

## The Play's The Thing

LIBRARY SIGNPOST

"... the play's the thing where-in I'll catch the conscience of the king."

Emmet Lavery is in town today. After conference with the play-writing committee of Blackfriars, he will give a public lecture in the ballroom of the Columbus Building on the Prospects of a Catholic Theatre. It will be for the benefit of the Library.

This Catholic Theatre business is in the air, thanks mainly to Mr. Lavery. I am sure that some Catholics do not approve. Like Queen Victoria, they are not amused. To them it seems disgraceful to tack the word "Catholic" onto the word "theatre." It is like speaking of a Catholic nation or of a Catholic "something-worse." So far has the world been let to monopolize the theatre and give it a bad name.

But people like Mr. Lavery know different. They know about the beginnings of modern drama. They know the sacred drama, done right inside the sanctuary during the Holy Mass. The Church blessed it as something good to "catch the conscience" of her people. And if we may credit the extant manuscripts, those miracle and morality plays were good, in both sense of the word.

Those who feel with Mr. Lavery on this subject are eager to see the drama back to its hallowed place. It has been a prodigious loss in a far away country, spending its substance in riotous living. We should not say "The boy has had names; we can't let him come home." Good friends like Mr. Lavery are making him feel ashamed of himself and helping him recover his taste for the simpler, deeper pleasures of his former state. He has other friends, too, who call themselves Communists; they like him very much, but not deep enough. We want more because he has a powerful knack of making people feel the way he wants to make them feel. "Red" like himself, and so "catch the conscience" of other people and make them "red," too.

But if people like Mr. Lavery are given half a chance, it won't be quite so easy. The reform will take many years. It will move as slowly as time itself, and for a long while it won't look like a reform at all; the old prodigious will be playing Jekyll and Hyde, and people like Mr. Lavery will have to use a lot of patience. The more they can keep him as Dr. Jekyll, the less seductive will be Hyde associations seem. For the truth is strong, and will prevail.

So, more power to you, Mr. Lavery and your Blackfriars apprentices! We are eager to hear what you have to say about the prospects. We want you to win culture apoplexy to the cause. We want writers who know how to assemble a strong play, a beautiful play, a flash-and-blood play, a reform Jekyll, a surprising Jekyll, in coat-and-tails or going on like a Hollywood Carmelite. Let him be John the Baptist, Hildebrand, Severola, Catherine of Siena, Peter Claver, O'Connell, John Bosco, Dorothy Day, Father Flanagan—living, awake, driven with the energy of God. Or let him be among "the blind pieties of the poor" and the outcast, leaping down the walls that separate us, and making us weep and bleed with them.

Mr. Lavery, tell us what we can do!

The following plays are to be found in the Library shelves:

The First Legion, by Emmet Lavery.

Second Spring, by Emmet Lavery.

The Hostage, by Paul Claudel.

The Things Brought to Mary, by Paul Claudel.

The Comedian, by Henri Ghéon.

The Marriage of St. Francis, by Henri Ghéon.

The Marvellous History of St. Francis, by Henri Ghéon.

Sandwich, by Violet Clifton.

Light Out of Darkness, by Francis X. Talbot.

Murder in the Cathedral, by T. S. Eliot.

Our Town, by Thornton Wilder.

The Zeal of Thy House, by Dorothy Sayers.

Shadow and Substance, by Paul Vincent Carroll.

The End of Orleans, by Robert Hugh Benson.

Whereas drama is a legitimate form of literature, and whereas a good play affirms true human values and so bears witness to truth.

Be it resolved that we of the Catholic Library shall be vigilant to search out good plays which are not good, whether distinctly Catholic or not, and present them to our reading public by the way of our shelves.

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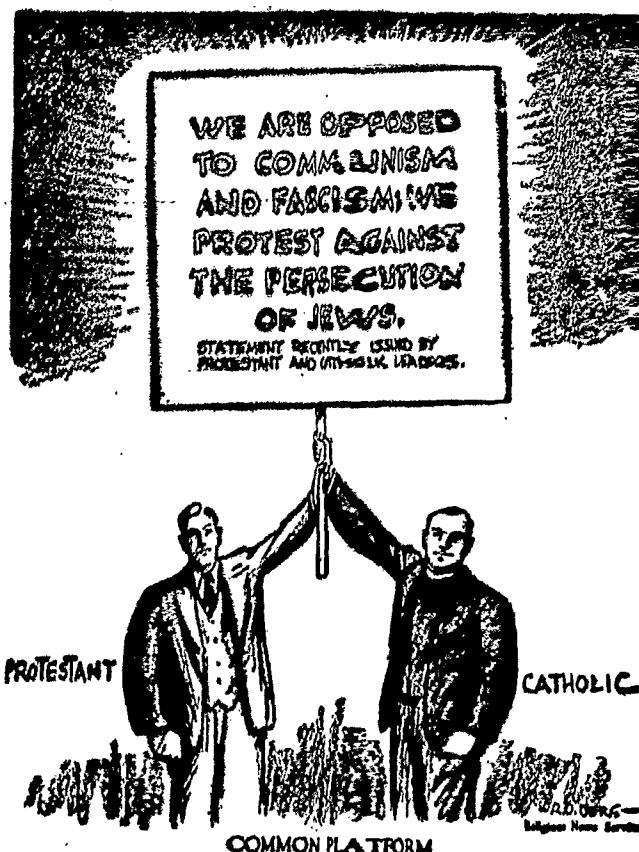
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## COMMON PLATFORM



## RELIGION IN THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### Sursum Corda

By REV. JAMES M. GILLEN, C.F.P., Editor, The Catholic World

President Roosevelt's declaration that Religion is the source of Democracy "stirred something" in Walter Lippmann. He called the message "a landmark in the history of Western thought," because of the religious philosophy it contained. Dorothy Thompson called it "the greatest speech in his career," but proceeded to justify that opinion with little or no reverence to the element of religion in the message. Three days later, she had missed the main point, the returned to the subject, praised Mr. Lippmann's article and devoted her space to the discussion of the President's chief theme, the indispensability of religion to the maintenance of democracy.

### Five Years Ago

In the files of the CATHOLIC COURIER

From the Jan. 12, 1934, issue.

The Rev. Joseph A. Balcerak was honored with a testimonial dinner and a purse for his 10 years of service as pastor of St. Columba's Church in Elmira, N.Y. The dinner marked the occasion of his leaving to take over the pastorate of St. Stanislaus Church in Rochester.

The Rev. Bernard Gellert of East Rochester presented Nazareth College with an entire series of some of the world's best reviews. Listed among them were "The Dublin Quarterly," "The Review," "Studies" and "New Scholasticism."

From Corning came protests to the publishers of the Corning Magazine objecting to the story "Three Wise Guys." Several organizations issued formal statements of protest.

Archbishop Mooney visited the parishes in the Elmira Diocese. While there, he was the guest of the Rt. Rev. Mgr. John J. Lee, pastor of St. Peter and Paul's Church.

The Rev. Dr. William J. Mahoney, C.M., Professor of Philosophy and Education at Niagara University, inaugurated the Rochester Catholic Hour with the first in a series of seven talks on Catholic Psychology.

St. Monica's Ladies Auxiliary, Knights of St. John, held its annual dinner and installation of officers. Mrs. Minnie Rosenbach, president of the organization for 10 years, was given a purse of gold as a token of appreciation.

### Spiritual Thoughts

At the hour of death the character of the man will be your greatest consolation.

Happiness is a duty, quite as much as truthfulness, honesty or good temper.

We shall, if we are wise, place ourselves and all our faculties, especially our will, for God to do with us as He pleases.

One Mass heard during life will do you more good than many heard for you after death.

Every Mass heard will go with you to judgment to plea for pardon for you.

How small the spirit, how cheap the character, that gives vent to spite!

Our Lord held no grudges. He had no neighbors to whom He refused to speak.

We do not know how cheap the seeds of happiness are, or all should scatter them often.

A SOCIAL VIRTUE

"By its very nature, charity is a social virtue. Wherever a social group is formed—in the home, the community, the civic association—good will is a necessity. It is charity, rather than justice that overcomes selfishness, casts out race-hatred, forbids hatred, clears away misunderstanding, leads to reconciliation."—Pastoral Letter—(N. C. W. C., Washington, D. C.)

The man who decides to give until it hurts is most susceptible to pain.—Catholic World

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## Lost Horizon

By Rev. Daniel A. Lord, S.J.

We're inclined to think of the world as so compact and covered with the dragnets of civilization that it is very difficult for a person to be lost. Yet in this crowded and compact little world...

Well, my friend the aviator was talking. He flew his plane for the United Fruit over the Central America, and knew that country like the palm of his hand. (Which always seems a stupid figure of speech.) I'm sure that I don't know anything about the palm of my hand.

Eight months ago, he said, a plane with pilot and four officials of the Company started off across the 80 miles of jungle that separate the sea coast from the capital, San Jose. The plane did not arrive. No word of it reached headquarters, so he with several other planes started off to find it.

The space in which the plane could have been lost was only 16 miles long and a few miles wide. There had been no storm or high wind to blow it out to sea. Nothing could explain its disappearance unless it had plunged into that forest.

The first day's search brought no slightest clue. The United States government got interested, and soon there were 23 planes flying over the relatively small stretch of jungle. Their search parties under the direction of engineers started off from the coast, each party covering an area of three miles.

Not a sign did they find. For three weeks the 23 planes flew as long as there was the least light. The ground parties worked. Quickly they realized that if these five dead bodies in the jungle, the vultures would soon find them and their wheeling flight would betray the presence of the fallen planes. So each time they spotted vultures they hurried to the spot to find a dead lion or cow or sheep—but not a sign of the lost plane or its passengers.

So with no storm, no darkness, no known reason, a plane with five men disappeared as completely as if it had been carried off to Shangri-La.

Amazing in this day and hour, but the sort of thing does still happen.

S-4 Content

It was Father Kiefer of Pittsburgh who pointed out to me the little joke played on us by a printing arrangement of the new pamphlets from our office have been two, one called "Why Be Decent?" the other called "Let's See the Other Side."

But in this Bulletin, the placement of the two of them had been slipped together in this very unCatholic and very disconcerting fashion.

"Why Be Decent? Let's See the Other Side"

Ouch!

Mexican Propaganda

By Movies

Mexican motion pictures, as far as I know, are not showing in the United States. Naturally, they are atrocious things, of the vintage of about 1923—horror operas for the most part—escape, woe, wailing under windows, socks in the face, rescue duels. Pretty frayed and chestnut stuff.

But have this slip their anti-Catholic pictures, and they get a large audience in Central and South America. With consequences that I for one do not like to consider.

In Panama they were advertising a film called "Virgin and Martyr." I caught the teaser and it was superb. No doubt about it. It was superb. A girl, beautiful, of course, is forced into the convent. She falls in love with a handsome man, runs away from the convent and is about to marry the man of her choice, when the soldiers of the Inquisition bear down upon them, fight the man, capture the girl, bear her off to the dungeons of the Holy Office.

From that point on, it is anti-Catholic stuff of the heaviest but most persuasive variety. The girl is tortured, water, racked, there is much suggestive stripping, horrible agony on the girl's part, floating by pale monks, black hoods, muffled canes, all the abominations of the silent and most vicious accounts of the Inquisition.

But what is the effect of this sort of thing on emotional and impressionable minds?

I mean

Watch and see if "I mean" hasn't become the most popular phrase in the country's current speech.

"I was walking along the street, I mean, just walking, and..."

"We had a long talk, I mean, quite a long talk..."

The fact is, that it doesn't mean anything, and just stuck in as "or" might be, or "ah," or any of the other tags, like, I mean. Well, watch for it, anyhow.

Clips

Don't lose any sleep about the moon being dead, or any other moon-keeping busy trying to make this world a live one.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

No world is more wonderful than ours when your liver is being having and your conscience is clean.—Richmond News-Leader.

He who loses wealth, loses much; he who loses a friend loses more; he who loses courage, loses all.—Cervantes.

It is said that in certain parts of Scotland the superstition still lingers that it is unlucky to be the thirteenth man to light a cigarette from one match.—The Catholic World.

## WHY?

Why Don't You Claim That the Pope is Indefatigable When History Tells Us That He's Dead?

The question of bad Popes is something that does not touch the claims of the Church at all. Catholics are not disturbed by the facts of history in this matter. We do grant that there may have been a few bad Popes, that is, men who did not measure up to the high moral standards expected of them. But this is no argument against the Church.

A states official may be a very bad man, but still a very good official as far as his duties toward the state are concerned. The same is true with respect to the rulers of the Church. A few of these have been bad men, but as far as their official duties toward the Church are concerned, they were good.

Christ never promised His Church freedom from sin and scandal. But Christ did promise to safeguard the Head of His Church from all error when he pronounced officially upon matters of religious doctrine and that in all we have ever claimed for the Pope in this matter. Infidelity is not a personal but an official prerogative of the Pope, and is in no way concerned with his private life.

Why Are Infidels Baptized Before They are Admitted into the Catholic Church?

Protestants are not baptized before they are admitted into the Catholic Church. Baptism imparts a spiritual mark upon the soul; hence can be received but once. Catholics are sometimes baptized conditionally when there is doubt as to the validity of the former baptism, but in no sense of the word is this a re-baptism. The original baptism was valid, the Catholic baptism is a more ceremony without effect.

How Does a Soul of Man Come into Existence?

The soul of a man comes into existence by a direct creative act of God. The Church teaches that every human soul is a new and unique creation of God as the creation of the world itself. That was true of Adam; that is true of all of us. Each one of us came into existence by a direct creative act of God. This is the fundamental reason for the underlying opposition of the Church to all such things as murder, abortion, birth-control and race-outrage.

What Causes You to Wake up in the Bed of a Catholic in the World?

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