

University of Notre Dame  
Religious Bulletin  
November 9, 1934

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Religious Freedom--II.

"I don't need any argument for religion. It satisfies me."

It ought to, if it is true, but it is not true because it satisfies you. Your objection smacks of Pragmatism--a religion, a proposition, is true because it "works". Someone has observed that Pragmatism substitutes the heart for the head, and, more poignantly, that it makes the head play shyster to the heart. The engineering of Brooklyn bridge is not true because the bridge sustains its load. The bridge sustains its load because the engineering of Roebling was in the first place true.

It is all very comforting to experience the psychological relief that comes from the confession of sins. The Sacrament of Penance is one great safety-valve. But it is the comfort of delusion unless the priest really has power of forgiving sins.

For all the subjectivism of Kant and the agnosticism of Spencer, the mind is still, as Woodrow Wilson once remarked, by nature, King. That which is founded on comfort and satisfaction is founded on something very flimsy and transitory and shifting. To meet the requirements of human nature one has to meet a thing on rational grounds. The well-grounded convictions that a man has stick with him. Emotional likes and dislikes merely come and go.

III.

"Religion is a matter of personal choice."

The objection suggests that where religion is concerned, opinion is the only thing possible. And opinion is a tentative, reserved, assent, with fear that the opposite may be true. The objection envisages religious truth, not as truth at all, but as a dim, uncertain, flickering light.

But suppose that the divine Christ did make a revelation, capable of investigation, and, when understood, of establishing certainty. Then religion is not a dim, unsatisfactory light, but it is the clear, steady flood-light of God. Then religion is not opinion but the certainty of God. Not only is such a revelation the highest ornament of the human mind, but what sane man will claim the right to choose or not to choose to say (once the facts are known): "God Almighty, I don't believe you."

IV.

"I'm not going to bring up my child in any faith. I have no right to prejudice his mind. When he is old enough, let him choose for himself."

This is getting to be an old one, so old it ought to be senile. It really implies the mentality, or lack of mentality, which is behind the three previously-noted objections.

If Agnosticism is true (which it is not), agreed. If Pragmatism is the test of truth (which it is not), agreed. If all religious adherence is a matter of opinion, of merely tentative assent (which it can't be if there has been a divine revelation), agreed. But suppose there is a divine revelation. Pass on then to the child its social inheritance, its cultural inheritance, its inheritance as an American citizen. Have the child learn language and arithmetic. But for goodness sake do not pass on its religious inheritance. Do not pass on to the child the certainties of Jesus Christ  
PRAYERS: friend of John Clark (Walsh); Fred J. Sullivan ex'35, appendectomy; Mrs. P. J. Kelley, operation; friend of a student. Four special intentions. James MoSweeney '24, seriously hurt in auto accident.