Hurley, Wilfred G. ADS3197 THE BLAME?

--- By ---Wilfred G Hurley

THE PAULIST PRESS . NEW YORK, N. Y.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED IN THE U.S.A. BY THE PAULIST PRESS, NEW YORK, N.Y.



WHOSE THE BLAME?

By WILFRED G. HURLEY



FAMOUS American humorist often begins his articles with the bland remark: "All I know is what I see by the papers."

But with only this not-so-meager source of information it is not hard to see

that things are decidedly bad with young America.

Day by day sordid details are unfolded. How much more remains hidden, only Heaven knows. Only those unfortunate enough to be caught are known. But, even then, there is an abundance and super-abundance. Immorality. Drunkenness. Murders. Suicides. Crimes of every sort. And so the tale goes on. Families disgraced. Young lives ruined.

Perhaps you think this is overdrawing the picture of modern decadent youth? Then read the papers! Consider the import of the headlines. Crime and scandal! And the offenders? Youths! Mere boys and girls. There is no time nor place for a "pollyanna" attitude. Of all living issues today this is the most vital—our children.

Just yesterday a mother came to see me ... what was the burden of her plea? Her son. Where is he? San Quentin. How old a boy? Only seventeen. Educated? Yes. Expensive military academy. What was the crime? That for which black men are lynched in the South. A momentary slip? No! No! Even at that age, a roué. A confirmed libertine. Was he an isolated sinner? No! No!! The mother bared a whole circle of companionships—women as well as men, living the same kind of a life....

Was this an unusual visit and interview? Would that it were!

Could the curtain be torn from the life of young America . . . I shudder at the revelations!

It portends a storm. If the storm is not already upon us.

Whose the blame?

Parent or child?

Look at the situation with a little reason and common sense! Get down to the fundamental basis of the mess we are in.

That basis is the family life.

As the stately row of Doric columns upholds a temple, so the architecture of the temple of family life is sustained by certain columns of strength. When these pillars crumble, the structure is no more. And the pillars are crumbling. They must be restored—restored to their former strength and power. And if a parent loves his child there must be no delay.

Restore these pillars!

The Pillar of Discipline

Discipline means order. Order is Heaven's first law. And law is fundamental. Why do we know so assuredly that out of the darkness shall come the dawn? Law. Why does the sun and all the immense planets that surround us in this tre-

mendous universe move on and on in ordered sequence? Law. Why does the tide ebb and flow, the moon wax and wane? Why? Law! Law!! Law!!!

Discipline means order. Order means law. And LAW is simply LOVE, written in three letters. Let law be abolished from the cosmic order for one second and the heavens crash. And crash, inevitably, will any family which does not maintain, at all cost, the family discipline.

But God is love. Love is law. And hence the cosmic order is, and must be, immutable.

And if a parent loves his child, then that love must inevitably express itself in the discipline of the home.

Why won't parents see this—that oftentimes they are their child's worst enemy?

These "easy going" parents! Leisurely, amiable men and women who "take things as they come"..."let well enough alone"..."never make a fuss." The world is always praising them. But are they so admirable? Are they not really slackers and by their cheerful laziness passing on a lot of grief for others to settle?

I knew such a couple, once, who let their son run over them . . . who failed to teach him the rules of life . . . who let him grow up as he pleased.

"Oh, let him enjoy himself while he can," they would inanely beam, "he's only young once." "He will have to learn the hard things soon enough. We just want him to be happy now—that's all." But the boy wasn't happy. Even then. He's most unhappy now. And so are all those who have to associate with him.

At maturity he is still filled with notions, prejudices and habits which should have been eliminated in his infancy.

He had never been taught to obey . . . to be prompt, tidy, systematic . . . to do things he didn't like to do.

He had never been taught to consider other people's feelings.

His mother laughed when he resented discipline ... said he "took after his father." Shrugged her shoulders and waited for him to "grow up."

But the world didn't chuckle when he went out into it. It had no time to bother with him. It wouldn't stand his nonsense.

And because he had no discipline. Because everyone was dizzy and disgusted with him. Because he had been petted and pampered and spoiled, he is today a diseased, drunken sot—a down-and-outer.

Whose the blame?

Those "easy going," amiable parents.

Too lazy and self-indulgent to train and discipline him. That was their job, but they preferred to be "easy going."

And they will go to their graves thinking they were perfectly wonderful parents.

"We loved our boy so," they are whining today. "Love"? Just so much cant.

What they really loved was their own comfort, leisure, and indolence.

And the boy pays the penalty for their sin.

The Pillar of Protection

The headline of a San Francisco newspaper ... "SCARLET WOMAN EXPOSED!!!!"

Splendid newspaper copy. The words caught the eye. Hundreds bought. In offices. On the street cars. In the homes. People read, reveled in the filthy details.

A man had been murdered. In a love nest. His jealous mistress, in a drunken frenzy, had emptied a six-shooter into his abdomen. He lingered for hours in frightful pain. Then died.

For days the papers were full of it. There were pictures of the apartment. The father and mother of the mistress. Her brothers and sisters. The man's wife and children. His home. His automobile.

Day after day the lurid details were unfolded. It was the sensation of the week! The talk of the town—even from pulpits thundered forth sermons on "A Scarlet Woman."

But the truth back of it all?

"A Scarlet Woman"?

"Scarlet"! . . . Yes!!! Flaming, crimson scarlet.

But a "Woman"? . . . No! Just a young girl, scarcely seventeen years old.

In the quiet of her cell, to a sympathetic, kind

old matron, she talked. With hard sullen eyes, with tight thin lips, she unfolded her story.

A story of careless parents, or should I say callous.

A father, ambitionless, drifting along through life on a small salary.... A mother who insisted on working to augment this salary, for the luxuries of life.

And with the coming of evening, the mother off every night to a card club, or dance. The father, likewise, deserting the lonely house for the pool room. Thus the girl grew up, forming as well as she could, her own life.

A life of sex-laden movies. Of questionable dance halls and more questionable dancing. Of lonely automobile rides. Long parking in secluded spots. Late hours. Fast crowds. The inevitable drinking.

Then came the meeting with this wealthy man. She knew he was married . . . and had children. But he said his wife didn't understand him. He had ceased to love her. And he did have "plenty of money and a perfectly gorgeous car." And so . . .

"But we always did our duty by her," cried the parents to the reporters.

Then it is no wonder that the child turned out wrong.

"Did our duty"! Food. Lodging. And clothes. Why, a public institution would give that!

"We did our duty"! Of all empty boasts, this is the emptiest.... The most vicious.

What the child needed was deep draughts of love. An atmosphere of sweet sympathy, of counsel and trust. And Protection, Protection, PRO-TECTION.

Her parents should have been an unfailing refuge. A constant resource. An ever-present inspiration. They were merely a cupboard, a hotel, a pantry, a wardrobe that furnished life's necessities free.

The parents came to see the girl. The father and mother sat together. Facing them, sat the girl. But between them, iron bars—which must always stand there between the girl and the world.

Whose the blame?

"Oh, dear, how could you do what you did to US"? the parents whimpered.

And out of the mouth of their babe and suckling came the contemptible, despicable truth:

"Yeah," the girl sneered at them, "how could YOU do what YOU did to Me"?

The Modern Trinity

Facing the modern youth of today stands that modern trinity of hell. Dancing. Drinking. And the automobile.

I have no comment to make concerning the dance. Whether it is wise or unwise, good or bad. But if parents are going to allow their children to attend these dances, permit me one or two observations.

Home at a reasonable hour! And especially in regard to the girl; chaperoned to and from each dance by someone in whose character the parents have confidence. They should see that their daughter dresses modestly and decently. If they permit her to dress in such a way as to excite the passions of her dancing partner, it's going to prove a dangerous boomerang.

Know their companions. The parents that let their sons and daughters associate with questionable characters, have no one to blame but themselves when the characters of these sons and daughters themselves, become questionable.

Perhaps one of the greatest dangers, however, to the boy or girl today is the automobile. There is a fascination about a car. It is easy to go far, and swiftly, to secluded places.

When the boy and girl start going to parties and social affairs, it is inevitable they will be faced with this temptation.

And especially in regard to the girl. She must adopt and maintain the attitude, "Hands off." It may be difficult to convince her that she must do this.

Doesn't this sound familiar? "Oh, everybody 'pets' nowadays, and if I don't do it, I'll be let out."

How is that to be answered?

They must be shown that familiarity does breed contempt. That a boy who does it soon gets the

cheap nickname of being a "chaser." That the girl gets the name of "easy." That just ONE of these petting parties will destroy the very thing she prizes most—the admiration of other boys.

And when the day comes, as it surely will come, when the boy and girl want to get away from the cheap filthy crowd that wallow in these familiarities, they will generally find their unsavory reputation has preceded them and that decent boys and girls are holding them in justified contempt.

The last ten years have developed the worst danger of all. It is now considered "smart" to drink. Hence we have with us the flask-toting youth.

At a recent high school dance in Portland, with sixty-two boys present, fifty-four of them carried hip flasks.

It seems useless to dwell upon this danger.

We all know the effects of liquor. Especially the strong liquor such as these flasks contain.

The dormant body passions are aroused. The brain is clouded, the will weakened.

But IT IS BEING DONE....

Dancing, Drinking, and the Automobile . . . and the newspapers reek with the pitiful results.

Hardly a day passes without bringing its revelation of a well-developed career on the part of some boy or girl, of high school age, and even younger.

And it is not mere make-believe, either, that they display.

Very often they show an easy assurance in the ways of the underworld that is a most unpleasant commentary on their parents who bring their surprised presence to the police station, after the arrest.

"If we had only known! We never even suspected! We never even dreamed."

Well, they should have suspected.

Frequent and unexplained absences, mysterious companionships, and late hours are not the accompaniments of a virtuous life.

Newspaper accounts flash their warnings too often for any father or mother to offer such a diabolical and absurd excuse.

"We never even suspected"!

The terrifying need of protection! The treasures of youth are so easy to lose. So hard to keep. If eternal vigilance be the price of liberty, eternal protection is the price of youth.

Between security and tragedy, between life and death, may lie only an hour. Even less.

A giant Sequoia tree, glorious and magnificent in its four thousand years of growth, can be felled in a few minutes.

I knew a football player who spent all his previous life to achieve physical perfection. He stood forth magnificent as a Greek god. But in one night he lost all that he had spent a lifetime to obtain.

It took a girl only one night to make "the great mistake."

It took only one night of drinking the wrong

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liquor to bring lifelong blindness to a party of six boys and girls.

Physical, mental, and moral dangers are lurking on every side.

Unceasing watching and counseling, guarding and advising, have become a terrific task upon parents.

Unless they wish, some day, to bask in the pitiless, soul-scorching limelight as the father and mother of a notorious nobody.

A terrific task! But a task for which God will surely hold them strictly accountable.

The Pillar of Education

A parent can give life, but, as parent, can give no more. A parent can take life, but the deed stops there. But when a parent educates a child he is effecting eternity. He can never tell where his influence is going to stop.

Education may make of a child either an atheist or a priest. Honest man or jailbird. A credit or a disgrace. Almost, it seems, in spite of himself.

But the school, at its best, has only transient and temporary effects compared with the far more powerful and permanent effects of the home influence.

The real teachers are not the professors, nor the clergy, but the parents. The real training ground is not the church nor the school but the home.

It makes no difference how Christian decency and morality is inculcated by the school and

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church, the more intimate teaching that goes on insensibly in the home may neutralize it and scatter it to the winds of Heaven.

Refinement, love of the beautiful and clean things of life, dissolve like the mist before the sun when the home influence opposes.

On the other hand the good influence of a father and mother cannot be exaggerated. As good food, pure air, wholesome exercise, cleanliness of mind and body build up a splendid constitution, so good example, in daily life with good parents, the surroundings of a sweet and healthy home, build a child into the ideal young man or woman.

Thus the Psalmist: "With the holy, thou wilt be holy; and with the innocent, thou wilt be innocent; and with the elect, thou wilt be elect; and with the perverse, thou wilt be perverted."

In regard to the school, it is for no foolish whim that the Church is so insistent for the right education. That the Church sacrifices time, money and labor—without stint—for the furthering of such education.

That is why the noblest of men and women leave the world and live lives of the greatest selfsacrifice. Poorly paid. Poorly clothed. Poorly thanked. That is why Christ promised a special reward to those whose life labor is the teaching of the little ones.

For in the Christian education of children, it is essential that not only the mind must be trained, but above all else the will. The keenest intellect

without a trained will is one of the most futile parodies of today. What does it profit a young man if he knows what is good. If he can enumerate the reasons why he should follow the right path. Why he should do good and refrain from evil. And not only enumerate but demonstrate clearly and convincingly why he should do one thing and not another.

What DOES it profit him—if he has not the will to do that which he knows he should do?

False Education

What does the most brilliant of educations amount to if it causes the one educated to lose the priceless heritage of his faith? You all know such young men and women. Wandering here and there. Indifferent. Dissatisfied. Ironical. Cheaply cynical. Dreading death as only those who fear annihilation can dread it.

Education accompanied by skepticism, indifferentism, and atheism is the greatest possible evil parents can inflict upon their children.

And so, too, with higher education.

Not so long ago a young college girl committed suicide.

A beautiful girl. Talented. Brilliant. At an age when most girls find life fascinating. Full of promise. Reveling in the very joy of living.

This poor girl, instead, snuffs out the light of her God-given life. To plunge despairingly, hopelessly, into eternity.

Whose the blame?

Her father, frantic with grief and sorrow, dragged into court one of her professors in a famous university.

"That man," he cried, pointing at the professor, "is really the murderer of my dead daughter. The ideals he put into her mind killed her faith in God, her faith in religion, turned her against morality and decency. And the loss of all this destroyed her health and mind. She killed herself because of what he taught her."

Then the father turned to the Judge imploringly. Tears streamed down his cheeks. Raising his arms dramatically he shrieked, "Justice"!

The Judge leaned down from the bench. His calm, cool and reasoning mind had summed up the situation.

"Justice. Yes"! he replied. "It was you, certainly, who put the girl in this University. You knew she would be subject to such ideas." Contemptuously he went on: "I dismiss the case against the Professor." "And you are under bonds not to trouble him further."

The Judge was right.

If parents insist, after unquestionable authority warns them of the dangers of putting their children in such universities, of placing them under such instruction, they must accept the consequences. Allow a child to play with fire and eventually that child is going to be burned.

If parents place their children under teachers

whose submersive attitude towards the fundamentals of free will, morality and immortality is well known, the outcome is one of sorrow and regret.

A sorrow and regret that knows no healing.

When such parents reap what they have sown, they should not cry for Justice.

It seems to me that they already have it.

The only education that is going to turn out the child you would wish to have is the education which trains the child to the knowledge of real truth. That truth which recognizes the existence of a God of truth.

For education must do this, and must not stop even here. It must go further. It must train the will to the doing of good. To practice virtue.

Virtue means right living. And right living can be founded only upon religious principles.

Outside of God's grace, there is no better preservative against the loose living, the immorality, the skepticism that abound in the world today, than that a boy or girl be given such an education.

And if parents love their children—and such love be worthy of the name—surely then such an education becomes not an ideal—but an obligation. And an obligation not only to them—but to the God whose own they are.

The Pillar of Religion

However, the instruction in the Faith cannot be entirely dogmatic. The moral side must figure just as prominently. And in the beginning we run face to face with the old philosophic axiom which goes somewhat to the effect that "what we do not possess, we cannot give."

Hence the necessity that parents practise what they preach. That a keen sense of religion vivify and actuate them in their lives. No one can sense hypocrisy quicker than a child. Especially one's own child.

Now the only solid basis of a real religious home is the realization that matrimony is a sacrament.

At the risk of boring you for the second, let me say that God has established two sacraments that have to do with leading souls to Himself. The first is the Christian Priesthood; the second is the Sacrament of the Christian Family.

God founded the priesthood that souls might be guided through life to their heavenly home. The dignity of Holy Orders is equaled only by its responsibilities. Great is the reward of a priest, if he be faithful. Great is his punishment if he fail.

Likewise, in the Sacrament of Matrimony, God has elevated and consecrated Parenthood. Privileges untold, but the responsibility is also tremendous. To bring children into the world! What greater privilege? To nourish, educate and prepare them for their eternal heritage . . . the Kingdom of Heaven! The dignity and the reward must be tremendous when parents are faithful. And so,

too, must be the punishment when there is failure, or betrayal of the honor and trust.

In our Catholic churches we find statues of Mary and Joseph, so that at least once a week, on Sunday while at Mass, parents should look upon them. The ideals for the ideal father and mother. To inspire, to encourage, and to aid fathers and mothers in their labor of love.

What a wonderful Father and Spouse was St. Joseph! Quietly doing the will of God without fuss, without anxiety. Laboring throughout the day cheerfully and patiently. Whatever God desired, it was to be done without murmuring, without complaint.

The angel appeared to him in his sleep telling him to arise and to take the Child Jesus down into Egypt. Scripture records that he arose immediately, that very night, and set out. Set out on a trip of hundreds of miles. A trip that in those days meant incredible hardship in every mile.

Every day in his life could record similar acts of faith and devotion to God's honor. A devotion not of words alone but of deed. Such was this model for fathers. What father could look upon him, and think of him, and not be a little more patient? A little more considerate of his family? A little more zealous in his desire to do God's will?

The Paternal Path

How can a father forget—ever—that no matter how insignificant he may appear in the eyes of the world, in the eyes of his little boy or girl he is the most wonderful man on earth. A child almost adores his father, if he will let it. If he will only treat the child with a little kindness, consideration and love. The saddest sight on earth is to see a family where the children desire and long for the love of their father but a fear of him has chilled their hearts.

How can a father quarrel in front of a child, or with the child? The father may forget all about the matter in less than a week; but oftentimes the sensitive mind of a child has received an impression that time may never fully efface. For years the memory of biting words and the sight of an angry face may be clearly remembered.

Rule by love! Teach by love! Guide by love! This is the better way, and it will attain the best results. But with this one exception. Sacrifice not one iota to sin, or to the occasion of sin. The spirit of today in which license passes for independence, where boldness parades as confidence, where distraction is mistaken for pleasure . . . must be curbed . . . rooted out.

Business troubles belong to the office. Leave them there. When things go wrong let the family be the last to feel its effects, not the first.

Be such a father that the memory of you, years after you have gone to receive your reward, will bring tears to the eyes of those whom you loved here on earth.

Be such a father that the memory of you, to

those whom you brought into the world, will be one of the sweetest memories that life holds for them.

An ideal of the highest attainment. An ideal blessed by God. An ideal which will require constant self-denial, self-control, limitless patience and love.

The Maternal Path

But, after all, it is the mother who is the priestess of the family. She it is who holds the family and the home together. She is the all-important factor in developing the ideal of Catholic home life. Personal piety must be her first accomplishment.

Of course, the ideal of all mothers is found in all fullness in the Holy Mother of God. Hence the statue of her—that they may look upon her, remember her, imitate her. For to imitate Mary, is to draw closer to God.

"Thou shalt conceive," said the Angel of God, and the Maid of God bowed her head in ready assent. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done unto me according to Thy word," she replied. We have some inkling in the Gospel narrative of the suspicion which was attached to her immaculate person . . . yet how patiently and meekly she bore it. We have some inkling of her hardships in the birth of her infant in a cold, cheerless, comfortless stable in the wintry hills of Bethlehem. We have some inkling of her life of agony among those cold, heartless Jews who could not, or would not,

appreciate the exquisite divinity of her beloved Son. We get glimpses here and there. But they are only glimpses. But even so, they reveal a world of suffering, of loneliness, of apprehensive fear for her divine child.

When she presented Jesus, a mere child, in the temple, she heard those words of prophecy of Holy Simeon: "And thy own heart a sword shall pierce." No prophecy was ever truer! Her heart was pierced, not once but a thousand times. Until at last, in the shadow of the Cross, she beheld the consummation.

Thus with the wife and mother of today. If it be God's will that she bring forth a child, she should do it gladly for His sake. When the child is born, she must guard and protect it, surround it with all the love and care that she possibly can. She must assiduously watch for the first dawn of conscience in her child. She knows, or ought to know, that first impressions are the most effective and most lasting. What a delight it should be to take her little child on her knee and teach it to pray! What pride should be hers when her little one raises its mind and heart to God in the "Our Father."

With the knowledge that her child is also a child of God! An heir of heaven! With a dignity above all other creation. "Just a little lower than the angels," says God Himself. She must sacrifice pleasure, her own comforts, everything, that she may make the child better and more pleasing to

God. Not forgetting—ever—to pray for her child unceasingly.

The Home

In consideration of the home itself, may I offer one or two suggestions? Suggestions based on the sound psychological principle that—whether we like it or not—we are constantly being influenced by the environment in which we live.

There ought to be prominent signs about the house that it is the abode of a family that loves God. There is a feeling in some families, having pretentions to being up-to-date and fashionable, to regard a religious picture in the home as out of place. This feeling is generally the result of a cheap worldliness.

In a home of real culture, this is not the case. Any artist will tell you the Madonna and Child are the very center of real artistry. Repeatedly artists inform us that the best pictures of the best artists are invariably devotional. Da Vinci, Michael Angelo, Rembrandt, Fra Lippi, Fra Angelico, Raphael, and so the list goes.

Perhaps those cheap lithographs, and those inferior pictures which have flooded the market may in a measure have caused the reaction today. But in a real Catholic home, good and really artistic religious pictures give a tone to the house. They impress the faith on the minds of the members of the family. Expressing the culture and the faith of the family to visitors.

More important even, than Catholic art, is Catholic literature. These are the days when everybody reads . . . something. It is notorious that Catholics do not buy books as they should. Even our Holy Father has warned us that unless we support a good Catholic press it will be useless for us to build schools and churches.

Now the Catholic Church is not wanting either in excellent writers or excellent publishers. Our book stores are rich in devotional, scientific and recreative literature. The crying shame is that so little of this finds its way into our homes.

Not only should there be this religious literature but a weekly Catholic paper. A monthly Catholic magazine should be on the reading table. Today, as down through the ages, the Catholic Church is marching on, spreading the Kingdom of God over the earth. These papers should help, and impress upon Catholics, their Catholicity.

To my mind the greatest loss and misfortune that has come to America in the last generation has been the dying out, among non-Catholics as well as Catholics, of the custom of family prayer. For the home and family which practised this custom, of having all kneel together in common prayer, had surrounded itself with a bulwark against which the storms of temptation, vice and sin could beat only in vain.

May I also urge that glorious old custom of a crucifix over every bed. Of a holy water font at every bedroom door. Of a prayer book for every

member of the family. That wherever they go, they carry with them their rosaries.

And may I add this truth. That such labors are not without their reward even in this world. It is the inevitable rule of divine love, that if parents teach their children to love and reverence God, God in turn will teach those children to love and reverence their parents.

Whose the Blame?

From what we see in the papers, it would appear the children of today deserve the severest condemnation.

But reading between the lines—the truth comes forth—as truth must always come forth.

And the truth is this!

The children are sinning—Yes!

But they are MORE sinned against!

The temple of family life—which should be their refuge and their strength, has fallen on evil days. Its pillars of Discipline, Protection, Education and Religion—are crumbling.

Their one haven!

It is even becoming—a menace!

And the children of today—destined to be the fathers and mothers of tomorrow.

Their loss is irreparable.

What is to be done then?

The answer seems rather simple. Down in our hearts we know.

Good fathers and mothers!

It is the sorest need of the world today.

A good father and mother is the birthright of every child.

And the good father and mother—though all else be in ruins about them—will preserve the temple of family life, will keep it inviolate.

WILL RESTORE those Pillars.

DISCIPLINE.

PROTECTION.

EDUCATION.

RELIGION.

So that, when on that day of days to come, when life's labors are over, when coming through the infinite lengths and breadths of space they stand before the judgment throne of the Almighty, Eternal God—

It will be the one consolation, the one satisfaction, the one contentment to such parents that their children, and their children's children, shall rise up to call them blessed.

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Demands a Reading!



By Rev. Wilfred G. Hurley, C.S.P.

"This is an admirable synthesis of Catholic apologetics, and fills for the rank and file a need which such works as Hettinger's Abologie des Christenthums have long fulfilled for the 'learned.' I Believe! is not merely an explanation of individual, dissociated points of dogma-extremely useful as works of this type are. Rather it sets forth the pattern-with generous sections of the tissue and fabric, so to speak-of Divine Revelation as a consistent, coherent unit, the only satisfying answer to the eternal unrest of the human heart. To have achieved this within the compass of a large-print, 208-page book in straightforward 'American,' is decidedly a feat worthy of special commendation. Moreover, it meets the American challenge to 'make it snappy' by brief, incisive, pointed statement without a trace of obscurity. Neither is the reader repelled by frigid argumentation. Copious historical illustrations and apt analogies make the assimilation of the arguments easier. A book like this must undoubtedly be a boon to convert-class instructors-and for all those who have anything to do with ill-instructed Catholics."-The Messenger of the Sacred Heart.

Paper Cover: 50c, \$35.00 the 100 Cloth Cover: \$1.00 Postage Extra

Published by

THE PAULIST PRESS 401 West 59th Street New York, N. Y.







