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GOD'S WORLD OF TOMORROW



John J. Russell
The Catholic Hour

GOD'S WORLD OF TOMORROW

by

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THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

"Why Are You Alive"

Address delivered on August 6, 1939

Let me begin with a very direct question: Why are we alive? What is the purpose of life? I raise the question at the very beginning of these talks, because of all the problems that can engage the human mind, there is none I think quite so interesting and quite so serious. We are not sticks and stones or dumb brutes but human beings, thinking, reasoning, loving, choosing our own destiny; and so sooner or later there must come a moment when you and I ask ourselves, "What is life for? What is the meaning and purpose of my life?"

Life seems so hard and sometimes so futile. What are we here upon earth for anyway? Just to work, to slave, and worry, and endure for a span of years, to raise others for a life just as hard and trying; to enjoy the brief respite of summer vacation and then begin the tedious grind all over again, facing the drudgery, the illusions, the pain of life, the poverty or dread of poverty and all that it implies—until at the end, decrepit old age and—then death?

Everyday we acquire more and more the characteristics that make us, give us the name, "old", so that sooner or later apply to us the words of the poet that we are:

"Fools of the jest which God
Plays ever and again
We who thought old men odd
Are soon the odd old men."

And every hour is pushing us relentlessly on and on nearer to the valley of death.

What is the purpose of it all?

The unchristian material philosophy of today would tell us life is just a succession of experiences during a period we spend upon earth, so that it is to our interest to make these experiences profitable by the gratification of the mind and body and heart before we are annihilated by death, and all is over. The Catholic Church tells us that we stand at the edge of life with eternity yawning before us—an unchangeable eternity of indescribable happiness or indescribable woe. And she repeats for us the words of Christ: "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and his justice"—"For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul."

Which view shall you and I accept? We must choose, must make a decision of some kind, for we can not live intelligently until we decide the purpose of our life. All the other problems of life hinge upon this one: divorce, sterilization, birth prevention, mercy killings, and a hundred and one other things, are right or wrong according as they promote or hinder the achievement of the purpose of life.

In reaching a decision one thing before all others must be reckoned with, namely the human soul.

In all creation, we distinguish two broad classes of things: spirit and matter. Spirit is being which has the power of knowing and willing and cannot be perceived by the senses. Matter is being which lacks the powers of intellect and will, but which can be perceived by the senses. Some creatures are pure spirits with no material parts. We call these angels.

Others are purely material with no spiritual parts such as stones, plants, and animals. Between the two is man, a citizen of both kingdoms. In him alone spirit and matter are united. By his soul he is a spirit as the angels are, by his body he is a part of the material universe. Although the soul cannot be perceived by the senses, the fact of its existence may not be questioned, for we know that we are alive, that we think, that we will, and the cause whence spring these spiritual actions we call the soul.

At the end of life, death breaks up the human compound, separates spirit from matter, the body disintegrates, is buried. But what happens to the soul? Does it live on beyond the grave? That is the important point in deciding the purpose of life. Common sense, our reason, tells us that the soul does live on and forever.

Deep-seated in the nature of man is the instinct for life and immortality. Wheresoever man is found, whether in the snow huts of the Arctic zone, or in the deep tangled jungles of Africa, or at the World's Fair, we see him fondly nurturing the life that is in him, dreaming of the world of tomorrow and conjuring up visions of life beyond his present horizon. He knows—he cannot hide the fact—that a mysterious power called death will soon put an end to his schemes, smother his earthly hopes, and extinguish even the flickering spark of his present existence. The evidences of death are around him on all sides, yet the love of life endures even in the face of cold, motionless death and whitened sepulchral bones. To live—this is the first desire and the last lingering hope of man.

Now nature is true and she is unerring in her laws. When she plants an instinct in the heart it

points infallibly to some real object that shall correspond to it. There is in all orders of organic life no faculty or activity which has not some real object to correspond with it. There would be no eye were there no light to be seen, no ear if there were no sound to be heard, no sense of taste or smell if there were no things to be tasted and smelled. In fact, throughout the whole of nature there is no faculty that has not something real to correspond with it. Therefore if nature has placed in the heart of every man a yearning for endless life, there must be endless life to gratify this instinct of nature. Our own experience bears witness to this longing in many ways. Let us consider just two—our craving for knowledge and our craving for happiness, such as this world never satisfies.

We know how the intellect craves knowledge and craves it insatiably. It is never satisfied. A child will ask you the how, the why, and wherefore of everything it sees: Its first infant wail soon gives place to a why? a how? why mama? how daddy? Why it must eat spinach instead of sweets, and also why the stars shine and who put them there, and how they were made and what for? The child is not easily satisfied. Unless stopped by a harsh rebuff, he will pursue you from question to question, as a cat pursues a mouse from hole to hole.

A business man is always trying to learn more about his particular business, to know if there are cheaper methods of production, better means of distribution—he never feels that he has learned enough. When you and I meet a person who impresses us favorably we want to know more and more about that person. When the philosopher thinks he has fathomed the profoundest truths, or the scientist

thinks he has wrenched from nature its darkest secrets; the poet, that he has attained to the highest flights of fancy; and the musician, that he has listened to the sweetest strains of music; it is only to find that there are profounder truths, nobler flights, and sweeter strains to be reached. The more the mind is developed and perfected the more dissatisfied it becomes with this world, and instinctively it stretches out to the infinite, away beyond the present and past, bound not by the limits of time and space. Thinking, it thinks thoughts, and dreaming, it dreams dreams that can never be realized in the world in which we live. Something deep down within us tells us that only beyond the grave can our yearnings for knowledge be appeased.

Just as we all yearn for knowledge, so too we all seek for happiness; and who doesn't? You do, I do. It is a part of our nature. But who has ever found it? Do you know anyone who has? Who is there among your set, among your friends or relatives or your acquaintances who has ever found complete happiness? Can pleasure, wealth, or fame, good times—Oh, they yield a passing pleasure—but can they make you really happy? You know that they cannot, that they fail utterly, hopelessly. Can power make you happy? We recall an Alexander looking for new worlds to conquer, and a modern Dictator restless for still greater dominions, and we know that power does not bring happiness. Looking down the vista of the ages you see the vast procession of mankind, you hear them in one voice testify that no earthly things can fill up that void in man's heart.

For life in its stern reality is a pilgrimage of sorrow. We come into this world only through pain. We depart in pain. And between the cradle and the

coffin we never fully achieve that happiness which our hearts crave. Can it be, my friends, that we are doomed to think thoughts that can never be realized and to dream dreams that must perish with the dreamer? That we are to build up hopes without a foundation? That we are longing for heaven's happiness when there is no happiness? Is it possible that everything else in the universe is to be satisfied and man alone, who is the lord and king, is to be doomed to eternal disappointment? Why even the beasts of the field find contentment in their life. Can it be that man, imperial man, whose aspirations, whose longings, whose soul is filled with the very noblest ideas, is to be lost in the degradation of eternal sleep? Or that his noble faculties for wisdom and intelligence and longing for such truth and beauty as this world can never give, are to be mocked by the grave and the dust of corruption?

If everything else in the world is to be satisfied—and nature provides for this—may we not conclude that for man—who by nature soars beyond the clouds and stars and who longs for life eternal—there should be life eternal?

Another evidence of immortality is found in the fact that the soul survives the physical changes continually taking place in our body; and why should it retain its identity? Medical men assure us that in a few years our body is entirely renewed, they say that all the tissues of its members are replaced by new tissues, so that nothing of the original substance remains. Our flesh and sinew are constantly wearing away. The nails and skin and muscle we have today are not the nails and skin and muscle we had a few years ago. This process of wear is going on constantly in every part of the body and yet notwith-

standing this constant renewal and change we are the very persons we were twenty years ago.

As we review the emotional experiences of our lives it is impossible for us to doubt that we are the same persons who were thrilled by them. "Man says I in all the phases of his existence. When a little child whose vivid fancy moves like a butterfly over the flowers of life, he was I: when a boy and seeing the road of life open out before him, he chose that to which he should fix his steps, he was I: when a young man and he struggled in the combat and cried out, 'O my God! Save me, I perish,' he was I: when a grown man and he begins to understand the nothingness of human things and to open his ears to the rapid steps of the coming of eternity he is I: when an old man, who in a few years, lamenting his mistakes, hoping in the mercy of God, will daily look for the end of his miseries, he will be I—always I—the same, the unchangeable I."* How account for this abiding identity of personality? There is only one explanation: that there is within man a soul that is not subject to change, that is not affected by the law of dissolution and death; and if the soul survives this constant, continuous death that is going on in the body why may we not logically conclude that it will continue to survive when the body has been consigned to the grave? "Dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return," was not spoken of the soul.

And so Addison's soliloquy sums up our reasoned conviction:

"It must be so—thou reasonest well, else
whence this pleasing hope, this fond de-
sire, this longing after immortality? Or

*Mousabre, Confer. xvi

whence this secret dread and inward horror of falling into naught? Why shrinks the soul back on herself and startles at destruction? 'Tis Heaven itself that points out an hereafter and intimates Eternity to man."

Every so often some scientific investigator unearths a skeleton which he assures us is the mortal remains of a man who lived fifty thousand or a hundred thousand or perhaps even a million years ago. We are thrilled and awed at the thought of someone living so long ago—and yet, a million years from now your soul, my soul, will still be alive. The thinking, reasoning part of me which now says "I" will survive the material body and will endure forever. Reason says so and the God who made us says so. For what purpose? We can *guess*, but of ourselves we cannot *know*. God has a plan and a purpose so immeasurably beyond anything that the mere powers of their being would lead men to dare to hope that we could never know unless He told us. And God who made our immortal souls has revealed His purpose in making them. His own Divine Son came to earth 1900 years ago and in the person of Jesus Christ the God-man confirmed and completed the revelation God had made to the first man He created; and He established a Church which until the end of the world should continue to give man the answer to the riddle of life. If you would have that revelation summed up in a phrase, if you would hear the answer to our question, "Why did God create our immortal souls?" "What is the purpose of life?" ask the smallest child in a Catholic school this fundamental question: "Why did God make you?" and from the lips of a babe you will hear the simple yet sublime reply:

“God made me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this life in order that I may be happy with Him forever in the next.”

From those childish lips hear the echo of a revelation made by God Himself, the same answer that was wrung from the depths of the heart of that profound thinker, St. Augustine: “My heart was made for thee, O God, and it cannot rest until it rest in thee.”

OUR SANCTIFICATION

"God Loves Me"

Address delivered on August 13, 1939

God is our beginning. He is our end. Between that beginning and end there is a road we call life. Upon that road we often forget whence we came, whither we are going. But however misguided our intentions become, however we stray in our wanderings, however forgetful of the true purpose of our being, there is one infallible eternal truth to encourage us. Each step of the way, each of us can say with very truth, "God loves me." Mark those words, repeat them with me, slowly, in your heart: "God loves me." Never was word spoken, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive an idea more sublimely incomprehensible than this: "*God loves me.*" Compared with these three words the eloquence which fired nations and armies becomes faulty and commonplace. Not even the almighty creative command which flung the vast universe into unfathomable space compares with these three words—God loves me.

What do they mean? They mean that flawless perfection is united with imperfection. Almighty wisdom accommodates itself to groping reason. Almighty power stoops down and consorts with lame, stumbling humanity. God and man, the Creator and the creature, are united.

Consider the bond by which they are united. There is no stronger, no deeper, no closer tie than that of love. And is it by such a bond that God is united to man? "God so loved the world as to give

His only begotten Son." These are His own words telling of His love.

God's Love—what does it mean? Has it the same significance as man's love? We know to what extent man's love will carry him. There is nothing that man will not sacrifice for love. He places it above wealth: for how often we find riches squandered for a mere cast-off because it becomes the object of misguided love.

He places it above honor: how often does it happen that the man whom nations would elevate becomes the slave of the basest love.

He places it above power: Yes, warriors have suffered fatigue, have been wasted by disease, have felt the gnawing pangs of hunger and thirst, have exposed themselves to danger and death in order to conquer, and having conquered, have thrown away empires with less compunction than they would in earlier days have thrown away a cup of water—all in order to say: "I am loved." If love can transform a coward into a hero and fill the timid breast with a courage that laughs at death, if love can transform man who is naturally so self-seeking and pleasure-loving, what should we expect of the love of God?

What is love? What is God's love? To love is to wish good to some one. God loves all things. All creatures in so far as they exist are possessed of good, for just to exist is good. But since all things depend on the will of God for their existence, it follows that God wills good to every creature.

God loves all things, not however as we love, for our love by which we desire good to some one is not the cause of that good, but on the contrary, it is the good which is already there that provokes our love. But the love of God infuses into His creatures what-

ever is lovable, His love makes them lovable. He creates all the good that exists in His creatures.

Toward man God manifests a more especial kind of love. "You are My friends," He says, "I will not now call you servants, but My friends." Is it possible then that there should exist a real friendship between God and man? It is indeed within the limits of the possible and if it is not realized, it is not because of any shortcoming on the part of God.

What has been the nature of the union by which God and man have been bound together in friendship? It has been three-fold: the union of superior and inferior, the union of friends, and the union of flesh and blood.

The Old Testament with its providential dispositions in behalf of a chosen people illustrates the love of superior and inferior. But God was not content to love with the far-off condescension of a superior towards an inferior. So His next step is to make Himself like those whom He loved. The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity takes to Himself a human body and soul—God becomes man. He became like unto them in all things save sin. The King throws off His regal silks, His crown of glory, and His sceptre of almighty power and becomes a beggar because he who is loved is a beggar. The Almighty, who rules by a wish and whose wish is the law of the numberless worlds circling in bewildering though harmonious precision, becomes a weakling because His beloved is a weakling. All-knowing Wisdom flees in awkward confusion like an outcast from his country because His beloved is an exile. He whom the angels look upon and are happy, who fills the heavens with His glory, becomes as the least of men because His beloved had disfigured by ingrati-

tude the original beauty with which God had endowed him. He whose very existence was at the same time the most exquisite and the most boundless bliss, subjects Himself to suffering as keen and as degrading as the malice of man prompted by hell could make, because such was the punishment which the beloved one had deserved and would have received. Is this idea of God revolting to you? Is a God-man hard to accept? Is a God dying on a cross difficult to human reason? That but proves the boundlessness of that love. But reflect what would you not do for a beloved one? Is there anything in your power that you would refuse to him or her whom you truly love? And will you say that God, who is boundless in all things else, is inferior to you in love?

The superior by love has brought Himself down to the inferior; but how shall the inferior be made equal, how shall he become a friend of the superior? In other words, God stoops down to our humanity, but how shall our humanity put on the garb of divinity? Must we pay the same price of suffering, of humiliation, of degradation? No, He has bridged the infinite chasm between humanity and divinity by the cross. He asks us but to apply to our souls the benefits which He has purchased by His Cross.

By the Sacrament of Baptism the merits of Christ are applied to our souls. By this simple ceremony we obtain all that Christ purchased by His life and death. We are made participators of the Divine nature, adopted children of God, heirs to an imperishable kingdom, brothers and sisters of Christ Himself. How little do we take in the meaning of this. If I told you that by Baptism you would increase your wealth, you would enhance the value of your bonds and stocks, that you would be made the

heirs of some rich magnate, with what open-mouthed awe you would regard this simple ceremony. But reflect how ineffably greater is the real effect of this sacrament. God becomes man and the least of men, He unites Himself to our fallen nature, He pays the penalty of our sins; and then, that we may benefit by His sufferings and death, He exacts only that we receive the Sacrament of regeneration. He has become one with us not only by clothing Himself in our human nature, but by elevating us to the dignity of His Divine nature. Could one expect more? Is anything more possible? Can love extend farther than this? One might think not, but love is so mysterious a power, it is so unlike all else, it possesses such unexpected resources, it is so strangely inventive. Love will discover ways and means of accomplishing its designs of which nothing but love would do so much as dream.

Jesus Christ was not content with this. To live for man, to die for man, that might be only human. He must do more. Having died for man He would live for him. He gives Himself to us in the Sacrament of the Eucharist in which He appears even less than man in order that we might become more than men. He desires to be near His beloved. He multiplies Himself. There is not a little hamlet, however remote, where a few loving souls desire His company but He will be found in their modest little tabernacle. In the throbbing heart of a great commercial center He is to be found surrounded by a few faithful souls in peace and quiet. Can love do more? Ah, what can we say. Has He not already surpassed our wildest dreams of love? We are ready to see Him go to any excess for love. Do you ask Him to come to you, He obeys. Have you insulted

Him, have you brought shame on His name, have you dishonored your own bodies and brought shame on your flesh, repent, be absolved from your sin, come to the altar, Jesus Christ will not refuse to put Himself in your power, will not refuse to unite His body with yours in closest living union.

We have reached the limit. Even divine love can do no more than descend to the level of the loved one, raise him up to His own dignity, and surrender Himself to the loved one whether he be worthy or not. Farther than this love cannot go. In the Sacrament of His love, we have all that we shall ever have in heaven. We possess it without being able to estimate what we possess. If by some stupendous miracle our eyes were suddenly opened, we should find that we were really in heaven, or rather that heaven had entered our souls.

But you may say: God loves so many, how can He love me truly and deeply? My friends, God loves all and He loves you with all the intensity and all the depth of which you are capable. We cannot love many as we would love one. The more general our human love, the weaker it is for every one included in it. But this arises from the nature of our love which is very shallow and narrow. But God's love is boundless. Let me illustrate by a comparison. Does God not know all things? Is there anything which He does not comprehend in its entirety? Is the thoroughness of His knowledge of each individual one whit the less on account of the universality of His knowledge? He knows everything as completely as it can be known. So He loves everyone of us as intensely as if each of us were the only thing in all creation.

Perhaps you are thinking: Well if God loves us

why does He let us have so much suffering and misery? Our Blessed Lord who proved His love by dying for us, who continually proves it by living for us, makes reply: "If any man will come after me let him . . . take up his cross, and follow me." We cannot expect to achieve our destiny, to reach heaven, unless we follow Christ—and we cannot follow a crucified Saviour without the shadow of His Cross falling across our path.

So in the sorrows as well as in the joys of life, we may each find inspiration and encouragement in these words—God loves me. They contain the whole explanation of God's dealing with men. They are the key to the Incarnation and Redemption. God became man because He loves me. The God-man lives in poverty and humility—bears insults with meekness—because He loves me. He dies on the Cross because He loves me. "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." He gives Himself in love in the Sacrament of the Eucharist because He loves me. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him." "Holy Father," was His prayer the night before He died, "keep them in thy name whom thou hast given me; that they may be one, as we also are." He desires that our love for Him should be the most perfect—the love of union. Could He do more—Could He do less? No, because He loves you.

HEAVEN

"Enter Into The Joy"

Address delivered on August 20, 1939

Do you want to go to Heaven? Pardon my abruptness in asking so direct a question. I know it is considered impertinent to inquire about anything so personal and so utterly important. You, my friends of the radio audience, have been on a journey for as many years as you have lived, yet for some reason I could never understand, it is not considered quite the right thing for me to ask you: "Where are you going? Do you hope to get there?"

In all ages, men have looked forward to heaven. "Do you want to go to heaven?" Like every one else, you will likely answer: "Yes, I do want to go to heaven." Why do you give that answer? What is your idea of heaven?

The average man wants to go to heaven because heaven is peace, contentment, rest, union with friends. He looks forward to entering upon an existence in which he will enjoy most of the pleasures of this life without any of its pains and anxieties. To him, heaven is a purified earth, eternal life, an extension of the present, exempt from its fears and suffering and death, free from its separations and misfortunes—like the Olympus of the cultured Greeks or the happy hunting ground of the rude American Indian. He conceives a state hereafter of natural bliss which can be forfeited only by his own misdoings. This natural desire is the logical outcome of conscience; the good shall be rewarded, the wicked shall be punished. But except insofar as he

hopes to escape the punishment, the prospect of attaining to this state of natural happiness fails to become a strong, impelling force in life. Why is that? It is because it has become all mixed up in his mind with the imagery with which the sacred writers who have been given a vision of heaven have run riot in trying to explain that heaven is infinitely more than natural happiness, and have attempted the impossible task of describing the indescribable.

St. John, for instance, describes the eternal city. "It had a wall great and high, having twelve gates, and in the gates twelve angels, . . . and the building of the wall thereof was of jasper-stone but the city itself of pure gold, like to clear glass." "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away. And He that sat on the throne, said: Behold I make all things new. And He said to me: . . . I am Alpha and Omega; the beginning and the end. To him that thirsteth I will give the fountain of the water of life, freely. He that shall overcome shall possess these things, and I will be his God; and he shall be my son."

Isaias says: "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and elevated: and his train filled the temple. Upon it stood the seraphims: . . . And they cried one to another, and said: Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of hosts, all the earth is full of his glory."

And Daniel so clear and explicit when dealing with earthly affairs is lost in words almost meaningless to us when he attempts to describe the vision he saw: "I beheld till thrones were placed, and the Ancient of days sat: his garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like clean wool: his throne

like flames of fire: and the wheels of it like burning fire I beheld therefore in the vision of the night, and lo, one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and he came even to the Ancient of days: and they presented him before him. And he gave him power, and glory, and a kingdom: and all peoples, tribes and tongues shall serve him: his power is an everlasting power."

If the average man—for instance, the average American business man—thinks of heaven in these terms, pictures himself walking along through pearly gates, down streets of gold, surrounded by seraphim, or imagines himself sitting upon a fleecy cloud, playing a golden harp, balancing a crown upon his head, and endlessly singing psalms, he will say, "Very pretty, but none of that for me!"

The trouble is that human language has been made by man from his experiences of this life, and it has no power to convey the experiences of the next—pictures of joy built by imagination upon the joys of this life are poor shadows of the joy of heaven.

The Church has always held that this imagery, these symbols, are only symbols. In her theology they are only ornaments to a great body of teaching in which the life of heaven is expressed in its true relation to the nature of God and the nature of man. The difficulty is that in leaving her and rejecting her theology men have taken away as food for their souls only the symbols, which appeal to the imagination. The tremendous reality they symbolize fails to enrich that higher faculty of the soul, the intellect, because the reality has come largely to be forgotten. The result is that for the average man, heaven thought of in terms of endless hymn singing and

harp strumming makes very little appeal; and no wonder! So he may do either of two things: He may simply resign himself to a state of mind in which he hopes for the best, but determines to think no more about it; or just as a man, to blot out a painting in which he is depicted as making a fool of himself, will obliterate the image by smearing black paint over it, to be more sure of escaping the ridiculous golden harp and pink clouds he may bluntly proclaim, "Man dies like a dog!" He may even assert it with proud defiance, as though to die like a dog were more desirable and glorious than to die like a Christian. With one sweeping daub he blackens his whole picture of the future. A very unsatisfactory solution, for it runs counter to the natural and universal human instinct and craving for happiness hereafter. Well, what other solution is there? Theorizing is useless. Guessing about the nature of a country one has never visited must ever be uncertain and unsatisfactory. Better to inquire of someone who has been there. Suppose we try to communicate with the spirits of the dead, they should be able to tell us something about the hereafter. But others have thought of that before us, and centuries of spiritualistic seances with the ever attendant danger of fraud have yielded mostly nonsense.

Is there anyone else who can tell us about that after life? Ah, there is one who can tell us and who has told us—that one Being Who has complete personal knowledge of that other life and who can neither deceive nor be deceived—God.

God has revealed to us what heaven is through these words of the Evangelist: "This is eternal life: That they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." To know God

—to have a clear knowledge of God as He is. On earth we know God by reasoning and by faith. But how obscure, how unsatisfactory is this knowledge. "We see now," says St. Paul, "through a glass in a dark manner; but then face to face. Now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known." We shall see God face to face, we shall know as we are known, which means that we shall know God not as we know things here below, by an idea in the mind, but directly, God Himself present in our very soul and realized by us as present. "We shall be like to him," says St. John, "because we shall see him as He is."

We were born to know, our nature craves to know from the cradle to the grave. We want to know people, to know places, to know facts. How delightful and satisfying it is to know. How pleasant, for instance, to weave together the details of history and present to our mind's eye a living picture of days long past—to hinge together scientific truths, till we have clearly before us an astonishing demonstration—how absorbing to understand the workings of a complicated machine, to know the life of even a little flower, or the tiniest insect—to know how it begins, how it thrives, how it grows, how it lives, how it dies.

But how difficult now is the labor involved in acquiring every scrap of knowledge! How tortuous are the paths of reason—what years of toil to gather into the store-house of the mind a few certain facts. Certain? Why even when we have worked our way to the light upon any subject, we find it immersed in a cloud of uncertainties. Even the most learned men have confessed that their years of patient midnight toil have purchased for them this

one fact: That at most they were only beginning to learn.

Facts today are uncertainties tomorrow. Books of science ten years old are antiquated. There are few things more astounding—I was going to say more awful—than our ignorance. We know something about very, very few things. We know everything about nothing.

How different in heaven to know all in God, to see all in God. In Him to know the causes of things, the causes of the stars and all that pertains to them, to find the solution to our every problem, to drink in knowledge as with our breath, knowledge of men, of angels, in times past and present and for all eternity, to see in God the reason of all things—of things of which we now know nothing. God is supreme truth and our intellect with no barrier between itself and its supreme object will be eternally engaged and active in its natural congenial function of knowing, of passing from eternal truth to eternal truth, ever satisfied but never satiated and never exhausting the vast treasures of truth for all eternity, for the truth is God, and we shall see Him as He is.

Besides the intellect to know, man also has a will to love. Knowledge begets love. To love—what does it mean? It means to give the best we have, to receive the best we know. We all love. What do we love? Something that is good and beautiful. On earth the terms are relative, what is good to one may not be good to another. But to all, the appearance of good is what attracts, what makes us love in spite of ourselves.

Let us go a step farther. Man cannot help loving what is good. Place before him an object that

is good and beautiful—a mother's devotion to her child, a gorgeous sunset, a rapturous strain of music, what you will, in spite of himself he will love it.

Now whatever of beauty, whatever of loveliness adorns this earth and gives happiness to the human heart, whether in animate or inanimate creation, is caused by God. The qualities in the things of earth which cause us happiness are therefore already present in Him—not in the shadowy and imperfect way in which we find them in created things but complete and perfect in their highest form. Possessing Him then, we possess at an infinitely higher level all things whatsoever which cause us happiness on earth.

What is Heaven then? To love God, that is, to give ourselves to God and to receive God as our own. Heaven is love. What is it to love God? It is to draw ourselves to all that is lovable—God—and to rejoice in the consciousness that God is pleased with us. To gaze on God, to call Him our own. All beauty ours, all loveliness ours.

And this direct apprehension of the Blessed Trinity is to be ours for all eternity. Bound up with that is a companionship with all the other inhabitants of the court of heaven—with Christ, Our Blessed Lord, the second person of the Blessed Trinity made man, and our Brother; with Mary, His mother and ours; with the angels and saints. So that heaven is not only our relationship with God come to the fullness of perfection, but also our relationship with all the lovers of God—with all created beings who have achieved the purpose for which God made them. This is our destiny. Our Lord said before He ascended into heaven, "I go to prepare a place for you." That place awaits us. It is ours. It is pre-

pared, it remains for us to live for it, to prepare for it.

How must we prepare for it? St. Paul gives us an indication: "That Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts, that being rooted and founded in Charity, You may be able to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth: To know also the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God."

HELL

"Depart Ye Cursed"

Address delivered on August 27, 1939

Last Sunday you were invited to consider the joys of your future home. In order that we may be all the more determined to make heaven our home, it will not be amiss to consider today some of the evils awaiting us if through our fault heaven should fail to be our destiny. St. Theresa whose soul was inflamed by an ardent love of God used to say that she would never omit her meditations on hell. For however much we may love God and serve Him through love it would be impossible to determine the extent to which that love is precipitated by fear. The Psalmist tells us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

There are those who tell us there is no hell. Their statement would be most comforting and consoling except for the fact that their so-called reasoning or rather emotional sentiment is of no avail against the revealed word of God. It is God who tells us this awful truth—there is a hell where the wicked who depart this life in grievous sin will be punished by eternal punishment. We have the words of our Divine Lord: "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire . . . And these shall go into everlasting punishment: but the just into life everlasting." Here the two terms are placed in contrast: eternal life and eternal punishment.

We must logically believe in the one if we believe in the other, for both rest on the same divine testimony. The punishment of the wicked is two-

fold. There is the punishment which is directly the result of serious sin and there is the punishment which is called circumstantial and which is caused by the sufferings, anguish, and terror of others, by the hatred of the damned towards one another, especially towards those through whose fault or example they have been brought to eternal perdition.

Let me try to explain the nature of the first, which is called the pain of loss.

Loss is defined as the privation of any good with the consciousness of such privation. The punishment of the damned is the everlasting consciousness of loss. It is the consciousness of the eternal separation from God, the natural and supernatural destiny of man. By offending gravely against the dictates of his conscience, man deliberately turns his back upon God.

Remember there is question here only of a serious act that is knowingly, deliberately, and with full consent of the will committed against the warning of conscience. Nor is this all; repentance is still open to the sinner. Heaven, eternal heaven, may yet be his for but a word, nay, a thought of repentance. He refuses to formulate even in thought that expression of sorrow. He chooses to remain an enemy of God. Even to his last breath he holds out against God. He turns his back upon his crucified God who with outstretched arms nailed to the cross, with bleeding heart, invites him to the embrace of reconciliation and peace. As long as life continues it is by God's act. He upholds the sinner, he keeps within him the breath that blasphemes. He causes to course through his body that blood which is impregnated with sin. The man dies, which means

that God withholds the natural support he has given the man from the moment of his conception. And what then happens? The man has renounced God. God simply leaves that man, as he has chosen to be left, to himself—and that is hell. By his own act, the man has formulated his sentence, which God ratifies: "Depart from me you cursed."

It is important to remember that the pain of hell is caused not by any positive act of God. The greatest punishment of hell is caused by God's ceasing to act. The sinner has renounced God. God leaves him to himself. Immortal was that soul from the first moment of the man's conception, immortal it shall endure throughout untold ages, immortal but forever without God. When that man's hour is come, God withdraws from him that help which means life to the mortal. The man has already renounced God. God leaves him to his choice.

Do you realize what this withdrawing of God means? Let us consider it from just one particular point of view.

Heaven is order, hell is disorder. In heaven all beings are in a state of peace and happiness because all is order. In hell all are in a state of unrest and misery because all are out of place, in disorder.

In heaven all beings find rest and happiness in the enjoyment of that which their intelligence tells them is best and which their wills desire as the greatest good. The Divine Persons of the Holy Trinity are infinitely blissful in the knowledge and love of one another. All created beings see in God all that is attractive, all that is lovable. They realize that whatever of goodness, whatever of beauty was their love in this life, it was only a faint reflection

of God's goodness and beauty. In Him they find all beauty, all goodness and kindness, all attractiveness of every description. They rest contented in the enjoyment of God. They were created for God, they have reached their end. Their intelligence was given to know God, they know Him; their will was given to love God, they love Him. And so, all is order. Their resurrected bodies will share in the same blissful repose of order. For they too will have attained their destiny which is the union with the soul in the enjoyment of God.

Hell is the absence of heaven and all that makes heaven. Heaven is the knowledge and enjoyment of God. Hell is the absence of God and its consequent misery. Hence, again, hell is disorder.

Do you see what this means? Imagine if you can, a human being absolutely in disorder. Picture to yourselves a human body in disorder. Every minutest particle of skin and flesh disordered, every muscle, every nerve, every bone disordered. Let a spark from a sputtering match fall on your hand. What sharp pain you feel, because there is disorder. Let a bone be broken and you faint from pain. That is disorder. Let the smallest foreign substance be driven into the eye, how agonizing. That is disorder. Touch the tiny nerve of a tooth—what exquisite pain. That is disorder. Now imagine a body in which every nerve, every muscle, every bone, nay, every part of every nerve, muscle, and bone, is in disorder. Such is the condition of the human body when God ceases to sustain its parts in order.

Imagine then the agony of the soul when God ceases to sustain it in order. The intellect of man by an instinctive impulse which cannot be restrained stretches out for knowledge. To experience the

truth of this try at your leisure a simple experiment. Try to stop thinking. It is impossible. When you fancy you are succeeding, you are singularly failing. For you are thinking of not thinking. You cannot stop thinking, and thinking is the action of the mind seeking to know.

To know is the destiny of the intellect. The little child no sooner becomes a reasoning being than he wants to know. Labors, dangers, death itself are faced in order to know. Days of toil, hours of weary night till dawn breaks on wearier day, years of privation in arduous labor, are spent, are being spent now by man, all to know. To know what? All that is knowable. But all that is knowable in this life, the sum of all attainable knowledge is but the image in nature's mirror of nature's God. Our knowledge in this life is but a faint streak of light which penetrates through some crevice into a dark room.

Knowingly or unknowingly man in seeking knowledge, is following the rays of light that radiate from the sun of eternal justice—God. In Him are the causes of all things. In His Presence is answered the everlasting why of the human reason. Now destroy this world. The intellect with all its pent-up forces, with the longings of a life-time of concentration in one supreme effort reaches for God.

At this moment the damned soul finds itself immersed in an atmosphere of disorder on the brink of a yawning, an unfathomable chasm seething with falsehood. It breathes the noxious vapors of error. Its atmosphere is the atmosphere of the eternal lie. It wants to know with an insatiable longing. Yet every idea is distorted, every thought a monstrosity. It cannot help thinking yet every effort pro-

duces a falsehood. It has chosen Satan, the father of lies, it has renounced God, the eternal Truth. God leaves it to its choice. Wanting, eagerly pursuing, even stretching out to grasp some truth, exerting all its powers, renewing its efforts at every moment throughout a never ending eternity—as a drowning man struggling for breath—gasping with a never-tiring longing, supremely desiring to know, to know, to know, but ever baffled, ever confused, disordered, ever to begin over again the ceaseless, fruitless struggle.

Just as to know is a dominant impulse in man, so also is to love, the desire to possess what our knowledge teaches us is worth having. To want to possess is necessarily consequent upon our knowledge of what is worth possessing. The souls of the damned can no more suppress the instinct to love than they can help desiring to know. The human heart must love something and the lost souls do not cease to be human.

But what have they to love? In the wilderness of woe around them, what is there to attract? Diseased bodies are on all sides while soul looks into soul and reads the loathsome history of sin. There are friends, or those who were once friends, relatives, mothers—no, I do not believe many true mothers will be in hell—but brothers and sisters, wives and husbands, gruesome, flitting spectres of dark dismal despair imagining each the heart's desolation of the other. Within, the worm of conscience which never dies is biting into their morbid memories, the recollection of what might have been. With a loathing unspeakable they turn from themselves and their surroundings towards God.

They cannot know God as He is, they know Him only as their distorted minds and their self-inflicted sufferings represent Him to them. They know Him as the Avenger of wrong, as the just God. Even so, God is the only good they know. Their natural impulse to love urges them to God, while their monstrous conception of God makes them hate Him. Thus are they driven to desire with an eternal longing that which they hate with unutterable despair. Their will is entangled in an inextricable maze of disorder.

They have abandoned God, God has left them to their choice. They are alone, alone and entangled amid the awful surroundings of disorder and eternal despair.

To sum up, Hell means man without God. Hell means man left to himself as his only god. Hell means man alone in an unspeakable lonesomeness. Let us try to imagine ourselves absolutely alone, no relatives, no loves, no friends, no hopes, no ambitions, no sky nor sun nor stars, no trees nor light, no earth. By ourselves, suspended in an abyss of darksome loneliness, without a yesterday or a tomorrow, only an everlasting sickening night without a dawn, wherein we shall see nothing but the lurid images of persons and things that only madden the soul to greater despair. Hell means an unspeakable disorder, for the creature has usurped the place of the Creator. An intellect without order, a will without force, a memory that looks back in bitter remorse, and an imagination that looks forward in utter despair, a body whose every particle of flesh, blood, bone, muscle, nerve, and tissue is in disorder and therefore racked with excruciating fire—such is man without God. Such is hell.

In conclusion allow me to suggest a motto for your remembrance. It is the warning which so often meets us at the crossroads—stop, look, and listen. Stop for reflection, look to your path, listen to the voice of conscience. Not to think of hell, will not help us to shun it. The more deeply we realize the meaning of the words, "Depart from me, you cursed," the more surely we shall in the end hear from His blessed lips: "Well done, good and faithful servant enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Let us pray:

O my God, have I not been in danger of this awful fate—and for what? A moment's pleasure that left only bitterness. Then thou didst come to me and snatch me from myself by thy loving grace. Keep vividly before my mind, O my Saviour, the terrible life I must lead for eternity, if I abandon thee. Save me, save me, O my God, from myself. Let me suffer in this world, let me be misunderstood, calumniated, and persecuted. Let me be abandoned by all who are dear to me if need be, but O God of my heart, do not thou abandon me for all eternity.

CARDINAL HAYES STATES PURPOSE OF CATHOLIC HOUR

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

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

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

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

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

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