

F O R E W O R D

The papers presented during the 1949 sessions of the Third Natural Law Institute of the University of Notre Dame and reprinted in this volume have brilliantly maintained the high standards of exacting scholarship set by the preceding sessions of 1947 and 1948. They deal with the impact of the Natural Law on four great bodies of positive law. The Common Law, the Canon Law, Constitutional Law and International Law are not rubrics in some dim Code of by-gone days. They constitute major portions of human law today, the present and future development of which is of immediate concern to us all, lawyer and layman alike. The scholars whose papers appear herein show us how Natural Law lies deep at the roots of all four of these great bodies of law, how from it all four have drawn such nourishment that even today in their present stage of advanced development, it is difficult to trace back their characteristic rules without finding Natural Law originally informing them and indeed providing them with a vital principle of growth. It is not impertinent to ask whether the present and future will see that growth continued. Will it be warped and distorted by new and alien principles? In the light of such questions the papers of the 1949 sessions, while indeed looking back over the past, necessarily compel us to look forward. This is not the least of their distinctions.

These papers, moreover, again bring home to unpreju-

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diced minds a point of cardinal importance. The Natural Law is not some esoteric tenet of Roman Catholic theology or even of Christian philosophy. The participants in the various sessions of the Institute have been men of various religious beliefs. Nevertheless their profound studies and their quiet reflections brought them to the Natural Law Institute of Notre Dame united in a common conviction that the Natural Law lies beyond particular credal differences. It is the great and unique possession of Man as the Child of God. The careful reader will not miss then the subtle harmony which runs through all the papers of this volume. Recognition of the Natural Law and its principles can alone bring about the realization and the proper understanding of the great ideal of the brotherhood of Man under God which a terrified world is learning to see once more, albeit still "through a glass in an obscure manner," as its last hope.

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