

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin
March 11, 1931

Sermon By Father Miltner Tonight.

The Lenten sermon this evening will be on the Third Commandment, and will be preached by Father Miltner. Note that the adoration on Wednesdays continues until 7:30.

Setting An Editor Right on Faith. I.

A recent editorial in the South Bend News-Times, "Thoughts for Lent," sums up a group of impossible notions of faith, and since the correct idea of faith is of supreme importance in the present-day conflict of true religion with modernism, we take the liberty of setting the editor right. The editorial says, in part:

"Science rests on proofs, experiments, painstaking winnowings of truth from the material gathered by innumerable researches. Religion is different. It does not depend on proofs; it never can, in the very nature of things. It grows out of faith, which is often highly illogical and which can never be reduced to a simple equation.

"The scientist believes what he believes because the facts have convinced his intellect; the man who nourishes a religious belief believes in it because he has to - because there is an imperative need within him that will not be satisfied with anything else.

"What is religious faith, anyway? Is it not a compound of various things, born of a sense of loneliness and helplessness? It is what a mother believes when she looks down at a child that she has just tucked away in its bed. It is what makes some very old people serene and unafraid as they slowly go down the last hill and watch their shadows lengthen in front of them. It is what the music and the colored lights of a great cathedral can persuade one of, sometimes. It is the sudden, unreasonable belief in mankind's divinity that comes to a man, now and then, when he sees the beauty that his fellows can create, or marvels at the unselfishness and heroism of which they are capable.

"Now all of that does not depend on science. It cannot. Study the sciences until you are gray-haired, and co-ordinate all that you have learned into a unified and comprehensive set of probabilities; you may create a very fine philosophy, but you will not create a religion.

"A distinguished American writer recently defined the religious man as the man who feels constantly 'the need of God, a longing for God, and the sense of another world than this.' That sums it up very well. Can you improve such a faith by an injection of, say, the Einstein theory."

Thus far the editorial. If the writer is describing anything but an emotion, we fail to see it. Faith is not an emotion; religion is not an emotion. When Our Lord said to His enemies: 'If you will not believe Me, believe My works,' He was certainly not referring to an emotion; He asked His hearers to use their wills to hold their emotions in check, and their intellects to accept the teachings, the divine seal on which was His power of miracles. And there can be no reference to an emotion in His last command to His apostles: "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned." Can St. Paul be referring to an emotion when he calls faiths, "the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not?" Or when he warns his hearers, "If Christ be not risen, then is our faith vain?"

(To be continued.)

PRAYERS: Deceased: The father of Ray McGee, '24; a relative of Bob Filson. Ill: Phil. Conboy's mother; Jim Kearns's mother; a relative of Geo. Stack; two relatives of an alumnus. Three special intentions; two conversions.