Simeon Cardy

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 common sense." His opinion, we may suppose, precisely. But it is no mere 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-rooted faith and a pretty thorough acquaintance with what Catholic theologians call Prolegomena Fidei, that is to say the rational processes leading to a solid faith. To send an uninstructed Christian to a modern university is to invite spiritual and moral suicide. A week or two ago I happened to read a review of "Pioneer to 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 smite 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 properly instructed in religion at home or in Sunday School. Any one with a faith solidly grounded on knowledge would not be moved every upon discovering a lot of information which should have been handed to him ten years earlier.

Also in a recent best seller, 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 in 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. 26, 1938, Edition

Officiating in the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Newark, N. J., His Excellency, the Most Rev. Amleto 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 conscience.—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 has made his headquarters since his city was besieged by the Japanese. The Bishop lauded the work of the American missionaries in Free China. (Acme Photo. (N.C.W.C.)

EDITORIALS

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

The priestly zeal of Father Wise was made most effective in results by the combination of a pleasing personality and fine gifts of mind and heart. In his years with Monsignor Cameron and Father Reiss, 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 Rexville. 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 hosts 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 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 grim 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 hear 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 laughed 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, hence, 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, venture the Blessed 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 non-Catholic has mother or picked up stones to throw at her.—Rev. Richard Tierney.

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 unlearned much that she is not. Mary are a few things which Catholics do not believe but which are often ascribed 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.—Ephphata.

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. Aurelius Stanton

The sword of prayer, the sword of the mind, the sword of the will, with these for the theme of our Lenten conferences, it dawned on me that the sword of the will is the sword of decision. Decision is the act of the will in the completion of the act of the mind. It is the expression of action. We must make decisions, however, of supreme importance, things in earthly life of the will in the completion of the act of the mind or in the completion of prayer. In both cases prayer or what is really meant by it, the will is functioning at white heat; and as for study that is the most strenuous form of action which calls for concentration and self-control. What will we have, dear friends, and what are people here dedicated to divine knowledge and strength and what are they striving and struggling under to maintain a whole group of Christian principles, the opposite of free the will to exercise the order for action.

Now there are thousands of Christians to whom the will is very confusing subject to discuss or think about. And there are almost as many reasons why this is so historically true. For one thing, good people (myself included) do not know how to pray. I am not sure how much I know myself about it, or know how much it is about how much I know myself. There are people, many people in our country to-day and every decade, I suppose that are perfect saints, fine Christian folks a prevalent study of the mind little supporting history while lived, prayer will survive as a point where we will not need to be told that we need the particular things, but only desire it and for interest, sometimes this is, "Have I the vanity beginning to see what God's plan is. Prove how we only one thing is important for me. How do I go into this plan?"

Then the majority of Catholic have been allowed to grow up with the idea that action for God belongs to priests and religious, and that you have to have a special vocation for that. The result has been that our people's Catholic life has been quite unreliable, so far as the main of any activity is concerned. Yes, I'm recognizing the tremendous weight of the good example given by those names of our fine people merely that weighs for much in the matter of life and influence among outsiders to the true Faith. But usually this influence is individual and silent. It is not supported by public life action, deliberately intended for the spread of God's Kingdom. If our Catholic lay are an largely "stymied" from carrying this essential kind of effort, that is because of an interiority complex which they have about their part in most sacred action. And for that, the method of teaching Christian doctrine for the last two 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 grim cleavage 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 the soldiers whose only responsibility is to do what the officers say. No wonder they say it's a generals war. No wonder they can't understand sure when many of us tell them that they are also in take some initiative in the battle, that they are more like commandos than privates. Some minds are too set in the way of thinking that 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 dreaming now that the secular society in which our people have been living is farther than ever from Jesus Christ. Our people were leaving the conversion of the world today to the priests, and the priests have it—complain, arise and reinforce waiting for the social order to come to them and sit down quietly to learn about it as soon as its gain started life. But in the meantime, the social order was going to Hooghoog. You know what happened on Calvary before the Son of Mary gave the burden for the Apostles to give marching orders which were to become the British created to save their Empire alone; before the Japanese occupy Singapore, and the underground rumor says that while practice is forbidden but in the Host. Our Catholic laity, too, would have taken marching orders, would have rallied for eleventh hour ride on the enemy's domain to save us, likely from going to the devil. But some came, until Pius XI compelled his call with Catholic Action.

Catholic Action was, just merely a last-ditch solution that it was high time to call in the laity to the Christian defensive and offensive. It was for many 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. The Sacrament of Confirmation is the one which confers it. It shows us Christ's priestly power to sanctify the world. It gives us to endure the undeserved Christian life a militant Christian. By reason of it, every real Armed Christian has a status that links him to the priesthood and to the apostolate (see Acts, II) Before Catholic Action or the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy, we is learn out after all that the laymen do have a vocation to work for God, and that they are needing their own business when they absorb some of the burdens of the hierarchy.

With the call to Catholic Action, Confirmation is beginning to emerge from the obscurities of pious platitudes into clearer view as the Sacrament which converts the Christian into a sentinel of Christ, ready for action with his rifle on the most pitched battlefield where is the world.

We despise the carelessness of people who disapprove of us yet we don't imitate them.—Ark. Gazette.

Handwriting is a key to character especially on those little pieces of paper marked "amount of funds."—Auburn Citizen.

It is not necessary to hope in order to act nor to succeed in order to persevere.—George Dubamel.