

Library Signpost

Books As Christian Gifts

By REV. BENEDICT EHMANN

It shows good judgment to give a reading gift to a reading friend. If it appeals to you to have your gift come in instalments of 52 or 12 or 4, you could put your friend's name down for a subscription to some good Catholic weekly, or monthly, or quarterly. They would be so many mementoes of your friendship across the passing of the year. America is very good among the weeklies (\$4.50); so is Commonwealth (\$3); and I suppose it's in order to give a plug for the Catholic Courier (\$2.50) which patiently puts up with the column week by week. In the 1943 year group, the Sign is about top (\$2), with the Catholic Digest a close second (\$3), and for the more literary, as well as for those who like Father Gillis in large doses, the Catholic World (\$4); Father Gillis' editorials in the latter magazine are, without doubt, the finest of our time—fortnightly, hard-hitting, down-to-earth, eye-on-God commentaries on current events—alone worth the subscription price. Among religious monthlies, the best is Grate Fratres (\$2), a gold mine of spiritual light and inspiration. Just about all the quarterlies are in the scholarly field, but there is one, Liturgical Arts (\$2), which would be very well treasured by your artist friends.

Now for the books, with any number of good ones, I suppose, bound to be left out through lack of space and failure of memory. This list is only a selection, and apologizes for any intolerable omissions.

Mr. Sheed's translation of The Confessions of St. Augustine (\$2) makes vivid and startling one of the greatest spiritual treasures of the world. Don Verner Moore's Prayer (\$1.75) is a grand book about the most important thing in life. St. Teresa of Avila (\$5), by William Thomas Walsh, is just about the last word on one of history's most fascinating women. Another extraordinary book about Saints is Margaret Monroe's A Book of Walkley Saints (\$2.50), with its five chapters on as many Saints of the last four hundred years: Aloysius, Benedict Joseph Labre, Rose of Lima, Gemma Galgani, Therese of Lisieux. Our own Blanche Thompson's The Oldest Story (\$2.50) is a book on Bible characters from the first of the Old Testament to the last of the New, with lively pictures by the accomplished Kate Seredy—the right ticket of a book for parents, particularly, who still believe in reading to their children.

The Lives of Charles, by Albert Paul Schimberg (\$2.75), and The Rose Unspiced, by Blanche Moreville (\$2.75), are attractive and simple biographies of St. Francis and of St. Therese of Lisieux respectively. Hush, hush, it's about devils and their wily plans to damn our souls, but somehow it makes one of the finest and most entertaining spiritual books of the year: The Serpent Letters by C. S. Lewis (\$1.50), a national series of letters from a scoundrel devil on the retired list in Hell to a young nephew devil who seems in had need of his veteran counsel on the ins and outs of sabotaging the work of God on earth: a very witty, and canny (or do I mean uncanny?) book.

Chestertonians will become your willing slaves if you send them Maize Ward's Gilbert Keith Chesterton (\$4.50), a faithful mirror of one of the greatest men of our times; all the interesting correspondence and conversation of a man who makes you feel the way a Christian ought to feel, rollickingly cheerful about being alive. Not all people can stomach Fr. Leonard Feeney's particular style of whimsy and straight, but those who eat it up (or drink it down?) will be delighted with the Omnibus Volume (\$3) which Sheed and Ward have just published, with the best of his prose and verse, plus much that is new.

Men of Maryknoll, by Father Keller and Meyer Berger (\$2) is a wallowing record of Maryknoll's Foreign Legion, the missionaries from America's city streets and country crossroads who are showing the world that Americans, with God's help, can take their place, too, with the heroic missionaries of all the ages. I should have mentioned in the magazine paragraph above that Maryknoll's Field Mail (\$1 a year) combines genuine missionary spirit with peppy American enthusiasm better than any mission journal I know.

For your friends who like poetry

(I hope you have at least one or two to keep you awake), there is Paul Claudel's Coronal, one of his finest sets of poems, eloquent meditations on the Church Year (\$2.75); Robert Furon's This Man Was Ireland, a verse-sequance on the life of Ireland's Saint Columban, with all the rattle and lift of the Celts in it (\$3); Robert Holland's Song of Tokakwita (\$2.75), which tells the Indian virgin's story in the metre of Longfellow's Hiawatha; and E. J. Pratt's Bread and His Brethren (\$1.50), a worthy verification of a basic theme.

Among the novels, Top rank to Kate O'Brien's The Last of Summer (\$2.50) and Graham Greene's The Ministry of Fear (\$2.50). Second rank to Saroyan's The Human Comedy (\$2.75), Mary O'Hara's Thunderhead (\$2.50), Jesse Stuart's Taps for Private Tussie (\$2.50), Sheila Kaye-Smith's Tambourine, Trumpet and Drum (\$2.50), and Earl Gray's Heaven Is a Sweepest Hill (\$2.50).

For the books-to-be-passed-up department I nominate the following which some people may be tempted to buy for their friends: The Kabe, The Apostle and Ender Cover.

You can make your magazine and book purchases, with the help of this list, at Trant's, or Tucker's or Fredmore's in Rochester, or at your familiar bookstore. Remember that a book is a thoughtful tribute to thoughtful persons.

Quiz Corner

Is it wrong to attend shows given by magicians?

We must distinguish between white magic, or the performance of clever tricks by purely skillful, natural means, and black magic, or the producing of extraordinary things through the help of evil spirits. The magicians in proper shows are experts in white magic. They do not call upon the evil spirits to produce their tricks and therefore, their performance is objectionable. Those who do in black magic, however, are to be condemned, for they are guilty of superstition. Attendance at performances of black magic is forbidden.

Must we enter in the next world for all the sins that we have confessed in this world?

There are two kinds of punishment for sin, the temporal and the eternal. The eternal is always forgiven by a good confession; the temporal remains either in part or in whole. We can free ourselves from the temporal punishment by bearing patiently the trials of life, by performing good works, by gaining indulgences, by prayers and alms, by works of self-denial. If we fall in this, punishment will be exacted in Purgatory.

Does the Church have to depend on the Bible for its work?

The Church could continue the work committed to it by Christ without the Bible. As an historic fact there was a Church before there was a complete Bible. The Church existed for nearly a century before the New Testament was completed and it was not until nearly four hundred years after the institution of the Church that the various books were gathered into one volume which we now call the Bible.

Does it do good to have Masses said for non-Catholics?

Certainly. If they are alive, it may win for them the grace of faith and conversion; if they are dead, it may help them out of Purgatory. The Church allows such Masses for non-Catholics, if said privately and without public announcement.

Is it wrong to leave Mass before it is actually finished?

Although a Mass is heard provided one is present for its principal parts, the obligation of assisting at Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation requires one to assist at an entire Mass, if this is possible. For a good reason, however, one may leave at any time after the priest's Communion. But to leave early for no reason, or for a very slight reason, would be at least venially sinful.

"ALONG THE WAY" By Fr. Lord—See Youth Page 13

STRANGE BUT TRUE Little-Known-Facts for Catholics

By M. J. MURRAY

Illustration of a cathedral with text: '150 FRENCH CATHEDRALS WERE BUILT IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 13th CENTURY'. Below: 'This queer little building at Lisleatham, England, is the famous CHURCH. It has had most of the work but is still used'. Another text: 'The title FATHER OF JAPANESE BOTANY is generally accorded to a Catholic Priest, Father LUDOVIC FRANGE (1807-1895)'. At the bottom: 'JAPANESE BOTANISTS HAVE ERRECTED A MEMORIAL IN HIS HONOR.'

Senate and Youth Crime

By JOHN A. MORTON

Last week a sub-committee of the United States Senate invited experts of child education to confer on the national problem of increasing juvenile delinquency.

Some of the professional experts assured the Senate committee that the best way to combat this serious threat to our nation's future stability is to increase and improve our sex education. Presumably, the experts were referring to public schools. Admittedly, our high school youngsters these days know as much about sex as the experts in child education, if not more. Increased sex education can not solve the problem of increasing juvenile delinquency. Children have always been faced with the problem of sex. Is there anything different about sex today than in the past? No, sex has not changed. What has changed and even disintegrated is the general moral stability of present day youth.

Many religious-minded Americans are deeply concerned about the current moral disintegration of our youth. And if it is not in violation of the American doctrine of the separation of Church and State, these Americans could teach the Senate how to counteract the problem of juvenile delinquency. There is plenty of room in public education for more than the study of language, mathematics, and sciences, even the science of sex education, when our children's morally reaches such depths that the United States Senate has to stop, during wartime, to take frantic action about it.

What has sex to do with present-day juveniles stealing in stores? What has sex to do with the will of a child to lie and deceive his parents? What has sex to do with the cheating and chiseling of children, one with another? All these unfortunate tendencies have to do with the honor, the ethics, the general moral understanding (and foundation) possessed by the child. That's where to start. The process is long. It rightfully should have been started in the cradle. When the home falls with the child, the child cannot be right. Unless by accident, as happens in rare cases.

When thirteen-year-old girls run the streets until all hours of the night and morning, there is something much more the matter with them than accelerated sex education can correct. And something terribly wrong with the homes from which they come, too. That's where it all begins. It DOESN'T begin in the home. Keep the kennels healthy and the pups will come along well. Our children are NOT what they are. They are what we make of them. Today's children are no better or worse than children ever have been, but their homes are not the homes of yesterday. That's what's wrong—homes, meaning the parents who direct them (or think they do). Look around you. Are not the children YOU know, the perfect image, figuratively speaking, of the homes from which they come, morally, intellectually and

otherwise? Apples don't fall far from the tree. You do not find red buds on a white rose bush, unless they are grafted on.

The worried Senate would have done well to call in Mr. and Mrs. Driscoll who live up the street. They have seven fine, normal children. All decent, honorable, moral and likeable children. The sensational headlines, I am sure, might be quickly relieved by talking to the Browns (father and mother). They have eleven excellent youngsters; six grand, clean, sane and five splendid young ladies with whom they have had no sex problems or other unnecessary disturbances to mar their successful family life. Such people are real child experts. They have the children and the kind of children that prove it. And America is full of such "experts" . . . rich and poor . . . educated and modestly educated, but all possessing that "what-it-takes" to bring up children well . . . not forgetting, if you please, these "experts" the John D. Rockefeller, Jr.s . . . they have had no juvenile delinquency, either, if the record is right . . . and I am sure it is. These are the people, dear Senators, who have the recipe you seek . . . or do you seek the recipe they have. It's the right one . . . they have "samples" to show you if you'd like to look at their "line."

Your problem, Gentlemen, isn't the sex life of our youngsters . . . it's the HOME life of our youngsters . . . and there are millions of good, sturdy American mothers and fathers yet, who can tell you the answer you need to discover. So stop your head-shaking and face the truth. What our children need to be taught is that honor, courage, decency, respect for parents and what might be called a working-knowledge of the ten commandments are the true basis of successful growing up. If you can put your powerful shoulders to the accomplishment of that, honorable Sir, you will have no child sex catastrophes . . . for any others, with young citizens, that will take up your precious time, in Washington, these busy-war days.

Neither Do They Spin

When I would begot content and increase confidence in the power and wisdom and providence of Almighty God, I will walk the meadows by some gliding stream, and there contemplate the lilies that take no care, and those very many other little living creatures that are not only created, but led (man knows not how) by the goodness of God, and therefore trust in Him.

NEGLECT Ignorance is no excuse when we have neglected to learn what we are obliged to know.—St. Ambrose.

For Drinkers Only

By REV. RICHARD GINDNER

Some people get silly when they drink. They gloat; they cry; they tell endless and pointless jokes; they make fools of themselves and wake up next morning with a headache, wondering unaccountably how far they went the night before. These people are horses.

And there are those who feel that a highball sets them up. It stimulates them, sets their nerves right, gives them self-confidence. They are the fellow who never work stop in at a tavern, load up on rum-punch, whisky and gin-and-tonic, air and pistons, and then beat their way to the office. Their supper doesn't appeal to their faded appetites. Or, if they don't beat her, they kick up such a fuss that she feels like shooting herself and the children with her.

These are the people who should take the pledge and keep it if it kills them. They should be sentenced to sit in the confessional, say, on Christmas Eve, and listen to the tales of woe recounted by long-suffering wives. Christmas? That calls for a celebration. Whiskey, in honor of the Christ Child? go home, rear around the house, slap at the children, hang doors, kick over the Christmas tree, and have another shot in honor of the holiday! If that isn't blasphemy . . . and yet it happens in so many homes every Christmas!

It would be bad enough that they drink, if only they would go to bed—but they can't. They're too nervous to stay in one place. If they would go into another part of the house, or to the law in some way, but no! They demand an audience. With these people, the more they get, the more the crazier their speech, the more vehemently do they protest that they are sober.

If anyone should recognize himself in that description, then for God's sake, and we're weighing every word as we write it, for God's sake don't teach one drop during the holiday season. It's selfish to let our private pleasure wreck the happiness of others. We're going to have a hard enough time as it is, with our families broken up by the war, so let's do the best we can, without letting fireworks in to cause discord and temporary insanity—as it certainly does, in some cases. Let's have a joyous Christmas, in peace and holiness, unspiced by the drink of glass against bottles, and the splash of whiskey entering on its vicious course.

Five and Ten Years Ago

(From the Files of the CATHOLIC COURIER)

From Dec. 7, 1928, Edition. Guiding spirit of Maryknoll's phenomenal missionary expansion in the Far East, the Most Rev. James S. Walsh, D.D., co-founder of the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America stopped over in Rochester to visit with Archbishop Mooney who as Apostolic Delegate of Japan and Korea had been superior of the Maryknoll Fathers there.

From Dec. 8, 1928, Edition. In the light of 1900 years' experience, the Church is obliged to look with suspicion and even disdain upon some of the theories being advanced in social work today. This was the message brought to the doors by the Rev. Ignatius Smith, O.P., of Washington, at the Elmira Catholic Charities dinner in Mark Twain Hotel.

They Banned Papers

The English are disturbed because sale of the London Dispatch with 75,000 circulation in Eire, has been banned from distribution by the De Valera government. The ban followed publication of articles written by a Dorothy Crisp attacking the neutrality stand of Eire and being severely critical of other political and economic policies of Southern Ireland. On the other hand she praised conditions in Ulster, ignoring the discrimination against Catholics in the Northern countries. The British ambassador might be cooled if they recalled that for 700 years they prevented the distribution of Irish papers even in the Eire.

True liberty has only one condition: justice is equally indispensable to all.