow and poverty. He became the support of the family when He took up the carpenter's tools, left cold by the death of Joseph, and fashioned for the farmers of that verdant valley shares for their ploughs and yokes for their oxen. A noble and a dutiful child and an example to every son and daughter who is within the sound of my voice this evening. His devotion to Mary extended into the throbbing days of His public life; it continued until on Calvary He looked down from His blood stained cross to find her. Seeing his blessed mother through pain glazed eyes, He spoke to her through thirst thickened lips: "Woman behold thy son", as if He would say: "Mother, I see thee, I love thee, I provide for thee in death as I provided for thee in life." And turning to St. John he entrusted the welfare of Mary to him in the words: "Son behold thy mother."

This devotion of Jesus to His home and to His parents has written into the ideals of the race an imperishable standard inspiring mankind for nineteen hundred years to imitate Him in devotion to their homes and in their mutual efforts to make every home successful and happy. Christ at home has revolutionized society in the past; if made at home in our homes today will revolutionize them again. Let me explain what I mean.

Wherever the spirit of Christianity has breathed upon the life of a people their institutions have been transformed. This is never so evident as in the effect of the example of Christ on the home life of heathen and pagan people. Before the home life of pagan Rome was elevated by the teachings of Christ and the memory of His example the father of the family

was a tyrant with the right of life and death over his children and with almost equal power over his wife. Children were neglected, exposed to the elements that would destroy them, thrown to dogs to be devoured or suddenly murdered, when unwanted, at the whim of the father. The wife was a chattel, she had no place in the councils of the home, she had no voice in the government of the family, she had no say in the education of the children. The family institution was a citadel of tyranny and fear. And remember I am not describing many of the homes of 1932 from which the religion of Jesus Christ has been exiled; I am picturing in briefest detail the homes of pagan Rome, of India, Thrace, Persia, Egypt and Greece. But as soon as Jesus becomes a part of the family the home is regenerated. Nineteen hundred years of facts stand behind the truth of this statement. And whether paganism be old or new here is the achievement that is accomplished.

Marriage becomes a permanent institution and an enduring union between a man and a woman who have become not merely husband and wife but father and mother as well. Womanhood shares the dignity and respect shown to Mary the mother of Jesus by Christ and by His followers. The human body is regarded as touched by God and as the temple of the Divine spirit. The offspring is regarded not as an unwelcome and unwanted intruder but as a son of God and an heir of Jesus Christ, in whose name father and mother exercise trusteeship. Between parents there is mutual affection and devotion, sympathy unflinching, patience, if not peace, broad-mindedness and tolerance of mutual faults. Over their children they are watchful even as Mary and

Joseph were, and careful to instruct, by word and example, not only in the things of this world but in the things of God as well. Children render unto them obedience, affection, attention, love and service because those tributes were given by Christ to His parents in His home. Thus the pagan citadel of fear and tyranny under the magic touch of Christ in the home becomes a sanctuary of love and affectionate government; the parents become the partners of God and the ministers of Christ. The pagan house of misery and chaos becomes, under the magic wand of Christ, a home of happiness and peace. Such is the miraculous elevation of the home by Christ from the degradation of paganism to the sublimity of Christianity. On the other hand equally tremendous is the reversal of the home to paganism wherever Christ has been banished from the home by either the parents or the children.

I omit this evening any detailed analysis of American home conditions that are not Christlike. I merely ask a question of you who live in your own homes or in the homes of others. Would Jesus Christ be at home with you in your home tonight? If He should come back to us it is certain that He would select a home in which to live? Would He be at home with you? What is there in your home that would make Christ feel strange and embarrassed? Poverty and want would not embarrass Him; He was accustomed to them in Nazareth. But quarrelling, contention, sulkiness, and sullenness, would disconcert Him. Brooding, nagging, gossiping, and impatience, would repel Him. Indecency would rile Him. Irreligion, godlessness, and lustful childlessness, would horrify Him.

Thanks be to God there are in the American nation millions of homes of every religious belief to which Jesus might be invited to spend the week end without embarrassment either to Jesus or to the members of the family. It is in these homes that we find assurance for the perpetuity of the American republic.

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## CHRIST THE WORKMAN

Address delivered by Very Reverend Ignatius Smith, O. P.,  
in the Catholic Hour, April 17, 1932.

I speak to you today of Christ the workman. It is a fascinating subject because it reveals an alluring phase of the life of the God Man. It is practical, too, because it touches an aspect of our economic problem that is of deep concern to every American.

I pass over the details of the economic suffering of this day. I take you back to the time of Christ Himself so that you may see in the social life of the people with whom He lived economic distress very similar to that which besets our people today.

The attitude of the rulers toward the poverty and distress of the people of that time was one of smug superiority and arrogant indifference. There were very many Roman political representatives, Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, publicans and others, who, like the man in the Gospel story, thanked God, in a proud spirit, that they were not like the rest of men. They were unwilling that their comfort and security should be disturbed even by the pauperized suffering, the hunger and the homelessness of the people. Many a Dives, clad in purple and surrounded by wealth, ignored the Lazarus standing at the street corner begging for food and voiced his complacent contumely in counterfeit prayer in the temple. Wealth, political power and social prestige, frequently formed an unholy trinity for the arrogant suppression of every symptom of restlessness among the people. And not only was there indifference to

poverty and suffering but there was also a positive contempt of manual labor.

Along the road that passed by the little village of Nazareth there streamed, in endless procession, the panoplied caravans of the wealthy, of the learned, of the pleasure bent, and of the commercial men of the time. The sound of toil in the shop of the carpenter and the sight of the gnarled and grimy hands of the other workmen drew from the passing sons of Mammon only sneers and scorn. In that cosmopolitan civilization, Roman, Greek, Phoenician, Syrian, and others of power agreed at least in this, that manual labor was beneath the dignity of human nature and should be done only by slaves. Such was the attitude of the upper classes towards the distress of the people in the time of Jesus. Let me give you some of the details of this distress.

Palestine, like the United States, was a land of great natural resources and fertility. Yet many of its people, through no fault of their own, went hungry. Five thousand persons followed Jesus from place to place not just because they were attracted by the power of His eloquence but also because He had given them bread. There was worry too about clothing and there was a housing problem that went unanswered and left many of the deserving poor homeless. There was an unemployment problem with all the disintegration of soul and body that such a condition creates. There was much borrowing by the poor in an attempt to secure the necessaries of life and to meet their obligations to church and state. Furthermore the poor suffered anguish of mind and torture of soul from the fear that, for their indebtedness and their inability to pay, they would

be imprisoned, beaten to death in the market place, or cast into prison for life. Their cries for mercy and help met with bloodless contempt from those who hoarded, with iron indifference in their hearts, toward the poor whom they persecuted and the widows whom they defrauded. Also there were the ever increasing demands of the tax collectors to torment the distressed. There were taxes on most of the necessaries of life, and import taxes on everything brought into the country, taxes on the miserable hovels of the poor, a personal tax on every citizen of the state and another tax on the same person for the temple. There were taxes for bridges and for roads, taxes for public works and for the palaces of the Caesars, and taxes for the support of extravagant local government. Even in times of business depression, when works of construction had to be discontinued for lack of capital, there continued to exist a special tax on trades and professions. With the labor market overcrowded pitiless employers squeezed wages down to the last notch and frequently left them unpaid. Men driven to desperation and others who sought a living without effort took to banditry and killing for a livelihood. Such is the black picture of human misery in the time of Christ, a picture that I paint with the materials given to me by the Bible and by the other history of Christ's time.

Jesus is God. He can be born into whatever condition of society He selects. He can live His life just where and how He pleases. Will it be amid the comfort and the independence of the wealthy and the powerful? Or will it be amid the poverty and the toil of the downtrodden?

That is the question. What choice would most persons make today? What was the answer of Christ? What answer would you expect from the Great Preacher who later on was to stand before the multitudes and proclaim: "Blessed are the poor in spirit for their's is the kingdom of heaven"? What answer would you expect from one who would present to the downtrodden the picture of the selfish rich man buried in hell? What answer would you expect from one who addressed these words to the Scribes and Pharisees: "Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled; and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted . . . Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you devour the houses of widows . . . For this you shall receive the greater judgment?" Where then would you expect to find Christ in the great work of His life, in the ranks of the wealthy or among the laborers and the downtrodden?

The little shop at Nazareth wherein Jesus labored at His trade of carpenter is His answer to our question. He chooses the poverty and shares the financial worry of the poor people of Nazareth. He chooses a life of work and He begins it at the carpenter's bench in His native village. He visits the homes of the poor to repair their furniture. We can picture Him fraternizing with His fellow workmen in the synagogue and in the temple. He enlists in and is faithful to the great army of the workers. And after perhaps fifteen years of manual toil in the village of Nazareth He began His public ministry in Palestine. He left behind Him, when He bade sad farewell to His mother, His carpenter's tools, but during those last three years of His life, He continu-



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ed to be a worker in fact and in spirit. He preached, He taught, He visited the sick and the distressed, He debated with opponents, He walked and trudged without food or shelter over the length and breadth of Palestine. He labored, in the ministry, at a task far more exhausting and draining than the labor of the shop or of the mill. He was frequently weary and tired. But on the cross of Calvary, as He looked over the tasks that had confronted Him during His life, He could challenge mankind with the statement, "It is consummated". My *work* is finished.

In the fact that Jesus, the Son of God, was a laborer is a great inspiration and consolation to the working people of the world today. The character of the work of Christ should also be to them an ideal. Jesus was an honest and an efficient workman. With His sense of justice and His love of truth we can not imagine Christ seeking to break even an uncomfortable labor contract; we can not picture Him as a cheat or a grumbling clock watcher. He had a high appreciation of faithful stewards, watchful porters and careful servants.

Jesus was proud of His station in life and gloried in His trade. His serenity was not disturbed even during His trial when those in high places sneeringly referred to Him as the carpenter of Nazareth. This fact, more than any other, has contributed to the happiness of nineteen centuries of men who have been compelled to earn their bread in the sweat of their brow. Labor has always been exalted by the toil of Christ and laborers have always been and can always be sustained by the thought that they are co-workers with Jesus. Thoughtful persons of con-

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secrated wealth have respected the personalities of their servants because Christ also worked.

Jesus was not a labor agitator seeking to tear down the economic institutions of the time without offering, constructively, a program of sensible and reasonable reform. To no man in the history of the world has there been offered such an opportunity as came to Christ to lead a revolution of the workers. He was recognized as the leader of a discontented people. He had intelligence and courage. He had knowledge of conditions. He was of unblemished character. He was feared by the mighty. He might have set Himself up as the head of a great international empire of the workers. He complained of abuses; He demanded for the workers justice and fair play but He was not a radical. He advocated change and reform but He was not a Red. He planned an international empire but not one of this world.

Jesus was a religious workman. He realized that not by bread alone doth man live. He knew what the lessons of history have since confirmed and what is very evident today. Just as wealth and comfort need the controlling influence of genuine religion so also the power of the workers and the monotony of their labor need the perspective and the sustaining force of religious belief and practice. Jesus mingled His prayers with His tears; He mixed His religion with His work; He cast His weariness, distress and worry into the hands of God the Father. What an inspiration to the great army of workers and unemployed, in this country, and throughout the world, today, when it sometimes seems as if God Almighty has been asked to take no place in the councils of

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high pressure experts seeking to solve our economic problems.

Jesus showed His confidence in the ultimate good sense and in the ultimate importance of the laboring classes. He selected for the college of the Apostles, His executive council, a group made up largely of workmen. He demanded of all that followed Him that they sell all that they had. Upon their toil, their poverty, their worry and their struggle for existence He built an empire against which the gates of hell have not prevailed for nineteen hundred years. Upon labor and self-sacrifice He established His Kingdom which for all these centuries, without injustice to wealth, has, on the one hand been the salvation of labor and, on the other hand, has received the mightiest of its power from the laboring and toiling masses. Such was the character of Jesus the workman.

God grant that the picture of the toiling, patient and prayerful Christ may not be forgotten in the labor crises of this day. May it rule and guide the relations of capital and labor, of the employer and the workman. May we bring down by the power of prayer the living presence of Jesus the **Workman** into the economic problem. Let us have more of those God-given leaders who are not ashamed and not afraid to think as Jesus thought about labor and to act as He did.

## CHRIST AND WEALTH

Address delivered by Very Reverend Ignatius Smith, O. P.,  
in the Catholic Hour, April 24, 1932.

Our present economic and social disturbance makes advisable a frank presentation of the attitude of Jesus towards wealth and the possessors of wealth.

That Christ was not a person of fabulous wealth is not a mere accident. He deliberately chose poverty because it is an ornament to every preacher, because it would help Him better to save souls and as an example to the world in crises such as we are passing through now. His poverty was complete. It began in the stable at Bethlehem in swaddling clothes, the layette of the poor, and continued through to Calvary where His one seamless garment was stripped from Him and He was sent to His death naked and a pauper. His intimate companions, with few exceptions, were taken from the poorer classes. The Son of Man had not whereon to lay His head. In the desert, in the quiet recesses of the mountains or along the sea shore He slept with the great sky of God's heaven as His shelter. He who by a miracle fed the hungry multitudes wandered along the roadsides of Palestine hungry and in need, gleaning from the nearby fields the kernels of grain that had been dropped by the reapers. What a staggering thought it is that if Jesus were to come back in visible flesh today He might decline to be fed and entertained by the affluent and might be found with the hungry in some bread line. In the face of such a possibility sober thoughts steal into the souls of the wealthy and encouragement into the hearts of the poor. "Though

He was rich, for our sakes He became poor so that we through His poverty might become rich." The attitude of Jesus on poverty and wealth is further revealed in His challenging sermons. Let me recall some of them to you.

He speaks from the mountain side. The ragged and hungry multitude stretches out before Him in sharp contrast to the persons of wealth who pass by and to the palaces of the rich that loom through the haze of the distance. Jesus speaks: "Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are you poor. To you have I come to preach the gospel. Blessed you that hunger now for you shall be filled. Be not anxious for your life, what you shall eat; nor yet for your body, what you shall put on; for the life is more than food and the body more than raiment. What shall it profit a man if He gain the whole world and lose His soul. The care of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word. Woe unto you that are rich. Woe unto you that are full now for you shall hunger. He that renounceth not all that he hath can not be my disciple. How hard shall it be for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." This message disturbs a young man of great wealth who had found his way into the audience of Jesus. He has kept the Commandments from his youth but he is unhappy; he is evidently tortured by his possessions; he cries out: "Master, what must I do to possess eternal life?" Hear Christ! "Go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." The young man went away exceedingly sad and left the invitation of Jesus unanswered. I wonder how many hundreds of thousands of others have imitated this young man and have left the company of Christ, have silenced the

higher aspirations of their souls for love of wealth. But other hundreds of thousands have answered the appeal of Christ, have solved the problem of happiness in life by adopting, as Christ did, voluntary poverty. In these Christ finds justification and in them the poor find consolation. But we have interrupted the message of Christ. Let us listen again as from His lips there roll, in rapid succession and with irresistible power, the parables through which He spoke of the advantages of poverty and of the dangers of wealth to the salvation of the soul.

He pictures for His audience the rich man, Dives, buried in hell because he had prostituted his wealth for his own comfort and had neglected the needs of poor Lazarus, hungry, homeless and diseased, and cared for only by the dogs that licked his sores. He tells them of the rich man, arrogantly proud, independent of men and of God, who boasted of his wealth and was condemned for it. He tells them of the Good Samaritan, the man of limited means, who rescued and succored the poor traveler who had been beaten by robbers and whose desperate distress had been ignored by the affluent and powerful who passed by with disdain. He asked them to invite the poor and the unfortunate to share their hospitality. He told them how much more important was the widow's mite dropped in the coffers of charity than the comparatively insignificant donations of the wealthy. In words that echo and thunder down through the halls of time, in words that He would repeat were He to come back to us again, Christ preached to His audience the value of the poverty that He shared with them and the danger of the riches which they might be hoarding or towards which they might be reaching with greedy and en-

vious hands. But with all of this Christ is not a hater of the wealthy nor did He minimize the important role that wealth may play in the program of progress.

Christ counted men and women of wealth among His close personal friends. He recognized the right of private ownership, except for those who were climbing the exalted heights of asceticism. What a distinguished gathering of influential friends would be assembled were the wealthy friends of Christ to meet at dinner. Johanna, the wife of Herod's steward; Mary, the Mother of James; Mary Magdalen, who anointed Christ's feet with ointment so precious that Judas protested at the expense; the same Mary Magdalen who offered to take charge of His burial. Joseph of Arimathea was a rich man. Nicodemus was a ruler and a man of wealth. Simon the Pharisee who gave a banquet for Jesus and the Apostles was comfortably situated. Even John, the favorite disciple, was the son of rich and influential parents. Matthew had means enough to spread a feast at which Jesus, His disciples and many publicans sat down together. And these are not all of the wealthy and influential friends of Christ. He was not a hater of the rich and He was not an insincere demagogue. To His friends of wealth Jesus preached the same message that He proclaimed to the poor. He approved the institution of wealth but He fearlessly pointed out that riches were a menace to salvation; that wealth was a trust bestowed upon the rich for the service of the distressed; that a divine scrutiny would be made at the Judgment seat of the use to which persons of wealth had put their fortune. And how the fears of Jesus about the effects of avarice are justified in our society today!

Not only in the wealthy, but in the poor also, greed for wealth and lust for money engulf the finer impulses of human nature and throttle those virtues which create happiness. Personal misery is created,—worry, restless nights, peaceless days, injustices, law suits, and murder,—these are a few of the troubles that accompany the making and the preservation of riches. There is also a danger, always lurking behind the greed of possessions, of hardness of heart and an independence of mind that are subversive of social peace and destructive of the fundamentals of religion. God and the poor are ruled out of life. Hearts become hard and stony to every appeal of the needy, to every demand of God and to every request of country. I am speaking of that greed for which, like Judas Iscariot, men betray their Christ, sacrifice their faith, sell their God, corrupt courts of justice, influence legislation, devitalize our citizens and weaken popular faith and trust in government. Perhaps it was because of these things that He foresaw that Christ declared: "No man can serve two masters. You can not serve God and Mammon."

Jesus teaches that wealth should be looked upon as a trust. The person of wealth, in the sight of God, is an executor temporarily entrusted with the administration of an estate for his own eternal glory and for the happiness of the downtrodden. Genuine Christianity teaches men not so much how to make and to save riches as how to get rid of them with the greatest possible advantage to their eternal salvation. Christ indicates that not only is wealth to be limited by self-imposed restrictions but He also definitely charts the channels through which super-



fluous riches are to flow back to the needy for whom they are created.

Heaven must be populated at this moment with the generous rich of every century who gave of their wealth, of their service and even their lives to prove their love of God in the service of their neighbors. From them came the schools, the colleges and universities, the hospitals, the asylums, and other public benefactions that have hastened the progress of the race. Heaven of the future will also boast of the presence there of many of the great God-given philanthropists of this day who from motives of religion, inspired by a desire of eternal salvation, looking upon their wealth as a trust from God, recognizing the presence of Jesus Christ in the distress around us, have distributed their fortunes in the alleviation of human misery. They have seen a people on its knees calling out, in anguish to God: "Give us this day our daily bread," and in the name of God, they have answered that prayer themselves. They know that they will stand at the judgment seat of God empty handed and bankrupt of everything but good deeds. They know that there is no pocket in a shroud. They consecrate their worldly goods to divine purposes here that they may be rewarded by God hereafter. They wish to avoid the terrors of that last terrible day, the terrors that will be visited upon those who defy the teachings of Christ on this question.

Think of it for a moment. All the nations before the judgment seat of the Man of Palestine. The angels of God have separated the good from the wicked. Now the voice of Jesus! Not the trembling Babe of Bethlehem; not the hungry Crusader of Jerusalem; not the writhing blood-stained Figure of Calvary; but the same Christ in the full power of

His divine majesty and inexorable justice. Hear Him speak: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire. . . for I was hungry, and you gave me not to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me not to drink; I was a stranger and you took me not in; naked, and you clothed me not; sick and in prison, and you did not visit me. . . As long as you did it not to one of these least, neither did you do it to me." "Depart from me ye cursed."

God grant that the want of charity and religion of this day will not add to the numbers of those who will hear these words of the Master. God grant that, for the consecration of their possessions to the cause of God and His poor, all who hear my voice will hear the happier words of Jesus: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in; naked, and you covered me; sick, and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me. . . you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me." Come ye blessed. Come!

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## CHRIST THE CITIZEN

Address delivered by Very Reverend Ignatius Smith, O. P.,  
in the Catholic Hour, May 1, 1932.

A few minutes spent in meditating on the virtues that Christ showed as a citizen of a nation should be helpful today. It is not uncommon for persons seeking to keep church separated from state to go so far as to separate conscience from civic responsibility. And on the frontiers of religious belief and practice there are many who, while interested in the progress of the nation, are not so interested in the progress of the churches or in the advancement of religion. They feel that the churches have contributed nothing but meddlesome and unnecessary reform to the political welfare of the nation. They feel also that Christianity has nothing to offer in the way of ideals and principles that will further good government. It is a deplorable attitude into which many persons have fallen and one that is not justified by a knowledge of the character of Christ and by the content of genuine Christianity.

When Jesus lived, the imperial power of the Caesars' had subjugated practically the entire world. Palestine had been conquered but it had not been subdued. Among the Jews there were several parties of Nationalists, proud of the early power and independence of their nation, and eager for their restoration. Galilee, whence Jesus came, led all the states of Palestine in its patriotism and in its desire for freedom from the Herods. Jesus was therefore not only a Jew, devoted to the traditions and the heroes of His race; He was also a member of a conquered nation, a citizen of an alien government; His loyalty to government was placed to a very severe test.

Jesus loved His native land; He loved His national heroes, Moses and David; He showed preference for His people. He commanded that His gospel should be preached first to the Jews at Jerusalem. He wept manly and unabashed tears over their city when they, *His* people, rejected His divine teachings. Jesus was a patriot but not in that cruel and pagan sense that looks upon all foreigners as prey for hate. He was a patriot but one who looked upon all men, irrespective of color, race, or belief, as His brothers. He was a patriot but even the despised Samaritan found a place in His love; to all peoples of the earth was the saving grace of His message to be sent. Such was the broad tolerance of the citizenship of Christ.

Christ was a believer in government. He recognized the principle expressed since His time, that government is a natural outgrowth of the family and that it is a fundamental postulate of human nature and the natural law. Were He with us today He would set Himself against all attempts to wipe out the institutions of government and to abolish sovereignty. He would have no part with communistic philosophy that proclaims an unnatural and impossible equality of all men. He recognized the need of government when He submitted, to give us example, to the authority of the Caesars. He recognized the inequality of men and the need of government when, in His organization, He made Peter the head of the Apostles.

Christ believed that government had definite rights over its citizens. He preached, by word and example, the duties of the governed to vested authority, even when that authority and its government are not beyond reproach. He obeyed laws

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which, in His divine knowledge, must have seemed inane. He submitted to rulers and lawmakers who were lechers and dishonest. In His trial, His conviction and death on the cross, He submitted to an abortion of justice that has stunned legal minds for nineteen centuries. He was heroic in His obedience and He established a standard which speaks strongly to His followers today. He was faithful in another duty of citizenship, in the payment of His taxes to the state. It was by a miracle that He obtained the money to meet this obligation but the fact is that He looked for no loophole, no avenue of escape from this obligation. He paid His taxes. And these are but two of the many obligations of citizenship that Jesus met in His recognition of the rights of authority and government.

Christ recognized that government and authority are limited by certain obligations and duties. He was not a state absolutist. He was not a preacher of stateolatry. He was not an advocate of that kind of Caesarism so frequently voiced today in the slogan, "My country, right or wrong, my country." He recognized that the state was limited by the existence of and by the rights of Almighty God.

Do you recall that day when the members of a nationalistic party, abetted by Scribes and Pharisees, sought to lead Christ into a seditious utterance by asking Him, "Is it lawful to pay tribute to Caesar?" Do you recall what He did? He took the coin of the empire, pointed to its inscription, and asked, "Whose image is that?" They answered, "Caesar's". He replied to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." The answer of Christ has marked the foundations of solid citizenship for nineteen hundred years. It was

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a dramatic declaration of the fact that prior to and infinitely above all governments is the Omnipotent God, the King of Kings, and the Judge of Nations. Only by His authority do governments exist; only in His Name do men exercise authority; only because of Him do men obey; only on the worship of Him can the lasting nation be built; only when He is adored is authority secure; only when He is feared will law be obeyed; only when He is admitted into the convocations of the nations can the rights of the people be safeguarded. Were the oppressed peoples of the past able to march before us in gruesome procession today they would render testimony of the truth of these statements. Were the defunct and decadent nations of history able to rise up before us at this moment they would speak a spectred message to us, they would issue, in the name of Christ, a warning against political atheism in this or any other nation. Jesus saw that the state is limited by the authority of God and that good government and citizenship are matters of conscience.

It is not difficult to deduce from the example and teachings of Christ that the authority of the state is limited in another way. It is limited by the more primitive and sacred rights of the persons who create the state. The state exists for the sake of the people and not the people for the sake of the state. The fundamental principles of the American constitution breathe the spirit of Christ's teachings and that explains why Christian organizations have been stern in their opposition to any attempt on the part of government to violate the rights of conscience, the rights of the home, and the authority of parents, particularly in matters of religion and education.

Christianity, interpreting the teachings of Jesus,

also recognizes that the state is limited by the interests of the majority of its citizens. Christ was not interested in any form of government; He neither praised nor condemned the forms of government that existed in His time. He was interested only in the welfare of the people. Christianity from the beginning has not been interested in any form of government; she has lived under and has survived them all. Her paramount interest, like Christ's, has been the welfare of the people, and the judgment she has passed on the governments and nations of the past has been based on the service they have rendered to the people. She passes the same judgment today. She has nothing but reproof for forms of government and corruptions of government that ignore the happiness, the peace, the security, the progress, the welfare, and the liberty of the people. She weeps, as Christ did, over these nations, states and cities, who sacrifice popular peace for party power, who divert the public funds of the masses into the coffers of the classes, who abridge the liberty of the majority for the fevered fanaticisms of the minority, who conduct government for the governing and not for the governed. Government is always limited in what it may do by the interests and the welfare of the people. This is particularly true of our representative form of government "of the people, by the people, and for the people."

And if this government be the special creation of our American people, if this government be theirs, it is evident that they should be interested in it. The sacred right of ballot or suffrage should be exercised, should be exercised honestly and intelligently. The selection of candidates for public office should be made at the bar of conscience, the best pos-

sible person for public office chosen as a matter of conscience; the ballot should be cast as if it were being watched not by political leaders but by the patriotic Christ. Christianity will meet with higher respect when its followers, of every religious conviction, do their part in making the Ten Commandments a part of political platforms; when they bring conscience into citizenship; when they bring Christ into Capitols and city halls. And when Christianity can be presented to the unbelieving people of the nation in this garb and not in the garb of unpopular and unnecessary reform it will meet with the greater respect of our citizenry and with the deeper approval of Christ.

May I conclude with a word about a great duty which Christianity owes to this nation? I speak of the duty of prayer for our country. Would this not be an interesting and profitable experiment during these days of political turmoil and economic confusion? Christ seems to have been interested in us during the last one hundred and fifty years. He has made us a great people. Should it be said that He has abandoned us now? Should it not be said rather that He is teaching us in adversity what we would not learn in prosperity,—that we should call on Him for help. With majestic power He calmed the storm at sea. He can calm the storms of national life today. When He was lost at one time He was found in the temple. Perhaps we should look for Him there again today and bring Him back into national life. The executive, the legislative, the judicial, the ballot box, the tax department, and all other departments of government will profit by the presence of Christ. Bring Him there!



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## COSTS AND COMPENSATIONS OF CHRISTIANITY

Address delivered by Very Reverend Ignatius Smith, O. P.,  
in the Catholic Hour, May 8, 1932.

There are two ways of going through life, with Christ or without Him. I propose today to take inventory of each plan of life in the hope that we may help a great many persons who are asking the question, "Is Christianity worth while?" And the Christianity of which I speak is the one that I know best, the Christianity of the Catholic Church.

Life with Christ as it was analyzed by St. Paul is not a complicated process. He never tired telling his audiences "Ye are Christ's." He constantly admonished them to live "*in Christ*," in His company, within the sacred consciousness of His eternal presence. He asked them to live "*for Christ*," to offer up their sacrifices for Him, to live among men so that the power and influence of Christ would be widened among men, to record the achievements of life *for* and not against the Master. He pleaded with them to live "*with Christ*, following in His footsteps, reproducing Christ's example and taking Him as a partner in all the tasks and pleasures of life."

Listening to my voice today are many millions of persons who interpret their Christianity in this personal way and whose entire lives are an honest and loyal partnership with Jesus. They are a part of the mighty procession that stretches back through the centuries to the living presence of the Master. They are the overwhelming army of the followers of Christ who are not satisfied to make merely partial

surrender of their pagan impulses; they take Christ seriously and they try to live His teachings literally. They are with Christ today because it is worth while; the costs of their loyalty are more than balanced by the compensations.

The costs of genuine Christianity were anticipated by Christ Himself and He told His followers the truth. He did not paint for them an alluring picture of earthly happiness as a reward for their loyalty. He did not deceive them with roseate promises of heaven on earth for their fidelity. He sought no followers under misrepresentation. He told them the truth. He said that His religion would be a yoke and a burden,—a yoke that was sweet and a burden that was light,—nevertheless a yoke and a burden. He told them that to follow Him meant to take up a cross that must be carried up the Calvary of life, that Christian life was to be a life of sacrifice. Even to the select few of His Apostles who, like many today, took inventory of their sacrifices, told Christ that they had left all things for Him, asked what reward they would receive, Christ promised persecution plentiful from the world. He promised persecution not only to them but to all His followers unto the end of time.

The definite costs that Christians must pay for their membership with Christ were indicated by the Master in that incomparable sermon on the mount. There, in pointing out to them how to find happiness He mentioned the costs they would pay for their loyalty to Him. To live with Him would bring them poverty, in comparison with the riches of those who lived without conscience. In the midst of violent aggression and pride they would have to stand by

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meek and submissive. In a sea of unrestrained pleasure and laughter they would have to shed tears of sorrow and loneliness. In the epidemics of irreligion and spiritual indifference they would have to be unlike the rest of men. In pandemics of rage and fraternal hatred they would have to keep alive in the world universal love and peace. In the contagions of lust and immorality they would have to stand unsullied for the sake of purity of heart and life. When other men would spread sedition and misunderstanding they would have to stand, even alone, in their efforts for peace. Even if the rest of the world should lose its appreciation of suffering and the motives for suffering, they, His followers, were to look at the blood-stained Cross on Calvary, and to suffer "with Christ". These were but a few of the costs that Christ indicated must be paid by those who wanted to live "with Christ".

The experience of nineteen hundred years shows that Christ was correct and that if one be inclined to dwell only on the costs the Christian must pay for his religion it is sometimes discouraging. The person who follows Christian conscience is at a disadvantage in business with the person who has no sense of honesty and justice. In preserving purity too Christians are under what the world today would call a handicap. In the choice of pleasures they are limited. In the manifestation of superiority and pride they must be restrained. In the enjoyment of comfort they must be moderate. And what is true of individuals is true also of Christian nations. As far as material prosperity is concerned they are frequently handicapped when in competition with pagan or atheistic nations.

But genuine Christianity has many compensations. I do not emphasize the delayed pleasure and enjoyment that it holds out until the future life. I do not stress the happiness of future existence. There is not time. I refer to the compensations which genuine Christianity provides here.

Christianity gives sacredness to human personality, to both body and soul. It saves souls. It sanctifies the home. It ennobles womanhood and motherhood. It gives certainty,—certain and uplifting answers to the great problems of origin and destiny. It gives me Christ for imitation and this is a compensation when I realize that so many persons have gone wrong and are unhappy because they have had no one uplifting to imitate. Christianity gives me correction. And that is a blessing. Christianity gives consolation so that one mourns but not without hope. Christianity gives me a wider world in which to live. One that reaches out to my loved ones departed. Christianity gives peace of mind and conscience by giving release from the torturous tauntings of past misdeeds. Christianity gives me confidence in myself by placing me in direct and immediate contact with Jesus Christ. Christianity gives me pride,—pride in the Founder of my religion, pride in the divinity of His teachings, pride in civilization created by His doctrine, pride in its culture, charity, learning, architecture, music, art, sculpture, and literature, pride in an institution endowed by the Omnipotent God with imperishable and uncrushable life. These,—all of them,—are compensations that can not be purchased by wealth or irreligion; and they are enjoyments without which men can not be happy.

I would not have you believe that Christianity is

anti-social or unsociable. Christ Himself was a part of the social life of His day. He was found at family gatherings, at weddings, at banquets,—at play as well as at work. And Christianity has never failed in her duty of teaching men and women how to play as well as how to pray, how to enjoy within reasonable limits the things and the persons placed in this world by God for innocent recreation and amusement. Such is the case I present as attorney for the defence of Christianity. Let us examine the other side of the question.

Living without Christ is not an uncommon state of life. It may mean living without any thought of Christ, ignorant of His existence and of His laws. It may mean disregarding the presence of Christ, believing but not worshipping, worshipping but not practicing, professing one thing and practicing another, being with Christ, in Church, leaving Him there after Sunday services, living *without* Him, in business and pleasure during the week and joining *with* Him again on Sunday. But I leave it to you to make a survey and, if necessary, a condemnation, not of the other man but of yourself. What are the compensations and the costs of unchristian wickedness?

I wonder if the Scriptures have not done well in analyzing the philosophy and the conduct of those without Christ: "For they have said, reasoning with themselves, *but* not right: The time of our life is short and tedious, and in the end of a man there is no remedy, and no man hath been known to have returned from hell: For we are born of nothing, and after this we shall be as if we had not been: . . . And our name in time shall be forgotten, and no man shall

have any remembrance of our works: . . . Come therefore and let us enjoy the good things that are present, and let us speedily use the creatures as in youth. Let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ointments: and let not the flower of the time pass by us. Let us crown ourselves with roses before they be withered: let no meadow escape our riot. Let none of us go without his part in luxury: let us everywhere leave tokens of our joy: . . . Let us oppress the poor just man and not spare the widow, nor honour the ancient gray hairs of the aged. But let our strength be the law of justice: for that which is feeble is found to be worth nothing. Let us therefore lie in wait for the just, because. . . he is contrary to our doings and upbraideth us with transgressions of the law, and divulgeth against us the sins of our way of life. . . He is become the censurer of our thoughts. He is grievous unto us, even to behold: for his life is not like other men's, and his ways are very different. We are esteemed by him as triflers, and he abstaineth from our ways as from filthiness, and he preferreth the latter end of the just, and glorieth that he hath God for his Father." (Wis. ii, 1-16)

Such is the philosophy and the conduct of the man *without* Christ. Such is his attitude toward the man of Christ who rather chooses, "to be afflicted with the people of God, than to have the pleasure of sin for a time" (Heb. xi, 25). He pretends that Christianity is out of date; but it is not; it is being lived today. He pretends that it is impracticable, idealistic, reactionary, and that if practiced it would revolutionize the world of business, politics, pleasure, and economics. This is true but it is precisely the

kind of revolution we need if the world is to be saved from complete relapse into barbarism, if governments are to be saved from dissolution and if peoples are to be salvaged from ever deepening misery.

There is no sense in denying the fact that there are some phantom pleasures in sin and wickedness. Independence, self-indulgence, comfort, political power, social prestige. Some who are wicked feel no need of Christ. They have health, business, seem to feel no burden of sins of commission or omission and seem to have no thought of eternity. And all of this causes some Christians to pause at times and to ask whether their lives of sacrifice are worth while. They are tempted to cry out "Away with Christ." They ask with Job, "Why then do the wicked live, are they advanced, and strengthened with riches? . . . . Their houses are secure and peaceable, and the rod of God is not upon them. . . . Who have said to God: Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. Who is the Almighty, that we should serve Him? and what doth it profit us if we pray to Him?" (Job xxi. 7-15). But while a life without Christ may bring some phantom pleasures it demands terrific costs.

"They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment they go down to hell" (Job xxi. 13). "Envy not the man who prospereth in *his* way; the man who doth unjust things. . . . For yet a little while and the wicked shall not be: and thou shalt seek his place and shalt not find it" (Ps. xxxvi. 7-10). Eternal punishment is the spiritual penalty that must be paid for apostasy from Christ. But let us pass by merely with the observation that life without Christ here

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means life without Christ hereafter. There are costs for living without Christ that must be paid even in this life.

The pleasure of sin is of short duration. It needs to be repeated constantly to have effect. It operates on a law of diminishing returns. The more often it is repeated, the more familiar with its face, the less pleasure sin gives. But the pleasure of service for Christ is lasting and the longer He is followed the more pleasant is the journey.

Sin is disappointing. Whoever got out of sin half as much pleasure as he expected? Christ never disappoints.

Sin leaves behind it a sting that must be endured as a payment; remorse of conscience; terrors of soul; an army of skeletons of past misdeeds haunt and taunt and mock. What a price to pay for life without Christ! What a price to pay for pleasure and inglorious compromises with conscience! To look back on a past that scowls and frowns at us instead of looking back at days that beam and smile on us. These are the days of life with Christ.

Sin is a tyrant. It exiles a man from himself and from his conscience and sends him elsewhere, anywhere, everywhere in his search for peace and rest. The man *without* Christ fears no one more than himself; fears nothing more than being alone with himself. The person *with* Christ loves the moments of solitude that leave him alone with himself and his Master.

But why go on? Is it not evident to any impartial judge who has heard the case that when the costs and compensations of Christianity are totaled and balanced a life *with* Christ is most profitable? And



is not this the conviction of the heart if not an admission of the lips or a manifestation in conduct? Who really wants to be wicked? Who is there among the wicked who would not welcome an opportunity to return to the real peace and happiness of life with Christ? And even here the magnificence of a life with Christ and the attractiveness of the Master is evidenced.

The happiness of Christian life is shut against no one. The gates of mercy are open to all. A woman taken in adultery and about to be stoned to death by the men who had probably sinned with her is rescued by the merciful Jesus. She is forgiven and consoled. A Magdalene, of tempestuous beauty and of many sins, is forgiven much because she loved much. She is welcomed into the circle of the Master's friends. A dying thief on Calvary calls for happiness, confesses his sins, asks for pardon, and is rewarded by a dying Christ with life eternal with Jesus. That same invitation is repeated by Christ today to live with Him and for Him. "Come to me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you."

This is the day that we consecrate to the memory of our mothers living and dead. What more pleasing gift can you make to any mother than to tell her, if she be near you, to write to her if she be separated from you, and if she be dead, to ask an angel of God to carry to her in another world this message: If I have been living without Christ I shall return to Him today. If I have been trying to live with Christ I shall carry on. Mother of mine, it may be more difficult for me to *live* with Him but it will not be so hard for me to die with Him at my side. With Christ

with me who can be against me? Christ, the same, yesterday, today, and forever. Christ today, Christ forever.



