

ADM 4804  
776054

Price  
10¢

Why Not  
Be A  
SCHOLAR?

*An Invitation to All*

by JOHN A. O'BRIEN, Ph.D.

*THE QUEEN'S WORK*

3742 West Pine Boulevard  
ST. LOUIS, MO.



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2016

# Why Not Be a Scholar?

*An Invitation to All*

by

**JOHN A. O'BRIEN, Ph.D.**



**THE QUEEN'S WORK**

3742 WEST PINE BOULEVARD

ST. LOUIS 8, MO.

*Nihil obstat:*

T. E. Dillon

*Censor Librorum*

*Imprimatur:*

✠ John F. Noll, D. D.

Bishop of Ft. Wayne

June 4, 1946

First printing, August 1946

ANY FINANCIAL PROFIT *made by the Central Office of the Sodality will be used for the advancement of the Sodality Movement and the cause of Catholic Action.*

Copyright 1946

John A. O'Brien, Ph. D.

**Deacidified**

# Why Not Be a Scholar?

*An Invitation to All*

by

JOHN A. O'BRIEN, Ph.D.

WHY not be a scholar?

“What!” you exclaim, in derision. “Me a scholar, a bookworm, a bespectacled sissy?”

No . . . you're wrong. It takes pluck, courage, valor to be a scholar. It takes an individual with red corpuscles, stamina, and virility to battle the dragons of ignorance, prejudice, and superstition. It's the work of a brave soldier, a true hero.

“But,” you ask, “what has being a scholar to do with religion, with the Catholic Church, with the saving of one's soul?”

It has lots to do with them. The true scholar is a humble person. The more he learns, the more conscious does he become of the littleness of his knowledge in the presence of the mysteries with which God has filled our universe. Knowledge is a stairway that leads to the feet of God.

The Catholic Church is the great historic mother of learning. She founded the great universities of the Middle Ages, and she is still founding colleges and universities throughout the world. She bears the enormous burden of erecting and maintaining schools—from the elementary school to the postgraduate university—to provide her

children with all knowledge, not excepting the knowledge of Christ and of His teachings.

She wants all her children to get the best education that is possible for them. Not all can get university degrees; but the Church wants her children to go as far in education as they can. The more education they get, the richer will be their lives, the more numerous will be the pleasures of their minds. They will in consequence be the more capable to fulfill their duties to their country, their Church, their God.

### **A New Day**

The day when a grade-school or even a high-school education was sufficient has passed. More and more our youth, including war veterans, are thronging the colleges and universities of our land. It is a splendid movement, reflecting youth's eager thirst for knowledge and their determination to forge ahead. If our Catholic youth do not flock to our institutions of higher learning, they will be left far behind in the race. They will become in increasingly large measure the hewers of wood and the drawers of water.

The more education our Catholic youth receive, the more capable will they be to champion the teachings of our Holy Mother Church and to apply to the ills of society the great principles of social justice proclaimed by our Pontiffs. In a day when divorces are reaching an unprecedented peak, the Church stands desperately in need of a greater army of trained lay apostles

to battle with intelligence and valor for the permanence and integrity of marriage and the sanctity of the home. There is therefore a close relationship between education and Catholic Action, the relationship of means to an end.

This relationship is illustrated by an incident in the life of the saintly Pontiff Pius X.

He asked a group of cardinals, "What is the thing most necessary at the present time to save society?"

"Build Catholic schools," answered one.

"Multiply churches," replied another.

"Increase the recruiting of the clergy," said a third.

"No, no," replied the Holy Father. "What is most necessary today is to have in each parish a number of laymen who at one and the same time are virtuous, *enlightened*, resolute, and really apostolic." This is the crying need of our day—virtuous young men and women whose zeal can be made many times more effective by knowledge, education, enlightenment.

*Laborare est orare*—to labor is to pray—is an old Benedictine motto. This is particularly true when the labor is of the mind and is undertaken in order that God might be served more effectively. A student may well view every hour that he spends in study for this noble purpose as closely akin to an hour of prayer; it is the intention which sanctifies a deed and causes it to rise to God with the odor of incense.

Now what has education to do with the saving of one's soul? If the education is of the right kind, leavened with the teachings of Christ and of His Church, it helps the individual to answer correctly the question of our Savior: "For what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?" The more education the student receives in our Catholic institutions of higher learning, the more capable should he be to answer that question aright and to put the answer into practice.

### **The Church Urges**

The Church urges Catholic youth to get all the education of which they are capable. Let all finish a high-school course. Let all who have the ability finish a university course. Let all who have the talent complete the courses in medicine, law, theology, or in the other fields and professions. Let as many as possible obtain their Ph.D in philosophy, science, and literature. We need more priests, more doctors, more lawyers, more journalists, more litterateurs, more artists. In this country we Catholics do not have nearly the proportionate share of members in the learned professions that our numbers warrant.

Our percentage of top-ranking scientists and authors is shockingly low. Catholic young men and women who by years of careful training prepare themselves for eminence in these fields will render a magnificent contribution to our country, our Church, and our God. They will be apostles



of truth and athletes of Christ. What an illustrious career! What a glorious vocation—to spend oneself and to be spent for Christ and truth!

All our readers may not be able to achieve eminence in the learned professions. But if all of them will go as far in education as their abilities permit, we will have more than double the number of high-school and college graduates and a hundred times more top-rank members in science, literature, and the arts. Let this campaign for more education for all our Catholic youth be viewed as a campaign of prayer, a work of consecration, a crusade for God. Let it be carried on until Catholic names in profusion adorn the rosters of the intellectual leaders of our nation.

### **Guidance by Experts**

With the view to provide detailed, down-to-earth guidance for youth, parents, adults, educators, and pastors for the purpose of raising Catholic scholarship to a higher plane, we have published a symposium, "Catholics and Scholarship." Therein eminent Catholic scholars indicate how ambitious and talented youth can climb to the highest places. Scientists such as Professors Hugh S. Taylor of Princeton, Karl F. Herzfeld of The Catholic University, John P. Donaghey of the Incarnate Word College, James A. Reyniers of Notre Dame, and George S. Sperti of the Institutum Divi Thomae give practical pointers on methods by which to develop talents for scientific research.

Professors David A. McCabe of Princeton and Jerome G. Kerwin of Chicago University point the way to distinction in the social sciences. Monsignor John M. Cooper of The Catholic University, Dr. William J. Bergen, C. S. V., of Chicago, and Rev. Francis P. LeBuffe, S. J., of New York show how our schools can turn out more top-ranking scholars. Rev. Daniel A. Lord, S. J., of The Queen's Work, Monsignor Matthew Smith of the Denver Register, and Rev. Francis X. Talbot, S. J., of New York give invaluable pointers to all who are interested in becoming writers.

### **Removing a Misconception**

All the contributors to this volume devoted their time and labor without compensation to this cooperative enterprise. The present writer acted as editor and can testify that every reader of this symposium will find stimulation, encouragement, and practical guidance toward the achievement of scholarship for himself or in the helping of others to reach such distinction. The volume is a must book for all readers of this booklet.\*

Why do so few of our youth aspire to high scholarship? While there are no doubt circumstances of an economic and social character that play roles in the story, we think that one factor is youth's misconception of the real nature of scholarship. As we indicated at the beginning of this booklet, they frequently look upon a scholar as

---

\* "*Catholics and Scholarship*" is published on a non-commercial basis by the Our Sunday Visitor Press, Huntington, Indiana. The price is \$2.00, postage paid.

a lily-livered, namby-pamby panty-waist, an anemic sissy forever burying his bespectacled face in a book.

Youth wants action, adventure, the challenge of competitive sports. They crave the kind of action where they can show their mettle, prove their courage under fire, and taste the sweetness of victory snatched from the jaws of defeat. The air force was the mecca for thousands of boys because it held out to them the promise of daring adventure high in the skies . . . glamour . . . romance . . . the thrill of the spectacular. It attracted adventurous and courageous youth as the flame attracts the moth.

We do not withhold our admiration from deeds of spectacular courage and daring valor. Nor do we wish to stifle these noble yearnings in the souls of youth. We propose simply to show that scholarship offers abundant opportunity for the highest and most persistent courage and valor. We will remove a false impression with regard to scholarship — an impression unfortunately too prevalent — and show that in the arena of the mind there are battles to be fought which challenges the courage, the valor, and the daring of youth, the battles that really count, the battles that shape our world. We think that if youth get a true picture of the work of the scholar, they will find it replete with adventure, romance, and discoveries that thrill not only the discoverers but the whole of humanity.

## Courage of the Scholar

Back of most of the great discoveries that have blazed new paths through the jungles of ignorance and the wilderness of superstition has been the courage of minds struggling for truth and light. Not less important than physical courage for the welfare of the race is intellectual courage. It is akin to moral courage, which fights for personal convictions against the social pressure. We use the term intellectual courage to indicate that inner quality which prompts men to struggle with might and main and endless labor for the discovery of truth in all fields of science and for the achievement of beauty in all the domains of art and letters.

The exercise of physical courage is usually visible. The functioning of intellectual courage is rarely perceptible. In the early stages of World War I, Foch is said to have sent the following message to General Joffre: "My right wing is dangerously threatened. My center is giving way. It is impossible for me to move. The situation is excellent. I shall attack with all forces." Both the gallant courage of Foch and the valorous deeds of his soldiers are written on the pages of an open book for all the world to read and admire.

The courage of the searcher for the truths locked in the arcana of nature is usually hidden however in the obscurity of the laboratory or in the fields of nature. The courage of the artist finds expression in the striving for form and color in the

undramatic studio. The litterateur fights his brave battle bent over a lonely unglamorous desk—and no plaudits to urge him on. The paths of these searchers for truth and beauty are strewn with the boulders of unremitting toil, the thorns and briars of infinite care, and a patience that never ends.

True now and then a name bursts into fame through a spectacular discovery. But for the most part the workers toil away in their laboratories, grateful if their lives' labors will clear the way for some future researcher to reach the long-sought goal. Like Moses they journey in the desert and never enter into the promised land, but they are thankful for a distant view of that land from Mount Nebo. The discoveries are nearly always the flowers which bloom on the long stems of the labors of myriad workers in the field. That is part of the nobility and unselfishness of scientists.

### **Gregor Mendel**

Scientists are happy in their striving for the truth, their efforts to tease out a law from the tangled phenomena of nature. If they themselves do not succeed, they are happy in the knowledge that their labors may constitute the foundation for a fellow-worker's success. It is truth that matters. The glory of the individuals in the army of workers who contribute to the ultimate discoveries fortunately does not much concern them. Here is intellectual courage that wears the lowly garb of humility, one of the loveliest of all the virtues.

Abbot Gregor Mendel worked away with his experiments on rough and smooth peas in the garden of his monastery at Brünn, Austria, for eight years until he teased out of their variations important laws of genetics. His work laid the scientific foundation for the analytical and biomathematical treatment of the question of heredity. He published his discoveries in 1865 in the journal of the local Natural History Society. He carried on a long correspondence with the distinguished botanist C. von Nägeli, but he could not interest the botanist in his findings.

It was not until 1900, sixteen years after Mendel's death, that the scientific world finally perceived the far-reaching character of his discoveries and paid tardy homage to his genius. Abbot Mendel was not working for the world's acclaim. Like all consecrated souls he was working for the discovery of truth. Though his contemporaries failed to recognize the epochal nature of his discoveries, in the inner citadel of his soul he had the satisfaction of looking into the radiant face of truth and of unveiling that face for all the world finally to gaze upon. More than that no man can do.

### **Jean Henri Fabre**

Jean Henri Fabre came to know more about the ways of insects than did any other man in France. His key to the door that opened upon that mysterious world was an unremitting application and a courage that never surrendered. Living in a humble home, with scarcely enough money

to buy food for his family, he made the fields and woods his laboratory. Bent over on hands and knees, he would spend hours under the scorching sun, following the movements of ants in the grass, watching the maneuvers of beetles in the field, studying the behavior of wasps in their burrows. From sunup to sunset he would follow the movements of the insect he was studying until he could chart its way of life with an accuracy that had never been previously achieved.

### Application

When the minister of public education was visiting schools in the neighborhood, he asked to be escorted to the home of Fabre. He found the great naturalist dressed in overalls, his sleeves rolled up and his hands red with chemical dye. Hiding his "lobster claws" behind his back, Fabre apologized for his appearance.

Complimenting him on his having laid bare so many secrets of the insect world, the minister said, "I will help you. What do you want for your laboratory?"

"Why nothing, *Monsieur le Ministre*, nothing," replied Fabre. "With a little application the equipment I have is ample."

"What! . . . Nothing? You are unique there. The others overwhelm me with requests. Their laboratories are never well enough supplied. And you, poor as you are, refuse my offer."

Then Fabre told the minister how he made the fields and the woods his laboratory and studied the insects from morning



to night. He would go out into the red dawn to watch the resurrection of the silkworm moth in order not to lose the moment when the nymph bursts her swaddling bands. By night he studied the cion constructing a capsule of goldbeater's skin or the processional caterpillars moving head to tail along their path.

"My heart," he said, "beats with emotion as I watch my little subjects, ferret out their secrets, and pass hours of oblivion in the happiness of learning."

He would bring his findings to the walnut table that was "spotted with ink and scarred with knife-cuts, just big enough to hold the inkstand, a halfpenny bottle, and his open notebook." From the age of sixty to ninety, when most men look for repose, Fabre did most of his writing. He toiled over his books with meticulous care.

### **One-Word Motto**

"As though I had a long future before me," he said, at eighty, "I continue my researches into the lives of these little creatures. The outer world scarcely tempts me at all; surrounded by my little family, it is enough for me to go into the woods from time to time to listen to the fluting of the blackbirds. Away with repose! For him who would spend his life properly, there is nothing like work."

He was ninety years old when a friend broke the news to him that the people of France were going to erect a statue of him in a near-by spot.



"Well, well," he said, "I shall see myself. But shall I recognize myself? I've had so little time to look at myself."

"What inscription do you wish on the statue?"

"One word: Labor!"

Did it take courage for him to pursue his little subjects in their tortuous and mysterious ways, tracking them down in hole and burrow, working twelve to fifteen hours a day for seventy years? Try it and see.

### **Louis Pasteur**

The name which towers up most impressively in all medicine is that of Louis Pasteur. Of him alone can it be said that he laid the foundations for several distinct branches of science. He is the founder of physiochemistry, the father of bacteriology, and the inventor of biotherapeutics. His whole life is a story of intellectual courage, the courage to assault the foes—ignorance and superstition—which darken the human mind.

He spelled that courage out in a life of unremitting toil, the fruits of which are growing with the passing years. The lode-star of his whole life was work. "Work, work always" was his favorite motto. On his deathbed he turned to the pupils who were keeping vigil over the master's last hours.

"Where are you?" he asked.

His hand groped in the darkness that was closing in upon him.

"What are you doing?"

Then he ended with his favorite words: "It is necessary to work."

## Life's Frontiers

At the inauguration of the *Institut Pasteur*, in 1888, the famous scientist closed his address with the following words:

“Two opposing laws seem to me now in contest. The one, a law of blood and death, opening out each day new modes of destruction, forces nations to be always ready for the battle. The other, a law of peace, work, and health, whose only aim is to deliver man from the calamities which beset him. The one seeks violent conquests; the other the relief of mankind. The one places a single life above all victories; the other sacrifices hundreds of thousands of lives to the ambition of a single individual.

“The law of which we are the instruments strives even through the carnage to cure the wounds due to the law of war. Treatment by our antiseptic methods may preserve the lives of thousands of soldiers. Which of these two laws will prevail, God only knows. But of this we may be sure: that science, in obeying the law of humanity, will always labor to enlarge the frontiers of life.”

Pasteur's work in the developing of vaccines, which give immunity from infectious diseases, has saved the lives of hundreds of thousands of human beings. His discoveries practically eliminated the recurring epidemics of chicken cholera and anthrax, scourges fatal to cattle. Thomas H. Huxley estimated that the monetary value of Pasteur's discoveries in these fields of animal husbandry was sufficient to cover the

whole cost of the war indemnity paid by France to Germany in 1870. In every country of the world human lives are being rescued daily from deadly infections by his far-reaching discoveries in bacteriology.

### Faith

During his lifetime honors came to him from virtually every civilized country in the world. These honors did not however impair his childlike humility. His faith in God was absolute.

"The more I know," he wrote, in a letter to his children, "the more nearly is my faith that of the Breton peasant. Could I but know all, I would have the faith of a Breton peasant's wife."

He saw in the laws of nature, which he deciphered, the writing of God. Over his tomb in the *Institut Pasteur* are inscribed the following words from one of his addresses, wherein he summarizes his philosophy of life:

"Happy the man who hears within him a divinity, an ideal of beauty, and obeys it; an ideal of art, an ideal of science, an ideal of country, an ideal of the virtues of the Gospel."

### Isaac Newton

The intellectual courage which enabled Fabre and Pasteur to concentrate with such vigor upon their search for truth, to fight off for long periods the claims of the body for food and rest is evident likewise in the life of Sir Isaac Newton. When he was absorbed in his problems of mathematical physics, the great discoverer of the law of

gravitation would work with unremitting application over such long periods that he caused his friends to worry about his health. His manservant reports that when his master was thus preoccupied he would quietly open the little window in the door of Newton's study and insert a tray of food. When the servant would come back in the evening with additional food and would open the window again, he would see that the first tray was still untouched.

All day long the master labored at his desk, working out the principle of that law which holds every particle of the universe—from a grain of sand to the farthest star—in the marvelous network of universal law. This absorption would continue for weeks at a time. Newton himself reports that there were considerable periods of time when he averaged scarcely one hour of sleep a night. Here were stamina, grit, pluck, fortitude, courage—not of the muscles, but of the mind.

### **Humility**

Like Pasteur, Newton was a profoundly religious man and drew much of his courage and strength from union with God in prayer. Toward the end of his life, after many honors had been showered upon him, a friend remarked, "What a comfort it must be to be able to look back over a life of such epochal achievements. In discovering the law of gravitation, you have laid the foundations for both physics and astronomy. You have pushed back the boundary line of the unknown and have brought new

worlds under the reign of law. You have every reason to be proud."

"On the contrary," replied Newton, "I must confess to a feeling of profound humility in the presence of a universe which transcends us at almost every point. I feel like a child who while playing by the seashore has found a few bright-colored shells and a few pebbles—while the whole vast ocean of truth stretches out almost untouched and unexplored before my eager fingers."

*For his was not the cold philosophy  
Which, finding Law throughout the universe,  
Believes the world drives on beneath the  
curse*

*Of soulless Force and blind Necessity;  
But reading still above the unfolded Law,  
Love's revelation touched his soul with awe.*

### **Carrel and Millikan**

Courage, reverence, and humility walk hand in hand. They constitute the trinity of lovely virtues which distinguish the soldier in the kingdom of the mind who goes forth like Beowulf to slay the dragons of ignorance and superstition.

Most of my life has been spent in close association with scientists at great universities in America and in Europe. I have yet to meet a first-class scientist in whose character the disinterested search for truth was not accompanied by the spirit of reverence and humility. I had the honor to confer the Cardinal Newman Award upon two of the outstanding winners of

the Nobel Prize—Dr. Alexis Carrel, for his discoveries in medicine, and Robert Andrews Millikan, for his discoveries in nuclear physics. Honors came to them from many countries. But these honors did not lessen the sense of reverence and humility which characterize the writings, the speech, and the attitude of these two men. A close-up of them only enhanced my admiration of their simplicity and humility. With tireless courage they searched for the finger-writing of God's laws in the world of the infinitesimally small and of the well-nigh infinitely large.

### **The Courage of Ignorance**

Back of the achievements of all these scientists is the story of unflagging industry. Does that involve courage? Try it. In the ceaseless application of the mind in the quest for truth you will find discipline of a high order, self-control that no words can adequately describe, and patience that never wears out. Often the goal proves elusive, and the quest seems to lead only to will-of-the-wisps. There are tantalizing delays that must be endured, puzzles that rack and torture the brain, frustrations that bite into the marrow of the soul and challenge human mettle. The courageous soul fights on however, conscious that all he can put forth is his best. He is willing to leave to God and the future the decision on the outcome.

Work of that unstinting character, poured out to the overflowing, is the badge of courage and the hallmark of nobility. No one

else has proclaimed the gospel of work with greater vigor or persistence than has Thomas Carlyle. "Hang your sensibilities!" he thundered. "Stop your sniveling complaints and your equally sniveling raptures! Leave off your emotional tomfoolery, and get to WORK like men!"

Scientists do not know at the start, and all their life they can never tell whether as a result of their work a new truth, like a new planet, will burst upon their ken. In spite of their ignorance of the objective outcome however they carry on to the end. "The true courage of ignorance," observed William Lyon Phelps, "is the courage that faces the unknown outcome with serenity. As has been well said, a calm mind is a victorious mind. And even if the result should be defeat in the practical undertaking, there remains always one victory—the victory over oneself."

### **Francis Parkman**

The goal of intellectual achievement is always reached by the long road of labor. But sometimes that road is cluttered with the obstacles of physical disabilities and ill-health, obstacles that make the going all the harder. Only intellectual courage of a high order can meet such a combination of obstacles and convert them into stepping-stones to great achievements.

Francis Parkman is a case in point. Even as a boy his health was so delicate that he was obliged to spend several years living out-of-doors, at his grandfather's country estate. His frequent journeys into the wil-



derness engendered in him a fascination for the forest and helped to decide his lifework: the history of the American conflict between France and Great Britain, a conflict which took place to a great extent in the wilderness of the New World. This theme would enable him to write "the history of the American forest; for this was the light in which I regarded it. My theme fascinated me, and I was haunted with wilderness images day and night."

### Handicaps

Before he could complete his studies at Harvard however, his health broke. After a slow convalescence he resumed his studies and was graduated with honors. To prepare himself properly for his self-appointed task of writing about the wilderness—its gloom and vastness as well as its dusky warriors of the Stone Age—Parkman lived with the people in the wilderness. He shared their hardships and endured their rude and primitive life for many months.

When he began to write "The Conspiracy of Pontiac," he experienced another relapse. He suffered from nervous exhaustion aggravated by eye trouble, which made it impossible for him to keep his eyes open except in a dark room. This twofold obstacle would seem sufficient to have written *finis* upon his undertaking, foredooming it to failure. But Parkman refused to quit. Against these terrific handicaps he struggled with characteristic courage and fortitude. He invented an apparatus which so supported his hand that he could



write legibly even when his eyes were closed. While books and documents were read aloud to him, he took notes and mastered the material with remarkable accuracy.

So weak was he however that he was able to work only for half an hour at a time. Under these circumstances his rate of composition for a long time averaged scarcely six lines a day. Even with such appalling difficulties he completed his superb historical monograph in 1851. It was a splendid pioneer work. The American public however was not yet sufficiently interested in such a historical theme to give it the reception that it deserved.

### **No Surrender**

Undeterred by this inhospitable reception, Parkman courageously launched himself upon his great work, "France and England in the New World." This monumental work imposed upon his feeble strength and still feebler eyesight the work of tracing, collecting, arranging, and digesting an enormous mass of incongruous material that was scattered on both sides of the Atlantic. To make matters worse, a large portion of this material was in handwriting, some of it scarcely legible. The work required years of tedious exploration, meticulous copying and arranging. Several journeys to Europe were necessary in order to locate all the relevant data. Yet Parkman completed his task with a thoroughness approaching finality.

In 1865 the first volume of his great work appeared under the title "Pioneers of France in the New World." For twenty-seven more years Parkman held to his task with Spartan fortitude until the final volume appeared. His volumes "The Jesuits in North America," "LaSalle and the Discovery of the Great West," and "A Half Century of Conflict" are monuments not only of scholarship but also of courage that never surrenders.

They disclose the many-sided struggle that the two great European powers waged for dominance in the New World, and they afford an authentic picture of the American forest and its redmen. To the reader who understands the circumstances under which the material was gathered and the books written, these works are interesting and significant not only for themselves but for the revelations of the power of the human will to drive ahead in the face of overwhelming obstacles and to refuse to quit until the goal has been achieved.

Francis Parkman's career is a superb illustration of the French critic's definition of a great life: a thought conceived in youth and carried by an indomitable will to complete realization in later years.

### **Michelangelo**

The struggle to achieve beauty in sculpture and in painting calls for intellectual courage that finds expression in infinite pains. To compel the hard granite to respond to the sculptor's concepts of grace

of outline and symmetry of figure challenges the artist's patience and fortitude. To imprison upon the canvas visions of beauty and shades of light and color never seen before upon land or sea demands a concentration of attention and an application which tax the strength and stamina of the painter. Beauty is the supreme achievement of art. It is the combined product of inspiration and perspiration. The higher the degree of beauty, the greater the mental travail. Wielding one of the most finished styles among the writers of English prose, Cardinal Newman acknowledged that every book he wrote cost him enormous effort and pain—like the travail of childbirth.

### Power

The visitor to Rome stands in admiration before the great painting by Michelangelo that depicts the story of Genesis from the creation to the flood, which adorns the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. In this painting there are hundreds of figures, prophets and sibyls dreaming of the new dispensation to come. The vast array of figures reaches its climax in the representation of the forefathers of Christ. The delineation of the human forms and faces reflects the powers of Michelangelo at their best. Attitudes of unmatched variety and grandeur, countenances of unrivaled expressiveness and power meet the eye wherever it falls upon the mighty pageant.

## Alone

Does the spectator ever stop to consider the circumstances under which the painting was executed and the extent of the labor involved in the achievement? After working out a sketch of the vast scene, the master summoned a number of assistant painters from Florence. Unable to interpret Michelangelo's designs in fresco with sufficient freedom or with satisfactory uniformity, they were dismissed. The master then came to grips with the gigantic task—alone. On his back for four and a half years, he toiled over the vast pageant. Hidden in his lonely scaffolding, the great Florentine labored with courage and unwearying patience to mirror in form and color the vision that haunted his mind day and night. The result is a masterpiece that belongs to the ages.

Some twenty years later Michelangelo was summoned by Pope Clement to paint the great end wall above the altar in the Sistine Chapel. The master was in his sixtieth year when he began anew to fling the fury of his towering genius into the portrayal of "The Last Judgment." Here was a theme that stirred the soul of the gifted painter to its very depths. Spiritual heir of Dante, with the vivid faith of the Middle Ages lighting up every corner of the mighty drama, the genius of the great Florentine was kindled into incandescence as the figures of Pope, cardinal, priest, merchant, prince, pauper, and all the other types of mankind appear for weal or woe

at the great Assizes. God, he knew, was no respecter of person or place, and he depicted stern justice falling like thunderbolts upon the heads of the mighty in Church and state.

### **Courage, Grit, Stamina**

For seven years he labored upon his stirring drama. When finally the brush dropped from his exhausted hand, he looked up at the masterpiece that was destined to become the most famous single painting in the world. Like the previous one this too was executed in answer to imperative demands—and that in the face of Michelangelo's own conviction that sculpture, not painting, was the field of his greatest power. Courage, grit, stamina, and pluck are mirrored in that immortal painting not less clearly than are the grandeur and the power of a great genius.

As I gazed in rapt admiration at the mighty painting, there came to my mind the words of J. M. Barrie: "Sometimes beauty boils over, and then spirits are abroad." For the spectator can feel and almost see the spirits of the other world as they hasten to and fro to execute the divine decrees of judgment, consigning some to the joys of heaven and others, alas! to the nether world. The great poetry of Dante, with its vivid imagery of heaven and of hell, was by the fury of the Florentine's genius flung into a symphony of vivid color that not only grips the eyes but fills the ears and makes the heart echo

with the music of the mighty issues that stretch from time into the dim regions of eternity.

### Exemplar

O. Henry tells of a girl who lived alone in a big city. In time of temptation she found her courage mounting as she looked at the picture of the doughty Kitchener and thought of the foes he faced with never a temptation to surrender. The scholar who finds his courage faltering will find it mounting too as he thinks of the mighty Florentine sticking to his post of duty till the last stroke was painted and the last light touch of the chisel fell caressingly upon the sculptured stone.

Achieving world eminence in sculpture, painting, and architecture, and distinction in poetry, working away until his death—on the threshold of his ninetieth birthday—Michelangelo wrote an epic of courage in the annals of art. In the orchestration of the powers of his gifted mind one catches ever and anon the overtones from the iron chord of courage that vibrated in his soul. His sculptured figures David and Moses not less than the painting of the scenes from Genesis and "The Last Judgment" are monuments of intellectual courage that mobilized all the latent powers of his nature till they reached the full torrent of his towering genius, which flung open the doors of beauty in painting and in sculpture for all the world to gaze upon throughout all time. Having burned up his genius

in unremitting labor, he became a torch for all men. His philosophy of life may be thus epitomized:

*Heaven doth with us as we with torches do  
Not light them for themselves.*

The warfare which the scholar must wage is against the ignorance, intolerance, and stupidity of man. It is a war that knows no ending. It is waged for the most part in the lonely solitude of the thinker's cell. Upon his banner might well be inscribed the words which expressed the guiding principle of Thomas Jefferson's life, as they do of every scholar's: "I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man."

### **The Call to Youth**

Human nature shrinks from loneliness. But without solitude the depth of thought that marks a true scholar is seldom if ever achieved. Courage is required to face that black gulf of isolation day after day. "Only when you have worked alone," observed the late Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, "when you have felt around you a black gulf of solitude more isolating than that which surrounds the dying man, and in hope and in despair have trusted to your own unshaken will—then only will you have achieved. Thus only can you gain the secret isolated joy of the thinker, who knows that a hundred years after he is dead and forgotten men who never heard of him will be moving to the



measure of his thought—the subtle rapture of a postponed power, which the world knows not because it has no external trappings but which to his prophetic vision is more real than that which commands an army.”

### **The Shining Mountain**

Behind every discovery in science and the achievement of every masterpiece in literature and in sculpture is the story of intellectual courage which scorned rest or compromise until truth was emancipated or beauty was enthroned before the eyes of men.

Thus do we come to the end of the story, confident that youth sees the work of a scholar in a new light—adventure glistening with the bright colors of romance and replete with tasks challenging the valiant heart of youth. Why be content with the lowly foothills? Why not climb up the shining mountain of knowledge as high as you can and hold up the torch of truth to dispel the fog and darkness that encompass the multitude below?

In this way youth become torchbearers, beacon lights to the groping feet of humanity. In this way youth guide men on their climb to the perception of truths of nature, which is, as Chaucer said, but the “Vicar of the Almighty Lord.” Here is the call that the Church sounds to the youth of America: the call to be explorers in the realm of the mind, searchers for truth amid far horizons, seekers of the lost Atlantis, mariners across uncharted seas,



soldiers who fight on against all odds till victory is won, benefactors of mankind, athletes of God.

Such is the summons to youth. But the achievement of the goal of an enlightened apostolate, of more education for all our youth and the highest education for youth blessed by God with superior endowment, requires the cooperation of both youth and grownups. Adults, clerical and lay, can help talented and ambitious youth by moral encouragement and at times by financial support.

### **Adult Support**

If each pastor could see one boy of his parish through professional or research studies, what a magnificent contribution that would be to the development of the enlightened apostolate for which Pope Pius X pleaded so earnestly. If each of our men of means would sponsor a deserving Catholic youth to eminence in science, literature, or the arts, the names of Catholics would soon adorn in profusion the rosters of our learned academies and scientific institutions.

Two of the most promising students who are doing graduate work in science at the University of Notre Dame are here because a doctor in a far western city spoke words of encouragement to them and lent them the necessary funds. To these young men that doctor is a second father. Scarcely less than their own fathers will he be entitled to share in the pride of their achievements.

So would it be with thousands of Catholic men and women, if each of them would lend — not give — the funds necessary to launch a youth of promise on a career of adventure and discovery in the fields of science, literature, and the arts.

We ask the cooperation of all youth and adults in the achievement of that goal. We ask every youth who reads this booklet to resolve to develop to the full whatever talents God has given him. We ask every adult to help some worthy Catholic youth to obtain a higher education and to help our most gifted youth to achieve eminence in scholarship, which will reflect glory on our Church and on our country.



Why Not Be A Scholar?

Why Not  
Be A

Why Not  
Be A

SCHOLAR

Why Not  
Be A

SCHOLAR

Why Not  
Be A

SCHOLAR