

Library Signpost

Shine On, Farmer Boy

By Rev. Benedict Ekman

The spirit of democracy proceeds from a Christian view of life. A Christian regards each individual as having infinite value, purchased by the blood of God.

I have seldom seen this reverence for the common man so intelligently expressed as in a recent editorial in Maryknoll's THE FIELD OF AR, written by Bishop Walsh from China.

Shine On, Farmer Boy

I saw him in the ricefield. He stopped working, as I approached and leaned on his hoe. The sweat of a June day under the South China sun glistened on his brow.

I knew his father, a blunt old farmer, respected, hard-working, and honest. I knew his older brother, who was being educated at a city school.

His father was not a harsh man; he was merely a truthful one. He had read his son aright and had told him that he was not made for anything else than a life of labor.

mal, more gifted. He was content, but he was also puzzled. And I know he was to remain puzzled through a whole death life of obscurity and toil.

That puzzled resignation written in his honest eyes imprinted itself indelibly on my memory, and it stirred me as I have seldom been stirred. I have known love. I was not inescapable to the ties of affection that bound the members of a singularly happy family.

"I choose you" sang in my heart as I looked at my awkward farmer boy, perfect picture of the underprivileged man. "I choose you, and with you the countless millions of God's children like you: men overworked and overlooked, men forgotten and despised, men white, black and brown; weak, impoverished and uneducated.

There is, of course, a special reason for the deep impressions made on me by this living symbol of the world's need. I am a missionary. I am a man sent by the Catholic Church to minister to such as he.

Shine on, farmer boy, symbol to me of the thousand million like you who draw the Son of God from heaven to smooth and bless your weary anxieties and your puzzled brows.

BISHOP WALSH

'Quiz' Corner

Should one worry if they are not certain that they made an act of contrition when they went to confession?

There is no necessity to make a formal act of contrition in the confessional. Contrition is a condition of mind and heart. The very fact that you went to confession indicates that you were sorry for your sins.

If in past confessions a person has confessed his sins in a perfect manner as he thought possible and has not wilfully omitted anything and later learns he should have made himself more exact, were these sins forgiven?

The sins were forgiven but there remains the obligation of fuller explanation of the sins confessed when next going to confession.

Is it true that certain sins are forgiven by receiving Holy Communion?

A worthy reception of Holy Communion remits venial sin on the soul of one who is properly disposed. If a person were guilty of a mortal sin but not conscious of its presence at his soul and received Holy Communion with a sorrow for all the sins that he had committed and a real love of God, it is a probable opinion that the sin would be forgiven.

If Protestant churches are taken, why does the Catholic church recognize Protestant Baptisms?

Because Baptism, as a sacrament of such necessity, can be administered by anyone, provided he pours water which comes into actual contact with the one to be baptized, says at the same time the right words, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the

Son, and of the Holy Ghost," and intends to do what Christ instituted in instituting the sacrament. Since the sacrament operates independently of the faith or morals of the human agent, and derives all its efficacy from the will and merits of Christ, you can see that the faith or virtue of the minister does not of itself affect the validity of Baptism.

In Baptism, would it be an act of the sponsor should he be in the state of mortal sin?

The spiritual condition of the sponsor does not affect the validity of the sacrament of Baptism. The validity of Baptism requires ablation with true natural water and the pronouncing of the prescribed words. The same person who performs the ablation must at the same time pronounce the words.

Trust Quietly

We ought never to be dependent upon the recommendation of others; we shall not be if we are quietly trusting Our Lord Jesus to be our satisfactor and life. But we ought to be thoughtfully, gratefully helpful in giving others the words of commendation.

Feast Days

Sunday, Aug. 24 - ST. PETER BENEDET.

Monday, Aug. 25 - ST. BARTHOLOMEW, APOSTLE.

Tuesday, Aug. 26 - ST. JAMES KING.

Wednesday, Aug. 27 - ST. AUGUSTINE, POPE AND MARTYR.

Thursday, Aug. 28 - ST. JOSEPH GALILEANUS.

Friday, Aug. 29 - ST. AUGUSTINE.

Saturday, Aug. 30 - BLESSING OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

Sursum Corda

The Shoemaker And His Last

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

If I should suddenly burst out with a dissertation on shall we say the strategy of aerial warfare, and not content with discussing the general principles of that art, should go on to dogmatize about some fine point still in dispute among the experts, what would my readers say? Only one guess is needed: they would ask "What does he know about it?"

It is a matter for amazement what these novelists will attempt. I used to know a medical doctor who, after high school and no college, with only two years in a medical school of mediocre reputation, told me I tackle anything. This of course was many years ago. Medical schools nowadays don't turn loose such potential murderers.

Aldous Huxley, who only a few years ago seemed heels over head in the problem of moral and social degeneracy has turned to theology. There is no harm in that. We wish him well—we hope he continues and studies himself into the Church.

That last-mentioned feature of the life of Father Joseph explains why his biographer Aldous Huxley, considered it necessary to go into the subject of mysticism. Novelists rush in where theologians fear to tread. I wouldn't tackle it though I had the usual course, and somewhat more than the usual course in theology and have read mystical theology a thousand times more since getting my degree than I did to get it.

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spiritual director who does venture a bit of instruction to nuns or priests on that subject, makes apologies, gives warnings and disclaims personal experience.

The specific mistake of Aldous Huxley is something he said not about Father Joseph but about Cardinal de Berulle, founder of the French Oratory. (You will remember that Cardinal Newman was also an Oratorian.) Mr. Huxley claims that the French School of Piety, which Cardinal de Berulle partly founded and partly followed, "ruined Catholic mysticism for two centuries."

A great mystic of two centuries later, Father Benedict Caillet, exiled to France, followed "The Cloud of Unknowing," says Huxley, except that he believed that "even the most advanced contemplatives should persist in the practice of the passion."

I think that much will do. If we go further we shall get in deeper, and if we get in deeper we may drown. If you wish to see a beautiful sample of correction administered to Mr. Huxley, look up an article by Father Ronald Knox in the London Tablet for May 2 of this year. I understand that Father Knox and Mr. Huxley are good friends; and perhaps on that account Father Knox is kinder with Huxley than you would expect.

But what concerns me and I hope—the reader of this column is the peculiar phenomenon of an outsider's thrusting himself into a most difficult and perplexing problem in the most bewildering form of theology, and issuing a judgment and a condemnation. It is just one more instance of what we see in lesser matters every day, the shoemaker abandoning his last. Father Knox's correction should be a lesson to Huxley, and a paradigm to us. We must always be ready to ask "What does he know about it?" Often that question will be better than controversy.

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FIVE and TEN Years Ago--

—in the files of the CATHOLIC COURIER

From Aug. 19, 1932, Edition

Under the authority of the Most Rev. Bishop John Francis O'Hern and with the assistance of a committee known as the Diocesan Church Committee named by the Underwriters Board of Rochester, N. Y., a complete survey of the insurance covering all Catholic Church property in the Diocese of Rochester was being conducted.

EDITORIALS

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Iran Indian—for whom war and the hunt were paramount and who compelled women and captives to do the work—was not high. It is in his four-volume "History of Greek Culture" Burckhardt suggests that, on the other hand, the ideal now existing in Europe derives primarily from that of the urban middle class of the medieval age.

After "the glory that was Greece" had departed, however, the Greeks treasured the rapidly fading memory of their heroic age, a world unacquainted with either profit or use, and nothing could entirely efface it from their minds. In fact, they were much nearer to that heroic life, Burckhardt points out, a life composed simply of combats, the tragedies of the royal houses and consideration for the deities, the whole interwoven with a wonderful poetry, than ever were the members of the burgher class of the Middle Ages in the Germanic saga.

In Greece, moreover, the author of "The History of Greek Culture" affirms, slavery kept pace with the development of the urban aristocracy which devoted itself more and more to sports, and to poetic contests. And because to the labor of women and slaves was added that of the serfs, contempt for manual labor continued. Even peasants and artisans able to purchase slaves were not accorded public respect. In Sparta, for example, the ideal of Hellenic life was unalterably opposed to any participation in gainful occupations. A plenitude of leisure, so Plutarch believed, was the height of everything to be desired, one of the greatest and most fortunate blessings a man could enjoy.

According to Burckhardt, the entire system of government in Sparta was predicated on a subjected group of people, by far the largest element in the city, who were obliged to do the work. Menachem, it was the proud boast of the Spartans that no member of their class was required to do anything in advance the common good or that of the State. And the same ideal prevailed in other parts of the country, if not always in so exaggerated a form.

Burckhardt's explanation throws new light on the statements made by the Administration leader on the occasion referred to. The glory of ancient Greece was bought at high cost. And not only did the elite alone enjoy "freedom from labor." They also were the only ones to enjoy "freedom of religion, of assembly, of speech and speculation," but this too the speaker did not explain.

It remained for the Christian dispensation to elevate the status of work and the dignity of woman, despite the fact that the newer "barbaric" (money-mad, materialistic, ostentatious, corrupt) age is again degrading both. So much so that it is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain the Christian concepts. Should it be impossible to do so the cycle will be complete and unemployment will once more be identical with leisure, at least for the fortunate few, while the remainder will plod their way through life as ciphers if not confined to a certain occupation, determined for them by the totalitarian party or the State!