PROLOGUE

During the past four years it has been the privilege of The Shrine of the Little Flower to conduct a regular Sunday broadcast.

Beginning in a humble manner these services enjoyed the facilities of but one radio station. Last year two other stations were added to the local Detroit outlet.

During all that time it has been our endeavor to be charitable in whatsoever respects were made; for without charity on our part, it would be preposterous to seek your attention. Thus, remembering that you, our old friends, and you who comprise our new audience, are receiving us as a guest in your homes during this Golden Hour of the Little Flower, it is to be hoped that throughout this entire season at this same hour we shall always feel as if we are welcome guests and not intruding strangers.

Although this hour is primarily dedicated to an exposition of Catholic Doctrine and of Christian morality, we have at no time been remiss in discussing both the evils and remedies of such topics as Communism-Socialism, which, like a red serpent, is slowly insinuating itself into the folds of our national life. This last year we were happy to assist in our own way in pointing out the nature of Communism, which has been officially condemned by our Church because it is both immoral and unpatriotic. Its internationalism and pacifism strike at the root of our Constitution and American civilization. Its ambition, in the words of its great exponent, is bent upon tearing God from His false throne.

Its theory of economics will not be satisfied until it will have constructed a massive prison whose walls are both the Gulf and the Great Lakes, the Atlantic and the Pacific—and we, the free citizens of that new Siberia, shall become slaves, disfranchised of our vote, dispossessed of our property, despoiled of our religion and destitute of our families.

In the face of the recent German election; of the turmoil both in China, India, and elsewhere; of the underselling and dumping of wheat into countries whose granaries are already choking with last year's crop, it is only a superficial observer who believes that this thing called "Communism" is making no progress throughout the world—a progress that is as silent and stealthy as is the advance of any other deadly serpent.

Naturally and logically, certain causes have contributed in bringing this enemy within our gates. Naturally and logically, the simplest and most certain method of engaging in successful combat with this pernicious evil is to remove the cancerous cause of its growth.

Thus, my friends, under the patronage of the Little Flower, Ste. Therese of Lisieux, whose great desire it was to become a missionary of Jesus Christ, and through the financial assistance of just a few hundred ordinary citizens of our country's middle class, we have gladly purchased the facilities of the Columbia Broadcasting System to discuss those Christian principles which are the only efficient weapons of policy and of practice that can guarantee the continuance of our nation and the eternal happiness of those of its citizens who are willing to adopt the Gospel of the Crucified Christ.

Ordinarily, this Golden Hour of the Little Flower will be divided into song and sermon and Thought for the week.

Father Chas. E. Coughlin.
CHAPTER XVII

CHRISTIANIZED DEMOCRACY

FOUNDATION OF DEMOCRACY

SARCEL r more than one century and a half have passed since our nation has come into being. This country over which proudly flies our flag of Stars and Stripes was settled by men and women of stalwart heart and determined purpose. From the western nations of Europe they came to these shores bearing upon their souls scars inflicted by the lash of bigotry and of persecution.

Victims of that slavery called feudalism, they sought the liberty of our virgin fields and forests. Victims of prejudice and religious animosity, they dreamed of a fairer land which was dedicated to liberty of conscience.

Thus, both French Huguenot and English Puritan gave thanks to their God as they knelt in common with the Irish Catholic because there was one place yet left in this troubled world where both the true nobility and royalty of unspoiled manhood might flourish.

One-hundred-fifty short years! Into this history have been crowded stupendous events of progress, not one of which can vie in importance either with the Declaration of Independence or with the immortal Constitution of our country. These documents marked the apex of all human political achievement.

No wonder that England’s Gladstone has remarked that: “The Constitution of the United States is the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man.” No wonder that Abraham Lincoln prophesied that: “If we continue to execute all the express provisions of our national Constitution, the Union will endure forever, it being impossible to destroy it except by some action not provided for in the instrument itself.”

During these several discourses both on the labor and unemployment situation, particularly in the United States, an honest criticism has been extended to this audience for the purpose of turning the searchlight of truth upon those most serious short-comings which, combined, have resulted in the unprecedented misery that we are experiencing.

It has not been done with the motive of injecting politics into religion but rather with the desire of incorporating religion into politics. It has not been done with the ulterior motive of casting aspersions upon those into whose hands the destiny of our nation has been committed but rather with the intent of recalling the immortal words of him
who said that this is a government "of the people, by the people, and for the people"; of intimating that its benefits are not for a class but for the majority; of insisting that its benedictions are likewise for the weak and the oppressed; and of recollecting that its entire tenor is chiefly concerned with liberty and equality and every human right, rather than either with industrial or commercial rights which latter will always be protected if first the former are safeguarded.

These concepts are not novel. They have been woven into every flag which our nation has raised aloft. Every hill and dale and silver stream which mark the habitation of the early colonists gave them life and reverberation. Every instrument of law which long since our forebears enacted in their assemblies was not forgetful of them. A symphony of liberty, as it were, they come echoing down the corridor of time from the days of the Declaration of Independence when were enunciated the fundamental words of our national existence.

The walls of old Independence Hall at Philadelphia still resound with that melody of freedom when utterance was first given to that document which reads: "We hold these truths to be self-evident:—That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

The Liberty Bell which first sounded the birth of this principle was likewise the requiem and death knell to the theory that the many existed for the few; that human rights must be subservient to feudal rights be they industrial, agrarian or commercial.

Thus was conceived our democracy. It was conceived in the thought that first of all the power of government is primarily inherent in the citizens of a nation and not in any Divine Right of Kings. It was cradled into existence through a love of Christian liberty which manifested an abhorrence to the pagan theory of the spiritual and civil inequality of men. It waxed strong in the lustiness of youth because our ancestors thought that they had trampled to earth the scrivile heresy that the people existed for the rulers. And for years it prospered because men had sickened of the barbaric belief that the might of a few constituted the morality of the many.

The right to life, to liberty, and to the pursuit of happiness!

ASSAULTS AGAINST DEMOCRACY

From time immemorial the human race has been taught that man does not live by bread alone. Counter to this principle we have witnessed upon the stage of civilization various actors coming forth to strut their hour of prominence as they advocate that civilization lives by wealth and industry alone. So believed the Egyptians who accumulated untold wealth in the midst of indescribable misery. So believed the Romans whose legions and triremes conquered land and sea and whose Caesar and Pompey and Crassus divided among themselves the ancient world which they had bowed down in slavery.

May I pause to remark that the fabulously wealthy Crassus eventually was done to death by those whom he oppressed. They poured hot gold down his blasphemous throat.

Today this ancient theory once again has been revived in that we are told that the pinnacles of prosperity are built upon the foundation of material wealth. Today it is taught that nations live by bread alone. Today the philosophy is advocated that business and industry, stocks and bonds, gold and silver are the foundation stones of civilization which first must be protected, while the right to human life's necessities must wait in patience.

With all deference to the dignity of our esteemed Secretary of the Treasury and to the office which he holds, may I add my feeble voice to the hundreds of thousands of War Veterans and their dependents who are seeking redress from the functioning of this financial philosophy mentioned above. Naturally those closest to our Treasury are concerned primarily with our nation's fiscal welfare. But inadvertently, may it be suggested, have these eminent gentlemen not fallen foul of the materialism which characterizes so many of our policies?

UNDEMOCRATIC LOGIC AND THE ANSWER

Just last week in commenting upon the advisability of paying in full the so-called "Soldiers' Bonus" expression was given to the thought that "this would be equivalent to a capital levy on the holders of all United States securities." In other words, those who possessed money in sufficient quantity to have purchased bonds must not suffer any loss whatsoever in coming to the rescue of their less fortunate fellowmen in this time of stress and unparalleled suffering—fellowmen who but a few short years ago forsook their families and died with death on foreign soil while many of those who purchased these bonds remained at home to make millions upon millions of dollars in war profits.

Perhaps this is excellent finance. Nevertheless, through its veins there flows very little of the milk of human kindness. Excellent finance, but poor democracy and poorer Christianity when we who are in daily contact with many veterans behold the dire circumstances in which so many of them are existing.

The payment of this just debt may appear to be bad business from a financial standpoint. But it is not half so subject to the criticism of bad business as it was for our Treasury to have over-paid our national debt by more than three-billion dollars up to this present date.

We are likewise informed by our Treasury that the immediate payment of this so-called Soldiers' Bonus "spells further retardation
of the day when normal employment will be available."

I wonder what is inferred by this phrase "normal employment?"

Surely it does not refer to the past ten years of our national history through which time we have experienced three major depressions.

In 1921 according to figures issued by the Department of Labor and the Federal Reserve Board production fell off thirty-one per cent; employment decreased twenty-four-and-one-half per cent; the individual worker's income was cut twenty-one-and-one-half per cent; and the buying power of all laborers decreased forty-four-and-fifths per cent. In 1924 the second depression was not so great. Production fell off only sixteen per cent; employment eleven-and-one-half per cent; and the purchasing power of the laborer, thirteen-and-four-fifths per cent.

And now in 1930 we are informed that this is the least of all those years of depression. We are informed that employment is down only nine-and-one-half per cent; that the laborer's income is decimated only three-and-four-fifths per cent; and that his buying power has suffered only thirteen per cent.

Of course there is an improvement in that present depression, according to those official figures, is not one-half so disastrous as was the calamity of 1921.

We are not forgetful that practically during this whole period the same genius which steered our financial ship of State has held closely to the helm. Nor can we easily dispose of the idea that the future executions of these same policies hinds little promise either for the ex-soldier or the laborer.

A DISASTROUS DECADE

During this decade of time referred to we have been confronted with a chronic problem of unemployment. In older days when machine developments took place more slowly, increasing production gradually created new jobs and workers eventually found employment. But in the past ten years new machines and new techniques have been introduced so rapidly and so generally throughout industry that it has been impossible for the displaced laborer to acquire a new position.

Industries on which forty per cent of our national wage earners depend for a living, actually employed nine-hundred-thousand fewer wage earners at the height of our prosperity in 1929 than in the year 1919 although the business handled was far greater. In manufacturing, our factories produced forty-two per cent more with five-hundred-forty-six-thousand fewer wage earners; our railroads increased their business by seven per cent with two-hundred-fifty-three-thousand fewer employees. Our coal mines surrendered twenty-three per cent more coal with one-hundred-thousand fewer miners.

But this problem is more serious than these figures at first indicate. For between the years 1919 and 1929 our population has increased and about seven-million more persons are looking for work as wage earners and small salary workers.

"One would expect," to quote from the American Federation of Labor Report, "these new comers to look for work in factories, mines and railroads as well as in service trades, stores, banks, and other lines. But work in factories, mines and railroads can be had only by displacing someone already employed."

New industries, of course, have been created, as for example the radio industry. But these new industries, as experience makes manifest, have not assimilated the vast army of unemployed.

As the youth grows to manhood, our present situation has forced him to enter into competition with his own father. Thus, as a result, the age of forty-five is too often placed as the dead line limit for one who is no longer able to compete in the employment market.

Ladies and gentlemen, our solicitude about the decrease in values of stocks and bonds is straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel in face of these major problems where life, and liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are in peril of being destroyed. Why make life more burdensome for the brave veterans, hundreds of thousands of whom are victims of this great chronic labor drought? Why not respond to the overwhelming Christian and American sentiment in making an honest effort to discharge our duty to them?

In a former discourse I had occasion to mention the fact that tremendous amounts of American money made by the sweat of American laborers had been exported abroad to establish foreign competitive industry. Last week we were informed officially by the United States Treasury that the payment of the so-called Soldiers' Bonus meant destruction of all hope of the lightening of the load of taxation to the tax payer.

MORE LOGIC AND USURY!

And thus the tax question had to be dragged into the "Soldiers' Bonus" issue!

I wonder if this statement would stand deep scrutiny if those holding tax free government bonds and if those exporting American money would help in sharing the taxation burden which is borne on the laborer's shoulder?

The soldier whose body was exported was taxed heavily in health, in liberty, in finance and sometimes in life for the welfare of his fellow citizens. But the government bonds held by his wealthy fellow citizens—bonds for which many died to protect—are tax free as well as are the twenty-seven-billion dollars of savings deposits in our national banks.
I have before me an analytical report of a certain American industry. It was compiled by members of the New York Stock Exchange. It tells us of the tragedy of tax exempt American money. There is outlined the story of how this Company referred to will acquire "the sole and exclusive right of manufacturing, assembling, distributing and marketing and producing in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and North Ireland, the Irish Free State, the continent of Europe with the exception of Soviet Russia, Asia Minor, Syria, Arabia, Persia, Afghanistan, Egypt and certain other parts of Africa." This report shows that the American Company referred to has made earnings from fourteen to forty-nine per cent profit on this expatriated American capital. It astounds us with the statement that between the years 1923 and 1929 its dividends from one of its European activities were eleven-thousand-two-hundred-and-thirty-nine per cent profit!

And this analytical report has been issued by the stock broker in a friendly gesture to the corporation referred to with the hope of selling more stock in the Company under discussion.

Such things as these evidently fall under that category of unchecked competition and rapacious usury condemned by Leo XIII which "under different guise, but with the same injustice is still practiced by covetous and grasping men."

Ladies and gentlemen, I have ventured to address you upon such topics because as a priest of God I cannot but concur absolutely in what Leo XIII has proclaimed when he wrote: "it must not be supposed that the solicitude of the Church is so occupied with the spiritual concerns of its children as to neglect their interests temporal and earthly." We are concerned with the temporal welfare of every soldier, of every laborer, of every citizen because it is our belief that Christ's precious blood was shed for all and that He was most serious when He gave us His lasting commandment "to love our neighbors as we do ourselves." On this principle of Christianity and on none other is built the firm foundation of our Democracy.

THE CITIZENS’ DUTY

In a democracy such as was fashioned by our Constitution any criticism be it negative or positive ultimately reverts to the citizens themselves. Our rulers are but our elected spokesmen and executives. Their voice is ours. Their constitutional actions are likewise ours.

From time to time our opinions may differ, our policies may be contradictory. But in the final outcome, the voice of the President, of the Senate and of Congress spoken in legal terms and within their due limitations is the voice of the people, the voice of God.

This idea is elemental in the nature of our democracy in which there should dwell harmoniously all types of citizens.

We do not applaud the notion of referring to our various citizens as those of the laboring class, of the middle class or of the capitalist class. For, in its final analysis we are all men and women living under the same law, enjoying the same rights and aspiring to planes of betterment under the benign instrumentality of our Constitution.

Nevertheless, some are laborers—the majority; and some are capitalists—the minority.

While on this point, may I digress to refer to a common error which unfortunately is gaining ground in many minds. It is this: "A great mistake is often made by some possessing themselves of the idea that class is naturally hostile to class; that rich and poor are intended by nature to live at war with one another."

"So irrational and so false is this view that the exact contrary is the truth." The poor man of yesterday is the capitalist of tomorrow. The fertile fields, the almost infinite number of mechanical and scientific secrets awaiting to be discovered, the native industry and thrift latent in every heart—these and many more items invite the laborer of today, if opportunity is presented, to rise as did the pioneers of old from the valleys of hardship and toil to the mountains of affluence and estate.

Our democracy is identified with this concept. It justly opposes the inane leveling of classes. It condemns the agitator who sows seeds of dissention between employer and employee, between capitalist and laborer.

"Thus our Christian religion teaches the laborer to carry out well all equitable agreements freely made; never to injure capital; never to outrage the person of the employer; never to utilize violence in representing his cause; never to engage in riot or disorder."

"On the other hand, it teaches the capitalist and the rich man that the laborers are not his slaves; that they must respect in every man his dignity both as a human being and as a Christian; that labor is nothing of which to be ashamed; and that a just and living wage must be extended to those whom he employs." (Leo XIII.)

Both to poor and to rich; to laborer and to capitalist the one common law of God is preached; the one eternal reward or punishment is promised.

ONE WEAKNESS

A democracy cannot thrive when class is hostile to class any more than it can subsist when class is preferred before class either at the courts of justice or on the floor of Congress.

Moreover, a democracy cannot thrive unless they to whom have been extended the privilege and the right to vote have understanding and intelligence of the mighty trust bestowed upon them.
It is years ago since Archbishop Ireland once remarked that the chain of a democracy is no stronger than its weakest link.

And how weak—how lamentably weak have been the links throughout our great electorate! How many thousands of you, my audience, both ladies and gentlemen, have refrained from voting through carelessness?

How many thousands have loaned your ears to the idle propaganda?

How many hundreds of thousands have permitted the spirit of bigotry to hold your hand as you marked your ballot, Catholics denouncing men because they were Protestants, and Protestants hostile to Catholics because they were true to their God?

A democracy appears to be closely allied to the teaching of Jesus Christ when He proclaimed the common Fatherhood of God and the common Brotherhood of man. Nevertheless, there are thousands of you listening to my voice this evening who have excluded the concept of God from your daily life and who have relegated Christ and His doctrines to the scrap heap of worn-out fables.

They who formed and fashioned those immortal words, "the right to life, to liberty, and to the pursuit of happiness" evidently were not forgetful that life means more than the boundaries of the cradle and the grave; that liberty can neither be acquired nor gained without His guidance Whose trust shall make you free: and that the pursuit of happiness will likely lead you through the darkness of Gethsemane, coax you along the highway of the cross, and eventually crucify you on some Calvary's heights as you await the dawn of an Easter morning where all pursuit shall cease and all happiness will be acquired.

CHRISTIANIZED

In conclusion, I almost hear you asking me what redress we have for the numerous miseries under which so many of us are laboring. My answering is brief:

I know that those of you who have been constant listeners to these discussions will concede, at least, that I have tried to be sincere. I know that especially you of the laboring class whom I have endeavored to defend will not grow sullen when I pause to express my honest opinion that we as a nation are suffering mightily because the Hand of the Lord has touched us.

Prosperous years we have had. A wilderness has become the wealthiest nation in the world. Luxuries have been pored into our laps. Our meanest citizen has outvailed an Oriental potentate in his opportunities and in his conveniences. And in the meanwhile, our hearts have grown calloused to the Divine Providence from Whom all blessings came.

Are you forgetful of the story of the Jews—their persecutions, their enslavement in Egypt, their wanderings through the desert, hungry and thirsty?

Are you unmindful of their Moses who called down Manna from heaven to feed them and who coaxed from the barren rock the cooling waters to quench their thirst?

Without Moses, their proud race would to this day have been hewers of wood and drawers of water in the hands of some enemy.

And without the new Moses, Jesus Christ, you, too, shall have no deliverer.

If we point the finger of criticism at certain capitalists for their injustice to man, we can likewise turn it upon many of the laboring class for their injustice to their God.

At all events, my fellow citizens, our political redress is not and never can be in the ranks of the radical or of the revolutionist. It is not to be found in the furls of the flag of red atheism. The key of it is held within your own hands as free born voters.

Thus, there stands tonight a Figure beside each receiving set through which these words are sounded. In His side there glows the red wound of a hostile spear. Upon His brow there is woven the regal crown of thorns. In His right hand which He holds out to you there is the gaping wound of a blunt nail. His voice whispers: "Come unto Me ye who are heavily burdened and I will refresh you."

Statesmen and politicians may come to whisper to you honeyed words of promise. A new Caesar, a new Pompey or a new Crassus may take his place on the throne of power. Or even a new Lincoln may rise up from the ranks of the multitude to lead a broken-hearted people back to the highway of liberty. But unless we, as a nation, and you in particular as the laboring class, turn to Him Who is your King, your Lover, and your Saviour, what little hope is extended to you? "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." And in these words the riddle of life is solved and the pursuit of happiness is gained.