

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin
January 10, 1933

The "Devastating Effects" of Faith.

News Item - Dean MacBain, of the graduate faculties of Columbia University, in a memorial service at St. Paul's chapel rejected the various authorities for a belief in immortality, and said: "I may be wholly in error, but I am inclined to believe that for thinking men a certainty of an afterlife would have graver and perhaps more devastating effects upon us than certainty of extinction."

The worthy dean, you will observe, speaks only for the thinkers. It's an old sophistic custom. And he limits his argument to a group that has never existed, and probably never will exist, 'thinkers who have a certainty of extinction.' That's another old custom, safe as government bonds, and honest as bootleg whisky.

What grave and devastating effects, we ask the mortal dean, had certainty of an after-life on St. Paul, whose chapel was the scene of this ponderous utterance? Did it tie down the soul of this gigantic little man who turned licentious Greeks and Romans into chaste Christians?

What devastation did it wreak on the mind of Augustine? Did it cramp the style of Dante? What ruin did it bring on Shakespeare, on Copernicus, on Galileo, on Newton, Mozart, Bach, Michelangelo, Raphael, Rembrandt, Van Dyck, Pasteur? Did it defeat Napoleon at Waterloo? Did it enervate Marshal Foch? Has it devastated the Papacy, ruined the Catholic Church?

Dean, dear, light your lantern and start out in search of the 'thinkers who have a certainty of extinction.' No savage tribe has yet been found that does not, by burying food with the dead or by other symbol attest its belief in immortality. Respect for the dead and hope of reunion has characterized every civilized nation. Stubborn fools have stoutly maintained in their prime of life and health and vigor that "when you're dead you're dead all over," but they spoke from their moods and not from their heads. Even the dean is willing to admit, "I may be wholly in error." We accept his admission and close the book on a foolish incident which took place in St. Paul's chapel.

A Pious Wish.

A former student, who is now in a strict religious order, said in a recent letter: "If God gave me one wish it would be that every Catholic boy in the United States would spend one year at Our Lady's school."

State Your Case.

Along towards Trinity Sunday every year priests are besieged (not only at Notre Dame, but everywhere) by Catholics who have nursed a worry for upwards of a year - perhaps for several years. It's hard to find an excuse for such nonsense at Notre Dame, where spiritual advice may be had for the asking from any one of sixty or seventy priests.

You were told during the Mission that if you have a worry that doesn't settle itself inside of twenty-four hours you should tell someone about it. When are you going to act on it? The Prefect of Religion and his assistant are at your disposal always for that specific purpose, but any other priest will be glad to help. First, however, you must state your case.

A man who is his own counsellor seeks a fool's advice.

PRAYERS: The wife of Russell Overton, ex'23, died Monday. Five special intentions.
MASS: Friday, 8:25, Sacred Heart Church, for Professor Phillips. (Cracow Club)