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**“The Moral Order”  
and  
“Mary, the Mother of Jesus”**

by

**Rev. George Johnson, Ph. D.,  
Associate Professor of Education,  
Catholic University of America.**

**Six addresses delivered in the Catholic Radio Hour,  
Sponsored by the National Council of Catholic  
Men with the co-operation of the National  
Broadcasting Company and its Asso-  
ciated Stations.**

**1. The Spirituality of the Soul. II. The  
Immortality of the Soul. III. Mary,  
the Mother of Jesus. IV. The Freedom  
of the Will. V. The Voice of Con-  
science. VI. The Will of God.**



**National Council of Catholic Men  
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1314 Massachusetts Avenue  
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✠ JOHN FRANCIS NOLL, D. D.,

Bishop of Fort Wayne

EASTER, 1930

To

THE APOSTLES OF THE GENTILES

Whose powerful intercession we humbly invoked when this  
mission was entrusted to our feeble talents

## AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

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Last spring when the sermons contained in this pamphlet were delivered over the radio during the "Catholic Hour," a number of those who listened were kind enough to write for copies of them. The National Council of Catholic Men, eager to meet these requests, now makes the complete series on "The Moral Order" available in the present form.

The teachings of the Catholic Church concerning the nature of man and his moral responsibility are founded on the bed-rock of experience and sound reason. They are vindicated by the findings of sound experimental psychology. Social philosophy neglects them at its peril. They reflect the wisdom of the ages, which is not to be flouted at the behest of the folly of the moment.

Knowing ourselves, we arise to a better knowledge of God. Our nature bears witness to His infinite Perfection. Truth dissipates the murky vapor of error in which pride and self-love thrive, and begets humility. In the degree that we are humble we are profitable unto the glory of God and the service of our fellow man.

Perhaps this little book may serve in some small way to awaken interest in the noble teachings of the Catholic Church concerning the moral order. Perhaps it may help some Catholics here and there to know better the gift of God that has been entrusted to them, the while it reveals to such of those who are not of the Faith, who may chance to read its pages, the premises upon which Catholic moral teaching is predicated.

# The Spirituality of the Soul

(Address delivered by Rev. George Johnson, Ph.D., in the Catholic Hour, April 27, 1930)

“I am delighted with the law of God according to the inward man,” writes St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans. “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 this body of death.” These words of the great Apostle of the Gentiles echo a cry that has been wrung from human hearts since the beginning of time. There is a dualism about us, the effects of which we are constantly experiencing. Something in us strives for noble things, is delighted with truth and goodness and beauty, reaches out to the stars and causes us to feel a kinship with the divine. Yet all of the while, we are conscious of another force that drags us down, responds to the lure of things that are crass and ignoble, involves us in the delights of the senses, and makes us aware of a kinship with the brute. There is the law of the mind and the law in the members. Which is the index of our true nature? To which do we owe primary obedience? What are we, after all?

Are we just animals, albeit of a higher development? Is this consciousness of being somewhat different but a delusion and a snare? Must futility inevitably crown our efforts to emancipate ourselves from what St. Paul calls “the body of this death?” “The death of man and of beasts is one,” muses the writer of the Book of Ecclesiastes, “and the condition of them both is equal. As man dieth, so they also die; all things breathe alike and man has nothing more than the beast. All things go to one place—of



earth they were made and unto earth they return together. Who knoweth if the spirit of the children of Adam ascend upward, and if the spirit of the beasts descend downward?"

"Who knoweth?—We know," answer certain voices in our midst. We have learned the secret from experimental science. Henceforward there need be no mystery about the nature of man. We have built unto ourselves laboratories and equipped them with instruments like unto those which have revealed so much to the chemist and the physicist. We have approached the problem as scientists and not as poets or philosophers or theologians. We have refused to consider any evidence that could not be submitted to objective test. We have not been interested in what a man thinks, but in how he behaves. We have reached the conclusion that a human being can be fully defined in terms of his nervous system, that man's mind is quite as clearly of animal extraction as his body, that the difference between man and beast is merely one of degree. The concept of a soul may be an attractive bit of poetry, but scientifically it is untenable. There is no deliverance from the body of this death.

Yet somehow, the thinking world remains unconvinced. It regards the dogmatism of the psychologist, whose psychology knows no soul, with a certain degree of amusement. It wonders how much science there is to psychology after all. For a true scientist respects all the facts. Granted that the psychological laboratory has made a number of discoveries that have proven valuable to the educator and the sociologist, discoveries that throw light on the nature of the learning process, the mental activities involved in achieving skill in reading, writing and



arithmetic, the range of differences in intelligence, the relation of certain types of motive to conduct, it has yielded nothing but theory on the fundamental problem of the nature of the human mind. For it has not faced the fact that men are aware of something within themselves that transcends their nervous systems. This awareness is a fact, whether or not it can be measured and weighed. No explanation of human nature is scientific which gives the lie to the testimony of universal common sense.

Aristotle, the great Greek philosopher, summed up this universal common sense when he defined man as a rational animal. The animal part of man, he did not deny. He saw the close resemblance between the human body and the body of the brute. He observed how much alike they are in structure and function. He noted how the same laws seem to govern both in such matters as birth and death, nutrition and procreation, sensitiveness to physical satisfaction and annoyance, instinct and habit. He felt that he had plenty of justification for calling man an animal. Yet he could not let the matter rest there. For much as he resembles others animals, there is something about man which renders him quite unique in the animal world, something which sets him apart from the brute with whom he has so much in common, and creates a difference far more significant than the likeness. Man can think and man can will, which is to say he can perform actions which are beyond the range of mere animal powers. If he is an animal, he is a rational animal, an animal that can reason, and the ability to reason indicates that there is something about him that is not entirely physical. This something, the philosopher calls the soul.

Really one does not have to be a profound scholar to appreciate the truth of this argument. It but reflects the consciousness of mankind and is substantiated by the daily experience of each and every one of us. Its very obviousness has brought it into disrepute with certain thinkers. They would dignify their own learning by simulating a contempt for the thinking of the man on the street.

Let us examine the evidence for the existence of the soul as it presents itself to the average human being. Take an ordinary commonplace word like home. Perhaps it immediately suggests to us another word—house. We remember when we built our house. There were the years when it was no more than a nebulous plan in our minds. We became interested in houses, walked about studying them, revelled in pictures of them, observed different types and styles; our eye never filled with the seeing of them. We would sit alone in the evening, thinking of what we had seen, recalling the houses we had admired. From one house we would take one feature, from another, another. We liked that roof, that porch, that type of window, that floor plan. In imagination, the house of our dreams gradually took form. We saw it as we would have it look. It was of such an architecture, such a size, such a color, such an orientation. In fancy, we even furnished it—chairs like those we saw last week, a table like that one in the window, a dining room arranged like the picture in the magazine, and so on down to the last detail.

The moment came when we were ready to make our dream a reality. There were architects and contractors to deal with, the slow process of building, and finally the glad moment of completion. And now

the house is ours. We have moved into it, we have lived in it, we call it home.

But when we say "home" do we mean "house?" Has the word no further connotation than the building that is the result of much seeing and much mental picturing? The house, whether I look at it with my eyes, or conjure it up in my imagination, is a definite, specific thing, of such a height, and color, and length, and breadth. Home is something beyond this. If I ask you what you mean by home, you cannot answer by describing your house. Home is indifferent to houses. Home is not the house, but what the house stands for.

And what does it stand for? It stands for the right to own property which is yours according to the natural law. It stands for the privacy and the security to which you are entitled as a free-born American citizen, and hence you say that your home is your castle. It stands for the institution of the family, upon which the social order is based. It stands for the bonds of affection, love and justice that identify the interests of father and mother and children. It stands for the progress of the nation, in that it is a place where the young are prepared for the obligations of adult living. It stands for the glory of God, for all of these purposes are dictated by His Holy Will and His Providence watches over it.

Now none of this is apparent in your house as you look at it or picture it in your mind, yet it is all involved in the notion of home. It is not born of seeing and imaging. The thing we see, the thing we imagine, is but the cue that occasions an inward process that we call thinking to take place as a re-

sult of which we have not a mental image of a specific object, but an idea, which, while it includes the specific object, transcends it. Where the mental image is concrete, it is abstract; where the mental image is particular, it is general. Natural law, freedom, social order, love, justice, progress, Divine Providence—these are ideas, not objects like the house that can be photographed by the camera of the eye or painted by the artistry of the imagination. The fact that they are in our mind, is evidence of the presence of some power, higher than the body, greater than sense: a power that thinks, and we call this power the soul.

Let us return once more to this house of yours which you call home. What do you demand of it? Warmth as against the icy blasts of winter, coolness as against the burning heat of the summer suns? A place to sleep and take your rest, a place to refresh your body with food and drink? Is this everything? Then why those pictures on the wall? Why those evidences of care in the matching of colors and the arrangement of furniture? Why the books on the table and on the shelves yonder in the corner? Why the radio tuned in this moment on a religious discourse? Are not these all evidences that you cannot live by bread alone? You feel a craving for happiness that cannot be satisfied by ministrations to the body. There is a joy in the possession of truth, that riches cannot purchase, a satisfaction in goodness that makes a palace out of a hovel, a delight in beauty that transcends the senses.

The supreme human joys are not those of the body. Noble literature, elevating music, lofty conversation—in comparison with these what price eating, drinking, and sleeping? Such delights do not pall on



the taste, nor do they need the constant seasoning of change and novelty.

But the greatest of all joys are those which are found in religion, in the contemplation of the goodness of God. Ever and anon, even in the midst of familiar things, there comes over us a mysterious homesickness for something outside of ourselves, a yearning to fly away and be at rest in the arms of an Eternal Love. We may be kneeling in church; or walking along the highway in the springtime, or seated at home in our favorite chair. We have been much preoccupied with everyday affairs, careful and troubled about many things. Suddenly everything seems tawdry and meaningless. We feel a great hunger for something higher, for some truer reality. It is the law of the mind demanding its just dues, protesting against the tyranny of the law in the members and reminding us that if we have a body, we also have a soul.

It seems strange that men who pride themselves on their humanitarianism, who seem so eager to make a heaven out of earth, should be so intent on robbing man of his soul—the one thing that makes him human and renders him capable of enjoying even an earthly heaven. Of course the soul is not destroyed by a denial of its existence. A theory cannot eliminate a fact, even though the fact has been demonstrated in a laboratory and the theory calls itself scientific. But what can, and inevitably must, happen is this: Men will become so intent on the physical that they will lose all sense of spiritual values. Because they are constantly told that they are beasts, they may decide to live like beasts. The best things in modern civilization we have inherited from ancestors who were spiritually minded. How

long will they survive in the hands of a progeny that sums itself up in terms of its neurones? Take the soul out of the counsels of men, and what remains of religion, justice, charity, culture, courage and high resolve? If the idea is but a phantasm, why are not ideals fantastical?

But of course you cannot take the soul out of the counsels of men. Its insistences are too real. Human beings grow weary of bread and circuses, of machines, and business, and bodily comfort. There are signs all around us of an incipient revolt against the mechanism of our times. We are sickening of a realistic literature that has been beating a monotonous tom-tom in a vain attempt to exercise our souls. We are restive under the standardization that scientific processes have imposed upon us. We are weary of statistics and efficiency. Newspapers are affording more and more space to religious affairs. Magazines are opening their pages to religious discussion. The radio recognizes a national religious interest. Note how the ordinary commercial programs observe musically such great feasts as Christmas and Easter. These things would not be if men were ready to admit that they are but animals of a more intricate development.

What is man? The penny catechism gives me the answer. "Man is a creature composed of body and soul and made to the image and likeness of God". When I ask, "Is this likeness in the body or the soul?" I am told that it is chiefly in the soul. "But how is the soul like to God"? "The soul is like to God because it is a spirit that will never die, and has understanding and free will". "What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul"? Our Blessed Saviour asks

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us. "Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul"?

Shall we exchange the image of God, for the image of the beast? Shall we sell ourselves into the bondage of the senses and confess that we are the slaves of the physical? Or in the full consciousness of the liberty that is ours as the sons of God, shall we not rise up in revolt against the flesh that in all things it may be made subject to the spirit? "Walk in the spirit and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, for these are contrary one to another so that you do not the things that you would. But if you are led by the spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, idolatry, witchcrafts, enmities, contentions, emulations, wraths, quarrels, dissensions, sects, envies, murders, drunkenness, revellings and such like. Of the which I foretell you, as I have foretold to you, that they who do such things, shall not obtain the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the spirit is charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanmiity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity. Against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's, have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences."



## The Immortality of the Soul

(Address delivered by Rev. George Johnson, Ph.D., in the Catholic Hour, May 4, 1930)

**I**N every city, village, and hamlet, there is a hal-  
lowed spot we cherish with loving care. Yet we  
are inclined to avoid it except when duty com-  
mands, to pass it by hurriedly, with gaze averted.  
I speak of the cemetery. Bound up with our deep-  
est affections it is at the same time suggestive of  
our most hidden fears. We love it for what it en-  
shrines and hate it for what it foretells. It reminds  
us of those we love to remember, but at the same  
time it makes us conscious of something we would  
fain forget.

In fancy let us visit the cemetery. Entering its  
gates we stroll along its gravelled walks, admiring  
its well-kept lawns, its trimmed hedges, the noble  
trees that shelter it in their shade. Everywhere  
graves, some covered with flowers to reveal a recent  
grief, others eloquent of the shortness of the  
memory of man. Monuments and markers abound  
—love's defiance of death's rapacity. Let us see  
what some of them have to tell us of those whose  
names they would immortalize.

Here is one, just a headstone to mark the spot  
where lies all that is mortal of a little tot who tar-  
ried in our midst but five short years. Just a few  
months of delightful babyhood and growth in won-  
dering awareness of the world about him—just a  
few years of beautiful childhood crowded with  
eager curiosities—and then the end. The end of  
the hopes and dreams of father and mother who  
pictured for him a future rich with all that their  
love and sacrifice could buy, the end of prattle and

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play and happy laughter, the end of ceaseless questioning and toddling forays of discovery. Five short years, and life is over ere it has begun.

Yonder stone marks the last resting place of a woman forty years of age. Death came to her as an angel of mercy. All the days of her life she had suffered, bedridden most of the time and needing the constant ministrations of others. She had never known the delights of a stroll in the woods on a summer's morning, she had never danced and played in the company of happy companions, she had never felt the thrill that is born of accomplishment of worth-while tasks. All her life long, a burden to others and a burden to herself. Pain, sleepless nights, helplessness. And then at too long last, the merciful deliverance of death.

A chaste and simple shaft rises at the head of the grave of one we know as a scholar and a writer. The long years of his life were devoted to study and his fine mind left to posterity an heritage of noble books. Even when his bodily strength began to fail, his mind was active and he worked feverishly to complete his life work. But in vain. Fourscore years was too short a time to accomplish what he had set out to do and death wrote a finis to his work before he had a chance to complete what he felt was but the first chapter.

Here is the section which we call the potter's field, set aside by our common charity for life's derelicts. A new grave received but yesterday the mortal remains of a homeless wayfarer who knew no next of kin. There was a day of hopeful youth and high resolve, a time when it seemed there might be some realization of the fond hopes that lived in a mother's heart as it yearned over a new-born

babe. But the external handicaps were too great and the internal urge was too weak and life defeated him. Always the same thought, things will be better tomorrow, or next week, or next year—never quite quenched are the ambitions that flamed in youth, never quite stilled is the small voice whispering of what might have been. Finally death intervenes and a nameless grave seals his defeat.

But what glorious monument is this that rears itself aloft in a majesty of sculpture and design? We approach and learn that here rests a man of wealth, a man of deeds, a man whose name was honorable in the marts of commerce and the assemblies of statesmen. He labored hard and amassed a fortune the while he achieved an enviable place in the regard of his fellow-men. He thought of others as well as of himself. Human welfare was his watchword and the possession of the comforts of life made him eager to share them with those less fortunate in the fray. They told him that he owed it to himself to retire and to enjoy the fruits of his arduous labors. But he had work to do. He saw new ways in which his business might be increased and expanded. He envisaged social reforms that might be effected by more enlightened legislation. He was impatient for greater accomplishment. But death thought otherwise and struck him down in the midst of uncompleted tasks. We honor him for what he had done; his dying thought was of what he had failed to do.

Let us rest a while here on this bench and ponder the significance of these graves. With all their difference they seem to preach a common truth. The baby hesitating on life's threshold, the invalid constrained to a life of helplessness, the scholar

whose wisdom seemed to him but ignorance, the pauper never quite able to transform a wish into a deed, the statesman and business executive contemptuous of the hills he had climbed because of the vision of mountains yet unscaled—what is their verdict concerning life? And all these other countless dead that sleep in their graves, mothers who sacrificed all for children who disappointed their hopes, young men and young women who died at the outset of their careers, physicians who felt they were just beginning to know something about medicine, lawyers to whom increasing knowledge of the law brought a sense of being the merest tyros, teachers eager to be taught—what have they to tell us about life and death? In every case, I fancy the answer would be, there is too much of death and too little of life; death comes too soon, life is too short. In the surprise of death, they said: "Can this be all? You say it is finished, though I feel it is not yet begun. Is this the end of my existence? Then must I say, life has not been worth the living, for whatever joys and consolations, victories and honors it may have brought me, its termination finds my deepest desires, my fondest ambitions, my noblest yearnings, thwarted."

"Thwarted." The feeling of humanity since the beginning of time, at the approach of death. Our hearts and minds are too big for this life. Let it yield its utmost, our answer will be, "Vanity of vanities and all is vanity." Our mind is hungry for truth. Before baby lips can form words, baby eyes are eloquent with the query, "What is it?" The more we learn, the more we want to know. Knowledge whets the appetite for more knowledge. We learn what things are, only to become curious about why



they are. We sense an infinity behind the finite, and are loth to admit that the unknown is unknowable. Yet even a long lifetime of thought and study leaves us dissatisfied and death comes to thwart us in our search for truth.

"Thwarted." These restless hearts of ours are hungry with a love that naught earthly can satisfy. A broken heart is all we get in return for even the noblest human love. It is not only that people disappoint us, betray us, tire of us, grow out of us. Even if these things would never happen, people die. To love requires a world of courage; it is fear of a torn and bleeding heart that accounts for selfish mothers, self-centered fathers, calculating wives and husbands, thoughtless friends. The void in the heart cannot be filled with things and persons. The hunger is too deep. There is always something else, something beyond, something that is not bound up in space and time, something that is stronger than death. As St. Augustine puts it, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O God, and the heart of man is restless until it rests in Thee."

This life is not long enough for a creature possessed of a spiritual soul. Time is all too short. The business of keeping the body alive and well absorbs a very large portion of the years that are allotted to us here below. Specialization becomes more and more necessary as life becomes more and more complex. The field of individual human endeavor narrows constantly. There is so much of life and our share of it is so little. Comedians yearn to act in tragedy, mechanics would be poets, statesmen would be craftsmen. How often do we not hear men telling what they would do, had they their lives to live over again! Subtract what a man is

from what he would be—the remainder is a strong indication that there must be something after death.

How alive, how active, how vital, is the spirit in a dying body! We know of old men and old women, physically enfeebled by the passing years, whose minds are strong, alert, capable of deep and sustained thinking. We encounter invalids, weakened and painwrecked by long years of continuous illness, who give evidence of intellectual power of the highest order. Who can assist at the death bed of a normal human being and feel that the personality struggling in the final agony has been blotted out when the last breath is drawn?

Man's soul is a spirit and as such is not subject to material decay and decomposition. Only things that have parts, fall apart. The functions of thinking and willing that the soul exercises, transcend the body and are not derived from it. The soul is not dependent on the body for existence. If so all of its activities would be limited by the needs of the body. The very fact that it can and does concern itself with things that have nothing to do with physical needs and appetites, argues that when the body returns to the earth from whence it came, the soul ascends upward to the God who gave it.

But they tell us that notion of individual immortality is a relic of less enlightened generations. It is true, they say, that men have always cherished the desire to live beyond the grave and have recoiled with horror from the thought of personal annihilation. But this desire for immortality can be satisfied, and this horror of death can be removed, if we think of immortality in terms of society and the race. They assure us we are gradually ap-

proaching a degree of civilization, when individuals will think not of themselves but of the group and will find consolation in the thought that though they may die, the group will live, and they will achieve continued existence in the grateful memory of generations yet unborn. The man who is conscious that he has made a definite contribution to the progress of humanity needs not the superstition of life after death to bear him up.

One often wonders whether men who advance this theory really believe it themselves or whether they are not just whistling in the dark to allay their personal fears of death. To begin with it is based on a conception of the relation between the individual and group which is false. It takes it for granted that the group is more important than the individual and that the individual exists for the group. Hence they claim that the deep-seated desires of the individual are illusory and vain, whilst what they call the progress of society as a whole is all that matters.

Such is not the normal sentiment of the individual. Each and every one of us is conscious that he has a personality that is sacred, a personality that he instinctively defends and cherishes. We are not just blind and meaningless atoms in a larger whole; on the contrary the larger whole which is society is itself meaningless without us. In the mutual relation between the individual and the group, it is the individual that is most important. Society is the means whereby the individual is sustained and developed.

How carefully nature cherishes individuality in lower creation! Each rose on the bush, each hidden violet in the dell, is a perfect thing in its class,



having everything that is necessary to make it a rose or a violet. What a perfect thing is an individual butterfly or honey bee. Now the perfection of the human individual would seem to demand the satisfaction of that desire that is closest to his heart, the desire to survive the death of the body, the desire for immortality. Will the hope that society will survive effectually still that longing? Social minded though we may become, can we ever lose our sense of personal identity to the extent that we would gladly perish all in all, secure in the conviction that we shall live in posterity?

What of the countless millions who live today, the countless millions who have lived ere now, hidden lives, defeated lives, lives of poverty, sickness, slavery,—what sense of immortality in society could they have? Men who hew wood and draw water, men who are fated to perform the humblest and least honorable tasks in life—in every age such as these have found consolation in the dream of better things in another life as the reward of duty well done and burdens patiently borne. Is their desire for continued existence to be assuaged by the assurance that society will be healthier for the sewers they are killing themselves to dig, warmer for the coal they are shortening their lives to mine, closer to one another for the ships they are burning themselves up to stoke? No theory of man's destiny is worthy of consideration that stops short of all mankind.

But it is time that we betake ourselves homeward. We rise up from the bench and wend our way toward the cemetery gate. Before us rises up a noble cross, beautiful in the gathering twilight. Once there were three crosses and on them three

men were dying. The sufferer on the right turned to the Sufferer in the center and said, "Lord, remember me when thou shalt come into thy kingdom." He was a thief, who spoke thus, a common felon receiving just punishment for his misdeeds. But dying, behold he desires to live. Perhaps there flashes before his mind's eye the vision of happier days, a mother's face and the memory of her beautiful influence. The something good that is in the worst of men, the something good that had been throttled these many years by sin and crime, asserts itself. "Remember me."

"This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." For the good thief, the promise of heaven. For you and me, Divine assurance is Divine. The testimony of an empty Tomb, for the third day He rose again.

We are leaving the cemetery. We recall that He said to His disciples, "A little while and you shall see me and again a little while and you shall not see me, for I go to the Father." A little while. A little while and we too shall be brought into these sacred precincts. A very little while, to satisfy all the yearnings of these hearts of ours, even though it be as much as four score years and ten. But the while our bodies are being consigned to the earth our souls will have winged their way to the Father in Whose House there are many mansions where for all eternity ours will be the fulness of joy.

A little while. They await us on the other side of the grave—those we have loved and lost. There life has been changed, not taken away. The abode of this earthly sojourn having been dissolved, they have found an eternal dwelling prepared in heaven. Only a little while and we shall find them and pos-

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sess them once again in that moment of everlasting bliss which is God. "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me although he be dead shall live; and everyone that liveth and believeth in me, shall live **forever.**"

## Mary, the Mother of Jesus

(Address delivered by Rev. George Johnson, Ph.D., in the Catholic Hour, on "Mothers' Day," May 11, 1930)\*

Deep in the heart of the nation there stirred a noble impulse and Mothers' Day was born. It takes its place in our calendar on the second Sunday of May, to reveal something of the characteristic idealism of the American people. Production, distribution, consumption, manufacture, commerce, banking—frequently it is charged that these define our national spirit, that we are materialists cold, calculating, ruthless. But whatever we may seem to be, the observance of a day like this indicates what we really are. With all our grown up manners we are children at heart and of such is the Kingdom of Heaven. And today, leaving our machines and our balance sheets, our exports and our imports, our law courts and our market places, we have come home, in reality or in dream to Mother.

In her presence we rediscover our better selves. Once again we are boys and girls seeing life through the pure eyes of childhood, challenging it with the uncompromising heart of youth. Not so long ago we were babies in her arms. As her gentle song lulled us to sleep, she thought of the years unborn and of the place in life she would have us take. That vision guided her and strengthened her throughout the days of our childhood, made every sacrifice a thing of joy, touched with golden meaning every trivial task, sustained her courage in every darkling hour. Back in her arms today, we recap-

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\*Dr. Johnson's series of addresses on The Moral Order was interrupted on Mothers' Day, May 11, that this tribute might be paid to Our Blessed Lady.

ture that vision with her, and know that in her hopes and not in our attainments we must seek our true potentialities.

What a glorious title is motherhood! Not every woman who has borne children is worthy of it, for it is the crown of a spiritual not a physical victory. She bears it justly who is selfless, who has lost her life and found it in her children, who to them is the embodiment of the true, the good and the beautiful whose self-discipline renders convincing the discipline she exacts, who, whatever her social status, whatever her educational and economic opportunities, is remembered by her children as a saint. Today we think proudly of this poor, stupid humanity of ours, because it has produced countless mothers like unto this, and thereby shown us how very little we fall short of the angels when we are at our best.

Short of the angels? There is one whose motherhood inspires us to call her—Queen of the Angels. The mother, she of Jesus Christ. Instinctively the Catholic heart turns to her today; for, in her Divine motherhood, all human motherhood is blessed.

In the words of Cardinal Newman "the glories of Mary are for the sake of her Son," and Her Son is the Son of God. In Jesus Christ there are two natures, one human, one Divine. He is true God and true man.

He is God, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity—"God from God, Light from Light, True God from True God, begotten not made, of the same substance as the Father, by Whom all things were made."

As God there is no beginning or limit to his existence. "Before Abraham was made, I am."



But in the fulness of time He took a human nature. God became man. His humanity is not a shadow or a semblance, but is true and real. Jesus Christ has a human body and a human soul like all of us. The soul is the result of a direct creative act of God. The body was formed and developed in the womb of his mother.

The two natures in Jesus Christ, the human nature and the Divine nature, do not constitute a double personality. There are not two persons in Christ but the two natures are united in one Person and that Person is Divine. Hence whatever Jesus says is the word of God. Whatever He does is the act of God. Whatever belongs to Him belongs to Him as God. And the mother from whom he received his human body is justly called the Mother of God.

Mother of God—behold a title which sets her above every creature and gives her the right to honor and reverence second only to that due her Divine Son. No created being that ever existed was chosen for a more exalted office. Her position in the Divine plan is utterly unique. Of course, we do not worship her as we worship God; that were idolatry. The noblest of creatures, she is none the less a creature. But above all angels and saints we enthrone her, before all of whom in the eternal designs of God, she was preferred.

Upon her Divine maternity, hinges every dogma of the Church which concerns Mary. There is, for instance, the doctrine of the Virgin Birth. We believe that the human generation of Christ was miraculous, that His Mother was a virgin.

For proof of this we turn to the Bible. The following instance is related in the first chapter of Saint Luke's Gospel; "And in the sixth month the

Angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel being come in said to her: Hail, full grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, Who having heard was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son and thou shalt call His Name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the son of the Most High; and the Lord God shall give to Him the throne of David, His father; and He shall reign in the House of Jacob forever and of His kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said to the angel: How shall this be done, for I know not man? And the angel answering said to her: 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee, and therefore also the Holy that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God,' And Mary said, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word'."

Again we read in the first chapter of Saint Matthew's Gospel: "Now the generation of Christ was this wise. When as His Mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Whereupon Joseph, her husband, being a just man, and not willing publicly to expose her, was minded to put her away privately. But while he thought on these things, behold the angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep, saying: Joseph, Son of David, fear not to take unto thyself Mary, thy wife, for that which is con-



ceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son and thou shalt call His Name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins. Now all of this was done that it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the prophet, saying: Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted, is God with us."

What could be plainer evidence than these two texts of the Revealed Word that Jesus Christ had no earthly Father, but was born of a Virgin? The fact is predicated upon His Divinity. He is the true Son of God, and His generation was effected through the overshadowing power of the Most High. Mary's virginity, before, during, and after the birth of Christ, is a dogma of the Catholic Church. She is Mary, ever Virgin.

The doctrine of the Virgin Birth is frequently confused with the Immaculate Conception, which is, however, something quite different. The Immaculate Conception has nothing to do with the generation of Christ, nor does it mean that Mary, like her Divine Son, was born of a virgin mother. Her generation was not miraculous; she had a father and a mother like all other human beings. The difference, here, is not in the natural, but in the supernatural order.

The Catholic Church teaches us that we come into this world bearing on our souls the guilt of original sin, the sin of our first parents. As a result of this sin the human race was deprived of the supernatural gifts with which God had endowed it in the beginning. "Let us make man according to our image and likeness." When God created man He destined him for something higher than merely natural

happiness. Over and above the powers that were rightly theirs as human beings, powers which were necessary if they were to survive in nature, our first parents possessed capacities to which they had no right, which were given to them out of the free bounty of the Creator. In virtue of these capacities, they were raised up above the natural order and made in very truth children of God. "Ye are gods and sons of the Most High." To the intellect was given the power to penetrate into the secrets of the Divine Mind; the will was strengthened with the might of Divine grace. The reward of faithfulness would be intimate union with God for all eternity.

All of this our first parents forfeited for themselves and their descendants by their refusal to obey the law of God. As a consequence, every human being comes into the world, just a human being and nothing more, a child of nature, the light of his intelligence obscured by the gloom of ignorance, his will weakened by the assaults of the flesh. He is guilty of original sin, from which he must be cleansed through the merits of the Saviour, ere he can attain the noble dignity that was his in the beginning.

Now, the Blessed Virgin, in view of the fact that she was to be the mother of the Son of God, was from the first instant of her conception preserved from Original Sin and its consequences. She was immaculately conceived, redeemed, through the foreseen merits of her Divine Son. The fitness of this is apparent. It is utterly repugnant to think of the human nature that was assumed by the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity being subjected in the slightest degree to the dominion of evil. It is unthinkable that the holiness of God should thus be defiled.

The words addressed to Mary by the Angel Gabriel bear witness to this truth. "Full of grace," he calls her, and tells her that she is "Blessed among women." She has "found favor with God". Titles of honor, these, that could not be hers for purely natural reasons.

We turn back to the beginning of the Bible, to the third chapter of the book of Genesis, where we read these words which God spoke to the evil spirit after He had cursed him for tempting Adam and Eve to sin: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed. She shall crush thy head and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel."

Herein is implied the promise of a Redeemer, who would vanquish sin and evil. Through a woman sin came into the world; through a woman its power will be destroyed. Mary is the second Eve whose Son has satisfied the Divine Justice and restored to us our birthright. And the first fruit of His Redemption was his own mother. The serpent's head was crushed when she was immaculately conceived.

Immaculate Virgin, Mother of God—what a ravishing vision these words conjure up in the mind of the believer! Virgin and Mother, the two noblest titles to which womanhood could aspire, yet either to be achieved ordinarily at the expense of the other. In Mary both are combined, for, by the overshadowing power of the Holy Spirit, she conceived the Only Begotten Son of God, and, her virginity untouched, she brought forth unto the world, the Light eternal. Meanwhile, throughout her whole earthly existence, she was stranger to the slightest defilement of sin. Mother inviolate—Virgin most renowned.

The Blessed Virgin is not just a bit of poetry in Catholic life, a bit of sentimentality having no practical significance. Devotion to Our Blessed Lady is responsible, as no other factor, for the chivalry that has raised up woman to the high estate which is hers in Christian civilization. It has sanctified married life, the while it has recruited the hosts of those who, clad in the white garments of virginity, follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. It has helped to actualize the ideal of chastity, that noblest victory of the spirit over the flesh. It has inspired the brush of the painter and guided the hand of the sculptor. Music is richer for it and literature is its debtor. The world over Our Lady, Notre Dame, is glorified by great cathedrals, symphonies in stone, perennially hymning her praise. "Henceforth all generations shall call me blessed."

And she belongs to us, to you and to me. She stood at the foot of the cross beside John, His beloved disciple. The dying Jesus spoke to her, "Woman, behold thy Son." And to John, He said, "Behold thy Mother."

"Behold thy Mother." In John, all followers of Jesus Christ were represented, and through him all received the Saviour's death-bed legacy, His Mother. Are we not all one with Christ, members of His Body? He is the First Born among many brethren. His Father in heaven is our Father. What more logical than that Mary, His earthly Mother, should be our mother. She exercises over us a mother's watchful care. We are inexpressibly dear to her, because we are dear to Him. She sees in us His image, as we strive to become conformable to Him in faith and in love. She loves us. Hence can St. Bernard confidently exclaim—"Never was it known



that anyone who fled to thy protection, or asked thy intercession, was left unaided."

Mother's Day. Its vesper hour has arrived. As the soft tones of the Angelus ring out, let us betake ourselves to the Mother of Jesus. She has experienced as no other the joys of motherhood; she has felt as no other its bitter crucifixion. She knows that mothers always lose, that the best they can expect for themselves, after all their sacrifices and labors and yearnings, is what she received, the dead body of her Son. Of course our mothers appreciate the gifts we brought them today, the letters we wrote, the flowers with which we honored them. But above all things they need our prayers. And so for our mothers, whether they are with us or have gone on before, whether we are close to them, or far from home, let us pray to the Mother of God: "Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee, blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amer."

## The Freedom of the Will

(Address delivered by Rev. George Johnson, Ph.D., in the Catholic Hour, May 18, 1930)

Whenever man attempts to emancipate himself from the service of God, he ends up in slavery. He begins by denying the existence of a Creator upon whom he depends; in the name of humanity, he scoffs at Divinity. The denial of God forces him to deny his own soul: he triumphantly descends to the level of the beast. Next he defines himself in terms of his physical nature, and proclaims that his conduct is inexorably determined by the needs of his body. Having refused to reign in the service of God, nothing is left for him but to serve in the reign of the flesh.

"As they liked not to have God in their knowledge," says St. Paul of the Romans, "God delivered them up to a reprobate sense." These words apply with particular significance to those who deny the freedom of the human will. Surely, it is a reprobate sense that causes a man to stop his ears against the voice of his own consciousness, to scoff at the testimony of universal experience, and deny that there is in human beings any power of self-determination, any faculty of free choice. What profit is there in such a denial? Will men be better, finer, nobler, for being convinced that they are but machines operated by the force of circumstances, puppets manipulated by fate? What value can he set on heroic achievement, for whom heroism is merely a by-product of the thyroid gland?

But, they say, this sense of being free, of being able to make our own choice and decisions, is a trick of the fancy. We imagine we are determining

our own actions, when as a matter of fact they are being determined for us by factors of which we are unconscious. There are hidden depths in our minds that have never been sounded. In these depths, the course of our life is charted. Freedom of the will is an illusion.

Very well, but if freedom of the will is an illusion, then morality is an illusion. There is no validity in the distinction between virtue and vice. You cannot say that one man is good, another bad. All punitive laws should be erased from the statutes. A man should not be blamed for committing murder, nor arrested for speeding. Burglary is a natural urge and embezzlement a species of self-expression. Saint and sinner are alike accidents of circumstance.

If freedom of the will is an illusion, all sense of responsibility is an illusion. Why should I be held accountable for any trust when I have no way of assuring myself that the ideals that guide me today will be operative next week? You give me your word, but how can I trust it, if it expresses nothing more than present condition of your internal organs? Your dinner tonight may change your whole sense of values. How can a public officer solemnly swear to uphold the Constitution and laws of the nation if his actions are not subject to his own control?

If freedom of the will is an illusion, character is an illusion. We pay homage to the man whose conduct is dictated by principle, whose impulses are kept in leash. For the sake of an ideal, he is ready to go into bondage and death, and considers any sacrifice that the truth, as he sees it, may prevail. We cannot honor enough, the men whose un-



answering love of country emboldened them to face unflinchingly every danger and peril and to immolate the interests of self on the altar of patriotism. All of which is evidently a great mistake, if there is no freedom of personal choice and preference. If George Washington had no free will, if he could not help being a patriot, then at the side of every memorial we have erected to him we should raise one to Benedict Arnold, who, by the same token, could not help being a traitor.

If freedom of the will is an illusion, education is an illusion. We think of education as the process whereby individual self-control and self-direction is developed. We think of it as the discipline of the powers of the mind, in the light of the best ideals of the race. We talk about education for freedom, for responsibility, for self-determination, and we organize our schools and our curricula so as best to achieve these ends. But if there is no freedom, no responsibility, no self-determination, this is all a sad mistake. We might better scrap all our pedagogy, revise our philosophy of education, close our teachers' colleges, and betake ourselves to the animal trainer. He can teach us the science and art of educating beings that have no free will.

But, of course, Freedom of the will is not an illusion, but a very stubborn fact. The true prophets of human progress have always taken it for granted. The hard won victories of the race proclaim its reality. Our vocabulary is rich with words that would be meaningless without it—words like courage, resolution, patience, forgiveness, tolerance, sacrifice, remorse, fortitude. If the will is not free, the word love should be expunged from every dictionary.

In the interests of clarity, let me explain to you what I mean by freedom of the will. To begin with, I do not mean absence of physical restraint. The lion that roams the jungle is quite untrammelled in his movements, yet he does not possess free will. On the other hand, a man may be loaded with chains and walled up in the narrowest of dungeons, without losing one whit of his liberty of choice.

Neither do I mean by freedom of the will, personal independence of authority, emancipation from the restraints of law and order. Our problem is not one of liberty in the social or the political sense.

Finally, I do not claim that every action we perform is the result of a free choice of the will. Bodily functions like respiration and digestion are not subject to our conscious direction. Moreover, much of our activity is born of unthinking impulse, or is in line with our disposition and established habits. A situation arises and we react to it more or less automatically, without thought or deliberation. Often, too, our behaviour is suggested by the example of those around us. For many of the things we do we can allege no better explanation than the fact that we see other people doing them. Unconscious imitation plays a very large role in our lives.

But ever and anon, we do something not at the dictation of our nervous system, not as the result of impulse or according to the pattern of habit, not through the force of suggestion, but because we deliberately make up our minds to do it and not to do something else. Two alternative lines of action lie before us. Both are promising in some respects, not so promising in others. We would like to have our cake and we would like to eat it; not being able to do both, we must make a choice. We are aware of

an inward sense of conflict in our desires. We think, we ponder, we deliberate, and finally we choose the course that seems wiser. Perhaps the event proves that the choice was not wise, and then we experience regret, or perhaps remorse. We know we have only ourselves to blame. On the other hand, if we have chosen the better part, the result is satisfaction, a sense of having done well, the elation of victory. Experiences of this kind—and who is stranger to them?—prove that we possess a mental endowment in virtue of which we can perform an action, or abstain from it, can perform one action rather than another, when all the conditions requisite for the performance of such an action are given. In other words, experiences of this kind prove that the will of man is free.

A concrete example might make the matter clearer. The summer is at hand and you are thinking of your vacation. There is a certain outing you have been dreaming of for a long time. It promises rest and change, interesting things to see and to do. It would cost you in the neighborhood of one hundred dollars and you have that amount of money in the bank.

But the trouble is that you have been saving this money, a little here, a little there, to pay a debt that is long past due. Your creditor has been very patient, and you feel that in all fairness you should settle with him. Perhaps he needs the money and your tardiness has put him to considerable inconvenience. At any rate, it is a just debt and must be paid sooner or later.

You find yourself faced with the necessity of making a decision as between two plans of action, both of which are attractive, either of which you are

capable of carrying through. You begin to weigh one against the other. Shall I pay the debt, or shall I take the vacation? If I pay the debt, I shall win peace of mind. This obligation has been weighing upon me. It has been more or less of an embarrassment; find myself avoiding the man to whom I am beholden. The spectre of my debt haunts me and touches with unpleasantness each otherwise pleasant moment.

On the other hand, the prospect of an outing is inviting. He waited this long, he should not mind waiting a while longer. I will return with renewed vigor and be ready to work harder and make greater sacrifices. I can save another hundred dollars in a much shorter time.

But still, the thought of my indebtedness might spoil the vacation. He may make things a bit difficult for me, when he sees me squandering money that belongs to him on mere luxury. Besides, it is not quite honest. I would have the sense of being to some extent a thief.

And thus you argue with yourself, putting the case for the vacation against the case for paying your debt. Gradually you become convinced that you owe it to yourself, to your own integrity and sense of honor, to use the money for its original purpose. You will postpone the outing until some future time when you can afford it. You dismiss the case for the vacation from your mind, guide your thoughts away from it, refuse to pay attention any longer to its importunings. You concentrate on the reasons why you should pay the debt and you decide to send a check at once.

This is a typical instance of the exercise of free will. Our consciousness presents us with a choice



between two motives. We deliberate within ourselves, knowing that we are free to decide one way or the other. We make our choice and accept its consequences. We did not act on impulse, we were not constrained by anything or anyone. The decision is our own, freely and deliberately made, and we are responsible for it.

However, one can be free without being absolutely free. There are degrees of responsibility. For all the ridiculous vapourings of its popularizing camp followers, there is much of fundamental soundness in the science known as mental hygiene. The world is full of sham psychiatrists, but there is such a thing as genuine psychiatry. There are hidden tendencies in all of us, unconscious motives, which affect our behaviour, even though they do not control it. Some of these tendencies we inherit, others are due to the environment in which we were reared, to the education we received, particularly in early childhood. They interfere with straight thinking, generate points of view that are more emotional than intelligent, weaken the power of the will. They limit our freedom.

We are fully responsible for an action only when it has been performed with sufficient reflection and full consent of the will. A man whose mind is shrouded in ignorance and error, who is highly emotional, whose will is hesitant, unsteady, lacking in energy, is not accountable for his shortcomings, in the same degree as a man whose mind is clear and well-formed, whose feelings are disciplined, whose will is strong and masterful. But he is accountable, and deserving of praise or blame, reward or punishment, to the extent that he knew what he was doing and freely chose to do it. The final verdict rests with



God, Who alone can scrutinize the hearts and reins of men.

When we are tempted to condemn the conduct of our fellow-man, it is good to recall the prayer of our Crucified Saviour, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." To understand all, is to forgive all. We can hate and detest sin, and at the same time love the sinner. For what do we know of the hidden conflicts, the crooked twists in the mind, the obsessing fears in the heart, the inherited weaknesses in the will, that handicap him in his struggle against temptation?

But in dealing with ourselves, there should be no quarter. He is a weakling and a moral coward who is constantly excusing to himself his delinquencies, blaming them on his disposition, his ancestors, his environment. Granted that we are at times surprised into performing unworthy actions, by motives of which we were unconscious, our cue is not to surrender, but to fight. Our failure should be a trumpet call to battle. We search our souls, track the impulse that betrayed us to its lair, see ourselves as we really are, take humble inventory of our deficiencies, and then in the light of a sobering knowledge of self, we take steps to strengthen ourselves against the return of temptation. Power is made perfect in infirmity; and, if we do our share, God will not be wanting with His grace. "I can do all things in Him that strengthens me."

"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." It is through Faith in Jesus Christ, that we achieve the full liberty of the sons of God. In His light we see the light and darkness is dispelled from our minds. Cooperation with His grace brings power and discipline to our wills. His spirit

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dwelling in our hearts casts out fear and strengthens us with might according to the inward man. In his teachings we find the surest formula for mental health. His word is like healing oil poured forth on our troubled souls. May He teach us to love what He commands and to desire what He promises, that amid the uncertainties of this world, we may place our affections where joys are real.

## The Voice of Conscience

(Address delivered by Rev. George Johnson, Ph.D., in the Catholic Hour, May 25, 1930)

What is this mysterious thing called conscience? Of its existence we are all aware. A voice in the depths of our souls, it pronounces judgment on our actions. Its approval brings us peace and joy; when it condemns, we are filled with regret and remorse. It is the tutor of our wills, directing them, guiding them, and helping them to bear the tremendous responsibility of freedom. Because of its insistence, "ought" becomes a more important word than "can". Whence does it come, this voice of conscience, what does it express?

Is it the expression of my personal whims, the index of my selfish desires? Is it synonymous with self? Evidently not, for it is constantly sitting in judgment of self and contradicting its demands. The aftermath of self-indulgence is misery, whereas our happiest moments are those which follow in the wake of some act of self-denial. The first lesson that conscience teaches us is that we are not sufficient unto ourselves, that we do not explain our own existence, and that the cravings of self-love are not the norm of our behaviour. It subjects the inward urge to an outward law.

But perhaps conscience is just a canny instinct that enables me to sense the personal advantage or disadvantage that is inherent in some line of behaviour. It sounds a danger signal when I am about to do something that will cause me pain; it lends me a sense of assurance when I am about to embark on a course of action that will yield me pleasure. Its function is utilitarian.

But this explanation does not fit the facts. Following the dictates of my conscience, I find that I must often immolate personal advantage on the altar of impersonal principle. My reward is pain rather than pleasure. So true is this, that the very word conscience is closely associated in our minds with such other words as courage, effort, sacrifice. It suggests the difficult thing, the thing that is hard to do, and not the thing that pays.

Is conscience the reflex in my mind of public opinion? Does it echo the voice of the multitude? Once more the answer is No. The moral judgments of the crowd may be wrong. He who dances to its piping is usually a traitor to his nobler self. Human respect belongs to the category of less worthy motives. People may acclaim me, they may celebrate my conquests, and call me hero; but if I have won my victory by devious methods, if I have achieved eminence by trickery and deceit, if injustice has been my staff, then the roar of the crowd will be drowned out by the still, small voice, and the very praise of men will torture me. The great moral heroes of history were not conspicuously popular with the multitude; there was a day when public opinion expressed itself in the cry "Crucify Him".

Someone suggests that the State is the explanation of conscience. Conscience is the internal expression of public law and statute. How then account for the historical fact that men have shed their life blood defending the rights of conscience against the encroachments of the State? Conscience exists prior to the law, sits in judgment on the law, provides it with its only adequate sanction. Then too the domain over which conscience holds sway is much more extensive than that which the law en-

visages. The state can only moderate my external actions, my public conduct. It cannot control my thoughts and the concerns of my private life. But nothing escapes the vigilance of conscience. It demands of me an accounting for my most hidden thoughts and desires, my most secret words and deeds.

No, it is not self, not utility, not public opinion, not the State, that speaks with the accents of conscience. None of these factors can explain its authority. Its origin cannot be traced to anything created. The voice of conscience is the voice of God!

Perhaps a bit of analysis will help us at this point. What is it that conscience really does? It judges, does it not, hands down a verdict concerning our actions, insists that this is right, that is wrong? Now in our minds we make judgments of many different kinds. We say that something is true or false, ugly or beautiful. Sometimes the judgment is hard to make and is forthcoming only after much thought and study; at other times we pronounce it immediately the evidence is presented to us. For instance, it does not take any argument to convince a normal man that he exists, that things equal to the same thing are equal to each other, that rasping noises are unlovely, that harmony is beautiful. Certain truths are self-evident, certain canons of beauty unimpeachable.

In like manner, we make judgments in the field of morals. Sometimes we hesitate about concluding that something is bad or good, until we have had time to examine the case and to ponder over its various aspects. But at other times we say at once, this is bad, this is good. We do not have to think twice in order to condemn obvious ingratitude, irreverence toward



parents, betrayal of confidence. Our intelligence grasps immediately the immoral character of such traits. We just know that they are wrong.

In a word, the mind that has the power to recognize truth and error, that knows why one thing is beautiful and another ugly, has also the faculty of distinguishing between good and evil.

Now when the mind makes such a judgment, not about anything in general, not about something that has no particular relation to me, but about my own conduct, I call it conscience. I am tempted to take an unfair advantage of my neighbor in some business transaction. Immediately there is born in me a conviction that this action is wrong. Something bids me desist, warns me that I am making a mistake, A voice whispers—"Thou shalt not." If I hearken, I experience a feeling of satisfaction, a sense of having done well. If I persist in my course, I feel degraded, defeated, unhappy and become the prey of regret and remorse. This is conscience. I define it as a practical judgment of the mind concerning the rectitude of some specific action of my own.

But, you object, a moment ago you said that conscience is the voice of God, and now you say it is a practical judgment of the mind. How do you square these two statements? I answer, the contradiction you note is only apparent. The judgment of the mind is ultimately the expression of the will of God.

The truth of this statement is easily demonstrated. My conscience tells me, "You ought to do this—you ought not to do that." That sense of "ought" is inborn in all of us. Now when anyone tells me I ought to do something, I immediately ask him, why? And so I interrogate my conscience. Why ought I do this; why ought I not do that? Whence

comes this sense of ought? Not from the law surely, because the law does not cover matters of this kind. Not from public opinion, because the judgments of men do not bother me, and besides I can do this without anyone being the wiser. I want to do this thing to please myself, for my own gratification, to satisfy my own desires. Am I not my own master? Do I not exist fundamentally for myself?

And conscience answers: "You do not exist for yourself, you cannot find within yourself the source of happiness. As a matter of fact, you are constantly avoiding your own company. You are ever striving to get away from yourself, either in imagination or reality. You cover your true self with the mantle of fancy, take on elements from the environment in which you live, the books you read, the plays you see. You assume postures that are borrowed, play the mountebank to your own admiring gaze. But let stern reality strip you of your pretensions, reveal you to your own consciousness as you really are, and you will see the pitiable futility of self. You will know how inadequate you are as an explanation of your own existence; you will know that you were made for a purpose outside of yourself, and that you find yourself only in the degree in which you lose yourself in that purpose."

Conscience thus bears witness to us of a Creator who fashioned us and formed us. To Him we belong. In His eternal designs we discover the secret of happiness. A shoe is meaningful when it clothes a foot, as the cobbler intended it should. It is ridiculous as an ornament on the drawing room table. We achieve our destiny by fulfilling the purpose of our Maker, by living as He expects us to live, by doing good and avoiding evil. Conscience can right-

ly be called the Voice of God, because by reminding us of what we ought to do, it reveals to us His Holy Will.

We can see at once how vitally important it is for us to safeguard the authority of this inward voice. Conscience might be compared to the mechanism that steers a ship: Let anything happen to it, and moral shipwreck is inevitable. Or with St. Bernard, we might call it the mirror of the soul: let it be defective and it will show forth a distorted image of self, like the mirrors that are sometimes found in places of public amusement.

In the name of conscience we should be zealous for the truth. My judgment as to whether my conduct in any given case is right or wrong, depends upon what I know about right and wrong in general. If I entertain false notions of morality, if my moral sense has been corrupted by error, my conscience will be obscured by ignorance and doubt, and will lead me away from God, instead of towards Him. A criminal whose childhood education was received at the hands of a street gang has a conscience, a sense of right and wrong; but his fundamental notions of what is right and what is wrong are false. A man whose mind has been fed on error, whose ideas concerning God are wrong, who cherishes false notions concerning the nature and destiny of man, who has misread history, and misinterpreted his own experience, who has fashioned for himself as a consequence a materialistic, self-centered philosophy of life, will have a conscience that is dangerous for all of us. When men boast that they have opinions but no convictions, when they prefer a guess to an established truth, when they prate of a new morality, you can be sure that error has dulled their sense

of responsibility and that conscience has lost its sense of direction.

But wrong thinking is not the only enemy of conscience; wrong doing is equally pernicious. Whilst conscience is essentially an intellectual activity, it has its emotional concomitants. If I obey its dictates, I feel happy; if I disobey them, I feel miserable. I experience the pain of remorse, the torture of self-condemnation. Now by continually and consistently disobeying the voice of conscience, a man can harden his heart and render it insensible to these feelings. He knows he is doing wrong, but he feels no compunction about it. Sin drugs his moral impressibility. He is no longer sensitive to it. Thus does conscience lose its sanction. It is a matter of common experience that the punishment of sin is more sin. Our propensity to form bad habits has something to do with this, but the real explanation is the hardness of heart, the callousness, that results from every deliberate refusal to obey the whisperings of conscience.

Surely there is no human endowment to compare with an enlightened, upright, sensitive conscience. Without it great learning is futile, and tremendous energy fatal. It is the pledge of a happy, hopeful life. It insures clean living, order and harmony in thought and deed. It develops that knowledge of God which yields true knowledge of self. For conscience tells me that God is holy, that in Him there is no spot nor defilement. It tells me that being made according to His image and likeness, I too have the capacity for holiness, that I am destined to be god-like. According to this standard, it judges my conduct, condemning what is wrong, praising what is right. Under its tutelage I come to know myself and



discover every hidden weakness, every unsuspected strength.

"Know thyself," was the admonition of the ancient philosopher. Fundamental wisdom this, yet how few of us are guided by it. We are astonished at lack of self-knowledge in other people. How can he be such a bore? Does he not realize that he is wearing us to distraction? How can she be so ridiculous? Does she not sense the fact that she is making herself a laughing-stock? Yet all the while others are saying like things about us. They behold our meanness, our pettiness, our vanity, our deceit, our egotism, and they marvel at the smugness with which we take ourselves for granted. They note the contrast between our pretensions and our actual worth; a contrast which escapes us because we are so busy pretending. And thus it happens, that we go on from year to year, living in a moral fool's paradise, making the same mistakes, nursing the same faults, deluded by vanity, advancing not one step in the direction of self-improvement.

All of which would be so different, did we but hearken to conscience and scrutinize ourselves in its light. It is our great means of achieving true knowledge of self. It dissipates the murky vapors of self-love and helps us to see ourselves as God sees us. It stimulates that noblest appetite in our souls, the appetite for goodness, the hunger and thirst after justice. In revealing to us our shortcomings, it does not discourage us, for at the same time it makes us conscious of our perfectibility. Sinner that you are, it whispers, coward, ingrate, sluggard, braggart, you can, with the grace of God, be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect.



## The Will of God

(Address delivered by Rev. George Johnson, Ph.D., in the Catholic Hour, June 1, 1930)

**H**appiness has been the goal of all human striving.

It has been the quest of the race from the beginning until now. Our hearts are alive with desires. We want health and wealth, the love and affection of friends; we need truth and beauty and goodness; we yearn for peace and security. But the common denominator of all of these is happiness. We dream of the moment when every hunger will be satisfied, every thirst slaked, when joy will be all in all. Bliss without alloy, felicity without worry, satisfaction without care, gladness without vexation of spirit, fruition without stint or limit, delight without discontent—happiness, the lode star of our souls.

But where shall we find happiness? Not in the pleasures of the senses, surely, for who has not known the spiritual nausea that results from catering to the body? Not in the enhancement of self, for self is an empty, futile thing. Not in human beings, for they are too intent on their own concerns to yield us more than a hurried thought. With the best will in the world, they can share with us but a fraction of themselves. Conscience reveals to us the secret of happiness, when it whispers to us, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." Joy fills our hearts, for we know that we are accomplishing the will of God.

For we were made for God; we belong to Him. "For my own sake I made thee and formed thee and fashioned thee. For my own sake have I done it, and my glory I shall give to no other." It is to show forth the invisible things of God that we exist; it

is to fulfill His purposes that we were brought into being. There is nothing about you that would demand your existence. In yourself you are not necessary to the scheme of things. It is easy to conceive of someone else doing better the things that you are doing, someone making better use of your opportunities, someone else laboring more productively for the common good. Why, then, do you exist and not another one for you? There is only one answer. You exist because God wanted you, because from all eternity He foresaw a person just like you and through such a person decreed to accomplish certain ends. He called you before the earth was made and the mountains and the sea were formed. He has something for you to do. If there is to be rhyme and reason to your life, you must find out what this something is.

Nor has He left you in the dark concerning His designs. He has given you the light of reason, whereby you can read His message as He has written it on the face of creation. Everywhere you look you behold the reign of law. Science is nothing more than the attempt to ferret out and to codify the laws of God that govern nature. The stars in the heavens whirl through space along paths that He has marked out for them, governed by laws of energy, motion and attraction, that astronomy has scarce begun to understand. Geology studies the laws that have governed the development of the earth. Botany addresses itself to the problem of plant life and reveals to us the wisdom of God as it is seen in the life history of the tree, the flower, the shrub, and the waving grain. The animal world is the domain of the biologist, and the mysteries of life become less mysterious as his microscope discovers evidence

of order and harmony. The psychologist searches human consciousness and on the basis of his findings formulates the laws that seem to govern the mind. Chemistry and physics raise their voices and join with the rest in proclaiming that not blind chance or undisciplined force, but an all-wise Intelligence, directs the powers of creation.

"The heavens are telling the glory of God and the firmament declares the work of His hands." "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made."

But reason tells you that as a human being you are not like other creatures. You have being in common with the rock, vitality in common with the plant, sensitivity in common with the animal. You have a body which is subject to the physical laws of development, growth, and decay. But you also have a soul which is not subject to these laws. The animal has instinct, but you have intelligence. The animal is governed by its physical needs and impulses, you have free will. The animal perishes with its body; your soul survives the grave. Lower creation obeys God blindly; what He expects of you is a reasonable service, the service of a rational being. Your intelligence convinces you of God's right to your fealty; it tells you specifically through conscience what this fealty implies. But, for the rest, you are left free to choose whether or not you will serve, whether or not you will seek happiness in the ways that God has marked out for you, or will take your chance on finding it the service of self.

As a result of original sin, man became vain in his thoughts and his foolish heart was darkened. Knowing the justice of God through reason, he did

not understand it. He changed the truth of God into a lie and worshipped the creature rather than the Creator. God had pity on his ignorance and from the thundering summits of Sinai He proclaimed anew His Law. Here was no abrogation of the law of nature; here was no contradiction of the dictates of reason. The law written on two tablets of stone did not repeal the law that was written on the fleshly tablets of the heart. It was not a substitution but a commentary and a clarification. Because of sin, man had lost his sense of direction and his powers of straight thinking. He needed a friendly mentor and guide. He was prone to forget the purpose of his existence. Revelation now comes to the aid of reason and God sums up His Will in Ten Commandments.

"If you will enter into life," says the Saviour, "keep the Commandments." Submission to the law of God does not fetter our souls; it frees them. It liberates them from the thralldom of self-love and slavery to creatures and endows them with the freedom of the sons of God. It makes for life an abundance of life, for that noble exercise of all our vital powers that spells happiness.

There are the first three Commandments that remind us of our obligation to adore God as our Maker, to honor Him and pay Him reverence, to consecrate one day of the week to His public worship. They forbid us to pay to creatures the honor which is due to God alone. They condemn irreligion, infidelity and superstition, blasphemy and sacrilege. They frown on such Sabbath Day activities as would reveal a contempt for God's supreme dominion over all things. Their life-giving purpose is to keep us in contact with the Source of Life. They



make us conscious of the fact that in Him, "we live and move and have our being," that away from Him is darkness and death. Without Him, we can do nothing, but when He strengthens us we can do all things. From the first three commandments we learn the life-giving power of prayer.

"Honor thy father and thy mother." This Commandment takes us into the home and paints for us a picture of the happiness which results when parents and children dwell together in the unity of affection. It goes well with human beings when parental authority is respectable and respected, when parents rule wisely and sons and daughters are obedient. The home is society's fundamental unit; it answers a basic human need. Within its sacred confines are learned the lessons of love, with all that love implies of loyalty, self-sacrifice, self-control, generosity, cooperation, sympathy, and helpfulness. It satisfies the hunger for companionship, the while it nurtures respect for self. It is the nursery of patriotism. It is life's novitiate, and those who have missed its joys are forever haunted by a sense of thwarted incompleteness.

"Thou shalt not kill." God is the giver of life and He alone has the right to take it away. Human life is sacred and woe to him that lays murderous hand upon it. The Law of God forbids us to do anything that would tend to destroy or shorten either our own lives or the lives of others. It commands us to use the proper means to preserve health and puts the seal of its approval on every reasonable measure that human authority devises for the improvement of the physical well-being of the race. It recognizes the intimate relation between the soul and the body



and suggests that the mind is sanest when the body is most sound.

In the wonderful ways of God human beings have been called to cooperate with Him in the work of creation. Through them the stream of life is carried forward and the race increases and multiplies. They have been gifted with the sacred power of sex. But let them use this power for their own selfish purposes, let it become a means of sensual gratification, an end in itself, and at once it is an agent of death and destruction. Misused it tears down, debilitates, weakens, enervates, kills. It muddles the mind and saps the power of the will. "Thou shalt not commit adultery". "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife."

A lie is an instrument that deals death, for it deprives our fellow-man of the truth to which he has a right and thus unjustly limits the fullness of his existence. Truth is always the harbinger of freedom, the messenger of life. God forbids me to bear false witness against my neighbor, to use my power of speech to defraud him, to deprive him of his good name, to interfere with his possibilities by robbing him of his reputation. He bids me remember that a good name is better than riches.

But riches, too, are necessary to some degree for fullness of life. We need to possess things if we are to survive in the struggle for existence. The right to property is inherent in our nature. And so the Commandment of God forbids us to steal. I dare not take from my neighbor what belongs to him. Theft is a crime, as are cheating, fraudulent business transaction, starvation wages, wasting time for which we are paid, unreasonable profits, refusal to pay just debts, failure to live up to such public obligations as

taxes. All of these are just so many different ways and means of limiting the life of our fellow man. "Thou shalt not steal, nor even covet thy neighbor's goods."

In the Ten Commandments we find the secret of happiness, because we find the secret of life. They tell us how to live as God intended us to live, how to achieve the destiny for which He created us. They tell us nothing more than our own minds could tell us, were they not shrouded in the ignorance of original sin. There is nothing in them that contradicts the legitimate demands of our nature; they only condemn the unnatural yearnings that were born of the Fall.

The perfection of the Ten Commandments is found in the Law of Jesus Christ. "I am not come to destroy the Law but to fulfill it." The law sets us free from the bondage of sin; Christ tells us how to use this liberty. The Law forbids wrong-doing; Christ counsels perfection in doing good. He reveals the beauty of detachment from riches and promises the Kingdom of Heaven to those who are poor in spirit. He bids us transmute the murderous hatred that might tempt us to kill, into meekness which shall possess the land. Not pleasure-seeking but penance and self-discipline is the way to happiness, for those who mourn shall be comforted. Not those who covet what does not belong to them but those who hunger and thirst after justice shall have their fill. Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the clean of Heart, for they shall see God. The peacemakers, who by obedience and reverence at home and abroad make other people happy, whose love is zealous for the well-being of their fellow man, shall be called the children of God.

If in the name of truth and justice, for the defense of principles, you have been hated and hounded, take heart, for yours is the kingdom of heaven. And let those who in the name of Jesus Christ and for His sake have been reviled and persecuted, defrauded and derided, be glad and rejoice, for their reward is very great in heaven.

"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." He came that we might have life and have it in abundance. By example He showed us the way that we must travel, by word He taught us the truth that we must know, if we are to be completely, fully, perfectly alive in Him. "Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect," is the ideal He sets before us. Death to self, life to Christ, is the formula for Christian living. "I have crucified my flesh with its vices and concupiscences," writes St. Paul, "And now I live, not I, but Christ lives in me."

We hear more or less talk nowadays about the New Morality. We are told that the Ten Commandments are outworn and that the Eight Beatitudes are impracticable. Our whole concept of right and wrong needs revision, so they say. The argument seems to be based on the assumption that the Law of God does not work. In spite of its plain language, people insist on being disobedient, murderous, immoral, dishonest, irreligious,—particularly, immoral. Hence they say, "Let us make a virtue out of necessity. We will make the liar honest by welcoming the lie into the company of noble deeds. We will make the impure man pure by making impurity respectable. We will devise a moral order based on what people want to do, regardless of what they ought to do. We will still the voice of conscience by destroying conscience altogether."

All of which is predicted on the assumption that the Will of God, as revealed in the Ten Commandments and in the teaching of Jesus Christ, has failed to direct men into the paths of happiness. Which assumption is utterly gratuitous and contrary to all the facts. Men have always found happiness in the degree that their conduct approximated the standards set forth in the Revealed Word of God, for the Revealed Word of God is in complete accord with the vital needs of human nature. It is not the fact that someone tells him that his deed is sinful that makes the sinner miserable, as they would have us believe: it is the realization that his conduct has betrayed his better nature. The good man is happy because he is living as he was made to live, and consequently realizes that he is justifying his existence.

If you are looking for evidences of true happiness read the lives of the saints. Their overmastering ideal was perfect fulfillment of the Will of God. They cherished a horror of even the slightest deliberate fault, and sought to bring themselves into complete conformity with the spirit of the Gospels. Often they were poor and hungry and homeless. They were ignored and scoffed at and mocked. The world called them fools, for their lives showed forth Christ Crucified and to the world this is always folly. Yet they exercised a tremendous effect upon human history. Dying, behold they lived and were sources of life to others,—to the poor, the children, the oppressed, the ignorant, the sick. Sorrowful, they were always rejoicing; needy they enriched many. Having nothing, they possessed all things. Their joy was complete and no man could take it away from them.

The world has never been able to understand them,

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and it cannot understand them to day. Nor is this to  
be wondered at —for,

The love of Jesus what it is,  
None but His loved ones know.



**CARDINAL HAYES STATES AIMS  
OF THE CATHOLIC RADIO HOUR**

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

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

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

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

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

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