Famous Converts

Educating Into Agnosticism

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

There is a story of a United States Senator, who, being asked his opinion of the value of a college education, said "a college education may do a man no harm if he has enough sense." He spoke, we may suppose, jocosely. But it is no merry jest. It takes a great fund of common sense, a well-balanced mind, a healthy skepticism about the infallibility of professors, and a great many other qualities to escape the evil effects of an education in almost any one of the "great" colleges or universities in the United States.

Principally it requires a deep-seated faith and a really thorough acquaintance with what Catholic theologians call Prolegomena. What, then, is to stop the rational processes leading to a solid faith. The road an uninstructed Christian in a modern university is to invite spiritual and moral suicide. A week or two ago I happened to read a review of "Pioneers in the Past." The story of James Henry Breasted, I happens that Breasted is one of my great admirations, and his classic work on "Ancient Times" a favorite with me since it came out in 1916. So, naturally, I was eager to see what the reviewer had to say about this biography of Breasted written by his son, Charles. And this sentence rose up to indict me, "at twenty-two he suddenly decided to become a fundamentalist minister; a year later, disillusioned by the many mistakes in The King James translation of the New Testament, he abandoned that plan." Obviously the young man had been poorly instructed in religion at home or in Sunday School. Any one with a faith solidly grounded on knowledge would not be scared away upon discovering a bit of information which should have been handed to him ten years earlier.

Also in a recent book notice, now republished and sold for a quarter, "The Return to Religion" by Henry C. Link, I came across this illuminating, if not alarming passage: "My wife is one of the great colleges for women, and I is one of the renowned colleges for men, received the Phi Beta Kappa keys. We both profited by our education to such an extent that we became virtual agnostics. If we believed in God at all, it was the most vague and attenuated kind of belief. Certainly it had nothing to do with the Church, the practices and preachings of which had by this time become repugnant to us. We considered ourselves above such antics."

Dr. Link goes on to say that he and his wife, "had been taught that certain things were right or wrong because God or the Bible said so." True enough as a reason to give to a child. But by the time a young man goes to college he should somehow have got hold of the fact that things are not true or false, right or wrong, good or bad because the Bible says so, or even because God says so, but that the Bible and God say these things are right or wrong because they are right or wrong in themselves. Would lying or stealing or bearing false witness against your neighbor be right if the Bible hadn't said they were wrong?

It is tragic that men and women in their late teens or their twenties have a merely infantile understanding of religion and ethics. So when they go to college and some professor commences to attack religion or the Bible or God, or to sneer it away with sarcasm the youngsters fall at the right hand and the left, by thousands and tens of thousands. As Dr. Link says "we profited by our education to the extent that we became virtual agnostics."

A hundred lessons might be drawn from these two incidents, one about a psychologist, Dr. Link, the other about an Egyptologist, Dr. Breasted. But one comment is all I shall offer. A student entering a secular college or university had better "know his stuff" in religion before he takes his seat on the first day in his first class. A child's knowledge will not suffice as a safeguard against the attack of a Ph.D. The catechism is good and may serve its purpose, but a bit of Catholic philosophy and Catholic theology—more than a little bit—is an absolutely necessary preparation for a college education if the result is not to be agnosticism or atheism.

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FIVE and TEN Years Ago

From Apr. 27, 1933, Edition

Education for peace, with particular stress placed upon the personal, individual responsibility of men and women to promote better international relations was one of the points most strongly emphasized at closing sessions of the Catholic Association for International Peace convention held in Washington.

From Apr. 28, 1938, Edition

Officiating in the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Newark, N. J., His Excellency, the Most Rev. Egidio Giovanni Cicognani, Apostolic Delegate to the U. S. by pontifical authority, gave force and effect to the Apostolic Bulls creating the State of New Jersey as a new Ecclesiastical Province.

* * *

Backed by authorities, prominent citizens and various organizations in Corning, a drive, led by the Rev. E. A. Rawlinson, pastor of St. Patrick's Church, was launched against the sale of salacious publications.

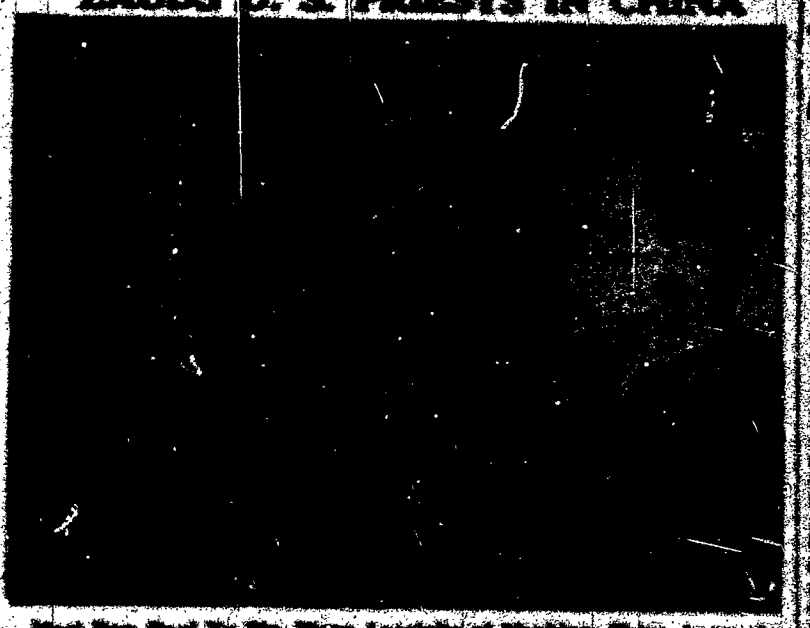
Quote--End Quote

However young and ignorant people may be, if a point of conscience is involved, they must act, as before God, according to their consciences.—Christian Reid.

When it comes to a foot race, the slimmest runner has the fattest chance.—Greensboro Herald-Journal.

The spiritual aspect of the Catholic interracial program flows from the common membership of all races in the Mystical Body of Christ and the common expression of this unity in the Church's liturgy.

LAUDS U. S. PRIESTS IN CHINA



Most Rev. Paul Yu Pin, Vicar Apostolic of Nanking, China, is greeted in Washington by Monsignor Michael J. Ready, General Secretary of the National Catholic Welfare Conference. Bishop Yu Pin has just completed a 40,000-mile journey from war-torn Chungking, which he made his headquarters since his see has been invaded by the Japanese. The Bishop lauded the work of the American missionaries in Free China. (Most Newsphoto, (N.C.W.C.)

EDITORIALS

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erved at St. Patrick's in Elmira, and at the time of his death was Pastor of St. Mary's Church of Roseville.

The priestly zeal of Father Ware was made more effective in results by the combination of a pleasing personality and fine gifts of mind and heart. In his years with Monsignor Cawston and Father Bolen, he accomplished splendid efforts in his teaching of the children, in his care of the sick, in his labors for all that concerned the spiritual and material welfare of parish and parishioners. He had carried on the same priestly program at Roseville. His many friends in Rochester and in other parts of the diocese will mourn his early passing from life.

To his parents in Auburn, to his band of followers and friends, the COURIER extends its deep sympathy. May his priestly soul rest in peace!

MORE WAR BONDS

Keep up your interest in the current drive for $13,000,000,000 out to be raised for America's war effort by sale of War Bonds and other securities. All are in the war, all look for ultimate victory, all do their bit either in the armed forces or on the home front.

Through your factory, your office, your K. of C. Council, your other connections, see that your order is in for all you can possibly loan to your government to keep our boys well equipped for the grave task they are facing. Buy more War Bonds!

Why They Pick on Mary

It's because they don't know her; that's why non-Catholics so often pick on our Blessed Mother. Not only that, but they have a wrong idea of her or, rather, of our attitude toward her. They think we've made her into a Fourth Person of the Blessed Trinity, actually! They have us calling her the Mother of God—as, in fact, she certainly is—but there they get the picture, right away, of Our Lady, existing from all eternity and begetting God the Son, just as we believe God the Father begets the Son from everlasting. They think we imagine Mary to be everlasting, like God, without beginning and without end.

The smallest tot in this spring's First Communion class knows better than that. But we can see how the queer cry of "Mariolatry" could arise from an idea so tangled up as that.

Our first step, then, in straightening out the open-minded non-Catholic is to point out that Mary is the Mother of Jesus Christ—nothing more than that; although that's saying an infinity right there!—because Jesus is God. There is such a unique tie between the Godhood and manhood of Our Lord that no example is apt. Jesus was, at the same time, God and man, and yet He remained one Person with an intact personality. Mary was the Mother of that Person—of Jesus, Isaac, of God.

Next, we must show that for all the honor Catholics pay Our Lady, we do not adore her nor treat her as God. She was created by God and is a creature, even as you and I—great and holy, but a creature, for all that!

Recite the Hail Mary for your friends, or the Hail, Holy Queen, and show them just how we phrase our prayers to her. There is never the least hint of adoration. The Hail Mary, by the way, if you point out its origin, from the words of the Archangel Gabriel and St. Elizabeth, will show, too, how highly Our Lady is regarded in the Gospel. You might, if you can remember it, explain the Second Chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, which is emphatic in showing Our Lady's importance in Christ's coming to earth.

Then go on to show how dearly Our Lord must have loved His Mother. Any Catholic can be eloquent on that theme; and, for a clincher, you might ask if any one considered his mother or picked up stones to throw at her.—Mary Richard Quinn.

Does Not Teach

It seems to be more necessary for the non-Catholic public to know what Catholics do not believe. At any rate, non-Catholics are not in a position to learn what the Catholic Church really is until they have ascertained much that she is not. Here are a few things which Catholics do not believe but which are often attributed to the Church:

Image worship.

That the indulgence is a permission to commit sin.

That the Church has the right to persecute.

That a mere confession of sins to a priest and absolution are sufficient to merit forgiveness.

That the Pope cannot commit sin, or err in the matters of science.

That Catholics may not read the Bible.

That republican forms of government are not favored by the Church.

That the Catholic Church is opposed to religious toleration.

That the end justifies the means.

That lying is permissible.

That innocent recreation on Sundays is forbidden.—Exponent.

Not That Dumb

Old-Timers were dumb in some ways, but they didn't expect vitamin pills to substitute for sensible living.—Cincinnati Times-Star.

The Sword Of The Will

By Rev. Bernard Basset

The sword of prayer, the sword of the mind, the sword of the will—these, from the thirteenth century Rule, summarize in England's virtuous thought, the gear and equipment for the work of man on this round world for Our Lord's accomplishment.

Of the first two, I have already written in this column. A reminder to write of the third, the sword of the will.

The will is the faculty of our soul which puts our ideas into execution. It is the executive of the mind. It is the decision of action. We must not confuse the attribute, however, of recognizing that there is such a thing as the will in the constitution of the mind with the manifestation of people, in fact, using their wills in what it really ought to be, the will to do things or refuse to do things, and on the whole, that is to say the balance there of active virtue, with the corresponding elimination of self-power. Any event we have gone and from our prayer have thereof to action, thanks be and strength, and after we have studied and thought hard, to determine a clear grasp of Christian principles, the necessary action for the will to execute the order for action.

Now there are thousands of Catholics to whom the will is good. Catholic Action is nothing if not that. And there are always so many reasons why this or that impossibility for you and me to do this or that thing, and greater interest we can have here to give ourself among these, however I would not, I think, be able to have more I call short of it. Some people are very apt to make such reasons their whole life. I confess that was my reason why the Christian faith a personal study of the matter, contemplating himself with living prayer, in terms of a point where he will not need to be told that he needs the medicine, how and when and the keenest conception that can. Here I'm sure implication to see what God's plan is. Pride must be only one thing is important for me. How do I take this plan?

Then the majority of Catholics have been driven to grow up with the idea that action for God is things to priests and religious and that you need to have a special vocation for that. The result is that our people's Catholic life must be quite negligible as far as the spirit of our times is concerned. Yet, I'm recognizing the enormous pull, weight of the great example given by these saints of our own people surely that weight is on earth in the saints of God and eternity surely and others in the true faith. But we really this influence is individual and short. It is not reproduced by great live action, deliberately intended for the spread of God's Kingdom. If our Catholics are not impressed "spiritual" from asserting this statement that of all fact, that is because of an in-security complex which they have about it as part of professional action. And for that, the method of teaching Christian doctrine by the last few or three hundred years must take most of the blame.

Our Christian teaching, not by direct intention but by indirect result, has helped to create a great chasm between the clergy and the laity. It has made the laity feel like a flock that has to be led. No wonder they feel sheepish. It has made them feel like children whose only responsibility is to do what the others say. No wonder they are if a grownup war. No wonder they are under-stood more often scorn of us left there that they are also to take some initiative in the battle, that really they are more like commandos, their private work minute cuts are not in the way of thinking about the business of the laity is to mind their own business and to let the affairs of the Church to the clergy.

Well that state of affairs has been going on for quite a long time and we are reaping now from the peculiar society in which our people have been living is further than ever from Jesus Christ. Our people were leaving the connection of the sacred unity to the priests, and the priests were in their sacred arise and pastoral waiting for the world to come to them and sit down quietly to learn what it must do to gain eternal life. But in the meantime the world order was going to Pieces. You know what happened in Europe before the fall of Singapore. Thousands of Chinese soldiers waiting on their side of the border for the British to give something across which never came, because the British wanted to save their bodies alone. Today, the Japanese occupy Singapore, and the soldiers ground cannot argue that while service is forever lost to the front. Our Catholic men, too, would have taken something orders, would have rushed for their swords into the enemy's domain to save society from going to the devil. But some years ago Pius XI sounded his call, with Catholic Action.

Catholic Action does not merely a lost cause, the opinion that it was high time to call in the laity in the Christian defensive and offensive. It was for more a reminder to the Catholic world of a truth that had for long been neglected—the truth that every Christian is ordained to work and fight for the Kingdom of God. To the reason of Confirmation imparts to the one who receives it a share in Christ's priestly power to sanctify the world. the grace is to restore the undistinguished Christian into a militant Christian. By reason of it, every confirmed Christian has a status that, like that of the priesthood and to the mission. Therefore, Pius XI declared Catholic Action as "the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy." So it came out after all that the laymen do have a vocation to work for God, and that they are missing their own greatness when they share some of the burdens of the hierarchy.

With the call to Catholic Action, Confraternities is beginning to emerge from the obscurities of many unfamiliar into clearer view as the instrument which converts the Christian into a missionary of Christ, ready for action with his apostolate on the great pitched battlefield which is the world.

We despise the "intolerance" of fascism, and disapprove of it, yet we can't tolerate fools.—Asbury Park Evening Press.

Handwriting is a key to character, especially on those little pieces of paper marked "installment books."—Albany Citizen.

It is not necessary to hope in order to act; one is not necessary to persevere.—George Bernanos.