

Sermon Cards

Peace and Rest

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

Reading Katherine Burton's newest book, *The Strange Land* I caught myself repeating inwardly a sentence alleged to have been written on a slate in a spiritualistic trance. The alleged writer of the ghost message was no less a personage than John Henry Newman. The circumstances have nothing to do with this piece but as a bit of odd information they may interest the reader.

When I was a student priest at the Catholic University, the city of Washington was—if I may use the expression—fairly crawling with spiritists. One of them was particularly famous. He was reported to have conveyed messages from the other world to Senators and Representatives, diplomats and other statesmen. His best advertised exploit was a communication to the Chinese Ambassador in the Chinese language from one of the Ambassador's ancestors in the beyond. Having a chance to see some hundreds of those slates with the "ghost writing" (not what we call ghost writing nowadays but the real thing) on them, I pounced upon one supposedly written by the unearthly hand of Cardinal Newman who had been dead for ten or twelve years. In each case not only the message but the actual handwriting was supposed to be that of the departed. I took the Newman slate home and compared the writing of Newman in heaven with some he had actually done on earth. They did not agree. But what matters was the message. "I have found my peace and my rest."

Perhaps that sentence had not come to mind since student days, but it repeated itself somewhere inside me while I was reading Mrs. Burton's biographical sketches of notable American converts to the faith, Father Hecker, Orestes Brownson, Lewis Thomas Watson (Father Paul), Brother Dutton (companion and successor to Father Damien), Cornelia Connolly (perhaps the most dramatic career of all), Sophia Ripley Selden F. Delany, Father Tabb, Levi Silliman Ives (first Protestant bishop to return to the Church since the Reformation), Rose Hawthorne Lathrop, and others.

It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that within the covers of Mrs. Burton's book you have a cross-section of all humanity. Here are twenty persons, men, women, scholars, poets, philanthropists, some of Yankee origin and from sources that hated the Yankee (Father Tabb was an unreconstructed rebel), some of German blood, some English, some saints and some who had been sinners, most of them extraordinarily well educated, some of them men or women of positive genius, one of them (Brownson) perhaps the greatest intellect of his century, some married, some celibates, one a classmate and roommate of General Grant, Father Dehon, who remained characteristically the soldier under his religious habit—all in all a heterogeneous group, about as dissimilar one to another as you could find if you scoured the continent.

But they had one thing in common. Possessing the impulse to the Faith, they recognized it as divine and obeyed. "All roads lead to Rome?" Say more specifically, all roads lead to the Church. They started from every point of the spiritual compass but came, drawn by irresistible magnetism, to the Truth. It often has seemed to me that if I had been born outside the Catholic fold, but were to see and hear of this one and that one, this intellectual giant and that saint, this poet and that humanitarian, all, all, making their way along different lines to the one goal, the Church, I would ask myself, "What's in it?" and I hope I would have the grace and the courage to investigate and not to abandon my search until I had found what they found. St. Augustine tells of St. Ambrose who was beset with the interior question, "What these men and women have done, why cannot I do?" In that case it was the life of heroic sanctity. But the question is equally applicable to the usual life of the faithful.

But the most important fact is not that these persons of various racial and social and mental origins found the one same goal but that they found comfort and satisfaction for mind and heart. And that's what kept ringing in the ear of my memory as I went from one biography to the other and so to the end: they all seemed to say with Newman—this side of the grave and the other—"I have found my rest and my peace." Of course I need not say that I didn't accept that spiritualistic message. But one has to admit that the spiritist "medium" was clever. He hit upon the right sentiment. Newman had found his rest and his peace. But if one desires an undeniably authentic sentiment from the mind and the pen of the great Cardinal to fit the case of all these converts, it is in the epitaph composed by himself. *Ex umbris et imaginibus in lucem.* "Out of the shadows and the images into the light."

(Copyright, 1942, News)

FIVE and TEN Years Ago--

—in the files of the CATHOLIC COURIER

From May 6, 1927, Edition
"The Model of Perfect Manhood," a symposium on the Human Character of Jesus Christ, was presented by students of six colleges affiliated with the Western New York Sodality Conference at Nazareth Academy under auspices of Nazareth College Sodality.

From May 6, 1937, Edition
Virtually killing all hopes for the restoration of peace between Church and State in Germany, Chancellor Hitler in a May Day address at a public gathering in Berlin, voiced a threat that the Nazi regime would see to it that the churches opposing its totalitarian philosophies would be "repressed to the spiritual tasks which are theirs if they attempt by measures of any sort, letters, Encyclicals, etc., to arrogate to themselves rights which belong to the State."

The newly-formed Catholic Junior League, comprising all the young married women at Holy Family Church, Auburn, was planning to make its public debut in an amusing melodrama entitled "The Dead Sister's Secret."

EDITORIALS

(Continued from Page 12)

of us. It meant joy to the Apostles and to the Church at large, because Christ ascended into Heaven to send the Advocate, the Holy Ghost Who would abide with her forever. It meant joy to the world for on this occasion Christ directed the Angels of the Ascension to tell the world of His Second Coming.

Christ came from Heaven to bring Heaven to earth; Christ ascended into Heaven that He might bring the children of this earth to their eternal home in Heaven. Ascension Day should remind us of all Christ's goodness to us, of His desire that we shall be always with Him, of our eternal destiny which shall be completed on the last day when our body reunited to our soul by power of Christ's death and resurrection, shall go from earth to Heaven in the Glory of His Ascension.

MOTHERS DAY

"Every best gift and every perfect gift is from above; coming down from the Father of lights." Every man will naturally list his Mother as the best and most perfect gift God has given him in the natural order. And rightly so! God's goodness, God's solicitude, God's fostering care and Providence, for each one of us, has been reflected and made actual in the person of our Mother.

"From the Father of lights!" From the Almighty Whose delights from all eternity were to be with the children of men Whose goodness prompted Him to behold envisioned in His Divine Mind the countless millions of beloved children He would call into being; Whose Providence looked lovingly to the gifts with which He would surround His children on earth, to care for their every want, to supply their daily needs, to enable them to grow toward the perfection of human nature in which they were formed; Whose consuming love would not be satisfied till he had provided for each little child one who would be His representative in seeking always that which would be for the best interests of its soul and body.

"From the Father of lights!" Only the inscrutable wisdom of God could include in one personality all that a Mother means to each of us. Only the vision of Him Who dwells in light inaccessible could pattern for men the Ideal of every Christian Mother, Mary Most Holy. Through this gift our earliest years were lighted up with a smile that brought God's own glory to our infant eyes; our remotest attempts to know and to reason were blessed by the Mother who told us of God and of His love for us; who taught us to speak to him in the hushing accents of a baby's prayer; who blessed the dawn of our awakening intelligence with the brightness of Divine Truth.

Gladly today do we honor our Mother! Gladly do we recall all that she has meant to us in infancy, in childhood, in maturity of life! Dutifully do we acknowledge our debt of gratitude to her. In word and in deed do we follow her blessed guidance along the path of faith and duty that will bring us to Him Who gave us this best of gifts, the Father of Lights.

BUY MORE WAR BONDS!

Not all can bear arms, not all can administer military and civilian activities connected with the war; but all can help the nation win the war by purchasing more and more War-stamps and War Bonds.

The patriotic interest we have in helping our Government, and the absolute confidence we have in our Government, give a two-fold incentive to increasing our holdings of these War Stamps and Bonds.

At your Postoffice, through your shop, from your newspaper carrier boy, get your weekly or monthly supply of War Stamps, War Bonds.

ASK AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE

The Gospel for the Sunday before the Ascension stresses the value of prayer in the Name of Christ. The theme is carried over into the three weekdays preceding the Ascension. They are days of prayer, of petition, Rogation Days. The petition of these three days deals principally with material things: with the need for food that calls on us to petition Our Lord to bless our fields, make them fruitful, raise up in them food for the human family. The liturgical procession through the fields with the chanting of the Litany of the Saints with accompanying versicles and prayers, is a function of Rogation Days.

But Christ, about to leave us and ascend into Heaven, would not have us center our attention on the food of earth, which must pass away: He would have us also pray that He may dwell within us, to keep our thoughts fixed on the reward of Heaven that shall never pass away. Only then can our joy be full; when we possess Him as our Eternal Reward! Therefore, He urges us to "Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full."

Constant communing with Jesus is our precious privilege here on earth. Prayer is the unfailing means of communication with Him. There can be no interference with our message, no interruption because of adverse conditions; the way to Jesus is always clear and open. Leaving us to enter into Heaven, His last message was one of exhortation to prayer, to constant prayer. As we hope to be with Him eternally, let us find union with Him now through prayer!

'Quiz' Corner

If a Catholic is present when a Protestant is dying, can he do anything to help him?

We presume that the Protestant has no desire to die in the Catholic Church. The Catholic could suggest to the dying person thoughts of trust in God and repentance for sin. He could pray for him and talk to him as a friend, advise him of the meaning of death and urge him to put his confidence in a good and merciful God.

What is the youngest age at which a child may be permitted to receive Holy Communion?

The law of the Church indicates that a child who has attained the

use of reason should go to Confession and receive Holy Communion. Ordinarily this means seven years; but there are cases in which a child might be permitted to receive the Sacraments at an earlier age while there are other cases in which it should be deferred. One would be fully justified in following the advice of his pastor in this matter.

Doctor—I want to change the death certificate I gave you yesterday.

Coroner—What's wrong?

Doctor—I signed my name in the space marked "cause of death."

Two Fine Novels

By Rev. Benedict Newman

(A small corps of young people from the Catholic Parker group of Rochester has volunteered to serve the Catholic Evidence Library by preparing reviews of significant new books as they are being placed in the library. Today's reviewers are Mary Agnes Dunphy and John C. Dunphy.)

THE TIMELESS LAND, by Ernest Dark (Macmillan Co.)

Australia, hitherto ignored as holding little if any possibility for expansion and development, is now America's ally and stands out as one of the great hopes for the preservation of Western culture beyond the Pacific. It is from the great island Down that Ernest Dark draws its setting and offers an interesting speculation as to probable reasons for the great population cultures in Australia.

This is a novel which, uniquely enough, draws its merits not from a sensational romantic portrayal of the life and culture of a primitive tribe of blacks, but rather from a spontaneous, at times fast-moving, gentle but colorful prose, rich with the mysticism and reserve so characteristic of these aborigines. The story has historical background in that it concerns an attempted colonization of Rodney Cove by a few hundreds of convicts from England in 1788, under the wise and truly courageous rule of Governor Phillip. Then there is Rowallan, a leader of his tribe who too is an historical figure. The author has cleverly balanced the philosophy of the natives against that of the practically exterminated convict settlement with satisfying results, so that though one's righteous indignation is aroused for the white man's inhumanity to man, there is no bitterness. Throughout the spirit of the tribe who found no enemy but himself, traces his initial resistance, unhappiness, his ultimate social and moral defeat from the coming of the white man when ever came to be governed not by the Law but by conflicting laws of body and spirit, when the land and the sky, the animals and stones no longer shared life with the abundance of their nature, when the creative spirit within his body became paralyzed and inert, when the forces of life were at peace.

It is a useful reading, as can be understood from the title, a timeless land where the past, the present and the future are intimately woven together, and with them is entwined the life of mind, body and spirit, one life. It is profound, too, because it leads one to consider some false values of civilized life where the mind of the white man has "traveled so far from their primitive wisdom in its search for knowledge that it is already astray in the labyrinth of its own psychological chaos. It is a mind which has gained subtlety and lost simplicity, a mind which has explored the universe, but has long ago lost sight of itself," which has gradually substituted for its faith "a system of mechanical worship by which it is enabled to believe that it might simultaneously serve God and Mammon."

PADDY THE COPE, by Patrick Gallagher (Doris-Adair Co.)

Paddy the Cope might better be called the Advocate of Paddy the Cope. If it were not for the excellent outline of the ideals and principles of the co-operative movement, the reader would not be aware that the tale was written expressly to describe the beginnings of co-operatives in Ireland. It can be read merely as an entertaining adventure.

Written in the best tradition of Patrick Gallagher's book describes the genesis of a spirit of economic independence among a destitute, oppressed people living on a land where the rocky ribs of the earth stuck out through its starved skin—a land so barren that it would seem to need an act of creation to bring any fruit from it.

Not only did the land protest. There were other apparently insurmountable obstacles in the way of any movement which would free the people of Templecroagh parish, Paddy's home, from the slavery of the land, the landlords, the local merchants and the local politicians or Gomban men. All these obstacles were mere hurdles to "Paddy the Cope." With thought for one thing—happiness for his people—he plunged ahead, reckless, caring not whether his reader knows the meaning of "singling turning" or "chill" at the almost or a score of other strange, colloquialisms which make the reader eager to know more about this speaking land where men plow for power.

Just as Paddy's neighbors were drawn to him by his heedlessness of self and absorption in others, so is the reader charmed by his tale in the best manner of describing his deeds performed so that the real values, recognized and preserved by the Irish of Templecroagh and dozens of such parishes, might not die from starvation or persecution, spiritual or economic, of the people of Ireland.

In these days of emergency, real values are sometimes lost. Co-ops are not an answer in themselves, but a means of preparing a real way of life. Paddy's country was barren land but the "Cope" proved, and the reader might well consider that why land is fertile if the right means are used to nourish the spirit of its people.—J. C. D.

Selected

Penance is a necessity, not a choice. No penance alone is the soul him of sin erased; by penance alone is grace regained; by penance alone our lost heritage is recovered; by penance alone is hell avoided and the torments of Heaven restored. —Cardinal O'Connell.

The Christian should always and everywhere aspire to the highest; and he may well fear, if he aims only to "get into Heaven by the skin of his teeth," that he will not get in at all.—Brownson.