

# THE DIGGER

'FOR A CHRISTIAN COMMONWEALTH'

No. 5

Jan. '86

## THE GIFT

A few weeks ago on one of my strolls around town, I discovered a cast out wood stove. One leg was off and the fire brick lining was missing, but all in all sound. Being needful and loathe to see a serviceable piece of equipment go to the dump, I went back later and picked it up and a couple of days later sold it to a friend for twenty-five dollars. You may find this a sad comment on my lifestyle (especially if you are a yuppie in which case you probably wouldn't be reading this anyway), I've been reduced to scavenging for a living. Poverty and desperation dog my footsteps. But this is not so.

I try to take literally Jesus sermon on the mount in which He taught us not to worry about tomorrow, to store not up treasures on earth but in the spiritual realm. Jesus teachings taken literally (and there is no real justification for taking them otherwise) amount to a total rejection of the status quo. When we reject worldly wealth we show our Father that we trust or have faith and when we do this, there is nothing we can want for. So I saw that old wood stove not

as a piece of junk but as a gift from my Father. Worldly wisdom is silliness, but how silly must this idea seem to the worldly.

The idea is promoted that poverty is difficult and wealth is ease yet those who strive for worldly wealth inevitably wind up with heart attacks, ulcers, nervous exhaustion, and twisted psyches. Is this ease? I think it is a strange kind of ease. Poverty is difficult only when it is seen as a shameful thing rather than as a blessing when it is allowed to nurture jealousy of wealth, when it is strived against. Accepted as a blessing, accepted as the lifestyle our Lord chose for himself, it is not a hardship but a beautiful life of peace and thankfulness. I often find myself praying in the spirit and may it always be so. May I always be thankful for the gifts my Father gives me. Even old wood stoves.

Kenny

"The power of the murdering and theeving sword formerly as well as now of late years hath set up a government and maintains that government; for what are prisons and putting others to death, but the power of the sword to enforce people to that government which was got by conquest and cannot stand but by the same murdering power."

- Gerrard Winstanley

## GOD'S LAW MAN'S LAW HANDLING THE CONFLICT

We all know that very often there is a conflict between the laws of man and the laws of God. Most of us would agree that the laws of God take precedence over man's laws. Jesus knew that this would be so, and that in many cases adhering to the laws of God would cast us in the role of criminals in regard to man's or the state's laws. We are not the first generation of criminals of conscience. Throughout history the church (in the sense of ordinary Christians rather than the earthly church bureaucracy) has been condemned for refusal to follow state dictates. Jesus gives us a few rules of conduct to guide us in the conflict. If you have been arrested for trespassing at a military installation or something of that nature and wind up in court Jesus says "Don't make any vows! Say 'Yes I will or No, I won't'. Your word is enough. To strengthen your promise with a vow shows that something is wrong." Math. 5, 34 - 37. The Quakers suffered for centuries over this. Don't swear in court. Jesus also says "You must stand trial before governors and kings for my sake, when you are arrested, don't worry about what to say at your trial, for you will be given the right words at the right time. For it won't be you

doing the talking - it will be the Spirit of your heavenly Father talking through you!" Math. 10, 17 -20. So while Jesus does not say we should avoid hiring legal counsel, He says it is not necessary. Could we have a better defence than letting God speak through us? No! And if the court should find against us would that mean that God had failed? Of course not, He has His plan, and if you didn't want to wind up in court or in jail, or in front of a firing squad, you would not be following God's law anyway, you would be laying low and following only man's law. Finally (for now) you may think that God expects too much of you. But God has made provisions for you before you wind up in confrontation. Jesus says "When you are persecuted in one city, flee to the next! I will return before you have reached them all!" Math. 10, 23. God will not ask you to throw your life away until there is no other course open, and God gave you intellect. Many times in many ways Jesus says don't be stupid. I will try in further issues to clarify many other aspects of Jesus' teachings in relation to our own lives.

Kenny

Risk! Risk! Care no more for the opinion of others, or for those voices.

Do the hardest thing on earth for you.

Act for yourself. Face the truth.

- Katherine Mansfield

"There are anarchists who never made a speech and never carried a rifle, whom we know as our brothers, though perhaps they know not us. Two I will name who live for ever, Shelley, the first of poets, were it not that there is one yet greater than he, the mystic William Blake. We are thought of as men of blood; we are hounded over the face of the globe. And who of our persecutors would believe that the song we bear in our hearts, some of us, I may speak at least for one, is the most inspired, the most spiritual challenge ever flung to your obtuse, flatulent, stertorous England. England! No, not England, but Europe, America, the world! Where is man, the new Man, there is our country. But the new Man is buried in the old; and wherever he struggles in his tomb, wherever he knocks we are there to help to deliver him. When the guards sleep in the silence of the dawn, rises the crucified Christ. And the angel that sits at the grave is the angel of Anarchy."

from a Modern Symposium  
by G. Lowes Dickinson



## KILLING US SLOWLY

At least 6,928 accidents involving toxic chemicals have occurred in the U.S. in the last five years, killing more than 135 people, injuring nearly 1500, and causing 217,450 to be evacuated, according to the draft of a study commissioned by the Environmental Protection Agency early this year. This compilation is only a partial list, because data were drawn only from selected areas and information banks. Had the entire country been surveyed, the number of accidents would be two and a half to three times higher, according to the consultants who prepared the study. But even this admittedly incomplete listing reports that five accidents a day released toxic chemicals from small and large facilities, most of them involved in chemical production or storage totalling some 420 millions pounds of chemicals.

## GRAPE BOYCOTT

The United Farmworkers of America (UFW) are once again asking us to boycott California grapes. The 3% of the 80,000 grape workers who belong to the UFW are under the attack of the California administration of Gov. Dukmejian who have reneged on agreements, and consistently refuse to investigate complaints by the union against grape-growers. Workers are still being sprayed with chemicals in the fields and living in their cars and trucks. It's a crime! Support the boycott.

## IN WHOSE INTEREST?

"Without being radical or overly bold, I will tell you that the third world war has already started - a silent war, but not for that reason any less sinister. This war is tearing down Brazil, Latin America, and practically all of the third world. Instead of soldiers dying, there are children; instead of millions of wounded, there are millions of unemployed; instead of destruction of bridges, there is the tearing down of factories, schools, hospitals, and entire communities.... It is a war by the United States against the Latin American continent and the third world. It is a war over the foreign debt, and one which has as its main weapon a weapon more deadly than the atom bomb, more shattering than a laser beam.

(from a statement by Luis Ignacio Silva (Llula), Brazilian labor leader).



We have recieved word from the Toronto Catholic Worker. They have opened 'Angelus House', a house of hospitality in the CW tradition. They have also opened (or are opening) a store front which will house a free clothes room, soup and coffee, companionship and office space. Call 466-4877, or visit at 1182 Queen St. East. We send them our love and prayers.

### THE SECRET OF LIFE

"A drunken man who fall out of a cart, though he may suffer, does not die. His bones are the same as other people's; but he meets his accident in a different way. His spirit is in a condition of security. He is not conscious of riding in the cart; neither is he conscious of falling out of it. Ideas of life, death, fear, etc. cannot penetrate his breast; and so he does not suffer from contact with objective existences. And if such security is to be got from wine, how much more is it to be got from God. It is in God that the sage seeks his refuge and so is free from harm."

- Chuang Tze

If you would like to write to the Digger I'd be glad to hear from you. If anyone would like to donate \$20.00 so that I can go to Toronto and visit the Catholic Worker house I'd appreciate it. Write Digger, P.O.Box 2144, Peterboro, Ont. Can.