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The Moral Law

(In the Heart of Man and on the Tablets of Stone)

by

REV. JAMES M. GILLIS, C. S. P.,

Editor of the Catholic World

Eight 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 asso-
ciated Stations.

- I. Morality, Old and New
- II. Conscience
- III. Religion as an Obligation
- IV. Parental Authority and State
Authority
- V. Crime and Warfare
- VI. Immorality
- VII. Honesty in Business and
Politics
- VIII. Christmas



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✠ JOHN FRANCIS NOLL, D. D.,

Bishop of Fort Wayne.

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

It has been a great joy to speak of the moral law to a vast radio audience. It is a still greater satisfaction to have evidence from all corners of the country that the people as a whole remain enthusiastically devoted to the ancient and everlasting code of morality in spite of persistent efforts of sophists and amoralists to abrogate it.

Incidentally, it is interesting to note that the demand for printed copies of addresses made "on the air" is proof that the usefulness of the old-fashioned printing press has not been entirely destroyed by the more novel and more miraculous microphone.

DEDICATION

To the Memory of my Father and Mother who first
taught me the Moral Law by precept and by example.



MORALITY, OLD AND NEW

(Address delivered by Rev. James M. Gillis, C. S. P., in the Catholic Hour, November 9, 1930)

Commencing a series of talks on the Ten Commandments, I find myself face to face with the fact that in these days of skepticism and iconoclasm, not even the Decalogue has escaped attack. Until rather recent years, everybody, presumably, accepted the Ten Commandments as the ultimate and irrefragable basis of morality. Whatever theological controversies might divide Christians from one another or from non-Christians, it was supposed that there could be no controversy about the authority and the binding power of the Commandments. Even those who did not believe in God, and consequently could not accept the Mosaic law as a divine revelation, admitted at least that the moral code of Sinai is the expression of high human wisdom, and that it is indispensable to morality.

But nowadays nothing goes unchallenged. Every phase of human life is in turmoil—politics, finance, philosophy, theology—are in a bewildering, not to say a chaotic condition. Even music, architecture, literature, and the drama are in the throes of revolution. It is not surprising therefore that ethics should feel the effect of this universal uncertainty. Notice I say ethics, not merely morals. Morals have to do with conduct, ethics with the principles underlying conduct. A man's morals may be bad but his ethics good. That is to say, he may have good principles but fail to live up to them. That is indeed a pity, but if he have no principles, no philosophy of conduct, his condition

is evidently worse. If his morals and ethics are both gone, he is in a desperate plight.

Unfortunately, in these days it would seem that not only the fabric of morality is weakening—the foundation is endangered. In earlier times a man might break the Commandments, but he believed in them none the less. The very phrase “Break the Commandments” was known to be a metaphor. You couldn’t *break* the Commandments. They remained intact and inviolable, the same yesterday, today and forever. You might break your neck, so to speak, in the attempt to break the Commandments. You might break your heart, or more likely some one else’s heart. But you didn’t really break the Commandments. They remained granite, adamant. They were written not by the hand of man with a pen upon perishable paper, but by the finger of God upon the rock. Of them God might say “*Quod scripsi, scripsi.*” What I have written *that* I have written. You may keep these Commandments or not: keep them to your salvation, break them to your damnation. But even if no one keeps them, still they remain. Heaven and the earth shall pass, but the moral law shall not pass.

So it was always understood. Men, indeed, turned their backs upon the Commandments. They went fornicating (to borrow the strong Scriptural phrase) after strange gods, easier gods, more indulgent gods than Jehovah. They had their fling. They took part in the orgies of the heathen. But when they discovered what all sinners must discover, that sin is Dead Sea fruit, they came back to the one True God, and to His eternal law. And when they came back, they found the Ten Commandments still graven upon the tables of im-

perishable stone, resting secure in the ark of the Covenant,—in the very Holy of Holies. The Decalogue had not been erased or expunged.

But of late there has arisen a tendency to discredit the Commandments as an authorized and irreformable code of conduct. The most popular, though perhaps the least philosophical of the critics of the Commandments is H. G. Wells. Repeatedly in American and English magazines and newspapers he proposes the thesis that the ancient and venerable code that came down from the days of Moses is now obsolete. "What," he asks, "is the cause of the wide difference between the behavior of people now and the behavior of people fifty years ago?" And he replies that nowadays the world has no accepted standard. People hold, he says, that "there is no *value* in faith and no *virtue* in chastity." And he gives his opinion that the moral code has collapsed because the "arbitrary imperatives" which once sustained it have been repudiated. By "arbitrary imperatives" he means the familiar "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not."

Well, there was a greater philosopher than Mr. Wells—much greater—Immanuel Kant, who used to say that two things most deeply impressed him—overwhelmed him—the starry firmament above, and the "categorical imperative" in the heart of man. The categorical imperative is the equivalent of the "ought" and "ought not," "shalt" and "shalt not" within man's conscience. It was immensely important to Kant, but the lesser philosopher, Mr. Wells, tells us it is now gone, and weeps no tears over it. It is significant, I imagine, that Kant mentions the moral law in the same breath with the heavenly firmament. He seems to say that

the destruction of the categorical imperative would be as great a calamity as the blotting out of the stars of heaven and we agree with him. But Mr. Wells, to tell the truth, seems rather relieved and pleased to think that all imperatives are gone.

He has a particular grievance against the Commandments that are phrased in the negative. "Thou shalt not" is an offensive expression to him. Well, we can easily remedy that. It doesn't require an excessive amount of literary skill to translate the Commandments into the affirmative form. In fact it has already been done, and by One whom even H. G. Wells must respect as a teacher of morals. Jesus Christ Himself being asked "Which is the great Commandment of the law?" replied, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with thy whole mind and thy whole strength. This is the first and the greatest Commandment. And the second is like to this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." If Mr. Wells or any other exponent of the higher morality revolts from the ignobility of negative commands, I rather imagine that living up to Christ's affirmative version will keep him occupied, if he will but try it.

The truth is that a great many men need the abrupt and forceful negative "thou shalt not." Indeed I think we all need it, sometimes. If we imagine that we have advanced so far in the moral life that we have no need of "thou shalt not," there still remains "Thou Shalt." But if, as I suspect, the objection is against *any* kind of command, affirmative or negative, I fear we can do nothing about it. The man who objects to any imperative must go his lawless way, and take the consequences.

It would of course be absurd to cite H. G. Wells

as a philosopher or moralist. I quote him rather as a reporter of modern conditions. But there *are* philosophers of considerable repute in certain circles who have made some rather plausible attacks upon the authority of the Ten Commandments. One of these was the late William Graham Sumner of Yale who familiarized the more learned world with the notion that morals after all are only customs, and that as customs change, morals and moral codes change with them. Consequently, a code of morals is simply a reflex of the customs of the tribe in which it originates, and "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not," are a mere survival of the taboos of the tribe. According to this theory the Ten Commandments may have served very well for a primitive, oriental, agricultural community like that of the Jews in the days of Moses. But (so the argument runs) we are no longer a primitive people; we are modern, some of us ultra-modern, a few of us the last word in modernity. We are not oriental, but occidental. Ours is not an agricultural but an urban and industrial civilization. So the code of the children of Israel in the wilderness or in the Promised Land, while suitable for a race of nomads 3000 years ago, is not appropriate for our own sophisticated and complicated civilization.

The theory sounds learned. But suppose we translate the academic terminology into simple and concrete terms. Let us ask, does the proponent of that plausible theory mean that "Thou shalt not steal" was a necessary commandment for a tribe of migrating cattlemen, but unnecessary for modern politicians or financiers? Or that "Thou shalt not kill" had a meaning for primitive cave men or the sheiks of the days of Abraham, but that there is no

need of it amongst the gangsters today? Or was adultery wrong in King David's time, but no sin in ours?

It was a wise critic who warned us always to "disentangle the reality of things from the trickery of words." Theft and murder and adultery were wrong 10,000 years ago, and they are wrong today. They are wrong in the orient and the occident, in spite of Kipling's ruffian who desired to be taken "east of Suez where there ain't no Ten Commandments." A little horse sense is sometimes better than a lot of pretentious philosophy.

One might indefinitely continue the list of the learned—or the pseudo-learned—who attempt to provide philosophical respectability for disregard of the Ten Commandments.

Some six months ago, Professor William P. Montague of Columbia University approached the matter from what seems a new point of view. He is not opposed to morality. On the contrary, he professes to preach a higher morality, a morality so high that it doesn't depend on God, either for its origin or for its sanction. In an address before the Yale Divinity School he advocated that religion should no longer be considered a foundation for morality. He said:

"It is my thesis that true morality is without sanction. . . . To make religion the basis of morality, to make the obligation to follow the better way and to do the noble thing contingent upon the will of a god, is not only to degrade the nature both of morality and of religion: it is to put their very existence in jeopardy."

That is to say, if I understand the professor, morality stands or falls of itself. It needs no pro-

mulgation from God, and no sanction from God. If so, the Ten Commandments of course are a superfluity, perhaps an impertinence. Man is a law unto himself. He needs no God to tell him what to do, and still less a God to tell him what will happen to him if he does not do it.

I hope I may be pardoned if I express a distrust of all such excessively flattering estimates of the mind and heart of man. It is not well for man to think himself independent of God. Getting rid of God and expecting human morality to remain is like expecting a shadow without any substance, or an echo, without any sound. There is no man so inwardly enlightened that he needs no direction from on high. Have we not already said that ethics is uncertain like everything else in this sadly disarranged contemporary world? And if you eliminate God and Divine Authority, I fear you will have only confusion worse confounded.

Is there not indeed a superabundance of evidence of that confusion? Take, for example, these despondent sentences from Walter Lippmann's *Preface to Morals*:

"Of all the bewilderments of the present age," he says, "none is greater than that of the conscientious and candid moralist himself. . . . When customs are unsettled, as they are in the modern world . . . it is presumptuous to issue moral commandments, for in fact nobody has authority to command. It is useless to command when nobody has the disposition to obey. It is futile when nobody really knows exactly what to command. . . . 'The good,' said the Greek moralist, is 'that which all things aim at': we may perhaps take this;

to mean that the good is that which men would wish to do if they knew what they were doing."

I think I have never met a more desolate expression than that—"what men would wish to do if they knew what they were doing!" Yet those words were written not in irony by a cynic but in dead earnest by an intelligent and conscientious student of moral problems. His hopelessness can be understood only by those who have read a good deal of modern philosophy. St. Paul said "Unhappy man that I am, the good that I will, that I do not, and the evil that I will not, that I do." St. Augustine also has many heart-rending complaints to the same effect in his "Confessions." But the modern man is unhappier than St. Paul or St. Augustine even in their unregenerate days. They at least knew the good from the bad, the right from the wrong. But the man whose mind has been unsettled and whose heart has been torn by the confusions and contradictions of modern ethics, confesses that he doesn't even know good from bad, right from wrong.

There can be no cure for this dismal condition unless there be a Moral Code having authority not from man but from God. It is of course true that there is implanted in every human soul a primary rudimentary knowledge of right and wrong. And one might be tempted to say, therefore, that a man in doubt about morals need only consult his own heart and conscience. So it may have been before man's heart became corrupted, his conscience clouded with sin and doubt, and his mind upset in these latter days with the bewildering contradictions of rival philosophical systems. But, however clear and sure man's conscience may have been when it

came new from the hand of the Creator, one thing is certain, man is not now a law unto himself. In fact, a condition in which every man would be a law unto himself would be sheer nihilism.

We need authority, certainty, infallibility. "If the trumpet speak an uncertain sound, who shall gird himself for the battle?" The only trumpet that rings clear and true and unmistakable in the moral world is the Divine Clarion proclaiming "Thus sayeth the Lord!"

The Ten Commandments are not the voice of man: they are the revelation of the mind and the will of the Almighty. The children of Israel cried in olden days to Moses, "Speak thou unto us and we will hear, let not the Lord speak unto us lest we die." "Not so," cries Thomas a Kempis, the Christian saint, "not so, Lord, not so I beseech Thee, but rather with the prophet Samuel I humbly and earnestly entreat 'Speak Lord for thy servant heareth.'" And so the Lord speaks directly to the soul, but lest the still small voice be inaudible or misunderstood, God thunders corroboration from the Mount. But whether He whisper or whether He thunder, the message is the same, the infallible, everlasting moral law, in brief the Ten Commandments.

CONSCIENCE

(Address delivered by Rev. James M. Gillis, C. S. P., in the Catholic Hour, November 16, 1930)

It often happens that a very familiar word is commonly misunderstood. Take for example the word that shall concern us in this talk—"conscience." Everyone pays at least lip-service to conscience. Everyone thinks, or pretends to think, that conscience is somehow sacred and inviolable. Even those who don't believe in God, often insist that they honor conscience more than those who do believe in Him. In fact, certain agnostics tell us that they decline to believe, not because they love religion less but because they love conscience more. Even those who reject belief in the soul, still sometimes hold to conscience. Now here is an anomaly. Conscience, the voice of God, the voice of the soul, still revered by those who reject God and the soul!

What is this wonderful, mysterious, venerable thing called conscience? Many philosophers and moralists have attempted a definition. Schopenhauer (an exception to the rule that everyone reveres conscience) analyzes it as though it were some sort of chemical compound and declares conscience to be composed of equal parts of fear, superstition, prejudice, vanity and custom. Even more contemptuous was Bradlaugh, a kind of English Bob Ingersoll, who said that conscience is only a spasm of the diaphragm, like a sneeze or a cough. Decent people generally will find such statements sacrilegiously flippant, but I doubt if the brazen infidels are more to be blamed than those timid agnostics, who "half believe they half believe, half doubt the substance of their own half doubt," and

therefore attempt to hold to conscience without God and without the soul. Speaking frankly, if there is no God, nothing is either good or bad, right or wrong. In that case, conscience, which purports to tell right and wrong, good and bad, is a delusion. If there be no soul, man is only a brute animal (disguise the ugly fact as you may) and a brute animal can have no conscience. If we get rid of God and the soul, logically we shall have to go all the way and get rid of conscience. We cannot eat our cake and have it too.

Infidels ridicule conscience, and agnostics hold it insecurely. But even religious minded persons not seldom have a perilously vague concept of conscience. To judge from the conversation of certain amateur theologians, one might imagine that conscience is an instinct, or a sentiment, or a feeling, irresponsible, and a law unto itself, a solitary something living a life of its own, somewhere in the inner man, fulminating its commands, with reason or without reason, superior even to divine revelation.

The truth is that conscience is nothing more or less than the human mind itself uttering its judgments upon matters that pertain not to speculation but to action, and more particularly to action that is imminent—action to be performed here and now and not at some future time. Let me illustrate. Hamlet in the famous soliloquy proposes the question "To be or not to be." He ponders "Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, or to take arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing end them." As far as speculation is concerned, he seems to lean to the idea that it were better to "make his quietus with a bare

bodkin," and so to "shuffle off this mortal coil." But just when that thought might lead to action, conscience steps in, warning him that "the Everlasting hath fixed His canon 'gainst self-slaughter," and that therefore suicide is a sin.

Now the mind of Hamlet, or anybody's mind which considers the question speculatively, is the self-same mind that commands "Thou shalt not." The mind reflecting upon an intellectual problem is called the intellect or the reason. The mind commanding good and forbidding evil is called conscience. Conscience therefore is nothing else but the mind issuing a dictate as to the morality of an action.

But even though conscience is essentially human, it is endowed with quasi-divine prerogatives. Indeed the importance of conscience in our theology is amazing and perhaps all but incredible to persons who are not familiar with Catholic moral teaching. For there exists, I fear, a rather general suspicion amongst those not of our fold, that because we Catholics believe the Church to possess infallible authority, we must therefore deny the dignity of conscience. There is an old phrase about the Chancellor of England being "keeper of the king's conscience." And perhaps there are some who fancy that the Church is held to be the keeper of the conscience of Catholics. But no institution and no person, no Church, no pope can claim dominion over conscience. Amongst all inalienable rights, the rights of conscience come first. A man has a right to call his soul his own. A right and a duty. No one may usurp another's conscience. Nor may any man surrender conscience. In the moral

life conscience comes first and last; first, since the soul is antecedent to the Church; last, because even when the Church has spoken, there remains conscience as the last court of appeal. Beyond priest, preacher, prophet; beyond the Bible and the Church, a man may appeal to conscience. We may even make bold to say that in a certain sense, a man may appeal from God to conscience. God may speak, God may thunder. But if man does not hear, or hearing does not understand, he still will be saved if he follow conscience. John Stuart Mill wrote with a touch of melodrama unexpected in a philosopher, "If an omnipotent being can condemn me to hell for refusing to believe what I see no reason for believing, then to hell I will go." He meant his pronouncement to be a defiance of Christian teaching. But the Catholic theologian will find no fault in it, except the irreverent phrasing. A man cannot go to hell except by violating conscience. Catholic faith in this matter has been forcefully expressed by the Fourth Ecumenical Lateran Council which declared: "He who acts against his conscience loses his soul."

On the other hand, he who follows conscience, right or wrong, cannot be lost. Cardinal Newman, who has assembled the teaching of many theologians on this matter, quotes a Spanish Franciscan, Antonio Corduba, who says: "In no manner is it lawful to act against conscience, even though a law or a superior commands it," and this same doctrine is reinforced by Natalis Alexander, a French Dominican, who says: "If in the judgment of conscience, though a mistaken conscience, a man is persuaded that what his superior commands is displeasing to God, he is bound not to obey." And

says Newman, "the word 'superior' certainly includes the pope."

Finally the Cardinal cites a long list of the highest authorities in Catholic moral theology who declare that "conscience must always be obeyed whether it is a true conscience or an erroneous conscience and whether the error is the fault of the person thus erring or not." "If," he adds, "a man is to blame for being in error, which he might have escaped had he been more in earnest, for that error he is answerable to God, but still he must act according to that error while he is in it, if in full sincerity he thinks the error to be truth." To put it in still more succinct form, a bad action done in good conscience becomes good, and a good action with a bad conscience becomes bad. For example, we read that Robin Hood stole from the rich to give to the poor. He counted that a virtue. It was therefore no sin—for him. A head hunter in the wilds of Borneo considers it no crime to slink through the jungle, catch a man from a neighboring tribe unawares, lop off his head and carry it home as a trophy. He knows no better. He commits no sin. An ancient Spartan or a Roman Stoic, who, weary of life, deliberately fell upon his sword, or the modern Japanese who commits hara-kiri, is not guilty of sin if, forming his conscience on the moral code of his country, or of his religion, he thinks his action virtuous. If Oliver Cromwell was so thorough-going a fanatic as to imagine God had chosen him to obliterate the Irish off the face of the earth, the butcheries he committed in Ireland were not murder. And—not to prolong this catalogue of examples—if Pontius Pilate condemning Jesus Christ to death was conscious of no wrong, he was

guilty of no crime. Our Savior Himself said: "The hour cometh when whosoever killeth you will think that he doth a service to God." If he think he doth a service to God, God will not condemn him. More than that, he shall have reward in heaven for doing what he thought was good, even though it was multiple homicide.

It must be obvious then that conscience is not infallible. It can be mistaken. After all, have we not said that conscience is the mind of man, and not a special, separate, supernatural faculty? The mind of man is liable to all kinds of mistakes, even most tragic and ghastly mistakes. The mind of man is clouded with sin and error. His own sins and the sins of the race, both tend to obscure the natural light of reason and even the supernatural light of grace. And when the mind, the mind that speculates and reasons, is darkened, conscience, the mind that commands, is sure to blunder.

But let no one think that since a man is justified if he act in accordance with conscience, he is therefore excused from the duty of enlightening his conscience. It is quite possible to do an action in good conscience today and to do the same action in bad conscience tomorrow. Yesterday it was no sin. Today it is a sin. Between times a man may have had the chance to learn that his action was wrong. Once he has learned, he sins if he repeats the action. St. Paul, for example, persecuted the followers of Jesus. He was hounding them to death. But up to the moment of the dramatic episode on the road to Damascus, he committed no sin in killing Christians. After he had heard the voice of Jesus, it would have been murder. Of course a man may

see the light, and yet turn his back upon it. King Agrippa, to whom in later days Paul preached the Gospel, confessed "a little more and thou persuadedest me to be a Christian." If the king refused to go ahead with "the little more," fearing that to adopt the Christian religion would involve unwelcome obligations, he may have been from that moment in bad faith, that is to say, in bad conscience. No man can be saved who knowingly turns his back upon truth and shuts his eyes to the light. Inculpable, invincible ignorance excuses from sin, but wilful ignorance is itself a sin and the cause of a thousand sins. Indeed the voluntary and permanent blinding of the eyes of the mind is the unpardonable sin. It is the duty of the individual not only to act in accordance with conscience, but, according to his opportunity, to develop and perfect his conscience. One who refuses to be enlightened or neglects the chance to be enlightened, and then alleges that he is acting "in good conscience," is really acting in bad conscience.

There is a doctrine current amongst certain moralists of our day to the effect that morality means, after all, only conformity with the custom of the time and the place in which we find ourselves. Catholic ethics has no countenance for such a theory. If a man violates his own conscience to conform with public opinion, he is in the way to lose his soul. No man may act upon another man's conscience. If *my* conscience says a thing is wrong, though *your* conscience calls it right, I must follow *my* conscience. It would be a sin for me to follow *yours*. If in the day of Judgment I say "Lord, I suppressed my own conscience, and adopted my neighbor's," I shall hear from the Great Judge,

“You shall be judged by your own conscience, and by no other!” Likewise, if ten thousand neighbors or ten million, or a hundred million neighbors think that a certain action or a certain course of conduct is good, and I think it bad, I must not do that action. *Athanasius contra mundum*. Athanasius against the world! Conscience against the world!

If, therefore, while we exalt conscience above priest and church and pope, and even seem to make conscience superior to the Ten Commandments of God, a person hastily judging, might declare our doctrine dangerous, I am sure that all deliberate and accurate thinkers will understand that, on the contrary the supremacy and the independence of conscience involve most serious responsibilities. Conscience is not free in the sense of being wild and reckless and irresponsible. *Noblesse oblige*. Nobility has its obligations. The higher the nature of man, the more exacting will be his judgment. The nobler his prerogatives the greater his moral responsibility. Conscience makes him like a God upon the earth, but in consequence he must walk the earth like a God.

In these days of mass thinking and mass action, when so many seem to think that “everybody’s doing it” is a valid principle of moral conduct, and when, furthermore, there prevails the curious notion that private morality is one thing and public morality another, and that the two are essentially different, I feel that I cannot conclude a talk on conscience without a word on what I may call the *public conscience*.

It is a Christian and Catholic principle that no man is free to do for his country what he would not do in his private capacity as a man. We demand of the President and of every man in authority under

our Government, of every diplomat and senator and congressman that, as far as he is concerned, he will direct the course of the nation as he would direct the course of his own individual action, strictly on principle, and in complete accordance with the dictates of conscience. In other words, we believe and teach that the basis of all governmental morality as well as of all personal morality is in the Ten Commandments.

A man must not steal, a nation must not steal. A man must not covet his neighbor's goods, a nation must not covet its neighbor's goods. A man must not lie. A nation must not lie. A diplomat must not lie for his country. A man must not bear false witness; a nation must not bear false witness. A man must not kill except in defense of his life, or the lives of his family or his neighbor; likewise with the same exceptions a nation must not kill.

Now these statements I know are platitudinous. But they have been flatly contradicted by the action of diplomats in all countries and in all times. Of course, I would not be understood to say, except in the metaphorical sense, that a nation has a soul, and therefore a conscience. A nation may indeed be rewarded for its virtues and punished for its misdeeds. But the nation will not, as such, stand before the bar of Eternal Justice on the last day. We go to judgment one by one. Alone, we shall meet God alone. We shall not be swept into Heaven on the skirts of our country, any more than we shall be swept in on the skirts of our Church. In that dread moment which shall determine our everlasting destiny, we shall stand or fall,—*alone*. This I take to be the most tremendous and magnificent,—or, which may God forbid,—the most tragic consequence of our fidelity or our infidelity to conscience.

RELIGION AS AN OBLIGATION

(Address delivered by Rev. James M. Gillis, C. S. P., in the Catholic Hour, November 23, 1930)

On the tablets of Moses, the First Commandment read: "I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt not have strange gods before me." But when our Savior was asked, "which is the first and greatest Commandment?" He amplified and interpreted the Mosaic reading, thus: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind and with all thy strength," and He went on to add the second, indicating that the two are inseparable. "The Second Commandment," He said, "is like to this, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' 'In these two Commandments is the whole law and the prophets.'" Indeed the Old Testament and the New, with all their beauty and charm and spiritual inspiration are comprised in the love of God and of one's fellow-man.

The psalms and the other sapiential books, though they go deep into the unfathomable riches of religious thought, have discovered no wisdom beyond love, human and divine. The Gospels which contain the very words that fell from the lips of Incarnate Truth have no inspiration, no revelation more illuminating than this,—that God is love, and that religion is love of God, and of man, the image of God. Vast libraries of pretentious books have been written in the attempt to expound what men call a philosophy of life, but there is no philosophy of life so sublime as that which comes out of the mouths of babes who prattle, "God made me to know Him, to love Him and serve Him in this life, and to be happy with Him forever in the next." Philosophers may isolate themselves in their studies for a life

time, or they may sometimes seek solitude and again mingle with men in search of wisdom; they may scrutinize the heavens above; they may penetrate the earth beneath and the waters under the earth in the attempt to uncover the mystery of the universe, and to construct therefrom a plan for human life; they may, like the wise old pope of whom Browning speaks, "search many hearts beginning with their own," but in the end they can have nothing more to offer than what is contained in those half-dozen words "Love of God, love of man." All philosophy from Socrates to Bergson is true or false according as it approximates to that wisdom or falls short of it. The law, the prophets, the gospels, philosophy, ethics, religion, all that man lives for, all that man lives *by* eventually arrive at the point where the Master of Masters, Jesus Christ, commences: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with thy whole soul, and with all thy mind and with all thy strength."

Now in these bewildered days, there are some—not a few, I fear,—who say sadly: "The love of one's fellow man I recognize as a duty, and perhaps a possibility. But how can I love God? And how can God command that I love Him? And how can I love Him unless I first believe in Him? If I had faith, I might proceed to love. But I have neither faith nor love for God."

Now be it remarked that those who speak thus are by no means all militant atheists or what is called "rank" infidels. They do not blaspheme God or indulge in any other melodramatic and hysterical anti-religious performances. Only once in my life have I heard a man curse God. Of course we have some ranting atheists, who go about frothing at the

mouth against God. But I suspect that their ranting is a kind of defense mechanism. They protest too much. For why should anyone vociferate madly against something that does not exist?

But with such as these I am not now concerned. I rather aim to help those who say like an acquaintance of mine, "I have nothing against religion, your religion or any other man's; but as for me, it isn't in me. I am simply non-religious."

Now I rather fear that in our grandfathers' day, or somewhat further back, even so neutral an unbeliever would have received "short-shrift." Our ancestors felt that if a man did not believe it was because he would not, it was incredible that he *could* not. Unbelief was held to be in every instance criminal, the fruit of satanical pride or of carnal sin.

And it is probable that in many cases our ancestors' judgment was just. Our Savior Himself, gentle and tolerant as He was, cried out against those who were stiff-necked, hard of heart and slow to believe; and He put His finger on the sore spot when He called them "a wicked and adulterous generation." In His day there were many who complained that they could not believe His doctrine, when their real objection was not to the doctrine, but the life implied in the doctrine. In our day there are those who denounce the creed, when their real stumbling block is the Commandments. They cry out against Dogma. But it is not Dogma, it is Moral that irks them.

However, it cannot be denied that there are on the other hand a considerable number of persons of respectable, if not altogether irreproachable character, who find it impossible to believe, and who sincerely lament their unbelief. Some of them ad-

mit that without faith they are mentally miserable. They say they envy us who have the faith and that they would make any earthly sacrifice for the gift of faith. They have the will to believe but they doubt that they have the right to believe.

Such persons as these deserve kindly consideration. Their unbelief is a misfortune rather than a fault. They have fallen perhaps under the spell of eloquent speakers or brilliant writers who beguile them with "persuasive words of human wisdom." They have listened to some deceptive oracle of the drawing room or the smoking room, and they have not philosophy enough to detect his plausible fallacies. Perhaps they move in ostensibly intellectual circles where religion is always attacked and never defended, or in social circles wherein it is considered bad form to go to church, to pray, or to be in any way religious. They have succumbed, not to bold and blatant atheism, but to the polite agnosticism of the intelligentsia.

Or, in some rare cases, unbelief arises from a purely interior mental conflict. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh." But more agonizing still, spirit contends against spirit, mind against mind itself, on the battlefield of man's soul. The mind believes and the same mind disbelieves. And when a man's own mind battles against itself, the poor fellow hardly knows which is his real self, his better self.

Nevertheless it remains true that man is commanded to believe in God and to love Him; not invited but commanded, and not by some prophet or preacher, but by God himself. If, because of some twist of the mind or flaw in conscience, the man does not hear the voice of God clear and true in

his soul, he may, I dare say, plead ignorance in the day of Judgment. But no man can exculpate himself if, through laziness or cowardice, he abandons all effort to discover religious truth. He may insist that he has been anything but lazy. He has studied until his head is dizzy with conflicting opinions, he has been listening to every self-appointed expounder of philosophy, and has become in consequence bewildered. The wise thing to do in such a case is to retire within himself, shut the door of his heart against the noises of controversy and hear what the Lord God will speak within him.

In other words, a man should pray. Let no one say that he cannot pray. It is as natural to pray as to breathe. William James, who knew something of psychology in its true sense, the science of the soul, said: "I read many reasons why we should pray and many reasons why we should not pray. But few seem to remember that we pray because we are made that way." The impulse to pray is human. To smother that impulse is to be inhuman. Not that prayer is a purely natural act. It is supernatural. No man can say "The Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Spirit." Divine grace is indispensable to prayer, but grace is not denied to any man who follows his nobler natural impulses and does what in him lies.

I remember hearing the president of a state university, speaking to an assembly of thousands of undergraduates, declare boldly, "To be irreligious is to be degenerate." That's a strong word, but if it be degeneracy in a human being to have lost a human function, I think the president was right. It is human to be religious. It is non-human to be irreligious. When a man admits that he is non-religious he certainly pays himself no compliment. My friend

said he was simply non-religious. But he would not say, "I am simply non-intellectual," or "I am simply non-social," for intellectuality and at least a certain degree of sociability are necessary human attributes. Not to have them is to be somewhat less than human. But religion is also a primary, essential, indispensable attribute of man. Leave a man alone, don't smother his soul with multitudinous and perhaps fallacious opinions, let him consult his own human nature rather than books, and he will be religious. "Know thyself," said Socrates, "this is all wisdom." And St. Augustine prays, "Lord that I may know myself; that I may know Thee." He who knows himself will know God. He that knows God will love God.

Furthermore, if a man is all at sea because he has read this and that and heard thus and so, for and against religion, it seems obvious to me that he should have recourse to a Teacher, not some philosopher making "Guesses at the Riddle of Existence," but a Teacher with Divine Authority. Jesus Christ was such a teacher. Men with distracted souls and perplexed minds came to Him because as they said, "He speaks not like the Scribes and Pharisees, but as one having authority!" The doctors of the law were accustomed to tell the people "Thus sayeth Hillel," or on the other side of the argument "Thus sayeth Shammai." True prophets said "Thus sayeth the Lord!" But Jesus, calmly and with absolute assurance said "I say unto you!" He spoke as God! "The Father speaketh and I speak! He that heareth me, heareth the Father."

And today there is a Teacher upon the earth, a Church that says of herself, "As the Living Father

hath sent Christ, Christ hath sent me. He that heareth me, heareth Christ."

One thing is certain, if there be no infallible authority here on earth entitled to use the majestic formula, "Thus sayeth the Lord," then we must all grope around in the dark as best we may, and even if we stumble upon truth we shall not know it. Like Pontius Pilate, we may be looking truth in the eye; we may have truth at our finger tips, and yet say "what is truth?" We are all blind, and our teachers are but blind leaders of the blind, unless there be some one who can speak with authority and not as the self-confessed agnostics, who in the last resort can only say, "I know not." Unless there be certainty, faith is impossible, and love is impossible, religion is impossible.

But if a man has tried all the variegated and kaleidoscopic philosophies, and has only been bewildered by them, why shall he not, if he really seeks faith and love and religion, deliberately and deeply investigate the only Church confident enough of her Divine Mission to claim infallibility. No earnest seeker has done all in his power until he has done that.

However, the inquiring mind must not expect or demand an overmastering demonstration of the truth of religion. The mind is not bludgeoned into belief, beaten and bruised until it cries "Credo!" The will also remains free. It must not be coerced. Christ said "Go out into the highways and byways and compel them to come in." But he did not mean go out, over-power them and drag them in unconscious. The arguments for religion are not so absolute that only an imbecile or an idiot could resist them. They do not compel assent. The assent of

faith remains a free act. Religion is to a degree natural, but it is not an irresistible impulse. It is supernatural, but not the result of a divine compulsion.

If a man is to believe, he must bring the will into play as well as the intellect. As some one has wisely said of St. Augustine: "He reached his decision by throwing his heart (that is, his will) into the scales."

Now this, I am aware, is held a capital sin in the eyes of unbelievers. They scorn what William James calls "the will to believe." Throwing the heart into the scale is to them the same as loading the dice. They seem to think that a man should come to belief, if at all, by the mind and the mind alone. All the rest of him—feelings, instincts, emotions, even the free will,—must stand aside, watch the intellect struggling for faith, but remain coldly, rigidly neutral.

There are two objections to that program. First, it cannot be done. Second, if it could be done it would be inhuman. A man is not a machine, not even a thinking machine. Man is something more than mind. Man is heart and mind and soul, to say nothing of flesh and blood. In a true man, heart and mind and soul interact upon one another, assist one another, cooperate with one another. And so it is when one makes an act of faith. "To believe," says our greatest theologian, St. Thomas Aquinas, "is an act of the understanding adhering to divine truth by command of the will, which is moved by the Grace of God." (2.2 qu. ii, art. 9.)

Now in spite of divine grace, it always remains possible for man to withhold his will, or to refuse the command of God. In that case he sins against

faith—against religion, against the First Commandment, against God Himself. And so irreligion or unbelief is a sin.

Let me add one very important consideration. The intellect and the will, to make a moral act, must work together, not at odds with each other. If the mind does not see its way, the will must not drive it. To believe, or pretend to believe, when the mind sees no reason to believe is hypocritical and immoral.

There is a stanza in Tennyson's *In Memoriam*:

“Let knowledge grow from more to more
But more of reverence in us dwell
That heart and mind according well
May make one music as before
But vaster.”

I take that to be good poetry. I know it to be good theology. Faith, love, religion is the result of “heart and mind according well,” under the direction of Divine Grace. The first Commandment therefore resolves itself into this: Be yourself. Be your best self. Be human—completely human. Be the full measure of a man. You are not completely man unless you are religious, with all your heart, and all your soul, with your whole mind and with your whole strength.

PARENTAL AUTHORITY AND STATE AUTHORITY

(Address delivered by Rev. James M. Gillis, C. S. P., in the Catholic Hour, November 30, 1930)

Every serious-minded person is asking nowadays "what's the matter with the moral world?" Not that the political world is serene, or the financial or the industrial world. But the particular sore spot in contemporary civilization seems to be the world of morals. Not only preachers and reformers, traditionally supposed to be prone to pessimism, but parents and teachers, principals of high schools and presidents of colleges, philosophers (professional and amateur), welfare workers, especially in children's courts, judges on the bench; the police (from the patrolmen on the beat to the chief at headquarters), novelists, essayists, dramatists; the intelligentsia and the Babbitts, the man in the street (whether it be Main Street or Wall Street, or perhaps Broadway), all sorts and conditions of men, no matter how widely and deeply they may differ on other matters agree that the moral world is topsy-turvy. Ethical standards that had been fixed for centuries and that seemed everlasting are unsettled. Actions that used to be called sins are now condoned or even exalted as virtues, and on the other hand traditional virtues are looked at askance.

Some observers of the "liberal" or "radical" type profess to be pleased at the revolution in morals; most sensible people lament it as a calamity; a few rather timid souls, having little experience and less historical knowledge, are crying that nothing like

this has been seen before in all the history of the world.

When it comes to assigning the cause or locating the blame, some say it is the war, others remember that conditions were alarming even before the war. Some—not a few—attribute the trouble to a materialistic-evolutionistic education. Socialists and communists blame the excesses of capitalism, financial scandals, stock market gambling and the like. Capitalists, in turn, declare that there is a Bolshevist conspiracy to demoralize the world.

In America a good many profess to think that Prohibition is the cause of all our troubles. Others remind us that the same evils exist also in Europe where they laugh at Prohibition, and so the argument runs, or not so much argument as crimination and recrimination.

But it seems to me that the all-important question is not how we got into the mess, but how we are to get out of it, not what's the matter with the world, but what are we going to do about it?

I dare say that on that question also every man has his own opinion; but perhaps I may be permitted to propose my panacea;—yet not mine but that of the vast and venerable Church to which I belong, the Church of infinite experience and of ages-old wisdom. Do not assume that I am immediately going to suggest religion as the only cure-all of social evils, and the savior of civilization. Religion, of course, would save the world, but religion is gone from the souls of millions of people and you cannot turn the mill-wheel with the water that is past.

Nor let any one imagine that where religion fails, law will succeed. Some superficial thinkers cry "there ought to be a law" for this and for that.

But we have more laws than we know what to do with; we are stuffed, choked, suffocated with laws, and it does seem that the more laws we have, the fewer we obey.

Recognizing that fact, some five or six countries in Europe have suspended the operation of their parliaments, have selected one man, a dictator, and have said to him "You be our law!" But that plan will not work for long. It is too much like putting a lid on a volcano and sitting on the lid. The volcano will blow up some day.

Perhaps some one anticipates that my cure-all is *education*. Education is indeed often proposed as the remedy for all the ills that society is heir to. As one of the popular modern prophets has said, "The race is on between education and catastrophe." But I suffer no illusions about education. We have had universal popular education for a hundred years past, and yet the very people who hail education as salvation, loudly declare that we are worse off morally now than we were before the free or popular school system was inaugurated, and before colleges became multiplied. The man who coined the phrase, "Education or catastrophe" favors a new *kind* of education, but his kind of education would not forestall catastrophe; it would precipitate catastrophe.

Well, what then shall save us? To maintain the suspense no longer—the solution is nothing novel, nothing spectacular; but something very simple. The salvation of society is in the *family*, the reorganization of the family, the reconstruction of family virtues, parental authority and filial obedience. The family is the nucleus of all society. You can have no prosperous state unless the

family is healthy. You can have no effective church unless the family is sound. Every human being who comes into the world is born into two societies, a family and a state, and traditionally into three, a family, a state, and a church, and of these three, the family comes first and is of most fundamental importance. The family is the organic cell from which all human societies are constructed.

Now any doctor will tell you that if a man is sick, he cannot be cured unless by medicine and nourishment and rest you can reconstruct the broken-down cells in his body. Tuberculosis can be cured by the rebuilding of myriads upon myriads of cells slowly and, as it were, one by one. Cancer will be cured when a way is discovered to rebuild the cells faster than the disease breaks them down. No matter what the disease may be, even though it appears on the surface of the body, it can be cured only from within. You cannot cure Bright's Disease by slapping a plaster on your back. You cannot cure boils by rubbing on an ointment. You don't really cure a sallow skin with rouge. You don't increase red corpuscles with a lipstick.

Now society is an organism, that is to say, it is like a living body. If it is sick, you can't bring it back to health with superficial applications. You must get inside—inside the individual cells. To complete the analogy, enacting a law to cure a moral condition is like slapping on a plaster to cure disease; to rely upon book-learning as a cure for immorality is like going to a beauty parlor to get rid of indigestion.

Now this is all elementary, so much so that one is almost ashamed to spend time saying it. But, like a good many other elementary facts, it is for-

gotten. Take, for example, the statesmen who are trying to patch up this broken world. How do they go about it? They summon international conferences; they meet and debate and lay down rules and regulations about warships and airplanes and poison gas and international commerce. But of all absurd notions (and their name is legion) the silliest is that a disintegrating civilization can be held together by conferences or by diplomatic maneuvering. If history teaches us anything, we ought to know that the fate of nations does not depend upon the encouragement of trade, the payment of war debts, the adjustment of customs and taxes, the regulation of commercial rivalries, or even upon the suppression of the opium traffic, or the control of the manufacture and distribution of alcoholic drink. What doth it profit the state to arrange all these details if the home, the family, the soul of the state be lost? Statesmen are careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary, domestic morality.

In the days of the decadence of the Roman Empire, the Emperors who, with all their faults, were less blind than most contemporary statesmen, made frantic and desperate attempts to reconstruct the old institution of the Roman family. They failed; the family was so badly disintegrated that it could not be built up again, and so the Empire tottered and fell. It wasn't so much the barbarians from without that smashed Rome. It was domestic corruption. In earlier days, when Rome was healthy and vigorous, she could have taken on the successive waves of barbarian invasion and turned them back as a rocky headland turns back the breaking surf.

Now all these observations are by way of calling attention to the supreme importance of the Fourth Commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be long lived upon the land which the Lord thy God will give thee." It has been frequently remarked that this is the only Commandment with a promise, and I hope it is legitimate to interpret that promise as made to the nation, and not to the individual. Whether the Lord meant that one who obeys his parents will live longer than one who does not, may perhaps be questioned, but one thing is certain, a nation will not long survive if parents cannot command and children will not obey.

The Catholic Church includes under that Commandment the entire matter of family discipline, the duties of parents as well as of children. For, of course, there is no rule that does not work both ways. If children have duties to parents, parents have reciprocal obligations to children.

It is not my purpose to enter into minute detail with regard either to parental or to filial duties. I think it better to present some few fundamental considerations and leave both parents and children to apply them in the family life.

Parents, then, first of all should be persuaded of the duty and the dignity of their vocation. The primary purpose of the union of man and wife is procreation, and that very word hints at the God-like prerogative of fathers and mothers. God Himself is Creator, and the masterpiece of God's creation upon earth is a human being. Men of science are fond of dilating upon the magnitude and the mystery of the starry firmament. Astronomers tell us unimaginable, incomprehensible facts about the uni-

verse revealed by the telescope. And on the other hand biologists insist upon the equally bewildering mysteries discovered by the microscope. But there is no marvel in nature that can surpass the miracle of the origin of a human being. Only God can produce life, but by a most amazing condescension He has permitted man and woman to share His divine prerogative. Under God they say "Let there be life"; under God they become creators. When a mother brings forth a child it is as it were a sublime miracle. She might well hold up the babe in her arms and offer it to God, as the priest in the Mass elevates the newly consecrated Host in the sight of God and man. And from that moment the parents are not only endowed with a quasi-divine dignity, but with a most sacred responsibility. The task placed upon them, say rather the vocation with which they are blessed, is one that requires the use of high intelligence, as well as affection, and such difficult virtues as patience and everlasting vigilance. There can hardly be any vocation that calls for more devotion, loyalty, self-sacrifice than that of being a parent. If man and wife have hitherto been careless, self-indulgent, sinful, they dare not continue to be so after the birth of a child. Formerly they endangered only their own souls, now they are to a degree responsible before God for the soul of their child. They must watch over his physical and mental development, the growth of his moral character, learn to read the riddle of his personality, and bring to bear upon his training every ounce of intelligence and good will that God has given them.

Successfully to rear a child, or a houseful of children, is a work more difficult, more worthy of study and at the same time more interesting and more

praiseworthy than to rule a city or to be president of a nation. Perhaps that is the reason why there are so few notably successful parents. The world is full of incompetent ones. They allege the difficulty (they call it the impossibility) of bringing up a family under modern conditions, in a world that has grown reckless and immoral, in a society where the privacy and the sanctity of home life is generally disregarded; where there are so many distractions of mind, so many influences that over-stimulate the passions, so much glaring bad example, so much ostentation, luxury, artificiality; in an epoch when disobedience and heedlessness, always characteristic of childhood and of youth, are particularly accentuated. But they must understand that God expects them to fulfill their duty, even in spite of the obstacles presented by an artificial civilization. Modern parents cannot expect medieval conditions; if they live in a great American city they must not complain because they are not situated in a quiet, remote little village of, let us say, the Austrian Tyrol, where presumably, raising a family is a simple and easy matter. God gave them love, the impulse to procreate, and God will not play them false. With diligence (and again I repeat with *intelligence*, for I consider intelligence a prime necessity in a parent), with good-will and well-balanced affection, with self-control, with prayer and study of their problem, with divine grace flowing not for one moment but permanently into their married life from the Sacrament of Matrimony, they may expect to succeed.

If finally, through no fault of their own, they fail, wholly or partially, they may be excused, like a priest who is devoted and energetic and self-sacrificing but who seems not to get results. Even Jesus Christ

did not save and sanctify all with whom He came in contact.

Evidently, all these obligations and responsibilities on the parents' side imply sacred duties on the part of sons and daughters. It is generally said nowadays that you cannot *command* young people to obey. Catholic moral theology lends no countenance to such an opinion. Parents have a right and a duty to command, and children are bound under pain of sin to obey the just commands of parents.

Fortunately, young men and young women have naturally high ideals. If they do wrong it may be partially on account of the innate evil tendencies, but more often it is because they are ashamed or afraid to be unlike their chums. But if you know how to elicit their true interior convictions, you will find them, I believe, in most cases highly idealistic. Tell them, therefore, to live their own life and not to be apes of the vices and follies of persons with whom they come in contact. When they need advice, they must have it, and having it they are morally bound to heed it. It is not a matter of option, but of divine command: "Honor thy father and thy mother!"

When fathers and mothers and children live together in a happy home, you have the acme of civilization. The home at its best is a shrine, a temple, a citadel of defense against an evil world, a center from which virtue and healing go forth for the regeneration of the race.

CRIME AND WARFARE

(Address delivered by Rev. James M. Gillis, C. S. P., in the Catholic Hour, December 7, 1930)

The Fifth Commandment is short and sharp. *Thou Shalt Not Kill!* Any commentary on that clear, curt command might seem superfluous. Could any four little words be simpler,—*Thou Shalt Not Kill!* So I can understand if one should say, “That fifth commandment is clear as crystal. Don’t cloud it. Don’t complicate it. Leave it alone.”

And yet a moment’s reflection will show that even that simplest and plainest of texts gives rise to scores of questions. And not all these questions are captious. Some of them are quite honest and legitimate. For example: “*Thou Shalt Not Kill!*” Does that mean that no man must go to war, and and that every soldier is a murderer? “*Thou Shalt Not Kill!*” What? Not even in self-defense? Not even in defense of father or mother, or wife or child? Neither in defense of life nor in defense of virtue? “*Thou Shalt Not Kill!*” Is capital punishment, then, a crime? Are the judge on the bench and the legislature back of the judge, the prosecuting attorney and the jury, the warden and the executioner, the attendant who leads a criminal to the electric chair, perhaps even the clergyman who walks with the prisoner—are they one and all murderers?

Or—to take a totally different kind of problem: in child-birth if the mother’s life is imperilled may the life of the babe in the womb be crushed out by a physician to save the mother? Or yet again, may a patient suffering unendurable pain and crying for death be “put out of his suffering”? And what about

suicide? Certain ancient Stoic philosophers, Greek and Roman, condoned it, or even recommended it. Chinese and Japanese consider it in certain circumstances a matter of honor. In some elite military organizations if an officer has shown the white feather, he is handed a revolver and left to himself. Shall he abide by the code and shoot his brains out?

Again, if two men, after shipwreck, are clinging to a bit of wreckage that will hold only one, may one purposely slip off to give the other a chance? Was the companion of Robert Scott, the explorer, justified when he walked out of the tent to sure death in an Antarctic blizzard, so there might be one less mouth to feed?

Take yet another species of problem: If a woman's virtue is in peril, may she leap from a high window even at the risk of death? Or may she kill the man who threatens her chastity? If a woman has already been outraged, may a committee of citizens spare her the further ignominy of appearing in court, take the law into their own hands and lynch the assailant? In pioneer days on the frontier, were the vigilantes justified in hanging horse thieves without court procedure?

You see there is no end of problems that flow spontaneously from that simple, clear-cut little commandment, "Thou Shalt Not Kill!" Answer these questions, solve these problems as you may, you cannot deny that there is room for honest argument at least about some of them.

Obviously I have not time to discuss all these questions, but since I have mentioned them I dare not leave them hanging in the air. So permit me to answer most of them swiftly and categorically, not out of my own mind (personally I am no infallible

moralist) but out of the mind of my Church, the Catholic Church, upon which, as I hold, God *did* confer infallibility. Then I shall pass on to a more detailed discussion of what I think to be the two most pressing and important of all the problems concerning the Fifth Commandment.

Well then, to give the Catholic answers point blank without argument. Suicide is never justifiable. The pagan philosophers in Greece, in Rome, in China and Japan, were wrong. Neo-pagans in England or America, or in any modern civilized land are wrong—and with less excuse. Suicide is always wrong—horribly, hideously wrong. As for the woman who leaps from a height to save her honor, she is no suicide. Her motive is escape. She does not seek death, though death may come incidentally. Sir Robert Scott's companion did wrong, though doubtless with a noble purpose. The shipwrecked man who lets go of the spar that will not hold two, is justified; he aims to save life, not to take life. The surgeon who directly kills the unborn babe, even to save the mother's life, commits a crime. The sufferer from incurable disease must not be put to death; he may be eased by drugs as far as possible; beyond that he must await the will of God. The officer in a swagger regiment, convicted of cowardice, must not blow out his brains, the traditional code of honor notwithstanding. Such a code is pagan. Finally, lynching is always a crime. If there be a law requiring the appearance of the plaintiff in court, the law may be amended, but otherwise the grieved party must wait upon the law. No man is a law unto himself, in a land where courts are in operation. As for the vigilantes on the frontier, they *were* the law, they were the court, until

a regular court could be established. Finally, capital punishment is permitted by the law of God as well as the law of the land.

Let me repeat. I cannot in twenty minutes argue these cases out. Any one of them would require that amount of time. I answer them inadequately rather than leave them entirely unanswered.

And now let us come to the problems that I have called most pressing and most important; first the problem of crime in America, and second the problem of war.

And first with regard to crime: I remember that some twenty-five years ago, when a band of our mission preachers went into a certain state (which I prefer not to name) they were warned by the bishop "Preach the Fifth Commandment; in this part of the world there is too little respect for human life." A few years later in Chicago, I was shocked to learn that for every ten murders in that city only three arrests were made, and of the three arrested, only one received the full legal penalty. More recently in New York City, conditions have become, I fear, as bad as they were years ago in Chicago, if not as bad as they are in Chicago now. Indeed the entire United States seems to have become a happy hunting ground for murderers. Here is the scandal of the world and the shame of America. We are the youngest of peoples: we commenced a century and a half ago with a splendid new experiment in government. Our Declaration of Independence, in spite of all caustic criticism, is a glorious and stirring manifesto, a bugle call for justice and right and national honor. Our federal constitution, again, in spite of all atrabilious hypercriticism, is, with the exception of one of its amendments.

a beacon for the enlightenment of civilization. That is to say we have the best law in the world, but—here is the screeching anomaly—we are the most lawless people in the world. We have in proportion to our population twenty times more murders than England: we are more addicted to crimes of violence than any country in Europe with the possible exception of Russia, and even in Russia it is the Government and not the gangs that makes life uncertain. It is humiliating also to acknowledge the truth that our murder rate is higher than that of Mexico, which we are accustomed to think has a less developed civilization than our own. In China just now there is social and political chaos, but China, which has in round numbers four times our population, would need 48,000 murders a year to equal our murder rate, and I doubt if there are that many in China, unless you call by the name of murder what the Chinese call warfare. At least there are not in any civilized country bands of murderers to compare with our American gangsters, racketeers and other organized criminals, with whom murder is a trade and a method of transacting business.

Mr. Arthur Brisbane has recently written that we have become blasé about murder. He records (rather ghoulishly, I must admit) the discovery of parts of a dismembered human body, the torso floating in the Hudson River, "the legs lying in the street," and he added: "Once this would have been 'a great murder mystery,' [rivaling the famous Guldensuppe case, or the 'Lamp Black Swamp Mystery.'] But mere individual murders cease to interest. In Chicago eight young bandits enter a cabaret, one announcing: 'This is a stickup.' A railroad watchman enters with a big dog. The dog bites the

'stickup' men. They turn out all the lights, then fire at random. Three female entertainers of the cabaret are killed, half a dozen others wounded. The police find corpses, and hysterical women and men. One little chopped-up torso is mild compared with that."

Of course Mr. Brisbane is not really indifferent, but is trying to shock us out of our indifference. However, it is possible that our feelings and our moral sense have been benumbed by constant reading of an endless succession of sensational crimes. It is commonly said nowadays that it is impossible to arouse the American people, as a whole, to high indignation against dishonesty, even gigantic dishonesty. But I pray to heaven that our people be not also beyond indignation at murder. We have reason to be worried over our unhappy supremacy in crimes of violence. I believe that every American sociologist and penologist, and I dare say, every thoughtful American citizen, is appalled by the fact that crimes of murder and man-slaughter are more numerous now than they were even in pioneer days before our civilization became settled, and that they are constantly increasing. Murder is more than seven times as frequent in New York City as in London. Only recently a London correspondent of the *New York World* reported a decrease of more than 50 percent in the number of murders in the London area, compared with the average of the last 20 years. In 1919 there were 10 murders and 37 manslaughters in London. There were 357 murders or manslaughters in New York for the same period.

President Hoover, in a speech delivered to members of the Associated Press, shortly after his inau-

guration, like a High Priest making public confession of the sins of his people, declared that "more than nine thousand human beings are lawlessly killed in the United States each year" (others say twelve thousand) and he added this most amazing and yet undoubtedly true statement: "No part of the country, rural or urban, is immune. Life and property are relatively more unsafe [here] than in any other civilized country in the world." There may be some critics of the President who will say that he ought to have been more discreet and not to have uncovered our shame before all the world. In Europe there is a great deal of pharisaical comment upon our preeminence in crime, and our European enemies pounced upon Mr. Hoover's confession with unholy glee. Nevertheless, I, for one, am glad that the President spoke as frankly as he did. If he can lead us away from that sickening self-satisfaction which so many felt when our leaders were singing "Prosperity, Prosperity" (as if Prosperity, even when genuine, could be the mark and measure of a nation's greatness) the change will be for the better. Perhaps, by the way, the present depression, though it seems an unmitigated calamity, is a blessing in disguise. It will be so, if it teaches us, as our Savior said, that "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth." In us the Scripture is fulfilled: "Thou sayest I am rich and made wealthy and have need of nothing and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked." We have more money, more foreign trade, more manufactures, more automobiles and other luxuries; we live in finer homes, eat better food and have more expensive pleasure

than the rest of the world, but what doth it profit us if, on the indubitable evidence of hard cold facts and figures, we lead the world also in crime?

I hope that no one will be so unkind or so unfair as to imagine that I state this appalling fact with any satisfaction. I repeat it in the same spirit in which Mr. Hoover spoke of it. As a good American, sincerely anxious for the welfare and the honor of the country of my birth and of my affection, I am primarily concerned not with evidence of our shame but with hope and desire for our improvement. Our regeneration, our salvation depends on our getting back to the Commandments of God. "It is an evil and a bitter thing for thee to have left the Lord thy God," said God himself to the people of Israel. It is as evil and bitter for America as for Israel. And surely America has left the Lord if she no longer keeps His Commandments. Perhaps a nation, as a nation, has no soul, and therefore it may be a metaphor to say that a nation has lost its soul. But, literally or metaphorically, this nation is in danger of being damned. It will be if it does not return to the service of the Lord our God. We must get back to those forgotten, ignored, violated, commandments, and though it be humiliating to confess it, we (I say "we": I mean of course America) must go all the way back to that primary elementary rudimentary commandment, the commandment that first lifts us out of sheer savagery, "Thou Shalt Not Kill!"

In my talk a week ago, I dwelt on the theme that if our nation is to be saved, we must reconstruct the home, re-establish the authority of parents and the obedience of children. In a word, I

cried "Back to the Fourth Commandment—'Honor Thy Father and Mother.'" Today I feel myself compelled, with considerable chargin, to cry aloud, not indeed to my individual hearers but to our country, to America, "Back to the Fifth Commandment—'Thou Shalt Not Kill.'" "

I devote the remaining few minutes to the principal problem connected with the Fifth Commandment, the problem of war. It seems a simple problem. Indeed, to certain persons it seems no problem at all. They solve it instantaneously and dogmatically. They say: War is always wrong; no conceivable combination of circumstances can justify war; no motive, however exalted, noble, altruistic, can sanctify warfare. Some extremists go further still and declare that every man who fights in battle, whether he volunteered or was conscripted, is, potentially at least, and in most cases actually a murderer. If that theory were true, every soldier who discharges a rifle or flings a hand-grenade, or wields a bayonet in battle is as guilty before God as a gunman in a gang-war. Men may sing a soldier's praises, pin medals on his breast and worship at his tomb as at a shrine, but before God his hands are red with blood; his soul is stained with murder, and if he meet with sudden death, as is probable, he can have no hope of salvation. That, I say, is the utmost extreme of the pacifist theory.

I think that theory needs only to be stated to be refuted. I certainly shall not debate it. I am a lover of peace myself. I am a member of societies organized to assure and perpetuate international peace; I may, in a sense, be called, I have been called, a pacifist. But I certainly cannot agree with the

mad theory that all war is organized murder and that the soldier is *ipso facto* a criminal.

There is, or at least there may be, such a thing as just warfare, the conditions of which have been laid down by Christian moralists. One recent Catholic theologian, Fr. Strattmann, of the Dominican Order, has summarized these conditions. He numbers ten, but for our purpose three of the ten will suffice. First: "The war must be caused by very great moral guilt on one side, and one side only." That is to say, one nation must be wrong, know itself to be wrong, and the other must be innocent; second: The object of the war must be the furtherance of good and the avoidance of evil; third: The war must be so conducted that the limits of justice and of love are never transgressed." Obviously, these conditions are difficult, some will say impossible. Be that as it may, they are the conditions recognized by Catholic theologians back to the days of St. Augustine, 1,500 years ago.

Theoretically, I believe these conditions can be fulfilled. Historically I think they have been fulfilled, though rarely. I beg leave to illustrate with an analogy that I used rather frequently during the War, and that still seems valid to me. Suppose you hear, in the middle of the night, a cry "Help!" "Murder!" from the next room. You leap from bed, grab a revolver, rush in and find, let us say, your brother being attacked by a man wielding an axe. The axe is poised in the air and about to descend. Will you or will you not shoot, and if need be shoot to kill, to save your brother's life? If you answer "Yes, certainly! I should be a dastard if I did not!" then you justify war,—some war. For it makes no difference whether the cry comes from the next room or from

the next continent, whether the victim be your brother by blood or by the common relationship of humanity. If you hear a cry for help, not from a person but from a nation, you feel and I agree with you, that you may rush to the defense of that nation, as you would rush to the defense of an individual. Mark you, I am not now justifying the World War. That would be a stupendous task. I am not even justifying our entrance into that war. I am not justifying any particular war. I am supposing a theoretical case. If that case actually occurs; if an innocent person or an innocent people is attacked, you may take up arms, and Catholic theology denies to any one the right to accuse you of murder or of any other wrong.

Of course, when an actual, not theoretical, war is impending, the question is usually more complicated. What we have learned to call "propaganda," that is, diplomatic lying, gets in its diabolical work; false rumors and reports are circulated; "atrocities" stories are deliberately manufactured, race-hatreds are stirred up, passions are inflamed, and altogether there is a conspiracy to befuddle the mind and cloud the judgment of the citizen. He reads the papers, listens to furious oratory, and then he himself mouths his opinions with violence and dogmatic assurance. But really, he doesn't know "what it is all about." He goes into the war, dies on the battlefield, or fights it through, returns, lives his allotted span, and goes down to his grave, never really knowing whether the war was just or unjust. If he could live for a hundred years and read all the discussions, study all the histories, pore over all the original documents, analyze all the hidden facts as they slowly come to light, he might perhaps finally know who

was right and who was wrong. But as things go nowadays in this complicated and bewildering world, no private citizen, perhaps I might add no president, can be infallibly sure that the war in which he participates is justifiable.

Well then, if a man cannot know, is he entitled to go ahead and fight? For answer I refer you back to the principles concerning "conscience," the second discussion in this series. The private citizen must take the information at his disposal, keep his mind free as far as possible from passion and prejudice, form his opinion conscientiously, and then go ahead.

I say, he must avoid passion and prejudice! And there is one thing about which we can be certain: every man is under the moral obligation to keep his heart clean from hatred. Our Savior, and after Him, the beloved disciple, St. John, and after them, the Church, has taught that hatred is a sin akin to murder. "It hath been said of old, thou shalt not kill," says Jesus, "and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment." And St. John adds, with extraordinary emphasis, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a *murderer*."

St. John has also a very significant and pointed question, "If I love not my neighbor whom I see, how can I love God whom I see not?" One might borrow the idea, with a slight adaptation, and say, "If I love not my fellow American whom I see, how can I love Europeans, and Asiatics, and Africans, and Australians, whom I see not? How can I make pretense of being a lover of all mankind if I cannot en-

ture patiently the defects of my next-door neighbor?"

How can I keep peace with the Italians in Italy, if I am intolerant of the Italians in my own city? If I despise the Jews or the Irish, or the English, or the Germans, or the Poles, or the Swedes; if I call them by opprobrious nicknames, what right have I to send ambassadors of good-will to London, or Rome, or Dublin, or Berlin, or emissaries of peace to Geneva?

Some thoughtless persons may retort that the racial or religious prejudices they permit themselves in daily life have no relationship whatsoever to big issues that produce a war. But they are mistaken. Modern war arises generally from a complication of causes. Perhaps the first and chief is economic. Next comes jingoism, the exaggeration or caricature of patriotism. But not the least of the causes of war is the feeling that a man is our born enemy because the blood that flows in his veins is different from ours.

Of course, there is no real difference between our blood and that of any other human being. The Creator made no difference. Aristocratic blood and plebeian blood will naturally mingle. If a prince marries a peasant, his union need not be without fruit, and in the veins of his offspring the aristocratic corpuscles will not fight the plebeian corpuscles.

Furthermore, nature and nature's God have raised no barrier between race and race. The Italian can fuse with the Austrian, the English with the Irish, the French with the German. Nature has indeed erected geographical barriers between man and man, but not biological barriers.

In ancient days, men went to war because they were told that the people on the opposite bank of the river, or on the other slope of mountain, were monsters, cruel, savage, uncivilized, and what not. In these days of easy intercommunication between nation and nation, we know that the fellow over there is pretty much the same as the fellow over here. We are all brothers under the skin. We are all blood relatives.

Therefore, when war looms up, let us remember these elementary truths taught by Reason and Religion. If we keep our heads clear and our hearts right, we may prevent the next war, no matter how ardently certain diplomats and financiers and militarists may desire it. If we prevent the next war, we can prevent any war. If there is no next war, obviously there will be no war forever. So be it. God grant it. Amen.

IMMORALITY

(Address delivered by Rev. James M. Gillis, C. S. P., in the Catholic Hour, December 14, 1930)

A rather serious difficulty confronts any decent person who attempts to speak on the two Commandments which concern us today, the Sixth and the Ninth. For the Sixth, as Catholics and Lutherans count it (otherwise the Seventh), is "Thou shalt not commit adultery"; and the Ninth (or part of the Tenth in the alternative enumeration) is "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife." Obviously these two commandments bring us face to face with the ugly sin of lust, lust in the flesh and lust in the mind, and no man who respects himself and his audience can approach that subject without misgivings. I shall therefore preface this talk with a prayer for you and for me, a prayer to Jesus, the lover of chastity, and to Mary, His sweet Virgin Mother, patroness of purity, that they may direct the course of my thoughts and the choice of my words, and that you and I may both remember from beginning to end that I am speaking and you are listening in the presence of the All Holy God.

That does not mean, however, that I must deliberately devitalize my language. Christ Himself, though infinitely aloof from even the suspicion of coarseness of utterance, was a plain speaker. Those who imagine a mealy-mouthed Jesus do not know the Gospels. He was never one to mince words. Take for just one example this divine declaration from the tenth chapter of St. Mark, verse 11: "He saith to them: whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery, and if the wife shall put away her husband and be married to another, she committeth adultery."

That strong statement irritated some of His hearers, and to this day infuriates many. It is a "hard saying." But the Gospels are liberally sprinkled with hard sayings that came out of the mouth of the gentle Nazarene.

Following Christ, the apostles were plain-spoken men in regard to sins of impurity. St. Paul indeed said: "Let these things be not so much as mentioned among you," but evidently the warning is merely against prurient conversation, for in his Epistle to the Romans he himself enumerated and excoriated the sins of the pagan world with a straightforwardness that in these days would scandalize many a Christian congregation.

After Christ and St. Paul, the great preachers and writers of the early centuries, some of whom we distinguish with the name "Fathers of the Church," discussed "immorality" fearlessly and frankly, using without embarrassment those blunt Old Testament words of which we moderns seem to be ashamed. Their language was robust but never obscene, and I am inclined to think that if we were free nowadays to speak of sin as the Bible speaks of it, instead of using a namby-pamby, "nice Nellie" vocabulary, our morals would be healthier and more wholesome.

Furthermore, it does seem unfair that clergymen and other moralists should be commanded to speak softly about vice, while writers of fiction, of drama and of talking picture scenarios are free to use whatever vulgar or profane or obscene word they think will lend what they call a "punch" to their productions. If they are permitted strong words for an immoral purpose, why may we not counter with equally strong words for a moral purpose? Why must we be gagged while they are so loose-lipped?

Why must we fight like a boxer with one broken fist that he cannot use?

But let us lament no more the unnatural restraint put upon us by hypocritical custom. And let us come to close grips with our subject. And first I address myself to those persons, particularly the young, who foolishly imagine that they can find happiness in sins of the flesh. Of course there is no happiness in sin, *any* kind of sin, and the sin of impurity is the surest way to misery. St. Augustine, in his marvelous little book, "The Confessions," tells of his own experience in words that are, like the words of the Bible, outspoken but not offensive. He says:

"I polluted the brook of friendship with the sewage of lust, and darkened its clear shining with smoke from hell. I plunged headlong into love whose fetters I longed to wear." But he cries out "O my God, My Merciful One, with what gall didst Thou embitter that cup of sweetness! For I was beloved; I attained my wish, the bondage of clandestine fruition, and proudly riveted round myself the chain of woe; then was I scourged with the red-hot iron rods of jealousy, suspicion, fears, anger and quarrels."

It was well for Augustine that the results of his sin were not even more tragic. Sins of the flesh often eventuate in suicide or murder. Charles Bigg in a beautiful introduction to his edition of the Confessions remarks: "Experience is always the same." He quotes from the Latin poet Lucretius: *Medio de fonte leporum surgit amari aliquid*. "Out of the midst of carnal delights something bitter emerges." And "Why," he asks "does this gall in the honey make one man a pessimist, another an Epicurean, while a third concludes that he has fixed his hopes too low and struggles on upward in quest of

purser joys?" There indeed is a psychological and a theological puzzle, but we have just now no time for puzzles. What concerns us is the fact, demonstrated countless times since the days of Adam and Eve, that sin—especially the sin of impurity—is Dead Sea fruit, beautiful to the eye, but dust and ashes in the mouth.

Now here is the first reason, the first and poorest reason for the avoidance of impurity: Men and women plunge into it seeking happiness, and they achieve only anguish. There is evidently something in human nature, something angelic, something divine, that makes it impossible to find satisfaction in sins of the flesh. How this can be, on the theory of material evolution, so popular nowadays, the evolutionists never seem to explain. They keep telling us that man is only an animal, but they have no reply to the problem "Why then can he not take his pleasures like an animal and be content?" Disguise the loathesome fact with fine phrases as they do, the essence of their doctrine is that we are not only of the earth earthy, but that we are of the beasts beastly. And at this moment (or at least until very recently when both science and philosophy have taken a turn away from materialism) the theory of our kinship and our essential equality with the animals, the theory of evolution, seemed to be about to conquer. But it cannot be. You may tell man that he is only an animal and you may overwhelm him with what you are pleased to call proofs, biological, physiological, anatomical, ethnological and what not, but you don't really convince him; he knows that "a man's a man for a' that," and one of the reasons he knows is that when he lives like an animal he makes himself wretched.

Walt Whitman, said by some to be the one great American poet, writes somewhere that he likes animals because they don't weep over their sins. But that's why they are animals. Man is the odd animal that does weep over his sins, and perhaps that is the reason why, if he ever was a mere animal, he is a mere animal no longer. He is aware of sin, he is unhappy in sin, and there is no sin that tortures him more than the sin of animalism.

And here indeed is the great psychological and moral fact: man is ever at odds with himself. We love purity, we admire it, we desire it, some of us are vowed to it. And yet we are drawn with a fierce attraction and with what seems at times irresistible force toward impurity. St. Paul confessed that in spite of his having been exalted into the third heaven, where he saw things and heard things "not given to the tongue of man to utter," he suffered the sting of the flesh. He laments again and again that "the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh," and he cries "the evil which I will not, that I do, and the good which I will, that I do not . . . I am delighted with the law of God, according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin, that is in my members. Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!"—*Romans 7*.

Every man who *is* a man knows that conflict and that anguish. Some persons may think that a good man is merely one who experiences no great temptations, and that a bad man is one who has been cursed by the inheritance of a particularly passionate nature. But they who imagine such things can never

have read the lives of the saints. St. Paul and St. Augustine are not exceptions: they are rather the rule. They happened to be not only saints but psychologists. They were experts in self-analysis and they had the gift of putting on paper the discoveries they had made while exploring the depths, shall we say the dirty depths, of their own nature. But a thousand canonized saints and some hundreds of millions whose names will never make the calendar have felt the same passions, have fought the same fight, and have won the same victory. Sometimes it seems to a pure and noble man under temptation that his brain is on fire. His blood leaps wildly like a mettlesome horse under the whip of passion. The thumping of his heart shakes his whole frame, and worst of all his will seems ready to play traitor to him. If he were a coward he would surrender,—sin, and afterwards explain either with bravado or with a whimper that he “could not stand it,” that “no man could stand it,” and that he had to do what other men do. But the hero, the saint, sets his teeth, stiffens his jaw, calls upon God and, though he sweat blood, he is not beaten. In the end he wins, and with a great deep sigh of relief and of thanks he lays his victory at the feet of his Maker and his Savior. St. Paul himself does not conclude with that cry of desperation: “who will deliver me from the body of this death.” He answers his own question triumphantly, “The grace of God, by Jesus Christ our Lord.”

He spoke not from a book nor from theological theory, but from actual experience. When he felt the sting of the flesh, he cried thrice to the Lord to be delivered from temptation. But he received the reply “My grace is sufficient for thee. Thy virtue

shall be made perfect through this infirmity." And God, as always, made good His promise.

Also St. Augustine, after that forever famous victory over himself in the garden of the country house of Verecundus, sings a song of praise that I love to call Augustine's Magnificat. It commences the ninth book of the Confessions: "O Lord I am thy servant: I am thy servant and the son of thy handmaid. Thou hast burst my bonds in sunder, to Thee will I offer the sacrifice of praise. Let my heart and my tongue praise Thee and let all my bones say 'O Lord who is like unto Thee?' Let them speak and do Thou answer and say unto my soul 'I am thy salvation.'"

Now, this struggle against temptation is as old as human nature. For human nature is a composite. We are part animal and part angel. The beast is in us, and God is in us. One or the other has to dominate. If the flesh dominates there is hell in the heart. If the spirit dominates there is peace and salvation. That, in brief, is the religious view of human nature and of the moral life.

But in very recent times, with the advent of Freudianism, we have heard much of a new theory. Freud has invented a new name for the instincts and passions that lie deep down at the roots of our nature. He calls them the "urges." And he has invented also the idea of a "censor" who keeps these "urges" out of sight, guarding the gate that separates the conscious from the unconscious. The "censor" prevents the "urge" or passion from breaking through into our conscious life. He is like a lion tamer. He cracks his whip over the "urges" and they cower. He keeps them back, out of sight, so that the master in whose nature they lie lurking doesn't

know they are there. But the master suffers from the suppression of passion. He becomes nervous, irritable, perhaps even hysterical or insane. Such is the price he pays for decency, for civilization.

I cannot stop now to discuss that theory. But I may remark that the majority of followers of Freud take him to mean that the "censor" guards us only too zealously and that if we are to be healthy and happy we should get rid of the censor and let the "urges" or passions come trooping out into the light of day. If that popular interpretation of the Freudian theory prevails, and the people become convinced that the only way to cure passion is to let it have its way, then we may as well say here and now goodbye to morality, goodbye to decency, and farewell, a long farewell, to civilization.

The better way, the moral way, and as a matter of fact, the only healthy way is for a man himself to open that gate to the underworld of his own nature, boldly go down into the den of his passions, grapple with them, throttle them, and then come back into the light of day, bloody perhaps, but unbowed, master of his own soul, dictator to his own body. This is dirty work indeed, but necessary, like the work of a soldier who goes to battle through blood and mud, beats his way to victory, sticking his bayonet into the belly of this man, crashing the butt of his rifle into the skull of that one, doing a hundred things that are disgusting and loathsome but things that must be done if victory is to be gained.

I noticed that those who advocate what is called in the Freudian jargon the "release of the inhibitions" generally illustrate their doctrine by reference to the passion of lust. But if we are to re-

lease lust, why not also anger, and avarice and greed and gluttony? If you release one passion all the seven deadly sins will swarm upon you, and upon society. After that the deluge, after that chaos. Whether or not we came out of the jungle, we shall surely go back to the jungle if this popular Freudianism prevails.

But after all that is not the real reason why we cultivate purity. The truly religious idea is that although we may be kin to the beasts physically we are none the less children of God spiritually. The body is indeed animal, but it is the soul that makes the man. And it is the soul that makes man like a God upon the earth, master of his own life, dictator of his own destiny. Under God, he is a kind of God. Jesus quotes the Scripture: "Have I not said ye are gods?" A god does not go crying and cowering, he holds his head high. A god does not go lusting about, a victim to the passions of the body. Like a god he says to passion "Thou shalt not." And by that godly domination over the lower nature he becomes fit to be a companion of the One Great God, the only True God in heaven.

HONESTY IN BUSINESS AND POLITICS

(Address delivered by Rev. James M. Gillis, C. S. P., in the Catholic Hour, December 21, 1930)

I am sure I may take it for granted that no one within reach of my voice, even though that voice be amplified to reach some scores of millions, needs any explanation of the more obvious meaning of the Seventh Commandment, "Thou Shalt Not Steal!" In other lands and under a different civilization, downright theft may have been considered pardonable, or even laudable. Even now, a particularly clever pickpocket, like the one who lifted a watch from a policeman's pocket unobserved, even though the eyes of the policeman, of the judge and of all in the court room were upon him, has a certain renown in the underworld. He would have gladdened the heart of Fagin in *Oliver Twist*. Also, I suppose, a bank robber who does a job quickly and smoothly and gets away, acquires a certain standing in his own set. They say there is honor among thieves. I doubt it. But I am sure there is *fame* among thieves. Jesse James was considered a genius in his line, though under our more exacting contemporary standards he might be called a "piker." In Chicago, or Cicero, or wherever it is that famous racketeers are buried under \$25,000 worth of roses, it would seem there are those who consider an assassinated thief a greater hero than Lincoln or Garfield or McKinley.

But putting aside these more or less picturesque perversions of moral opinion, the sneak-thief, the porch-climber, the robber (train robber, bank rob-

ber, highway robber), the yegg, the racketeer, the hijacker and all the other members of the hierarchy of thieves are reprobated by all good citizens. And so we are free to drop all discussion of the cruder forms of theft and to consider some of the subtle and surreptitious violations of the Command, "Thou Shalt Not Steal."

And first a word about transactions on the stock market. I confess that I have no expert knowledge of the tricks of bulls and bears, though I have heard of late a great deal of the wailing and bleating of lambs. Recognizing my limitations, therefore, I shall not attempt to discuss the question as to what is speculation or gambling. The Stock Market is of course a necessity of modern business. When properly conducted, Stock Market operations are as legitimate as those on the cotton or grain or produce exchange, or any other business. But there is a specific danger concerning stocks which I may perhaps be permitted to describe in the words of a recognized authority in ethics, Rev. Thomas Slater, S. J., who writes in a volume entitled "Questions in Moral Theology," as follows:

"When large gains or losses depend on future market prices, there is a very great temptation for all whose fortunes are at stake to take means to influence the market in their own favor. Great financiers, . . . or combinations of smaller moneyed men have means at their disposal by which they can raise or lower the market price of a commodity to suit their own interest. This process has been reduced to a fine art, and by this art dealers in futures strive to influence the future event in their own favor. This is against the rules whose observance is necessary if betting is to be an honest trans-

action. It is like backing my horse against yours in a race, and then bribing your jockey to hold your horse, or to drug him when the race becomes due. It is a dishonest trick and against the fundamental laws of the game."

Consequently the men, be they few or many, who operate dishonestly in the stock market, are thieves quite as truly as the pickpocket, the burglar or the bandit.

Recently, as all the world knows, in the crash, or series of successive crashes, in the Stock Market, a vast number of poor people suffered tragically. I shall not venture to enumerate and discuss the varied causes of that catastrophe. But if amongst those causes there was dishonest manipulation of the market by certain powerful and unscrupulous operators, it seems to me that they have committed one of the sins which according to the Scriptures calls to heaven for vengeance, "depriving the laborer of his wages." Those poor people were to all intents laborers and what they lost was their wages.

But I must hurry on. I allow myself, however, one more word for the benefit of simple, honest people. I would like to pass on to them a warning which I first received from an intimate friend who was, so to speak, brought up in Wall Street, being the son of a prominent operator, and for several years himself a stock broker. He used to say with great force, "Don't let poor people speculate. Warn them against gambling. If they cannot go into the street without succumbing to the temptation to speculate, keep them out of Wall Street entirely." I have preached that doctrine to thousands in the

past twenty years. I hope now it reaches hundreds of thousands.

So we drop the stock market and come to the business world. I should not be surprised if some one should declare petulantly that modern business as a whole is not one whit more honest than stock market speculation. But I have not said that all stock market transactions are dishonest. Nor is all business dishonest. It would be absurd to say so. David the Psalmist said: "All men are liars." But if you read the preceding clause in that psalm you find, "I said in my excess—my anger." So if one says "all men are crooked," I add, "Says you,—in your anger." But we must not be angry when we are trying to solve delicate ethical problems.

Doubtless there is a great deal of dishonesty in business. It is justified by those who indulge in it with some sweeping phrase such as "Business is business," or "I am not in business for my health," or "Everybody's doing it," just as ten thousand wicked things in warfare were justified with the easy phrase, spoken with a raising of the eyebrows and a shrug of the shoulders, French fashion, "*C'est la guerre*," which means the same thing as our own English phrase, "All's fair in love and war." Of course that phrase is untrue, and likewise if the phrase, "Business is business," bears with it the connotation that "all's fair in business," it is equally untrue.

There are rules to every game, even in the bloody game of war (though I hope no one will challenge me to say which one of the rules of the game of warfare was observed during the World War) and if business be a game, one must play the game.

Business lies, for example, are immoral and not only immoral but sometimes also unjust. One who tells a business lie simply to persuade the customer to buy, but gives him fair value for his money is a liar indeed, but not a thief. He is bound to repent of his lie and amend his methods, but he is not bound to restitution. But if he lies and at the same time cheats, he commits two sins and *is* bound to restitution. Now the old simple way of telling a business lie was to buttonhole the customer and beguile him with a fairy tale about the value of the goods. The modern way is to reiterate a deceptive slogan in the advertising pages of a newspaper or magazine, or to flash a dubious statement on an electric sign intermittently; until it gets into a man's subconscious self. But a lie is a lie whether it comes out of the mouth, or off the page, or flash from an illuminated sign. A lie is a lie whether it concerns a \$4.79 overcoat in a second-hand store in the ghetto, or a \$15,000 fur coat in a frightfully swagger Fifth Avenue shop. And if to the lie is added fraud, restitution must be made. Otherwise in the Catholic system, absolution for the sin cannot be obtained.

Again; dishonest business may consist of substitution. A salesman shows a certain grade of goods, gets an order and delivers a cheaper grade; a contractor specifies in his contract a certain weight of pipe for plumbing fixtures, or a certain grade of window glass or wood flooring, or cement, or brick, or stone trimming, or what not, and supplies a lower grade, collecting the price of the grade promised but not provided. I have been told that such substitutions are so common that contractors have been known to stop work rather than be

watched, and one owner who had been something of a builder himself, told me that a contractor with whom he had dealings would substitute cheaper grades of building material, as he said, "Under your very eyes with the skill of a Houdini."

These slippery dodges are said to have been particularly prevalent during the war. In the rush and excitement of manufacturing all sorts of material, from blankets and tooth-brushes to gas bombs, tractors, aeroplanes and sixteen-inch guns, there was fraud such as never could have been in times of peace and in the ordinary dealings of one business man with another.

Here is a particularly nefarious kind of dishonesty, and yet one which seems to cause the least compunction—defrauding the Government. There is many a citizen who boasts loudly of his patriotism (by the way, watch closely and judge shrewdly the loud-mouthed patriot) who would presumably blush with shame at the very thought of picking a man's pocket in a crowd, but who picks Uncle Sam's pocket whenever he gets a chance. Please notice that important word "*presumably*." "*Presumably*" he would be ashamed to pick a man's pocket, but I cannot deny myself the suspicion that a man who robs the Government would rob you or me. As a matter of fact, if he robs the Government he does rob you and me.

Now as far as Catholic moral theology is concerned, or for that matter, according to any reputable ethics, a man who steals from the Government commits a sin and is bound to restitution just as surely as if he stole from an individual. Thieving is thieving whether it be from the United States Government, the Standard Oil Company, General

Motors, the Pennsylvania Railroad or from John Doe or Richard Roe. Of course, it is a bigger sin to steal five dollars from a poor man who has only five dollars, than to steal five dollars from a multi-millionaire. Nevertheless it will not do to say, "I stole money from a huge corporation that couldn't possibly miss it, and that cannot even know that it is gone." I repeat, sin is sin, theft is theft and where there has been theft, restitution must be made.

And now a hurried word about that specific form of dishonesty called "graft." We may say of grafting schemes what the devils cast out of the Gadarene demoniac said of themselves—"Our name is legion." The forms and ramifications of graft are infinite, and if any one could come and cast out that legion of devils from American life, he would be a Savior indeed.

In public life—political life, particularly—graft is enormously prevalent. But not only public officials,—such persons as policemen (of high rank and low) and politicians (federal, state and municipal) but men in private business, buyers and sellers, builders and contractors and architects, chauffeurs, cooks, club stewards, tradesmen, all manner of agents in all sorts of business receive what is called a "rake-off": not an honest commission, but a secret and illicit compensation. In old-fashioned days it was called bribery, or plain thieving, or dishonorable business. But now that comfortable word, that not-too-evil-sounding word "graft," used sometimes with the adjective "honest," covers a multitude of sins.

But since no man can number the forms of graft any more than he can count the sands of the seashore, let me make the simple outright statement:

there is no honest graft. All graft is dishonest. The man who gives or takes graft and soothes his conscience by calling it honest may have recourse to one test to prove his honesty. If he is a politician, let him get up in a public gathering and tell his fellow-citizens the nature of his transactions, or if he is a business man, let him write a letter to the papers signing his name and explaining how he gets his money. Does he answer, "Nonsense! Absurd! Impossible!" Then he is very probably a thief. The acid test that discloses the difference between the gold of honesty and the base metal of graft is publicity. The hallmark of graft is secrecy. If your fellow-citizens do not know and would not be permitted to know what you make on the side apart from your salary or your recognized income, then you have reason for concealment. If you have reason for concealment you have no right to an easy conscience. You may delude yourself with that dubious reflex principle, "Everybody's doing it," or that other equally dishonest and equally indefensible principle, "If I don't take it, some one else will." But it remains true that graft is theft.

I conclude this part of my talk with a vigorous protest against that particularly wicked lie "Everybody's taking it." That convenient cowardly excuse is a libel on the great majority of American citizens. The generality of men and women are honest. If such a declaration is equivalent to an act of faith in humanity, then let it stand as my act of faith. I am sure it is true, because if all men were grafters, business could not be done, and the Government could not stand. The grafters take refuge behind a formula which is cruel and unjust because it indicts a whole people. The use of the formula

proves nothing except that the thief is also a liar. In that he is like the profligate who defends himself with the calumny that "all men are alike." It is bad enough to be a thief, a grafter, a bribe-taker without being a calumniator of a whole nation and of the human race.

CHRISTMAS

(Address delivered by Rev. James M. Gillis, C. S. P., in the Catholic Hour, December 28, 1930)

The center of attraction of the world at Christmas time is a stable—and in the stable a manger, and in the manger a new-born Child. Ordinarily great heroes are venerated as they were at the height of their career, or, in the case of soldiers who die on the battlefield, as they were at the moment of magnificent death. But of all those who have won and held the admiration of mankind, there is only One Who is commemorated as an infant in swaddling clothes. We have all seen representations, painted on canvas, or sculptured in marble or bronze, of the young commander Napoleon leading the assault on foot at the bridge of Lodi or astride a beautiful white charger winning his spectacular victory at Austerlitz or Jena. There are paintings galore of the Duke of Wellington at the moment of his supreme triumph,—Napoleon's supreme disaster,—Waterloo. There is a noble play of Shakespeare's that makes us see and realize much better than the cold unimaginative annals of mere history the tragedy of the death of Julius Caesar, "E'en at the base of Pompey's statue which all the while ran blood."

Yes, there are paintings and sculptures and tapestries and poems and plays and volumes of brilliant literature about great men winning battles, addressing parliaments, signing Declarations of Independence, wresting Magna Charta from a reluctant king, or on the other hand losing a great cause magnificently and dramatically, making one last heroic gesture like Robert Emmet in the prisoner's dock, or Blessed Thomas More on the scaffold, or St. Joan of

Arc in the midst of the flames, or the heroes of the Easter uprising facing a firing squad.

But there is only one hero, and He the greatest of all, who gathers His admirers and His adorers around His cradle. "I, if I be lifted up," said Jesus, "will draw all men unto Me." And He does, indeed, draw them to His cross. But I wonder if it be not even a more surprising miracle to draw men to a cradle than to a cross. At any rate the wide world today is in spirit at the crib of Bethlehem. Jesus has power to attract us to a stable at the end of a dirty oriental lane, to a hole in the rock filled with peasants, herders of sheep and other poor people.

And here is the miracle of Christmas—a moral and spiritual miracle; a world that admires force and power, drawn to pure helplessness; a world that worships wealth, venerating poverty; a world that ordinarily genuflects only to social standing, noble blood, great fortune, or to intellectual and artistic distinction, putting away for a few days at least its pride and snobbery and foolishness; a world suddenly become human in loving contemplation of a baby lying on an improvised pallet of straw in a stable.

Christian faith, evidently, is a great leveller of castes and of social distinctions. In the Catholic Church we indulge a certain lawful pride in the fact that we are the church of the poor. The rich who worship with us must be resigned to touch elbows with day laborers, servants, small tradesmen, mechanics. In the long lines of penitents waiting their turn at the confessional, and in the great swarms that come to the Communion rail, the rich and the poor, the educated and the illiterate, the highly cultured and the uncouth meet in the sub-

lime equality of Christian democracy. And so it was in Bethlehem: peasants and kings, rustics and Magi met at the crib of the Babe Jesus.

Now, therefore, of all the multitudinous thoughts that throng to the mind at Christmas-time, I select this idea to be emphasized: the levelling of social and intellectual barriers, and the abolition of all other artificial and anti-Christian discrimination among the worshippers who throng the court of the Babe of Bethlehem;—the court that was held in a stable, with peasants in place of princes, with the ass and the ox in place of liveried attendants, with straw scattered over a floor of hardened earth in place of soft rugs upon marble, and with a little Baby in swaddling garments in place of a king clad in ermine, sceptre in hand and crown on head.

Of all who gathered in that strange throne room to make obeisance to that strange king, the shepherds and the Magi will serve as symbols of the extremes that still meet after all these centuries to do honor and to offer love to Jesus, Son of God and son of Mary.

Perhaps there is a tendency in the mind of pious Christians to idealize those Palestinian peasants. But there is no reason to suppose that they were different from any other herders of sheep and of cattle in Judea—or in any other part of the Orient.

I believe it is the common experience of travelers to the Holy Land to be disappointed—if not scandalized—because the actual peasants in that part of the world do not resemble the peasants that we see in art. The shepherds of Corregio, Botticelli and perhaps especially of Fra Angelico, not to mention the rest of the army of artists who have painted the Nativity, are idealized, spiritualized shepherds,

the like of which have never been, East or West, in ancient times or nowadays. They bear the same resemblance to real peasants as a gentleman farmer bears to what is called, I believe, a "dirt farmer." The peasants who gathered at the crib of Jesus were "dirt" farmers (as was perhaps too obvious), and herders who came into actual contact with cattle (as was also very obvious). The peasants you see in Palestine today would be a good sample of those of Jesus' day. Manners and habits and costumes don't change in the Orient. Those who have not travelled to the Holy Land may perhaps have seen a motion picture "Grass" taken a few years ago. The cattlemen in that picture might just as well have been of Abraham's day or Christ's. And they were not picturesque. Or at least they were not pretty. Neither were the shepherds who came to the cave of Jesus and stood about in their awkward, embarrassed way; they were unkempt, unwashed, illiterate, uncouth, and if the full truth be told, they were probably no more pious or virtuous than it behooved them to be.

I dare say that in Palestine in King Herod's day the peasant was much like the French tiller of the soil, painted by Millet and described in rhetorical verse by Edwin Markham:

"Bowed by the weight of centuries, he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages in his face
And on his back the burden of the world."

The poem continues with perhaps an exaggerated choice of epithets to describe the peasant as one

"Dead to rapture and despair,
A thing that grieves not and that never hopes
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox."

Whether there was in Millet's day or Markham's, any French peasant of whom it might be said that he was "dead to rapture and despair," and whether in truth and justice, he could be called "a *thing* that grieves not and that never hopes" is a debatable question, to say the least. Millet's man with the hoe was kin to the man and woman of the Angelus. He was no brother to the ox, because he knew religion; he had faith, and where there is faith there is hope. Of course he wore a dirty smock and wooden shoes caked with mud, but he went to Mass on Sunday, he received Holy Communion perhaps side by side with the *grand seigneur* and the *chatelaine* from the mansion close by, and if you could see him as he went back to his place with the Sacred Host upon his tongue I venture to think you would have seen some slight trace of rapture on his face. Besides, at Christmas time in his own home he had a tiny imitation of the *creche* of Bethlehem, and in the parish church there was a much more gorgeous one with life-size figures of the Babe and His Mother, and St. Joseph and the kings and shepherds. And, just as likely as not, when he went to make his simple prayers at that wonderful Christmas crib he found himself again side by side with the *grand seigneur* and the *chatelaine* and I am sure that he realized in his humble way that history was repeating itself; that he was like the shepherds at the original crib and his rich neighbors were like the Magi.

But we may admit, no doubt, that in ancient Palestine conditions were worse than in modern France. The peasants who gathered about Jesus were quite innocent of intellectual activity, and their spiritual development was probably small. Their

morals, let us hope were decent, as the morals of simple people have always been. They were "poor people" indeed, but not as Markham, the poet, has imagined poor people, and not, I may add, "poor people" like the desperate souls discovered or imagined by Dostoievski. They were poor, simple, guileless, but it is impossible to believe that they could have been totally ignorant of the promise of the Messiah, and it is probable, to say the least, that they knew if only by the angels' song that the long expected Deliverer was now come and that He would wash away their sins and in the end fulfill their hope for rest and peace in paradise.

At the other extreme of those who came to see the new born Babe in the Stable of Bethlehem were the Magi. Now we cannot claim to know much about these mysterious "wise men." Legend has made them kings as well as philosophers, saints as well as scholars. Perhaps we are safe in supposing that they were acquainted with whatever learning was current in Egypt and Babylon, and whatever wisdom there was in India or in the not very far distant Athens. And that, as all historians and philosophers know, was considerable.

It would be a narrow mind, and prejudiced, that would imagine all pagan philosophy to have been alien or antipathetic to the truth. Fathers of the Church in the early ages, men like Clement, Cyril and Justin Martyr, to say nothing of St. Paul in his speech to the academy in Athens, labored to show that Christianity is the culmination and not the contradiction of all true philosophy. In the fifth century Augustine borrowed heavily from Plato, and many centuries later St. Thomas Aquinas borrowed

equally from Aristotle, both of them appropriating to the purposes of Christian theology the philosophic wisdom of men who lived and pondered the mystery of the universe 400 years before Christ was born.

The point is that the Magi who came to Bethlehem were led not alone by the shining of a star but by rays of light from the philosophical thought of their day. And that they brought with them not merely gold, frankincense and myrrh, material gifts, but intellectual and spiritual offerings, the fruit of their mind and their soul to lay at the feet of the Babe Jesus. Intellectuals we should call them, teachers of wisdom, creators of thought, sages, *savants*, compeers perhaps, in their own countries of what Socrates and Aristotle and Plato had been in Athens, Zoroaster in Persia, and we may add, of Confucius and Lao-Tsze in China.

At any rate they were the remote extreme, in intelligence and culture from the poor peasants, the shepherds and stable men whom they found at the crib of the One they had come from afar to seek.

And the significant fact, important to them at the time and of even more importance symbolically for all time is that the illustrious Magi and the illiterate shepherds met before Jesus Christ on a basis of equality. The beauty of the episode of the meeting of the wise men and the shepherds in Bethlehem is in this, that they knelt side by side and adored without any sense of condescension on the one side or of shame on the other.

And here I take it, is an important feature—an *essential* feature of of the Christian religion—Christianity inculcates simplicity, humility, poverty of spirit in the rich and the wise and the powerful; and

it lends dignity and nobility and even a touch of divinity to the unlearned and the lowly.

Today men are discussing the famous and familiar proposition "All men are created equal," and there seems to be a general tendency to reject the phrase as an obvious falsehood, a self-evident absurdity. But whatever be the fact in the political, or the social, or the intellectual world, in religion, all men *are* equal. Let me hasten to explain. I do not mean that one man makes no more spiritual or moral progress than another, but that when a man has progressed even to sainthood, he still counts himself no better than a sinner, or even a reprobate. As St. Paul says "What have you that you have not received; and if you have received, why do you glory as if you had not received?"—as if your moral and spiritual excellence were all your own doing. And again he says "by the grace of God I am what I am." And if I am not what I am by the grace of God, why should I glory as if I had made myself what I am? St. Philip Neri, seeing a condemned criminal on his way to execution, exclaimed "There goes Philip Neri, save for the grace of God." The saint associates himself mentally with sinners. The last thought in his mind would be self-complacency. The moment a saint considers himself no sinner, that moment he is a sinner and no saint.

And as with moral excellence, so with intellectual. The most learned man is always the humblest. A little learning inclines a man to pride; more learning leads him back to humility. When a man thinks he knows much, he knows nothing, and when he admits that he knows nothing, he knows much. I am speaking not in parables or riddles, I am not jug-

gling phrases. I am saying what all great philosophers have discovered at the end of the road of wisdom; all the wise ones from Socrates down admit their ignorance. St. Paul says if he must glory he will glory in his infirmities. And so of the learned man, if he must glory, he will glory in his ignorance.

In these days when the word relativity is in everyone's mouth, it ought not to be difficult to see that all our knowledge is ignorance. Of course if I compare myself with an imbecile or a ten-year old child, I may seem to know something. But if I compare myself with Shakespeare, the myriad-minded, or Kant, or Goethe, or Thomas Aquinas, or with the man who made relativity famous, I am a pitiable ignoramus. And if even these great men compare what they know with what they do not know, they will confess with Isaac Newton that they have only been like children playing on the edge of the ocean of knowledge, and that the vast expanse still lies unexplored. Or, to use another simile, if one goes high enough into the skies, a hut and a mansion, a subway kiosk and the Empire State building seem of about the same height. And if one goes high enough in the realm of knowledge, if one could by a miracle go as high as God above man, the learning of a child in the grade schools and of a great philosopher would seem about the same.

So when the Magi came close to God, it would have been absurd for them to be puffed up because they were acquainted with some philosophies that were hidden from the little ones, the peasants at their side. Furthermore, it is possible that they knew the Hebrew Bible and that they had read in the prophet Ezechiel "Thus sayeth the Lord God:

Remove the diadem, take off the crown . . . Exalt him that is low and abase him that is high." Indeed it is not incredible that on their visit to the new-born Babe they learned of His Mother's Magnificat, in which occur the words so familiar to all who attend the Catholic vespers, *Deposuit potentes de sede et exaltavit humiles*. "He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble, . . . He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart."

I hope I may be pardoned if I apply this lesson of Christian humility and Christian equality to conditions in my own, my native land America, which I love instinctively with a love of predilection, though I try to love all men in every land. I am confident that it is not mere fancy on my part to see in the primitive and authentic American ideal a similarity with that of the Gospel. Equality of all men in the sight of God is taught in the Gospel, and equality of all men before the law is the keynote of our Constitution. So it is a fact that where the Christian religion loses influence, the spirit of democracy is endangered. And there are not wanting in America today indications that the old simplicity of life and democracy of manners are waning. Time was when the fundamental social principle in our country was simplicity, and equality. But now there seems to be a deplorable hankering for class distinctions, the bane of the old world, the ancient curse both of Asia and of Europe. Aristocracy is the unnatural, artificial, un-Christian system based upon the lie that one man is better than another because his blood comes from a slightly different source, because his family is, or has been prominent, because his traceable pedigree is longer, his genealogy prouder, or because—and

this is the lowest and ugliest type of aristocratic theory—because he has more money than another.

Democracy, like Christianity, maintains that all such distinctions are arbitrary and altogether damnable. And it would take no great parade of argument to show that democracy is true and aristocracy false. There are plenty of scions of noble families who have in their veins the “noblest blood” in Europe, who are none the less mentally insignificant, and indeed in not a few cases imbeciles. There are both here and abroad a disproportionate number of aristocratic scapegraces, and it is almost the rule that the children of excessively rich parents are of no use to themselves, their families or to society; there is a superabundance of prodigal sons, and must I add, prodigal daughters of distinguished parents.

Furthermore—I say it with profound regret—there are too many Americans who were born of simple people, brought up from childhood to believe in the essential equality of rich and poor who, coming into money, have turned traitor to their early principles and have thrown away their birthright of democracy to take up the manners, the pride, the haughtiness and the insufferable self-satisfaction of the aristocracy. There are too many pedigree hunters amongst us, too many American newspapers conducting genealogical departments; too many children of shop-keepers, of farmers, of miners, of mechanics, looking up escutcheons and coats of arms; too many liveried lackeys; too many uniformed servant girls and serving men in American homes; there are too many marriages—loveless and often tragically unhappy—of clean-blooded American girls to decadent foreign noblemen, because of the silly ambition of title-hunting mothers;

too many American women madly desirous of being presented at some European court; too many rich Americans childishly proud of the permission to wear a medal, a sword, a cocked hat and breeches conferred upon them by some court in Europe. Such things may be in certain instances only foolish, but I fear that there often goes with them a haughtiness, a superciliousness, a ridiculous delusion of superiority.

I wonder if that sort of thing can find place in the cave of Bethlehem. I wonder if one would go sword in hand, cocked and plumed hat on head and trailing long silk robes on that earthen floor, to salute the poor little helpless Babe in the straw. The incongruity is not only ridiculous, it would be sacrilegious.

I hope I shall not be misunderstood to mean that the worship of Jesus Christ the Son of God should never be accompanied by beauty and splendor of ritual. He was born indeed in a stable, but we are not content to leave Him in that sordid place. We take Him from the proximity of cattle, place Him upon the altar and there we give Him, with all the magnificence we can muster, the adoration that is His due. But if a grand ceremonial involves the use of beautiful vestments by Christ's ministers, we expect them to remember that the splendor and the glory are not for them, but for their Master.

Indeed in the Catholic service we chant again and again: *Non Nobis Domine, Non Nobis*, "Not to us O Lord, not to us but to Thy Name be Glory." If a minister at the altar should be proud or vain he would be like a color bearer in a parade who would imagine that when men doff the hat as he passes by the reverence is to him and not to the flag he carries.

God grant, then, that we learn these lessons of Christmas: humility, simplicity, democracy of manner, and the spirit of poverty. For it seems to me that these sweet virtues are not only exemplified but are commanded to us by the fact that Jesus Christ, Son of David and what is infinitely more, Son of the Most High God, Incarnate in a human body, chose for His appearance upon earth the humblest and lowliest imaginable circumstances.

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