

When You Want to be Convinced.

"No one sins without making some excuse to himself for sinning."

This opening sentence of Newman's "Neglect of Divine Calls and Warnings" gives the key to every false philosophy. Man has a conscience, and before it he must give an account of his actions. When his actions are in conformity with the natural law, he needs no new philosophy. When his reason tells him that this or that course of action is not nice, he searches his mind for some shadow of proof that is nice.

One of the most complete libraries of atheistic literature in the United States belongs to a former Notre Dame man who married outside the Church. He has always maintained that he was perfectly right in doing what he did. If he really believed that he would never have bought a book to convince himself that he was right. He will go on buying books until he dies, and he will never satisfy his conscience.

When a man does wrong and does not want to change his course of action, he tries to change his course of thought. When he tries to kid himself, his usual course is to try to kid someone else into believing that he believes what he says; he argues that sin is natural, feeling sure that if he can get enough people to agree with him, he will be able to believe it himself. But it's a hard job, this kidding yourself.

When a man feels himself a proper subject for hell, he must either get busy and play safe, or he must deny that there is a hell. His conscience offers no middle path. When the Church settles things not to his liking, he sticks out his tongue at the Church. And like the man who whistles to keep up his courage when he passes the cemetery at night, he shouts his creed to the four winds, hoping to make it unanimous.

"The fool said in his heart: there is no God," sang the inspired David. What a pity it is that the fool can find such an eager audience. When the ignorant hear a blasphemy for the first time, they pick up their ears and remark, "How clever!" not realizing that it has been said many times, and often much better, in ages long dead.

Truth has no terrors when you want to be convinced. Virtue is not dull or impossible when you want to be convinced. It lies ahead. You may find it dull if you want to make it a season of mere physical inconvenience. You can, on the other hand, make it a thrilling experience if you follow the advice of the Church and meditate on the eternal truths. Your only real knowledge of yourself comes from a knowledge of God; your only real self-control comes from conviction that virtue is desirable -- and it comes when you want to be convinced.

The Wise Fool Again.

"Dear Father: For the benefit of the Fool Looking for Wisdom I suggest that he is conducting his search in a poor place and that an occasional exploration into the library bring more fruit in his search for wisdom. Should this prove unsatisfactory it might be well if he and his fellow sheep, cows, snakes, etc., who Boo and Hiss would study the conduct of their associates at the theatre -- Hynnyaks, as they term those who ignore what displeases them, and who act, in part at least, like human beings.

"The barnyardites have defended their self-expression in only one instance, against friend Collins. Perhaps it was their deep respect for all that is sacred in motherhood which prompted their moran-like gurgles throughout the performance, movie and vaudeville, whenever a scene or an action occurred which tickled their -- deep respect for sacred motherhood, will we call it? -- A Wise Fool."

Prayers: John Brennan's grandmother died Wednesday. Foster Murdock's father is undergoing an operation.