

"Of Such Is The Kingdom"

By REV. BENEDIKT EHMANN

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Gunnar Gunnarsson, (Rebbe-Meyll)

Highway critics may call this an "escapist" book. But let them spare us the raised eyebrow. There are many things in it good for us to escape from—war news, mechanical work, morose newspapers, movies, and radio programs—especially when that escape means a return to some forgotten values.

The Good Shepherd is a story of Iceland, and of one good man who had love and pity for the lost creatures of God. The story opens:

"When a holy season approaches men make ready for it, each after his own manner and kind. There are many ways. Benedikt too had a way all his own, and this was his way."

At the beginning of the Christmas season, that is when the weather permitted, if possible on the first Sunday of Advent, he would pack food, changes of socks and several pairs of new leather shoes in a knapsack which had three small oil stoves with a can of kerosene and a small flask of spirits. Then he would take the way to the mountains, the desolate mountains of Iceland, where at this season of the year nothing was to be found but birds of prey, and a few scattered sheep, lost and wandering about.

"And it was for the sake of these very sheep that he went forth, animals which had not been found at the regular autumn gathering. They must not be allowed to perish on these mountains of cold and hunger because man would take the trouble or the risk to seek them out and bring them home. They too were living creatures of God and he felt a kind of responsibility for them. His aim then was simple enough—to find them and bring them safe sound under a shelter before the great festival should spread its benediction over the earth, and bring peace and satisfaction in the hearts of men who have done their best."

And so, with Lee, his dog (a very Pope among dogs), and Gnari, his cat, he came to the lonely sheepfold and his way into the mountains to find the sheep who are lost in the snow, and to bring them back to warm folds before the birthday of the Lamb of God. Benedikt is humble—no creature is too small for his compassion. He is faithful—he sees the little animals as beloved of God. He is simple, a man of few words and needs, but of great heart. He is courageous, braving the rigors of Arctic blizzards with mastery of their terrors.

With the wintery Iceland setting, it might be far-fetched to call this story an idyll, and yet there is something idyllic about its simplicity and the generous human warmth it radiates. It is hardly long enough to be called a saga, but it has all the sturdy ruggedness and courage of the old Norse stories.

Benedikt is the kind of shepherd our Blessed Lord was thinking of in His wonderful parable of the good shepherd. The reader is conscious of the parable all through the story of Benedikt. Yet, apart from its title, no other reference is made to the parable in the story.

The translator, Kenneth C. Kaufman, has succeeded admirably in conveying the earthly, elemental flavor of its original and that I know Norwegian or Icelandic; but every word and phrase is so close to the spirit of the subject that you feel it must be a perfect translation.

The same credit must be given to the illustrator, Masha Skimkovich, whose lovely drawings are a perfect foil to a perfect story. The one opposite page 14 is a gem worth framing.

This story may take an honorable place in such worthy company as Hemon's Marie Chapdelaine, Kvitka's Marusa, and von Isfort's Song of the Seafoam. It has the same simplicity and warmth, the same deep sense of Virgil's lazarus, the same communion between the material and the spiritual.

(The Good Shepherd may be borrowed from the Catholic Evidence Library, 50 Chestnut St., Rochester, N. Y. During the summer months the library is open from 4 to 8 and from 7 to 9 P. M., except on Saturdays and Sundays.)

that schools can be abolished when eggs are served at breakfast. I can see a very real danger in the fiction that made me bitter and envious. I found that children on the Malay peninsula had education reduced to almost the proportions of a gala party. The things they were supposed to learn were carefully written out on little cards and wafers by the teachers. The children then absorbed the cards and wafers, and presto, they were in possession of the desired knowledge.

"The very idea made me green with desire. I could see why long division and the states bound in Illinois couldn't be worked out on the frosting of an angel cake and fed to me along with a dish of ice cream topped with the multiplication tables."

"Well, I find out that that form of education has actually, in a modified way, hit the country. It has occurred when my learning days are largely over."

For I have been breakfasting with a large religious community of men upon whose tables are stacked a variety of breakfast foods. These foods are wafers and cards in their original containers, with the result that the brethren are each exposed to education in its simplest, almost Malay form. For the manufacturers of breakfast foods, realizing the vast quantities of cardboard needed to surround so many of light and fluffy cereals, have packed the four sides of their boxes with the widest variety of informative, entertaining, inspirational and instructive information. During my days in this house, I have practically become an educated man. I have learned the easy road to knowledge. I selected each morning a chair near a box of cereal that I had not read before and though I never ate the contents of the package, I packed my mind with the intellectual content of the covers.

I felt that the more numerous of Walt Disney's favorite characters to my intense education. I mastered a chart of vitamins, and now approach a tomato with real respect, bowing to a bearer of great quantities of natural health. I have learned the various makes of airplanes and how to tell a Douglas from a Spittard, and give you a fair summary of the equipment needed by a Texas Ranger and how to get it by mailing in the tops of boxes. I have released some of the nursery rhymes and charted for myself a course in healthful exercise and mastery of the schedule. I was capable of committing sin in a memory that burns still in my soul.

"And," said one of my group, "that schedule still holds. The other evening I said to my little girl—"

"Kathleen, I saw you being very mean to your playmates today. Meanness is a sin, and you must be guilty of it. And she said, 'Don't worry, America, can be as mean as I like. It's no sin for me. I'm not seven yet.'"

Two weeks ago a few months the American Reds and their fellow travelers were called upon by Moscow to play the part of Fregoli. They had to sing high and sing low, wash out one door and come in another at the same moment, play the villain and the hero, abduct the heroine and save her from the abductor, dance an old-fashioned waltz and a new-fashioned Conga at the same time, roar like a heavy and slither like a soubrette, change from skirts to pants and from pants back to skirts again in sight of the audience and yet so quickly that the eyes couldn't follow the change.

Obviously it was too much to expect. It wasn't fair of Josef to demand it. Fregolis did not grow on every bush or pop up in every Communist "cell." If you got one such quick-change artist in a generation, it is all you have a right to expect. They don't come in battalions and regiments any more than Booths and Irwings and Salvins.

So play the poor editor of The Daily Worker. He couldn't succeed in carrying out the delusion. Every one is "in" to him. Even a child could say "Why, it's the same fellow that plays all the parts. He doesn't fool me. He dresses like a lady but he's a man all the time. He sings soprano but that's not his own voice. He dines a minute and a thimble but he gets them mixed up."

It was indeed just so. The Communist organ had to attack Hitler, praise Hitler and attack Hitler again quicker than you could say "Fly away, Jack, come back, Jack." It had to sing Heil Hitler and to Hitler with Hitler on one note and with one breath. It had to call the President of the United States a tyrant on February 6 and a savior on July 7. It had to cry down preparedness and howl for preparedness in successive issues; it had to damn the intercom- munist and before the ink was dry on one edition call the isolationists traitors in the next edition.

Naturally no editor could be that slick. The Communists became childish, simple, naive, transparent. Of course they still remain a menace. A little child playing with matches can start a conflagration. But they have lost their reputation as wily devils. We see through them.

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POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION



PAGE MY PASTOR

By Right Rev. Magr. Peter M. H. Wyhoven

Editor-in-Chief, Catholic Action of the South

ARE LABOR UNIONS GOOD?

At Cedie's request, Frances had gone over a little earlier to the McCambridge home for the Wednesday-night instruction.

"I don't know, Fran, Dad is so in a hurry about the instruction he didn't have time to go to a meeting he's anxious to attend simply because he didn't want to miss his instruction. By your coming a little earlier, like a sweet lamb, he can take in both."

"Oh, the pastor wants to organize a Labor Institute, and he was anxious that he attend the meeting as an employer."

"A Labor Institute, Cedie, what for? And why is your pastor interested?"

"Now, Frances, you who belong to a parish and have a pastor who is always ahead of the parade, do you mean to tell me you haven't started doing something about getting a better understanding of the principles that concern Capital and Labor?"

"Yes, Cedie, we read the Holy Fathers' views in an instruction club, but my pastor couldn't arouse much interest, because you see, our parish is in a rather rich neighborhood and his parishioners are not much affected by industrial problems."

"Now, now, Fran, I begin to have a nasty suspicion that you, the champion of Catholic literature, have been doing much reading lately."

"Meaning what, Cedie?"

"Well, you always preach that no matter how excellent our school education has been, we must keep informed by constant reading."

"I still think that's true. So—"

"So our Catholic paper lately has had several articles on the question of Social Justice that definitely show that labor problems should be of grave concern to the rich as well as to the poor. And then you boys in your parish are composed of mostly rich people, therefore—"

"O. K., Miss Prosecuting Attorney, how do you happen to know so much about that, Fran, although the appearances are present somewhat. It's true, however, that all this arbitrary, contrary spirit manifested by the unions in some instances is most of the time due to the fact that a few of the leaders are uneducated and are working for their own personal benefit."

"But wouldn't your dad agree, Cedie, that most of the industries are being run by uneducated men who are working at the expense of the sweat and blood of the poor workers?"

"Yes, Fran, I believe father is ready to concede that. But do you understand, he is positive that the working people will not be benefited as a whole as long as there is not a mutual trust and respect between the employer and employee. Under the present union leadership and its attitude, this amicable relationship is impossible, and the necessary good feeling can never be affected by all the compulsory laws in the world. It will always be a strained situation, one where dog eat dog."

"Yes, but in the last analysis, the rich, hard-boiled employers were the first to be wrong—they should realize that, Fran, you have enough common sense to appreciate this tendency of human nature; those who have and are in power must be forced, but they can be talked into doing the right thing by using plain logic. And there is where the unions fail; they try to scare and bulldoze the employers. They lose by these tactics, because most employers refuse to be intimidated, consequently, they steer clear of unions as much as possible."

"Yes, I know Fran, reading the encyclicals that that attitude is not the underlying intent and advice of the Church. Labor is admonished to respect the rights of Capital."

shape to all things earthly is what they are. May they help us to be all that God wants us to be as His ambassadors on earth. Study in soul, strong in mind, keeping the faith may we be to the world what God wants us to be, sources of strength to all about us, exemplars of righteousness to all that dwell on God's own mountains!

Sister Eusebius

God's Providence usually works itself out through the agency of human action. God will not make His dumb beasts, to live according to instinct, to act according to impulse. God made us in His own image and likeness, made us with intelligence to know, with free will to do. As He desired the good of all whom He created, so He would have His representatives on earth seek the good of those about them. His infant in the bodies and souls of men is made effective through the interest men are ready to show in their brethren. At the priest of God is another Christ in ministering to the spiritual needs of man; so every good Christian is another Christ in caring for the material wants of the brethren.

With the passing of Sister Eusebius, the diocese loses a soul dedicated in holy religion to the service of the poor and the aged. Sixty-four years of her religious life was given to the manifold works of charity and prayer that make up the life-program of a Sister of St. Joseph. Thirty-two years of that life were consecrated to the care of the aged at St. Ann's Home. From near and far they came, men and women in the evening of life, men and women in need of the kindly and sympathetic care St. Ann's Home could give to their sholing years.

Leaving their homes in Elmira, Corning, Geneva, Auburn, Ithaca, Rochester, they found a new home at St. Ann's where the spirit of Bishop McQuaid set the pace for these devoted Sisters in charge, with Sister Eusebius long at the head of the Home, blessing it with a business capacity beyond the ordinary, blessing its guests with a hospitality and understanding kindness that could come only from the heart of a true religious.

The ministrations of Sister Eusebius were not from afar off. Her association with her guests was personal and close-at-hand. She knew her beloved friends at St. Ann's and they knew her. From early morning till retiring time at night, she was at hand, ready to greet the visitor at the door, ready to consider the difficulties and problems that bothered the minds of her men and women and to find a ready solution for them, ready to help the sick and the dying, ready to hold the crucifix to the lips of soul departing this life. She was unto the many hundreds who have found St. Ann's the home of their declining years, the Providence of God. Through her His graces were administered, through her His comfort and solace came to souls distressed, through her His mercy was made present and effective in bringing peace to souls distressed.

What an example for good the life of such a woman as Sister Eusebius! Her way of life was God's way. She left the world that she might follow that way more perfectly. With the great army of those she has served so faithfully, we join in singing her praises. In paying tribute for service unselfishly given to God's own aging children, in testifying our appreciation of a life in all things given to God. May she rest in peace!

If Thou Hadst Known

When Jesus Christ saw in vision the destruction that was to come to Jerusalem. He wept over the city. It was a sight that could not but bring sorrow and regret to Him who loved the Holy City, who revered the great things that had been wrought there, who admired its Temple and the place it held in the history of the chosen people. The vision did not lead Jesus to react to forestall the coming ruin. It did not lead Him to pray that it might be removed on any or no terms. He saw in it the just punishment of those who turned their back on God, who proved false to their responsibility as chosen ones of God, who were so steeped in wickedness they did not know the time of their visitation.

There is much in Christ's description of the destruction of Jerusalem, to remind us of the fate that has fallen on many a city in today's war. Today only too many have forgotten God and God's ways. Their danger is hidden from their eyes, because they have refused to see. God's punishment surely awaits them in their impudent state.

Christ's words on the destruction of Jerusalem should lead every Christian to return to God and God's ways ere it becomes too late. Let fidelity to Christ and to His commandments be the beginning of our prayer for peace for our country and for all the world.

The only man who never makes a mistake is the man who never does anything.—Theo. Roosevelt.

Five Years Ago--

In the files of the CATHOLIC COURIER

From July 29, 1936 Edition.

The Most Rev. James Edward Walsh of Cumberland, Md., Vicar Apostolic of Kowloon, South China, was elected Superior General of the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America (Maryknoll) at an Extraordinary Chapter of the Society.

Death of the Rev. Martin J. Cluney, 17, beloved pastor of St. Ann's of the Cross Church, Honesey Falls, brought to a close a half century of zealous apostolic and civic service.

As Catholic news service reports told of the burning of churches and convents in Spain's civil war, secular press dispatches reported that the Leticia government had decreed nationalization of buildings owned by the Church, had ordered institution of working hours and had set up a committee to give industry and trade a review if necessary.

The Rev. Charles J. Cluney, who was the first of a number of the Rev. Martin J. Cluney, was elected Superior General of the Society of St. Ann's of the Cross Church, Honesey Falls, brought to a close a half century of zealous apostolic and civic service.

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