

tion of his See, has become the Primate of the American hierarchy, and who by the love he has rendered to his country in times of war as well as those of peace, has enshrined himself in the hearts of his countrymen as the first citizen of the land. And it seems to me that when one has been chosen, even as I have, to be your spokesman, it is not my duty on a historic occasion as this, or before such a notable gathering, to simply rehearse for you the many happenings of these fifty golden years of such an active life, but rather to tell with as few words as possible, and to paint with a small number of broad, bold strokes and to crowd into the briefest period of time the outlines of those marked, those particular and personal traits that have made of him an eminent churchman and a distinguished citizen. Let me then from the many achievements of a really great life, select and show to you just a few, especially those which have made him stand forth in the vision of all the people and by which he has added the growth and moulded the future of the Church in this country, more than any other man we have known. And it may be that before I end, it will have become clear to you that here indeed was one, who, like the good Shepherd of whom the Lord spoke, saw the danger coming to the flock even though they remained unconscious of its nearness, and was ready to sacrifice himself, if need be, to drive the danger away.

THE FIRST YEARS

But before we discuss these greater undertakings for the good of the Church in America, which God's Providence had in store for him, let us just glance at those first years of his episcopate. There is one, however, who has described this period better than I can, one of his own clergy, a priest of the Carolinas, and in these words, "When he was consecrated, for the Vicariate in 1868 he found only two or three priests, about the same number of humble churches and a thousand Catholics scattered at different points, all over North Carolina. The amount of labor he was capable of accomplishing was incredible. He traveled night and day and by all modes of conveyance. He knew all the adult Catholics in North Carolina personally and called them by name. He administered the Sacraments in garrets and in the basements of houses, preached and lectured throughout, always ready and prepared for every emergency. He opened a school and taught therein, conducted a written controversy, wrote elegant pastorals and the most practical and least offensive doctrinal treatise that appeared within the century. He received many converts into the Church, and entire congregations, ordained some dozen zealous priests, erected a half dozen new churches and opened several schools. It is evident that this vast amount of labor, signally blessed by God and performed within so short a time, could have been accomplished only by a man of prayer and devoted servant of Our Lord." I do not remember to have ever read a finer tribute paid to a bishop than this, and yet it was written more than forty years ago, and forms but the promise and the prophecy of the greater work that lay before him, and for which those pioneer days formed just the novitiate.

For the mission the Lord had mapped out for this youthful prelate was not to be confined within diocesan lines. In this newer land of ours he was to be a leader, a force and an inspiration to the Church which was still in its childhood when he came to Baltimore as the Metropolitan. Great problems were beginning to face the Church in this country, and even greater ones were developing for the future. Our Catholic people were coming from many lands and were of many races. Some of them had come from parts of the old world where the Church was a state institution, others from countries where the ancient faith was despised and the practice thereof hampered or even forbidden. With us neither condition prevailed. Here the Church was not favored, neither was it oppressed. Our fathers who built this Republic, but they gave preference to no church and no creed; they left that to each man's conscience; for his method of worshipping his Creator he must answer to God, not to the State. And the Catholics who flocked to our shores, strangers in a strange land, naturally looked to their priests and these to their bishops for guidance, for direction, for counsel. If the bishops failed to lead them, then other unauthorized, often self-seeking, unscrupulous, will talk for them and to them, bring discredit and ruin upon them, and eventually upon the Church, causing often the loss of many souls. For the same reasons there had to be unity, conformity among the bishops. There had to be a national leader, some one to whom the bishops themselves might look for a word of guidance, some one whom the authorities of the land might recognize as our chief, our spokesman, an official perhaps, yet universally acknowledged national Catholic leader, the primus inter pares amongst us. And to Cardinal Gibbons God had given the qualities a Church leader needs. It would be idle for us to discuss at any length what these qualities should be; the manner in which he took advantage of the opportunities that presented themselves and overcame the difficulties the Church here had to face is the most convincing evidence that he possessed those qualities of mind

and heart that lift a man above his fellow, that make him a leader among his own kind.

THE UNITY OF THE AMERICAN CHURCH

He loved his Church with the devoted love an affectionate son bears his mother. Whatever touched its honor, its progress, its well-being, concerned him even more than his own welfare. The same zeal he showed in the early days of his episcopate for the spread of God's kingdom became even more intensified as the years went on. He very early in life foresaw the remarkable growth of the Church in this country and he was constantly on guard that nothing might retard it. He was ever solicitous for the oneness of the American Church, he was fearful lest its peace, its progress, its unity be disturbed by sectional disputes, by questions of language and customs or by men's personal ambitions. He opposed any movement, any division, any allegiance that might make it appear alien to the country. It was never in his design that the love a man bears for the little green spot where rests the cabin in which he first glimpsed the light of day should be plucked from his heart, or the sound of the speech that fell from his mother's lips should be banished from his hearing; but he was solicitous that others might not use these as means to further their own ambitions or that crafty politicians abroad employ them as avenues for alien propaganda. Had he lacked the leadership or encountered failure in his efforts perhaps today the Church might be regarded with suspicion by our countrymen, parish be leagued against parish, diocese differ from diocese, and for that very reason entail a great loss of souls, be open to charges of disloyalty instead of being, as we are, a united people, who from the very right arm of our Government in harmony as never before with our fellow-citizens in these epoch-making times.

LABOR QUESTION

There appeared another problem, fraught with great danger for Church and for State. A time had come when the industries of the country were being developed on a large scale. This brought with it vast combinations of capital and consolidations of smaller concerns, in order to produce richer returns. At the same time immigration, which brought increased supply of laborers and mechanics, grew like the incoming tide. The newcomers were ready to underbid the work men in possession and, on the other hand, only too often did the flood of gold harden the hearts and minds like petty the affections of his soul and the promptings of his conscience. There came then the clash between labor and capital. It was then that the workmen banded together to protect themselves against both the rapacity of some employers as well as the encroachments of imported unskilled and cheaper labor. These combinations were looked on with suspicion in some quarters, indeed elsewhere had already been condemned by Church authorities. But Cardinal Gibbons never lost sight of the fact that our Church is essentially the Church of the poor. He became the workmen's advocate. He shielded them and their organizations from any condemnatory sentence. What is the result? The labor unions are by no means perfect. But neither is any other human combination. Yet no fair-minded man will deny that more than anything else they have obtained for the laboring man a living wage, they have helped him to rear his family in decent surroundings and enabled his children to aspire to higher and better things, they have helped to make the toiler a contented factor in the community. And there is more than a mere possibility that had His Eminence lacked the courage on that occasion when he championed the Knights of Labor, or failed in his mission, not only might vast forces of workmen have been estranged from Mother Church, but today instead of being in harmony with the country in its hour of peril, as they have been, they might be allied with those anarchical forces that have so long and yet so infrequently striven to weaken them selves to labor and make it disloyal to Church and State.

HIS POSITION AS A TEACHER, A PREACHER, A WRITER

Next the constant effect of his personality in the Church as well as out of it. No man exerted a kinder influence over the American nation; no man was ever so intent on and so successful in uniting our people, no one did so much in half a century to promote an spirit of tolerance and good will toward those separated from him in matters of faith; no one labored harder, more hopefully, more constantly than he to bring about the fulfillment of that wish, so dear to the Sacred Heart of the Master and which is so lovingly expressed in the words of the Good Shepherd, "and other sheep have I that are not of this fold; them also I must bring that there may be but one fold and one Shepherd." And yet nowhere will you find that to do so he sacrificed any part—no matter how small—of our Christian heritage. Like many others, how often have I not riveted my attention to some polemic treatise and when I had finished reading, I wondered whether it accomplished anything at all. How often have we not listened to pulpit orators denigrating us for some evil of the day and at the end have them fail to suggest a remedy for it, or at best an impracticable one. In neither class do we find His Eminence. Always optimistic, never expressing as a preacher, always kindly,

never forgetting the consideration due to his hearers or to himself as a gentleman, do we wonder that his audience is never hostile, never inattentive one? And probably no other religious book in our language has had so vast a circle of readers as "Faith of Our Fathers." It has been read by the great and the lowly, by the saint and the sinner; by Catholic, Protestants and Jews. I have heard unlettered converts spell out his teachings and great theologians enthuse over its explanation of Christ's Virgin Mother. Simple in language, limpid in style, direct in its appeal, it has been to countless, earnest, aching, truth-seeking souls like a hand reaching out in the darkness and leading them in to the light. Only the Recording Angel can tell to how many it has brought quietude and certainty, to how many it has pointed out the road that leads to the "via, veritas et vita," the way, the truth and the life.

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

There would be something lacking in any discussion of the Cardinal and of his life that did not touch on his love for Catholic higher education. It has long been a matter of pride with him that nowhere in this country are so many young men prepared for the Holy Priesthood as here in his diocese, and it has been a matter of satisfaction to him and of grateful memory to them that many hundreds of American priests received from his hands their priestly unction. And the friends who are nearest to him and who enjoy his confidence will tell you that no institution in his diocese or elsewhere is as dear to his heart as the Catholic University of America. Other names were associated with his in its inception and its foundation, but none other can be placed with his in its growth and progress. From the very beginning he has watched over it with a father's vigilant care. He was its loyal protector in some of its sunless days of the past and today its assured position in the world of science and of letters and its fearless championship of the doctrines of the Church have become the consolation of his shortening years. He planned it as the capstone, the completion of our Catholic educational system; it will remain as a monument of his inspiration, his faith, his perseverance.

OUR RECORD IN THE GREAT WAR

Would you have another instance of his influence and the results thereof? They tell us that republics are ungrateful, but I trust our Republic will ever remember the help the Church and its leaders extended to it in those dark and uncertain days in the war's beginning. When there came the declaration of war from Congress and the President, it was a signal of danger into our crowded cities in which fully one-third the population was yet foreign in its customs and its language, at a time when the world at large thought us a house divided against itself, when it was a question even at home whether the melting-pot had not proved a failure, coming after a period when unbiased criticism of Church had been allowed to run riot in the land, it might have proved little short of disastrous, if the Bishops of the Catholic Church had wrapped about themselves the cloak of silent neutrality. But they realized that a grave crisis had come in the history of this nation and that the freedom which the Church had here enjoyed was intimately bound up with the liberties of the country. And with a whole-hearted and unprecedented enthusiasm they threw themselves into the work of helping their country, and at its service they placed our well knit, disciplined organization, and as a result, at no time and nowhere did the aid of the Church prove of such benefit to those who must lead and guide the people in critical times like ours, as here and now in these United States. We are proud of the record we have made in these times of our country's need and peril. We have not burdened our Government and its statesmen with our advice, nor have we hampered them by our criticism; but we have chiseled the story of our patriotism so deep in the granite rock of history that neither the acid bite of bigotry nor the gnawing tooth of time will ever eat it away. 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