

Sursum Corda

English Press Honesty Again

By Rev. James M. Gillis, C.S.P. Editor, The Catholic World

Recently in this column there appeared a statement that some of the English Catholic papers are more honest and courageous in the treatment of certain phases of the war than the general run of our secular papers in America, or even than some of our Catholic papers. I didn't say that all the papers published by our co-religionists in England spoke habitually with more forthrightness than all of our own here in America. Some correspondents wrote to inform me that on the whole the Catholic Press here is no less honest than that of England. I thank them for their letters, and if my words in that previous article can be fairly interpreted as giving the English a blanket commendation and the Americans a blanket indictment, I express my regret. I had not so intended and to be frank I don't think my words can be rightly taken in that sense.

He that as it may, let me give one more sample of what I mean. This time I take it from the Tablet of London rather than from the Weekly Review previously cited in which honesty and frankness are observed to an altogether extraordinary degree.

The London Times had carried a leading article in which it said that Russia and Britain were two countries whose direct community of interest can be projected into the future and spoke of the prospect that the Soviet would enter upon leadership in Eastern Europe. That leadership, said the Times, ought not to disquiet either the Eastern peoples or the English.

On the same page of the Times there was another "leader" in which Nazism was vigorously attacked for its "deliberate effort to undo what the progress of Christianity has achieved in nineteen centuries."

The juxtaposition of the two articles, one praising Russia and the other attacking Germany, was too much for the Tablet's sense of logic and truth. The Times, it said, cannot run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, the hare of Christian European Civilization and the hounds of revolutionary Communism. "It is more wishful thinking," says the Tablet, "that by writing Russia, Russia, over and over again you can deprive the Soviet Union of its character as the headquarters of international red revolution."

Library Signpost

By Rev. Benedict Ehmann

Cues and Clues

If a Quiz master asked you to think in eights, you might after a little racking think of the eight Beatitudes, but I don't think you would remember that the Catholic Evidence Library is eight years old this week. Eight is a kind of "in between" number, and so the birthday is being let pass unobserved, even so much as a cake. It is time to say Thanks once again to the valuable volunteers who have kept the Library alive this long, with nothing in return but what a love of good books can give them, and of course, a remembrance in the founder's prayers and Masses.

"Lest wild acquaintance be forgot, stop in and revisit the Library if you have been long away. The stock of books is now on its way to the 1800 mark and in all those titles there must surely be some 20 or 30, at least, to fill your bill exactly.

Imagine having Maritain or Adler or Nosses or Cardinal Newman or St. Paul for your personal friend, calling you up to ask whether you will be at home this evening for a visitor. Most certainly, how soon will you come? And then an evening full of the bracing feast of thought.

The next best thing to that is to commune with these thinkers and devout people in their books. In fact, there is even an advantage in it over the personal visit. With a book, there is not any shyness or constraint. You can stop, when the author says it over again, even three or four times, without fearing that he may consider you a very stupid person indeed.

Books therefore are a means of communion with the very best minds and hearts in the world. Let us choose these friends wisely, and they will open up vistas of unimagined power and beauty on life. The Catholic Evidence Library is proud to introduce "well which one will it be?" Come in and make your choice.

An early (1916) novel of John Buchan has just been reissued. It is called The Power House, a fascinating tale of intrigue about a secret society, known as The Power House, which aims to get control of the world by seizing its key positions. Written in Buchan's competent yarn-spinning style, it will while away a couple of hours of a winter evening, and at the same time give you a few slants on actual affairs of today.

For instance: our civilization seems as solidly entrenched as the skyscrapers which carry on its business. We can hardly imagine a world without the British Empire or the United States. It might shock us to know that there are men who not only feel that a change would be easy, but are actually working to effect that change. They are the masters of Germany and Russia, with their fuglemen all over the world.

In this book, one of them says: "Reflect, and you will find that the foundations are sand. You think that a wall as solid as the earth separates civilization from barbarism. I tell you the division is a thread, a sheet of glass. A touch here, a push there, and you bring back the reign of Saturn."

When he is reminded that there are too many key points in the civilized world to be pushed over all at once—keys that are strongly held, he answers: "Not so strongly as you think. Consider how delicate the machine is growing. As life grows more complex, the machinery grows more intricate and therefore more vulnerable. Your so-called sanctions become so infinitely numerous that each in itself is

Remember the English are fighting for their life. Their backs are to the wall. On some days, as the news comes in from Russia and the rest of the Continent, England seems to be in a perfectly desperate situation. With all the distraction offered by Russia, which at the time these words are written is still holding some five million Nazi soldiers occupied, England considers herself in no position to strike a blow on the Western Front or, for that matter, on the Eastern or Southern Front. In a word she seems "up against it." The Tablet suffers no illusion on that score. Its editors are not fools for optimism, nor are they mad jingoes. They see and they know.

But badly as they need the Russian alliance, these English Catholics are not permitting their neighbor the great London Times to say or to suggest untrue things about the Soviet Union—Russia is the headquarters of International Red Revolution. Don't forget it. Don't imagine you can change the character of the government by dropping one name of it "Soviet" and calling it by the other "Russia." The Tablet is not hostile to the idea of fighting side by side with the Soviet to defeat Hitler. But it will not on that account allow the Times to "get away with a dishonest or ingenuere or illogical statement."

That's what I mean when I say that the English Catholic papers are in general honest. I could select instances to the contrary here and there in the English Catholic Press. But characteristically they live to the line.

I mentioned to express the hope in that article of a few weeks ago that if we get deeper and deeper into the present war in fact all the way into a shooting war and if when we are in that war, defeat and humiliation seems imminent, we shall still continue to be honest and speak the truth, whether it tells for us or against us.

I am confident that most of our Catholic papers will do so. As for the secular papers here in America, they run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, like the London Times. They fulminate incessantly and rightly against Nazi tyranny and Nazi oppression of religion and until very lately they fulminated equally against Soviet tyranny and Soviet oppression of religion. But have you not noticed that they have "jumped down" on the Soviets? They abandon the "hunting of the truth" because at the moment it seems inconvenient. And we are not in the war? How far the English newspapers will go in suppressing or concealing the truth about the Soviet government if we go into the war as Soviet allies we can only guess.

To the Catholic press in this instance as in the matter of Spain and Mexico, and a half hundred others will remain in the duty of telling the truth though the heavens fall.

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They are strongly by our tacit agreement not to question them.

His interlocutor retorts that the goodwill of civilization will help to support this agreement and will keep its machinery going. The conspirator replies: "You have put your finger on the one thing that matters. Civilization is a conspiracy. What value would your police be if every criminal could find a sanctuary across the Channel or your law courts find no other tribunal recognized by their decisions? Modern life is the silent compact of comfortable folk to keep up pretences. And it will succeed till the day comes when there is another compact to strap them bare."

A little mechanical device will wreck your noses. A new chemical combination will upset every rule of war. It is the same with commerce. One or two minute changes might sink Britain to the level of Ecuador or give China the key of the world's wealth. And yet we never dream that these things are possible. We think our cables of sand are the ramparts of the universe.

You can read the rest of it in the excellent Lullier. You see we have been so misty to thinking of things as supreme in themselves that they have come to be looked on as unchangeable. But in the meantime a profound change has happened in the minds of men, and with the power of mind over matter a new use is given to things.

Science was to go forward giving us ever new and better blessings. And with its advance men would automatically grow better and better. Now we find its blessings are curses and hell for loose. We forgot that Science can give only power, not goodness.

As the hero of Buchan's thriller puts it at the end: "Do you know what it is to deal with a pure intelligence, a brain stripped of every shred of humanity? It is like being in the company of a snake."

The author was not consciously making a prophecy of 1941 back in 1916. But that is the nub of the destructive revolution of today. (You may get this novel from the Catholic Evidence Library.)

Five Years Ago--

—in the files of the CATHOLIC COURIER

From Nov. 3, 1936, Edition

The year's achievements in Catholic Schools of the diocese, the enrollment figures, and the outlook for the schools' future were commented upon in the annual report of the Rev. John M. Duffy superintendent, Catholic Schools, Diocese of Rochester.

The canon that the Vatican had loaned money from Peter's Pence collection to the Italian government for advancing the war in Ethiopia which appeared in Revue Politique Parlementaire of Paris drew a crushing denial from Osservatore Romano Vatican newspaper.

For the first time since St. Charles Borromeo Church of Elmira Heights was constructed 32 years previously the strains of a pipe organ were heard following the blessing ceremony conducted by the Rt. Rev. Msgr. John J. Lee, V.F.

Feast Days

- Sunday, Nov. 3.—ST. THEODORE TYRO.
Monday, Nov. 4.—ST. ANDREW AVELLINO.
Tuesday, Nov. 5.—ST. MARTIN OF TOURS.
Wednesday, Nov. 6.—ST. MARTIN, POPE.
Thursday, Nov. 7.—ST. STANISLAUS KOSTKA.
Friday, Nov. 8.—ST. JOSEPHAT.
Saturday, Nov. 9.—ST. ALBERT THE GREAT.

EDITORIAL FEATURES

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Catholics In Non-Catholic Hospitals

By Rt. Rev. Msgr. Peter M. H. Wynhoven, Editor-In-Chief, Catholic Action of the South

Fran, I'm so upset and low. I've just been to the Presbyterian Hospital to see Myrtle. She's had a very serious operation.



Isn't she doing all, Cede? On yes, as well as can be expected, but she had a narrow escape and that makes me a shudder. You know, Fran, Myrtle doesn't come on a very plain Catholic home.

I asked her tonight if she had the priest, and she said that nobody had given that a thought in the excitement.

Did you notify her parish priest, Cede?

Yes, at once. I asked her if she didn't want to see her pastor? She said, Sure, Cede, I'd love to have him visit me. But then she got a little uneasy. "I'm out of danger, though aren't I?" I assured her on that score and I explained that a priest didn't come only when you were in extreme danger and I pointed out that his blessing would help to see her through safely on her way to recovery.

She must have felt much easier after your assurance. She isn't entirely out of the woods yet, Cede?

Well, you know Fran, so many things can happen after a serious operation even if the operation is successful. Anyhow, I'm sure her pastor will make her receive Holy Communion and bring her up spiritually.

You tipped him off as to her religious standing?

I did as well as I could, Fran, over the hospital phone. Why will Catholics want to go to a non-Catholic hospital when we have our own?

I know that girl would never have gone to the operating table unprepared and unfit to meet her Maker in a hospital managed by Sisters.

I'm sure it wouldn't have happened to a good Catholic, Fran. Sometimes it's the attending doctor's fault that a non-Catholic hospital is chosen because it's the only place he operates, so he says. But when the patient and the family insist that it must be a Catholic hospital, they find a way out, as a rule. Then in a city like this, where there are plenty of fine Catholic physicians and surgeons, who'll gladly accommodate the patient according to his religious inclinations and wishes?

You're right, Cede. In this town, no Catholic has a real excuse to jeopardize his spiritual well-being in a crisis.

They certainly do just that when they go to a place where God isn't kept, and there's very little thought of Him and where there's no priest near whom to suddenly a question of life or death.

You're right, of course, Cede.

There's one thing though that I can't understand about Catholic hospitals. As a rule they'll leave non-Catholic patients religiously alone when it comes to dying.

I'm afraid there lies more business instinct back of that than doing it charity.

How do you figure that, Fran?

Well, if a nun or the hospital chaplain approached a non-Catholic from a religious standpoint, there'd be danger that the word would go out by breach that the situation was used for proselyting purposes and.

And therefore go ahead and let a poor human creature die like a dog? Fran, that shouldn't be. The late Father Bowen a priest in Dubuque Iowa while a chaplain at the Catholic hospital started a Nurses' Apostolate.

What for, Fran? He'd found through a general survey, that in the Catholic hospitals throughout the states, sixty per cent of the sick and dying are non-Catholics. He discovered that most of them had no definite church affiliation and passed out of this life without any spiritual thought or religious consolation. He felt that we Catholics were derelict in our duty of mercy, so he organized the nurses in his hospital and gave them instruction in how to give spiritual comfort to well-blessed non-Catholics at their dying moments.

That's a very thoughtful idea, Fran.

Yes, the prayer he composed, which can be recited for Jews, Protestants and Catholics alike, is most touching and inspirational. And there is absolutely no suspicion created that the attending Catholic nurse, whether in a private home or a hospital, is out for a conversion. The prayer not only helps the dying to expire more peacefully, but it is so simple and true that it also affects the bystanders.

Is it applicable for everybody?

Yes, even a fervent orthodox Jew will breathe it with devotion if one sentence is left out.

When was this Nurses' Apostolate organized, Fran?

In 1925, but it has been a little slow in spreading because Father Bowen got sick and shortly thereafter died.

And has its promotion been dropped?

No, the present pastor of the St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Dubuque and the wife of a judge, Mrs. Anna Stuel, who worked with Father Bowen are very much interested in seeing the Apostolate organized in all Catholic hospitals in the country. It's one of Archbishop Beckman's parish projects for Catholic Action.

Can't we write to them for all the necessary information and literature so that we can biggest Sister Superior at our hospital? I know her pretty well and Dad is doing some work for the hospital right now. For sure, I can talk to her without giving the names of the we are battling in.

Cede, I'd gladly go with you after we have sufficient information, but I don't quite see that's battling in. Our best way to help to promote the aim for which Catholic hospitals are organized.

Of course, Fran, but you've now some people react to a suggestion they're up to them, are criticizing them for neglecting their duty.

We gain double when we have a brother at the grave of our own humiliation. St. John Francis Regis

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of Christ's career. Without hesitation, he placed his petition before Him. "Come and place Thy hand upon her and she will return to life."

Christ went with the father, and raised the girl to life. He did not discuss with him first of all the fact that the daughter would rise on the last day, as he did with Mary and Martha when they told him their brother Lazarus was dead. The prayer of the sisters to Jesus did not ask so directly that he restore Lazarus to the number of the living. "If Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died, but now I know that whatsoever Thou shalt ask of God, God will give it thee."

Faith tells the Christian soul that death has lost us snug in the wonderful Redemption Jesus has purchased for all those near to us go down to death, leaving us to sorrow, but not as those who have no hope. The saving power of Christ will affect the body even as it affects the soul. Body and soul share in the effects of the Redemption. The life of Heaven shall be following the last day, a life of body and soul. Of every one who dies, Christ says to the sorrowing survivors the same words he spoke to the Ruler of Sunday's Gospel: "This father, mother, brother, sister, child will return to life." Christ's power shall be made manifest in the case of every man and woman that dies in the Lord. Death shall be no more! Christ, Who came that man might have life and have it more abundantly, shall manifest His saving power over all men when on the last day He brings about their return to life.