Editorials

By

Rt. Rev. Msgr. Wm. M. Hart, P. A., V. G.

Catholic Bible Week

The Episcopal Committee of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine is sponsoring Catholic Bible Week from Feb. 10th to 16th inclusive. The Committee is striving to increase the knowledge and love of the Sacred Scriptures among Catholics of our Country. Their goal is a Catholic Bible in every Catholic home.

This Committee gave to us some years ago a fresh translation of the New Testament. It is working on a new translation of the Old Testament. In securing a Bible for your home be sure that it has the Confraternity editon of the New Testament. Stress is placed on the securing of a New Testament first of all and the reading of it in the family circle according to a regular plan.

The Holy Bible is the only book in the world which has God for its author. It also has human authors, but they did their work under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost who moved them to write down those things and only those things which God willed them to write. God's revelation comes to us through the books of the Bible and through that part of the deposit of faith which is called tradition.

The Catholic is certain that God is speaking to him as he reads the Bible and his heart should be burning within him as was the case with the two disciples to whom Our Lord spoke on the road to Emmaus.

We all remember the giant book that rested on our parlor table in childhood which was the complete Bible. It contained the register of births, marriages, deaths in the family. It was a handy place to keep mementos, holy cards, wedding invitations and other important papers. Seldom, if ever, did any of the younger or older members of the family open it to read its contents.

Why not mark Bible Week, beginning with this Sunday, by putting away this revered old giant and putting in its place on the top of the parlor table the handy copy of the Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testament in a size that will invite our daily reading of it. Remember Bible Week is meant for you, is meant to make you a daily reader of the Bible. Get your copy now and set aside a time each day for ten to thirty minutes careful reading of the Word of God.

Death Of A Great Leader

All the world was shocked on last Wednesday morning by the sudden death of King George VI of England. Among the rulers of the world today he stood out as a man of peace, as a strong bulwark to the people of the British Empire against the dangers that assailed her during and after the Second World War. He has stood before the world as a welcome and startling contrast to so many Rulers who have assumed absolute powers and who have ruled their people with the iron hand of totalitarianism. His moral example has been an edification to his people and to all men. He has been a very popular figure with the people of the United States who saw in him the personification of the lasting friendship that should exist between the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

His untimely death brings sorrow to Britons and their friends everywhere. It will bring sorrow to men of all nations who long for the reign of peace and order. We have prayed for God's blessing upon him in life and surely we can ask God to bless him in death. Queen Elizabeth becomes Queen on the death of her father. We ask God to bless her as she undertakes the heavy responsibility of her new office. The King is dead—Long live the Queen!

Two Great Americans

February brings to us the birthdays of Washington and Lincoln. Surely God was good. One, an aristocrat, the other, poorest among poor men. They were God's gift to America in the days of its founding, and in the days when ruin threatened the one great free nation of the world.

The writings of Washington still command the admiration of men of every race and color and his principles have become enshrined in our Declaration of Independence and in our Federal Constitution. The writings of Lincoln and the history of his work as President of the United States, as the victorious chief of the armies of the United States in preserving the Union, remain as precious documents instructing us in all that is pertinent concerning his career.

God grant that the memory of these two great Americans may serve to turn all residents of the United States toward the God whom they worshipped and upon whom they depended in building America as a Government of the people, by the people and for the people.

No man can be an admirer of Washington and of Lincoln and still be prepared to rob Americans of all they possess in the way of freedom and justice by the false doctrines of paganism and communism. May they stand to guide all of us in preserving our God-given principles of government. May they lead us to look upon our fellow-citizens as brothers. May we be grateful for the truly religious principles upon which our nation has been founded and preserved. God Bless America!

Servants Of Mankind

God has blessed mankind with dominion over all the riches of earth. He has provided for the needs of man in a material way through all the elements of the vegetable, the animal, the mineral kingdoms. Man has with gratitude to God used the animal kingdom for his welfare, for food, for studies in comparative anatomy that have been of immense help to our doctors and surgeons. Only the leaders in the medical profession can tell of the thousands of sick men whose cure is due to knowledge obtained through experiments and studies on dogs and cats. The Catholic Church from the beginning has maintained in this as in other matters the right of man to exercise his God-given dominion over the members of the animal kingdom.

A bill is before the legislature in Albany to make available to our medical schools some of the unclaimed animals which now by law are reserved for asphyxiation to the dog pounds and Humane Societies. The law provides for proper care, humane treatment, and the use of anesthetics, wherever an animal is under study. Vivisection is allowed by the present State law: this bill merely opens up a source of supply that the doctors consider essential to their work. Nothing in it would be in opposition to Catholic teaching.

OUR JUST REWARD

Heaven is the reward God has appointed for those who are faithful members of His Church. Some spend seventy and eighty and ninety years serving God; others are taken away from earthly labors in the days of their early youth; some die as infants with little or no chance to labor for the Lord, but to every one who dies in God's Grace the same reward is given in the eternity of happiness that God has prepared for those who love Him.

The reward is always above anything we could justly earn, left to ourselves. Our thoughts, words and actions have value to merit eternity only when God's Grace accompanies them. A meritorious act comes from the human agent and from God.

Christ illustrates this teaching when He gives us the parable that likens the Kingdom of Heaven (His Church) to a householder hiring labor for his vineyard. He agreed on a definite payment for each day's work. But also he agreed to give the same amount to those who came at the third hour, the sixth hour, the ninth hour and the eleventh hour. Some worked twelve hours, some worked nine hours, some worked six hours, some three hours and there were some who worked only one hour. Yet each received the same reward. Those who had worked the longer hours found fault with this.

The Lord told them that He had lived up to His agreement and if He wanted to give the same reward to those who came late the others had no reason to find fault with Him. He had been fair with them. He was fair with the tardy ones.

Because I am generous! God is generous with all of us. He is prepared to reward us far above anything we can deserve. His love for us should awaken our love for Him.

Finger In The Pie

GRETTA PALMER

Conflicting Loyalties Cleave A Soul

Gretta Palmer

To practice the Faith is never easy. As Bishop Fulton J. Sheen said in one of his sermons, "If you think it's easy to be good, you are not being very good." To practice the Faith amid a pagan-Protestant culture is especially hard. But to practice the Faith when your heart is given to one outside the Faith is surely the hardest thing of all.

The question of mixed marriages has been brought up in a very forthright and heart-breaking article by Betsy Farrier, writing in "The Sign." She has, I trust, assumed a pen-name for the occasion; otherwise the Farrier mixed marriage has probably, by now, become a mixed separation. For the author uncompromisingly states that in many cases the non-Catholic partner welches on his pre-marital promises. Then what?

"With the birth of children," she tells us, "comes the problem of schools. Your husband had promised to raise the children as Catholics; but, unaccountably, the thought of nuns teaching his son suddenly becomes repugnant to him. He begins to talk about his schools and his university for his children."

A wife is expected to be submissive to her husband: she has been told so on no lighter authority than that of St. Paul. But how can she, a Catholic, in conscience submit to a man whose definition of the good is not her own? How, especially, can she allow him to exercise the authority a father ought to have over his children when his authority is not subjected, in turn, to the authority of those who interpret Christ's wishes for the training of young minds?

"What of objectionable books?" Miss Farrier asks. "Your husband does not recognize the authority of the Church. Will such books fall into your children's hands? What about risque magazines, vulgar jokes, forbidden movies, night-clubs with 'sophisticated' entertainers? . . . What will you say when your husband's relatives advise him never to become a Catholic, and make jokes about 'these bell-ringing sisters'?"

* * *

THE CATHOLIC bride who enters into such a marriage probably does not anticipate these things—her bemused bridegroom has so cheerfully willed away all rights over the children who are still unborn and are, therefore, not altogether real to him. Nor should the non-Catholic partner be blamed too harshly for betraying his signed pledges.

Promises are easy to make, and hard to keep even for those who have the sacraments to strengthen them. A non-Catholic father, 10 or 15 years removed from that brief signing of pledges in some forgotten rectory, is apt to find the breaking of his word to "that priest" an easy thing to justify in his own self-directed conscience.

Transfer the problem to a different vocation and the danger becomes clearer. Suppose that a would-be priest — young, zealous, filled with love of his Lord — decided to embrace a missionary's life and so to be surrounded, much of the time, by unbelievers. He would know, in advance, that special Graces were required to keep himself in good spiritual shape without the support of other priests, of other Catholics.

That is a thing that only some tens of thousands of priests, in all the world, are daring to undertake at this hour. But can you imagine that any one of them, facing such a life, would say in advance, "Don't bother ordaining me. I can do this without Graces of Office"? Naturally not: a man who was not ordained would never be a priest at all, never be receptive of the Graces that he needs through the normal channels that God has arranged for their passage to his soul.

WELL, WHEN a Catholic man or woman sets out on the vocation of marriage without receiving Grace of Office at the start, he or she is very like that would-be priest. He or she is attempting to fulfill a difficult, lifelong vocation without recourse to the special help God has arranged to make it easier. And that is a pretty reckless thing for anyone to do unless strongly advised to undertake these risks by some spiritual advisor.

Few spiritual advisors, by MY guess, push their penitents towards a mixed-marriage in the rectory parlor as a perfectly splendid idea. In most cases, and unless there is a special, complicating factor, priests are likely to tolerate rather than encourage, marriages such as this.

Betsy Farrier has done all unmarried Catholic women a vast service by coming clean about the conflicts and sorrows that they court when they marry outside th Faith. And yet she has hardly scratched the surface of the difficulties involved: Loyalties working against one another can cause even deeper clefts in a soul than she touches.

Red Ouster Of Missioner Halts Villages' Conversion

Hong Kong — (NC) — A "phenomenon in conversion work" which the communists halted was described here by the Rev. Russell Sprinkle, Maryknoll Missioner from Middletown, O., who was forced out of China.

As pastor of the mission at Pakaia, or White Sands, Father Sprinkle baptized more than 1,000 converts during a two-month period in 1950. He had as many as 18 villages under instruction at one time, with many more on the waiting list.

"WE PRIESTS had little to do with it — it just happened," Father Sprinkle said modestly. "We would have had 3,000 baptisms during 1950 if we had been able to carry on. How great would have been the increase in 1951 no one can say, of course, but with our increased staff of catechists and Sisters, I think 5,000 is a conservative estimate. Entire villages entered the Church at a time."

Father Sprinkle said that, instead of people dropping out as the course of instructions progressed, they brought their friends and classes steadily increased.

UNDER the communists, however, Father Sprinkle found it impossible to continue his work. They imposed travel restrictions on him and his catechists, and they extended prohibitions on mass meetings to include church services and instruction classes.

Finally he was arrested and kept in prison for five months, while the communists took over his mission buildings. When released from jail, Father Sprinkle lived with a native priest for nearly eight months, under virtual house arrest, and then was forced to leave the country.

Requests Schools

Muenster, Germany—(RNS)— Roman Catholic Bishop Michael Keller of Muenster appealed here to German Catholics to "fight with the utmost determination for the introduction of Catholic schools in all the West German states."

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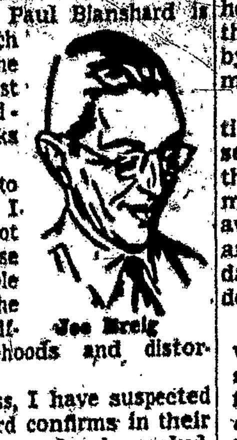
JOSEPH BREIG

Best POAU Has To Offer


Joe Breig

Here and there, from time to time, I have been asked whether I judge that Paul Blanshard is doing much harm to the cause of Christ by his anti-Catholic books and lectures.

I have had to answer that I really do not know, because it is impossible to estimate the effect of half-truths, falsehoods and distortions.

Nevertheless, I have suspected that Blanshard confirms in their prejudices those already prejudiced against the Church, and points up for them their dislike, based on misinformation.

On the other hand, I thought, after listening to one Blanshard lecture, that a fair-minded, thinking person might be repelled by his bland misstatements and his ignorant generalizations.

Such a person, it seemed to me, might be very likely to entertain doubts about Blanshard's infallibility and impeccability, and might sprinkle his assertions liberally with salt.

This, I imagined, might specially be the effect of Blanshard's technique—which is basically Ku Klux Klan technique—of wrapping himself in the American flag and assuming that anybody hardy enough to disagree with him about anything is, by that fact alone, un-American.

* * *

I SAY THAT THIS is a Klan technique, but of course it did not originate with the Klan. From the dawn of history until now, patriotism has been misused by demagogues who wanted to put other people in a bad light.

It will be so misused, I suppose, until Judgment Day.

The method is simple. Instead of discussing a question fairly, reasonably and in kindly fashion with the other fellow, you set yourself up as the standard and then berate him for not seeing things your way.

But you don't tell anybody that you are the standard. You simply take that for granted. You talk as if that were questionable. After all, you don't want anybody stopping you suddenly in the middle of your lecture to inquire:

"Who elected you as the criterion of all perfection?"

You don't want that, because you might be driven, by persistent questioning, to admit that you elected yourself.

* * *

BEHIND all fault-finding there is this basic and unspoken assumption by the fault-finder that he or she is beyond criticism, that he or she is the yardstick by which all others must be measured.

Any one who takes that attitude must, of course, be possessed of a towering deceit; and the oddest thing about it is that most of us are so humble, so aware of our own imperfections and shortcomings, that we let the damagogues get away with their demagoguery.

The Paul Blanshard lecture which I heard consisted of a solid hour of conceited fault-finding against Catholics. I came away thinking that if Protestants really believe we are such dreadful scoundrels, it is a wonder they don't demand that all Catholics be locked up forthwith.

Anyhow, I have before me an enlightening letter form a reader Mrs. M. E. Presar of Cuyahoga Falls, O. She writes:

"Mr. Blanshard's book, American Freedom and Catholic Power, was given to me by one of his devotees during a period when I was taking instructions preparatory to becoming a Catholic . . .

"What Mr. Blanshard perhaps does not know is that such hysterical rantings may have an effect opposite to the one intended. When I had finished the book, it was clearer to me than ever before that Catholicism is the religion Christ meant for us to have, and that He died in order that His Church might live 'all days, even unto the consummation of the world.'

* * *

"MANY OF my dearest friends are kind, faithful, active Protestants, who live and practice their religion and leave others to do the same. These people are somewhat ashamed of Paul Blanshard, the POAU, and the un-American tactics being used . . .

"To any thinking, fair-minded person it must surely be apparent that if Blanshard's arguments are the best the POAU has to offer, that little group had best 'fold their tents like the Arabs and silently steal away.'

"Mr. Blanshard's book and lectures are an insult to the intelligence of Americans. I am convinced that his own words will prove his undoing. He is making friends for the Catholic Church by the hundreds. I know several Protestants who have been rubbed the wrong way by his high-sounding drivel, and who feel almost an instinctive desire to protect a religion so unjustly and falsely maligned."

A LOOK AT LABOR

Simple Desires Beat Octopus State

By A. C. Tuohy

One of the things that never ceases to amaze me about the present Holy Father, besides his endurance, is the close contact he has with people. And by contact I do not mean the audiences, the handshakes, the meetings. Most of us, if God gave us the will and the strength, might have duplicated the physical contacts but would never have put into these human situations or gotten out of them what Pope Pius XII has.

The contacts of the Holy Father are always intimate and eminently personal. He makes himself a part of the life of every visitor. He is interested in every story, is sympathetic to every complaint, disposed to every need.

He is able to teach his flock so effectively because he has learned them, not out of any book, nor through a documented report, but by visiting with its sheep. If ever a Pope lived with his people, the twelfth Pius does.

This is borne out in the multitude of impromptu addresses he gives daily to various and sundry groups visiting Rome. He talks eloquently and meaningfully on science, history, politics, medical care, motherhood, travel, art, baseball, housing, wearing apparel, etc. And everything he says on all these subjects is significant.

* * *

JUST LAST week he was addressing a business and management group and the keynote of his address was "humanity." And if there is one thing the present world needs it is humanity. The Pope well realizes that the spectre of "man's inhumanity to man" has not faded from view. The trouble with the present social order, said the Pope, is that it is "not profoundly Christian nor truly human but purely technical and economic."

He urges management and labor to be guided by "human sentiments" in their relations and to work together in harmony for the common welfare of mankind.

We are accustomed to decry the impersonal treatment of men by government officials. Bureaucracy and red tape standing in the way of satisfying human need is all too common. Minor deputies sometimes save themselves a lot of trouble and are guilty of inhumanity to needful men by their impossible demands.

An ex-soldier who seeks an education from the Veterans Administration, a mentally ill person who wants home relief, a tenant who tries to escape eviction with his eight children, have all experienced this inhumanity. But this sickness is not pecular to government alone. It is part of the very wellsprings of our industrialized society.

* * *

WE ARE constantly being told that this is a very unsentimental world, that business is business, that red tape is necessary, that there are justifiable excuses for ruthlessness. We are further told that softness is a woman's vice, that sentimentality is corrosive of good order, that people must learn to stand on their own two feet. And yet if we are truly human we have and should have regard not only for people's rights but for their weaknesses.

We must be sympathetic to those who cannot stand on their own feet. We must remember that the weaker brethren were not made that way by God but were moulded and formed in this pattern by the very society which would now crucify them. Even where people have no right to expect justice they might hope for charity.

* * *

THE CLASS warfare approach to collective bargaining which characterizes so many industries is a direct outgrowth of this lack of humanity and personal affection for fellow human beings.

Too often the only lever of cooperation is naked power. The employer gets away with just about everything he can, if he can. The labor union uses its power to cripple or intimidate an unwilling management. Pope Pius rightly rejects such an order and demands a relationship based on a common human nature and a common Redemption.

The motive power of all inhumanity, of course, is good. If men were satisfied with less, particularly those who can afford to be satisfied with less, all of us would be a lot happier and we would not have to be worried about the Octopus State nor about Communism.