

GREAT SERMON

ARCHBISHOP HANNA ON CHURCH AND DEMOCRACY BEFORE CATHOLIC FEDERATION

The following eloquent sermon on "The Catholic Church, Democracy and Peace," was delivered by His Grace, Most Reverend Archbishop Hanna, at the High Mass on Sunday, Aug. 26, in Kansas City, which opened the convention of the Catholic Federation of Societies in America.

THE ARCHBISHOP'S SERMON

In one of the momentous crises in the history of civilization, we gather here in the shadow of the Tabernacle bearers of the light which is in Christ, unto men of this generation, chosen representatives of the Church of the Living God. Though we are not the authoritative mouth piece of the great Catholic body, still the personal representative of the Vicar of Jesus Christ honors us with his gracious presence, and lends the dignity of highest authority to our deliberations; a Prince of Holy Church has crossed a continent to give us the aid of his most wise counsel, the help of his great name. Many are here who have inherited the power of the apostles, and many more, their co-laborers, who as the torch-bearers of old, hand down the message of Christ unto those to whom they have been sent.

We, therefore, represent the old Faith in a way all our own, and to us the faithful look for steady guidance, to us the faithful look for encouragement and for assurance, in these days of change, in these days of danger, of darkness and of doubt, while to those outside the fold we ought to be the bearers of a message that for them and for the world is of serious import. Nor may we refuse the task given to us, for never since the days of Christ has the need of Him been as crying as it is to-day, and never since the first days of Christianity did the Church have a mightier opportunity for good than the opportunity which falls to her lot in the present crisis of man's history.

Will you bear with me while I picture to you in broadest lines the world of to-day, and while I endeavor to show that in the Church alone is the wisdom, in the Church alone is the power, necessary for the healing of the nations, necessary too for the establishing of abiding peace.

It must be granted that for the past hundred years or more the men who have ruled the destinies of the world, the kings and the men of science, have risen up against God and against His Church. Back of every movement as wide and as great as is this apostasy, there must be a distinct philosophy. Nor is it difficult to trace this philosophy even to its source. Men broke away from the authority of the Church in the days of the Reformation, and proclaimed private judgment even in the interpretation of the counsels of God revealed unto men for man's salvation. Following their own fancy, some wise men have regarded men as a plaything of fate, a pawn on the chessboard of the world, which the supermen to whom come the will to conquer and the might to rule, move about at their veriest pleasure. Others have seen man advancing to perfection by a gradual unfolding of his powers, and the evolution by which man grows into the ideal is accomplished by a ruthless untrusting struggle in which only the fittest survive. Nor are the fittest the higher, finer intellectual types of mankind, but those who in the contest have cast aside the higher moralities, which ought ever to determine action, and place their belief in the gospel of right by might.

True, there has been in all these years an attempt on the other side, an attempt to make a god of man, an attempt to make humanity worshipful, and thus the crude, merciless philosophy of evolution was softened somewhat by the cult of Positivism. There is no God, there is no Christ, there is no future of which man may be sure, for these things transcend human knowledge, but man is great and noble, man must strive to realize the great ideal which is within himself, an ideal which the Christian dispensation with all its conquest and with all its glory has helped man to attain.

These men grant the power and the office of the Christian Church, but they say that her function has passed, her task is at an end, and now with science as queen must begin the new era of progress unto higher ideals, a new era of liberty, a new era of a higher recognition of human rights, a new era of democracy, a new era in which man will attain peace from the love and from the realization of the ideals within him.

RESULT OF PHILOSOPHY WITHOUT CHRIST

The philosophy of the past century has not taken into consideration the place of Christ nor the place of His Church in the government of the world. Nay more, the kingdoms of the earth have been warring almost continually with the Panacee, with the representative of the Christ ideal upon earth. In the working out of the great evolutionary philosophy, nations have formed their own ideals of national greatness, and on immense standing armies have they relied to avert peril from peoples of hostile intent, by immense armies have they sought to impose their will, and consequently their ideals, upon their weaker brethren. And all the while they have proclaimed their love for the finer things of life, their love for the arts of peace.

The men who really understood



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felt that such conditions could not long endure, and finally must come the test of strength, finally must dawn the day when the attempt would be made to impose the philosophy of might upon the world. The men who really understood knew too that in the day of contest the world, still influenced by the teaching of Christ, would rise in its strength to avenge the insults heaped upon human dignity, to assert the most sacred rights of conscience, to proclaim the loftier hopes of men.

In one night the storm broke, in one night the world awoke to the horror of an earth-wide struggle, and the fond vision treasured of men vanished, the vision of progress, of liberty, of brotherly love, of democracy, of abiding peace. Instead of progress there was a return unto barbarism; instead of liberty and democracy there was martial law with its iron rule; instead of brotherhood there came the fiercest race-hatred that earth has ever known; instead of peace, the roar of cannon and the clash of arms.

We had hoped that the wave of blood might not reach our peaceful shore, but those who guide the destinies of our great nation have decreed that in this struggle there is a question of human rights so appealing, a question of human dignity and of human liberty so sacred, a question of national safety so imperative, that we may not stand aside. Our Catholic leaders, emulating Carroll and Hughes of old have placed themselves clearly on record, and with no feeling either of fear or of hate, we shoulder to shoulder with our fellows are today the mightiest factor in the world's great struggle.

After months of painful thought, we have come to our world task, but we come not as men without hope. We take our place in the world's struggle with warmth of spirit because we feel that if we are true to our great spiritual inheritance, true to the inheritance which the past century rejected, we may bring the world again to a realization of Christ's wisdom, a realization of Christ's power, a realization that only in Christ and in His teaching can there be victory for human rights, only in Christ can victory bring enduring peace.

THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERTY

The struggle for human rights, the struggle for liberty and for democracy, is one of the most stirring tales in all our world-history. This struggle recalls heroes in the great days of Greece, heroes who made famous the annals of Rome. This struggle recalls the thirteenth century and the revival of St. Francis and of St. Dominic. This struggle recalls American battles for right and liberty, Washington, Lincoln and the great names of our honored time. But we cannot fully grasp this entrancing story, unless we understand that the foundations of our liberty and of our democracy are laid deep in the assertion of man's great dignity, in the realization of man's power to rule his fellow men, man's power to determine the fitness of those who would be his masters, in the conviction that man grows into greatness of stature, when great responsibilities are placed upon him, and above all things, we shall fail to appreciate freedom's tale till we understand that the foundations of our liberty lie deep in the willingness to sacrifice our own petty personal interests for the greater weal of the whole body politic, to sacrifice wealth and treasure, yea and the things that pass, for man's eternal interests, for truth and for justice which must ever remain.

If you would trace the story and the failure of the democracies that have come and have gone through the ages, you will find that liberty has ever been beset not only by ignorance but most of all by lust for possession, by love of ease and of luxury, by the craving there is in man for power over his fellows, and by the pressing need that there must always be in the poor for food and for shelter, which need makes the poor man of every age sell his birth-right for the traditional mess of pottage, which need makes him heedless of the treasure he has cast aside.

MORAL GREATNESS OF STATES

This is the story of the Athenian democracy, this is the story of Rome's famed republic, this is the story of Venice, of the Florence of Savonarola, of Geneva, of Piza, this is the story of the failure of so many efforts at self-government through the centuries. These same forces are at work in our time, and these same forces, ignorance and love of power, ease and love of possession, poverty in all its phases, are as telling in our day as they have been in the past. If government by the people perish not from the earth forever, there must be an antidote against the poison with which these things infect the body politic. There must be

knowledge of man's great dignity and of man's power to rebuild and to rule. There must be a developed sense of man's responsibility for his own life and actions, yea and for the lives and for the actions of others. There must be a clear conviction that the State rises unto greatness more by the intelligence and by the righteousness of its citizens, more by their willingness to make sacrifice for a higher good, than by the possession of all the power and of all the treasure of earth, which though they win for men a passing mastery over their fellows, lead so often to a fatal forgetfulness of God and to that selfishness, idleness, and luxury which must ever destroy.

Man left to unaided reason has been able to know God, has been able to know in a measure the greatness of his own inborn dignity, has been able to know something of his ethical relations with his fellow men, but this knowledge, history attests, has been vague, strangely sown with error, and above all things has been the possession of a privileged few.

Only in that revelation that has its fulness in Christ does man see clearly that God is his Father, that God is the judge to Whom he must render account of his life and of his deeds; only in Christ does man see his own mighty place in creation, only in Christ does man understand that he is indeed God's image reflecting ever God's wisdom, God's love, God's beauty, God's power. Only in the revelation of God in the face of Jesus Christ, does man know his place in God's economy, his untold worth measured by the blood of a Man God. "Thou hast made him a little less than the angels, Thou hast placed him over the works of Thy hand."

"Bought indeed at a great price." Only in Christ does man appreciate his inheritance, which is faith, his inheritance which is hope; only in Christ is the brotherhood of man brought home to him, only in Christ does he learn that every man has been loved by the Father with eternal love, every man has become verily a son of God in the mystery of the Incarnation. Only in Christ does man recognize the mystery of his own nothingness, only in Christ does he know that power is made perfect in infirmity, only in the kindlier light of the revelation of Jesus does man know and feel that he can do all things in Christ, only in the same clear light does he know how to value the things round about him, only by Christ has he been led to seek first the kingdom of God, to seek first truth and justice and service and mercy, only in Christ does he know that the things that pass with time, gold and treasure and luxury and power, are nought in comparison with the wisdom that must remain forever. Only in Christ does man learn to subject his lower nature to reason enlightened by grace. Only in Christ does he learn that the highest law commands man to sacrifice himself, yea more, to lay down his life, for his friend, his brother. And finally, only in Christ is the grace and the power to realize fully this ideal in our individual lives, though we are wont to acknowledge that the finer kind of man even outside the fold, may see these things as in a glass darkly. Now these things are the foundations, the safeguards, of our democracy.

SAFEGUARDS OF DEMOCRACY

Thus we who in this mighty earth combat fight upon the side of liberty and of democracy, bring to our task a knowledge and a discipline which others may not bring, to our work a feeling of responsibility, a willingness to sacrifice, a sense of solidarity, a standard of values, which must ever be a guaranty that democracy and freedom will not perish from the earth, must ever be preservatives against the corruption which has ever been destructive of human rights and of human liberty.

These truths taught so clearly by Christ represent the case of liberty and of democracy, and of a consequence it behooves us as Catholics and as patriots to be true to these lofty ideals, it behooves us to be willing to take upon ourselves the responsibility which Christ imposes, it behooves us to recognize the glory of government by the people, when exercised aright, it behooves us to make every sacrifice which the bond of brotherhood exacts, and finally it behooves us to forego if necessary pleasure and power and wealth and comfort that justice and truth may be triumphant. Then with our millions working as one man, we shall give glory to the Father, we shall be an honor to the Catholic name, we shall be the truest upholders in the land of that freedom which has been entrusted us by our fathers—of that freedom for which they bled and died.

LIBERTY AND PEACE THROUGH CHRIST

In the battle line where we fight for the rights of man, rights which man may not forego, the knowledge which is in Christ points the way, the power which is in Christ must lead to victory. But the purpose of war is peace, and men engage in just war to the end that peace may come, enduring peace. In God's own time, peace must come to our embattled earth, and when carnage is no more and peace enfolds the land, then will come the real test of strength, then will be seen the power of the truths we preach, the vindication of Christ and of His Church, then will be seen that only in Christ is the hope of democracy, then also will be seen that only in Christ, the Prince of Peace, only in following the truth He has taught, can there be permanence in the peace guaranteed by the compacts of the nations.

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