

Library Signpost

Books For The Soldiers

By Rev. Benedict Ebanon

I would like to add a few footnotes to the appeal of the Victory Book Campaign.

Every Catholic adult ought to donate at least one book for the use of the men in our armed services.

It ought to be not any old castaway book, but something considered, even if it means buying one.

Catholics ought to give books with at least a little spiritual appeal. There will be plenty of the other kind given by the rank and file.

Many soldiers, so I am told, want a certain amount of serious reading. Consider: the world is in turmoil, and they are in the thick of it; they want something that will help them make head or tail out of it.

One of the greatest movements of modern times began when a wounded soldier read the lives of the saints for the first time in his life. Here, he thought, are better heroes than himself, fighting in a worthier cause. When his wound was healed, he enlisted his life for Christ, and recruited a militia of prayer and preaching which saved tens of thousands for the Church. That was 400 years ago. The man was Ignatius Loyola, and his militia was the Society of Jesus.

God's ways are always wonderful, and who can say that there may not be some wounded soldier of our present time destined to be God's special man of the future? And it may all start out of some lamed and faded book which will come his way.

Ed Doherty was not a soldier, but he had the rough and ready stuff of which soldiers are made. He was America's ace reporter, a fallen away Catholic. He was knocked off his feet at last by a book. And the book was not one of Ernest Hemingway's, cheery and hefty and running with sweat or saliva. It was the Autobiography of the Little Flower.

This is the way Ed Doherty tells it: "That night, lying in bed, in a room at the Book Cadillac, I took up the Autobiography of the Little Flower, yawned, and began to read. I intended merely to glance through it, but once I started to read those enchanted pages I could not put the book aside. Even after I had finished them, at three o'clock in the morning, I must hold the book in my hands for an hour or more, and rub tear-wet fingers over its covers. No book has ever so stirred me, as did that simple, beautiful story written by a girl in her twenties, a nun shivering in her cold little cell as she wrote."

That was the beginning of Ed Doherty's return to his Father's house. And the way he got the book in the first place is one of those strange things that are often said to be stranger than fiction. It all happened on account of Father Coughlin. You can read about it in Doherty's book, Gall and Honey. I hope some copies will get to the United Service Organizations for the boys in uniform.

Think over the boys you know in the service. They're not all read-alouds, are they? "The Boy, the Brave, the Beautiful..." Boys often at the altar rail. Boys friendly with the priest. Boys decent with girls. They want a little more than Philo Vance and Booth Tarkington when they read. Something we need them may help them clear a hurdle, and maybe all the hurdles ahead.

I'm not glamorizing camp life. Certain phases of it are pretty sloppy, from all I've heard. But there's just the point. The really decent margin know that they need a constant bracing to shake off the nastiness. The in-betweeners who veer with the wind will veer with a good wind, too. So all of us Catholics ought to get together, ourselves personally and our societies, and send a book-kit to the USO.

Here are five book-kits from which I intend to make my selection:

BOOK-KIT I.

1. The Bible (Douai-Rheims version).
2. The Imitation of Christ.
3. Chesterton's Father Brown Stories.
4. Collected Works of Joyce Kilmer.
5. Great Feasts, by Hugh Francis Blunt.

BOOK-KIT II.

1. The Bible.
2. The Living Thoughts of St. Paul, edited by Maritain.
3. House of Hospitality, by Dorothy Day.
4. Wind, Sand and Stars, by Antoine de St. Exupery (For Flyers).
5. Edmund Campion, by Evelyn Waugh.

BOOK-KIT III.

1. The Bible.
2. This War Is the Passion, by Houslander.
3. A Soldier's Confession with God, by Giosue Borsi.
4. Gall and Honey, by Edward Doherty.
5. Mr. Blue, by Myles Connolly.

BOOK-KIT IV.

1. The Bible.
2. Autobiography of St. Therese.
3. The Masterful Monk, by Owen Francis Dudley.
4. Fish on Friday, by Leonard Feeney.
5. Spanish Lover, by Frank H. Spearman.

BOOK-KIT V.

1. The Bible.
2. The Life of Christ, by Isidore O'Brien, O.F.M.
3. Problems Island, by Francis Clement Kelley.
4. The Inner Life of the Catholic, by Archbishop Goodier.
5. The Long Tomorrow, by Evelyn Voss Wine.

The Victory Book Campaign closes officially tomorrow (Saturday, Jan. 24). We can leave our books at any firehouse, any branch Public Library, the Central Library, or at Red Cross Headquarters. But this need not close our activity. We could send a kit at any time, direct to one of the camps, through one of our local chaplains, or through one of the boys in service whom we know. The books can be ordered through one of our Catholic agents: Trant's, Prodmore's or Tucker's. Societies, please take notice and be sponsors of a book-kit.

Sorsum Corda

'Bad News Is Good For Us'

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

That rather startling axiom, "Bad News Is Good For Us," comes, not as you might suppose from a commentator on what is happening in the Pacific, but from a book reviewer, Lewis Gannett in the New York Herald Tribune. After some favorable comments on a book by Frederick L. Schuman, entitled "Design for Power; the Struggle for the World," Mr. Gannett balances his critique by gently chiding Mr. Schuman for describing the Japanese as "barking dogs unable to bite." Obviously Mr. Schuman's book was written before the incident at Pearl Harbor. It was his misfortune that what was sent to the printer before that minor debacle (which by the way may turn out not to be so very "minor") did not come from the publishers until the Japanese had demonstrated that they could really bite.

Mr. Gannett deprecates the custom of underestimating your opponent. Not to speak of the danger of your being licked if you guess wrong, there is the humiliation of being licked by an enemy you have pook-pooked. Such belittling is a common custom among prize-fighters. Generals, good generals—don't indulge in it. There is no evidence available, either documentary or traditional, that Wellington called Napoleon a "bum" and the French army a "pushover." Grant didn't call Robert E. Lee a "palooka." There are rumors that certain officers of our navy in the Pacific were itching to get at the Japanese and boasted "We will clean them off the ocean in three weeks." We hear those rumors but the names are given of the officers who said it. It couldn't have been an admiral, a captain or even a lieutenant commander. It must have come from a mere boy writing home to his ma.

No reasonable person, and by the same token, no truly patriotic American goes around "sneering off his mouth" and belittling the enemy. The nations of Europe made that mistake about Hitler. What was he, they said, but a house painter. As it turned out, he preferred to paint landscapes rather than houses, and his favorite color was blood-red. If the English had taken that painter as seriously as the French did in 1932 or even in 1936, there might have been no war. But the idea had been "sold" to them that Hitler was a kind of combination of a neurotic and a comic. Too much attention was paid to his moustache, and not enough to the fact that he was the accepted leader of a powerful people with a huge genius for military affairs.

So I think Mr. Gannett's chiding of Mr. Schuman has an importance as something more than a book review. We must not make the same mistake about the Japanese that the English made about the Nazis. Perhaps, therefore, the humiliating experience at Pearl Harbor may do us good, in the long run, that is to say, in the long battle.

But there is something deeper than that in the axiom "Bad News Is Good For Us." It's a matter of psychology, and especially of American psychology. We are not a simple, credulous, glibble, un-

sophisticated people. Some editors, some radio commentators think we are. They don't know us. We are a skeptical people especially in matters pertaining to politics and to war news. Years ago we picked up and later on we dropped the habit of saying "Oh, Yeah." As a saying it is outmoded. But the mental attitude remains. We don't like to be fed comforting lies in place of disturbing truths. "Milk for babes, meat for men," said St. Paul, and we say it after him. As Mr. Gannett puts it, "America, like England, thrives on bad news and hesitates when fed pap." News censors—and should I say news manipulators, news manufacturers, news creators—would do well to study American mentality before releasing the kind of news they think will buck us up. If ever we get to distrust them, their shrewdness will work in reverse.

So let's have the real news, good when it's good and bad when it's bad. If the English can "take it," we can "take it." If being bombed with bombs doesn't knock the spirit out of them, our being bombed with bad news should not make us downhearted. It's a pity, of course, that there should be bad news to report. But good or bad, let's have it. Good news is good for morale. But bad news is also good for morale. The only thing that's bad is a doubt that we are getting the truth. (Copyright, 1942, N.C.W.C.)

Five Years Ago--

—in the files of the CATHOLIC COURIER

From Jan. 21, 1937, Edition

Using the Soviet's own sources, the Rt. Rev. Mgr. Fulton J. Sheen answered the challenge of the Daily Worker, official organ of Communism in the United States, and exposed the statement made declaring that the Communists loved the poor and hated war.

In a new attack upon the Catholic Church, the Methodist Federation for Social Service by distorting the words of His Holiness, Pope Pius XI, stated in a press release that the Vatican had taken a Pro-Franco, Pro-Fascist position. The Federation's activities drew denouncement from the Methodist Episcopal Church.

First parish credit union in the diocese was formed in Holy Family Parish, Rochester.

A club for study of motion pictures was formed by Elmira Deacons Council, National Council of Catholic Women with a program covering knowledge, appreciation and securing of better films, loyal support of the Legion of Decency and active participation in the Little Theater Movement.

According to the OPM, the country faces a paper shortage. If the scores of sex and crime magazines were put on the deferred list, thousands of tons of paper would be saved, and the periodicals that have something to contribute to American ideals and principles would not be in danger of having to cut down through lack of paper or higher costs. The Michigan Catholic.

BARBAROUS BABIES

By Right Rev. Mgr. Peter M. H. Wynhoven, Editor-in-Chief, Catholic Action of the South

PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT

"It hurts me more than it does you, Richie." This much-employed declaration on the part of the punishing parent may often do great harm. As far as Richie is concerned, it is not infrequently a lie, because the stinging pain somewhere on his anatomy, according to his way of thinking exceeds anything he sees his father or mother suffer. Therefore, never make this statement after administering cool, deliberate, physical punishment.

But, first, let us consider: In the infliction of corporal pain necessary in child raising?

It seems to be agreed that obedience is the cornerstone on which depends future beneficence and usefulness. A person with all the finest talents, but who will brook no interference with his personal notions, and to whom law and order mean nothing, will prove a nuisance at home and an undesirable in society, for he will go counter to divinely instituted order. He will be a weakling in spite of his other natural or acquired assets, because he will be unable to govern himself. Napoleon said, "The greatest conqueror in the world is he who can master himself." And "The Little Corporal" could speak from bitter experience.

The idea of obedience should be cultivated in the child's makeup from its tenderest years. And delay in doing this serves absolutely no purpose, but it will make the task more difficult and painful later on, and not rarely, practically impossible.

Now, how can obedience be instilled in a poor little thing who doesn't understand yet? That's exactly it. It is no use arguing with a little one when it is being fed with a spoon, and it knocks spoon and contents over the floor. Your arguments that this is not done in polite society, that it is a waste of food and creates extra unnecessary work, won't take effect. Baby won't give a hoot about all that kind of chatter, because baby does not understand. But the little one will understand what is meant by a good slap on its offending little hand. This done, repeated as often as necessary, will bring the desired results in no time. The principle of obedience will dawn in that unreasoning little mind.

The crawling and toddling age is the most interesting period in one's life. It is the time of thrilling adventure, the year of travel, sight-

seeing, discovery and invention. It really is too bad that we cannot remember and in later life enjoy our infantile escapades of those days. But our innocent fun was short-lived because every time we upset the milk pitcher on the table and saw the white fluid trickle down the Niagara Falls (only more interesting), or we scratched up the parlor door, or we broke the mirror in mother's dresser with a hairbrush, we were rudely stopped with many scolded words and a certain pain. We could not figure out the words, but we felt the pain; and we soon realized what was meant by the word, "Mamma 'spank.'" We were quickly sold to the idea of obedience, although we did not understand, except that it annoyingly interfered with our peaceful progress through life.

As long as a child is too young to be reasoned with, infliction of physical punishment is about the only argument that can bring desired results. The older the child grows, the less this type of correction should be resorted to. Whenever it is employed, it should be the last means and should be administered with utmost judgment. Never spank a child while your temper is out of control, nor should you, on the other hand, make the mistake of going at it with cool deliberation; avoid, above all things, giving the impression that you are unreasonably mean.

Parents, at all times, should study how to maintain their children's love, confidence and respect. These natural sentiments in every child's heart and mind are sometimes jeopardized by wrong handling of the child by the parents themselves.

There is no keener embarrassment for a mother or father than to be disobeyed in company by one of their four- or five-year-old children. It denotes a pitiful weakness and neglect. Maternal excuses and explanations sound so silly under the circumstances! However, this painful situation will very rarely occur if obedience has been gently but firmly insisted on from babyhood.

The path of least resistance may be easier; it is so simple to let the baby have its way with the false or ignorant subterfuge that "the poor thing is too young yet." However, the excellent mother who makes an intelligent effort for the children's sake must feel immensely rewarded when it is said, "Aren't her children well raised?" The satisfaction is double in the knowledge of "wished approval from man and God."

EDITORIALS

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That all may have opportunity to subscribe to and read the Official Newspaper of the diocese, a Crusade will be carried out during Catholic Press Month with the purpose of selling every diocesan copy of the month and value of the COURIER to the individual. Keep in mind that the COURIER is your paper, is for your advantage and instruction, to help you be an educated and well-informed member of the Catholic Church. Take it, read it, recommend it to your friends! Yours for a successful Catholic Press Month!

SAY ONLY THE WORD!

The Centurion's words have come down through the centuries to all members of Christ's Church. They are words of faith, of confidence in the divine power of healing that dwells in Christ unto the curing of bodily ills. They are words that speak to us today, as they have spoken to our forebears, of the divine power of healing that dwells in Christ unto the curing of the ills of the soul.

"Say only the word!" The servant was far from Christ, yet was near to Him. The servant prayed for himself, but had also a strong advocate in the Centurion, his master. Both prayed the prayer of faith: both recognized the divine power of Christ. The Centurion was a Roman soldier, but he saw in Christ the Son of God; He knew of His power to cure the sick; He knew that power knew no limit of time or space. He knew it was not necessary for Christ to be at the bedside of the servant in order to heal him. Therefore, he prayed to Christ: "Say only the word!"

Before every Communion, we say with the priest the same prayer to Christ: "Say only the word!" Unworthy that He should enter under our roof, enter into our body and soul, we pray for pardon: "Say only the word!" The same power that healed the servant of the Centurion, shall also the wounds of our soul. The same power shall make us ready to receive worthily the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion.