

Library Signpost

Balancing Up The Year Ahead

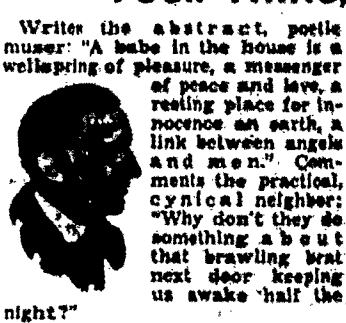
By Rev. Benedict Ehmann

Catholics ought not to let the liabilities of 1942 make them forget its assets, to wit: 1. Grace, which makes us children of the Father and spiritual blood-brothers of Jesus Christ, and which gives us citizenship papers for Heaven; 2. Faith, which enables us to know God as He is in Himself, and to know the business of life according to God's view of it; 3. Hope, which helps us see this life as the vestibule of eternity, and strengthens us to hold on through present distress awaiting the fulfillment that will come to the sons of God; 4. Charity, which empowers us to love God as He loves Himself, and to love our neighbor with a divine love; 5. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit, to wit, Wisdom, Understanding, Knowledge, Counsel, Fortitude, Piety, and Fear of the Lord, which assist our minds and wills and affections to produce acts of a divine character; 6. The Sacraments, which will continue to bestow, nourish, heal, and mature God's children for Heaven; 7. The Church, with its consecrated leaders empowered to lead God's flock into green pastures of truth and life, and with its community in the Christ-life, uniting us all in one bond of fellowship; 8. Prayer, which, in union with Christ and the Christian fellowship, is the mightiest power we have mightier for future peace and order than all the armaments and defense organization of the world, and therefore to be kept working on a 7-day week, 24-hour day basis; 9. Good Works, which, again in union with Christ and the Christian fellowship, are an extension of Christ's redeeming work for the salvation of the world, to wit, the corporal works of mercy, feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, visiting the sick and those in prison, and burying the dead; and the spiritual works of mercy, counselling the doubtful, instructing the ignorant, admonishing the sinner, comforting the sorrowful, forgiving injuries, bearing wrongs patiently, and praying for the living and the dead; 10. The Holy Mass, in which the Christian fellowship offers itself in sacrifice in union with Jesus' Sacrifice, and receives the pledge of the Fa-

ther's love in Holy Communion; Item 11. Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, dwelling near us to receive us, and Christ within us by grace, bearing our burdens and doing good through us to others; Item 12. The Love of Mary and the Saints, blessing our way, and mothering our weakness. No matter how bad 1942 or the years after may turn out to be, they cannot take these things from us. These are the things that really count. These are the substance, and all else is shadow. When all other things have passed away, and all the sound and fury have died out, and all passion is spent, these things shall remain. We have them now, while the sound and the fury and the passion are raging. We must hold on to them with faith, awaiting the issue with love and patience, helping to "redeem the time" with the powers that we have in the state of grace. The Catholic Evidence Library wishes such a 1942 to its friends, and invites them to visit us frequently for the books which, in thoughtful hours, they may absorb so as to deepen their appreciation of the wonderful assets of the Catholic Faith.

1942's promise of hope for the future does not lie with the Big Chiefs, but with the Little People who are faithful to God, silent and patient with Christ as, in His Mystical Body, He hangs on the Cross through the centuries. Christ's symbol is the Cross and not the academic gown. The Kingdom of God is opened to little children and not necessarily to important people or intellectual and spiritual careerists. By all means should the Faith be understood, more and more deeply comprehended, and the intelligent faithful rendered articulate, through their philosophy, to the modern generation; but when all is said and done, Christianity is a supernatural life and not merely a doctrine, and not a philosophy; the Brotherhood of Men is a life in Christ, and not a social theory; the essential Christian apologetic radiates from an inner Eucharistic life and not from a brilliant mental equipment. The world is hungry for an elite, but such crusaders are not self-chosen and self-advertised or selected by men; they are chosen by God - of the order of grace. The characteristics whereby all men may know them are humility, love of God and self-abandonment to God's will. These men are to be found in all classes. To save our Faith and homes in this present crisis, we must turn for help to the small people - generous, selfless, God-centered souls. So writes the Dominican Father, Ferdinand Valentine, in the English Catholic review, Blackfriars (June, 1941).

BARBAROUS BABIES by Right Rev. Msgr. Peter M. H. Weyhoven Editor-in-Chief, Catholic Action of the South 'POOR THING, TOO YOUNG'



Writes the abstract, poetic muses: "A babe in the house is a wellspring of pleasure, a messenger of peace and love, a resting place for innocence on earth, a link between angels and men." Comments the practical, cynical neighbor: "Why don't they do something about that bawling brat next door keeping us awake half the night?" A great and almost common mistake made in child raising is to postpone the training to a time when much harm has already been done by indulgence. Correction should begin from the very moment a child is born. You hear the argument in answer to this advice: "The poor thing is too young to realize any wrong, so let it be." And you proceed to hold it or rock it or walk the floor with it for hours. By so doing, you defeat your own argument, for, if a child is too young to understand a little corrective determination on the part of parents, it also should be too young to appreciate pampering and spoiling. But does it? No. You maintain it's the only way to pacify it and keep it quiet. However, by this assertion you grant that it must understand in some way or other. And it does. It is for this reason, then, that a healthy, normal, baby will quickly get accustomed to the idea after a few days or nights of cold-blooded insistence on your part. If you wish to term it so - that all its "cutting up" is not getting it anywhere.

to its tantrums, will substitute for that essential need. It may be annoying and it may become almost hopelessly wearisome for a short while, but insistence that the child submit to what is good for its own well-being will forestall much sorrow and trouble in the future. "Baby, don't!" may be an expression vehemently objected to by the learned modern scholars and educators who advocate self-expression for youth. Self-expression is excellent; it should be encouraged in children old enough and sufficiently well drilled in appreciation of the virtues that make for a happy social order. But self-expression in the bits of humanity means the reaction of little animals, for babies are innately miniature barbarians, and many of them, if let alone, develop into veritable tyrants. Hence, their wrong inclinations should be curbed as early as possible. They must learn to submit their little wills, or rather their animal instincts to the judgment of reasoning persons.

The order, "Baby, don't!" won't mean a thing to them as a reasoned mental reaction, but it will pretty soon register its meaning if something disagreeable is attached to the sound of those words. A young dog has no idea what's meant by your command "Down!" but if, the first time, you gently force him to do what you wish, and next, you firmly hold him to it, he will soon know what "Down" means and what is expected from him. This method has to be employed with babies, for they are impervious to reasoning or to the meaning of words, and the sounds mean nothing unless they invariably are accompanied by repeated, identical physical actions.

Naturally, we get used to the pleasant more quickly than to the disagreeable. So it is with children. Coercion and force, in one way and another, provide in them the motivation for obedience. Most children, most people, are unhappy today because they were not allowed to submit to the will of others who had their best interests at heart.

The greatest benefit for any baby is rest and regularity; and no unreasonable pampering, or giving in

- Six Safeguards 1. Say nothing you would not like God to hear. 2. Do nothing you would not like God to see. 3. Write nothing you would not like God to read. 4. Go no place where you would not like God to find you. 5. Read no book of which you would not like God to say: "Show it to Me." 6. Never spend your time in a way that you would not like God to ask: "What are you doing now?"

If a single lie would save the human race from extinction, that lie could not be told. (W. Farrell, O.P.) Parents who, on account of lack of brains or incentive, or from self-indulgence or laziness, raise spoiled children, are the world's worst failures.

Sursum Corda

Finding Fun In St. Thomas Aquinas

By Rev. James M. Gilla, C.S.P.

If there is one subject to which I have returned more often than to any other in this column, it is that of popularizing Catholic philosophy, especially the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas. I have maintained that it can be done, and that it must be done if the people at large are to be saved from the devastating influence of false philosophies. Yes devastating. You may perhaps be tempted to think that "devastation" is caused only by war, pestilence, famine, earthquakes, tornadoes, tidal waves, and such. The truth is that false philosophies have done more harm to mankind than all these other scourges. I mustn't go off on that tangent. It would take not a column but a book. So, back to the idea of making true philosophy popular. I say it can be done. One reason I think so is that it has been done - in spots. One instance is the book A Companion to the Summa by Father Walter Farrell, O.P. It looks formidable - three big fat volumes thus far and more to come - but don't let that frighten you. For over a year now I have had it at the head of my bed and have been dipping into it incessantly. Perhaps that's why I don't sleep so well. Do I hear someone exclaim, "What! The Summa Theologica as a bed-time book?" Why not? Abbe Hogan used to tell us, when I was a student at Brighton Seminary, that the best spiritual reading of all was the Secunda Secundae of St. Thomas. And that was the original reason that I had it at hand the last thing at night. But now - I hope the Lord and Father Farrell will both forgive me - I keep it there partly for the fun that is in it. Fun in St. Thomas? Yes, in St. Thomas as Father Farrell presents him. For example, would you expect to find in what is at once a translation and a running commentary on the Summa, wit and humor and epigrammatic expressions? They are there. For example: speaking of the need of order in one's life (order is fundamental with St. Thomas), Father Farrell says, "This does not mean that a

badly cluttered desk or a pile of unwashed dishes in the sink is evidence of a satanic visitation." I wonder if anyone else ever discovered in the Summa so much as a hint of "unwashed dishes in a sink." On confusion of mind about things just and unjust: "The good intentions of champions of suicide, euthanasia, industrial laissez faire and birth control may be an inspiring thing; but the damage they do to society is not lessened by their sweet simplicity." On telling the truth, or rather on telling fibs: "When a wife asks her husband, 'How do I look?' She is not seeking a diagnosis; prudence will teach him to restrict his comments to a few large and fairly obvious objectives." However, we must not fib too much or too often: "Imagine the turmoil if bus conductors, ticket agents and traffic policemen answered all questions with artistically fluent lies; indignation would be a timid word for the outburst of the explorer in search of Brooklyn who was deposited in the Bronx."

Again: "No matter how much of a nervous re-late it may be for a man to commit murder, no matter how innocently he deprives a laborer of his wages, no matter what pleasure it may give him or how much good it may do the State to chuck a crooner - these things remain unjust."

"A doctor is seriously obliged to know something of surgery before he throws open his beautifully equipped operating room to defenseless patients; a priest must know moral theology before he opens the confessional slide; and a wife should know something of the fundamentals of cookery before she serves up the products of her art." "It is easy to deal with a boaster: all we need do is listen, sprinkling our silence with appropriate exclamations. 'Oh, 'Ah, 'How Wonderful.' But it is a much more serious problem to deal with the belliter who says, 'I haven't a brain in my head, or 'Now wasn't that a silly thing for me to do?'" The author of this unique and delightful interpretation of the mind of St. Thomas doesn't hesitate to make a point by reference to a Saturday Evening Post cartoon, or to the driver, who on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington or some other of its "blasting streets" starts in one direction and finds himself going in the other.

Or consider this quietly humorous sentence that ruins a whole philosophy: "Even a poet cannot lie long on the bosom of Mother Nature. The picture of nature as a kindly mother and man as easily mastered are fictions of the French Encyclopedists concocted from the dreams by which they tried to escape the gutters of Paris. Nature is not the type of friend to be chosen for a stroll along a dark quiet street; at least not only she has been searched for weapons."

In place of humor often Father Farrell throws in an epigram: "Petitness in human nature is as revolting as squalor in a hospital or laughter at a funeral."

I wouldn't give the impression that all those pleasantries interfere with the solid worth of this amazing treatise. On the contrary. Thus far three volumes have appeared. There are to be four. I know one reader who will pounce upon the remaining one when it appears with eager anticipation. For philosophy after this fashion is, as Plato said, "a dear delight."

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Quote--End Quote

The real democratic idea is, not that every man shall be on a level with every other, but that every-one shall have liberty, without hindrance, to be what God made him. - Henry Ward Beecher.

Sursum Corda should be the word of encouragement for hearts created for God, and whose capacity He alone can satisfy. - Mother Mary Aikenhead.

Five Years Ago--

-in the files of the CATHOLIC COURIER

From Dec. 31, 1936, Edition Catholic faithful in Germany were exhorted by their Bishops to stand firm against the temptation to succumb to the pressure brought by Nazi authorities upon parents and employes and to be ready to "endure through Christ and their own consciences, even graver and more extreme sacrifices."

Archbishop Mooney pontificated at a Solemn Funeral Mass in St. Ann's Church, Hornell, for the Rev. James Haughton, who had been stricken with a heart attack while celebrating Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve in the Chapel of St. James' Mercy Hospital.

The Rev. John F. Muckle, pastor of St. Thomas' Church attending a Rochester Rally of "Friends of Spanish Democracy," challenged the statements of four imported speakers and declared that the Catholic Church is as much opposed to Fascism as to Communism.

EDITORIALS

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HIS NAME WAS CALLED JESUS

For the sinner who has just left the way of evil, for the faithful soul which has been devoted to the Lord, for the soul that is close to perfection, the Name of Jesus is a name of power. Its very meaning speaks of the salvation that Jesus came to bring. The soul steeped in sin has been called back by Jesus. Temptation is still strong, remorse is a constant danger, a sense of unworthiness strives to alienate the converted soul from its new state. Then the name of Jesus is on the lip, the love of the Saviour in the heart, the power of the Holy Name is invoked to secure perseverance in good. The devout soul knows that from Jesus must come the graces that feed its devotion, that stir up in its mind thoughts of spiritual worth, that lead it along the way of sanctity. Therefore, that soul constantly calls on the Name of Jesus, faithfully looks to it as a name of power. The soul confirmed in virtue, already walking the path of salvation, finds its solace and strength in the Holy Name of Jesus. Perfection consists in that love of Jesus that will keep the soul closely united to Him. Only the goodness of Christ in coming to earth and dying for man could bring about that change in the human soul that makes it as a child of God. All the sweetness of the spirit of Christ, all His saving power, all His consuming love, is summed up in that one title given Him by the Angel: therefore, does the perfect soul find its most lasting strength in calling on the Holy Name of Jesus.