

"LESS FLOGGING"

(A letter to Students Away from Manila)

February, 1966

"There is now less flogging in our high schools than formerly, but then less is learned there; so that what the boys get at one end they lose at the other.

Samuel Johnson, one of the best wits of the English language, said this in the 18th century.

Believe me, I do not advocate flogging in High School or College, but his quote gives me a chance to talk about what you are doing academically in school. It is a fact that if you work hard and wisely, the rewards in education are terrific.

(1) Work wisely - This means to ration your time so that the high priorities get their full respect. A Good student must be something of a strategist, plotting out the term paper or expected exam so that it is encountered at his best moment and angle, not the weakest.

(2) Work hard - Set a goal and press toward it with singleness of will. "Purity of heart is to will one thing." (Kierkegaard) So much is at stake during the brief academic years that they deserve the best you can give. How well you do this semester will open or possibly close doors to you next year.

I am convinced that all academic success like success in living, must be done day by day, one step at a time. This means that a basic mastery of your "today" schedule is all you need to win; then repeat the formula again for tomorrow, etc. General brilliance or genius is rarely enough and definitely no match for the fairly bright man who works hard, wisely and consistently. What counts most is the individual who can produce under pressure on a day by day basis (This is the point of a controlled situation mid-term or term paper with limited time to seize hold of and resolve a specific question posed).

The undisciplined, high IQ is in the last analysis more frustrating than rewarding because such an individual realizes that he cannot concretely and consistently produce because of his lack of basic academic and technical building blocks which ironically he had earlier scorned.

I believe it is God's will that whatever a Christian endeavors to

do should be done well; we should work hard and work wisely at every level of life because the highest calling demands the highest quality of life.

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