

Inquiry Class meets Tues.,  
8:15, p.m. at 107 Cavanaugh.

University of Notre Dame  
Religious Bulletin  
October 25, 1937

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Translations From The Vernacular--II.

"I prefer a practical subject."

These were the freshman's words, exactly, and to make them more impressive, he added: "And my Dad wants me to take practical subjects, too."

But the Dean failed to be impressed, as is the way with deans when receiving detailed directions from freshmen. He merely fell into his inveterate habit of seeking meaning behind words, and motives behind provocative agents, and asked:

"Why is Spanish practical, and Latin not practical?"

"Well, you see, Latin will never be of any use to me, but Spanish would. I might get a job in South America, some time."

"Oh, that's it. Knowledge which can't be put to use is impractical, but what can be, is practical. In other words, the practical is the useful?"

"Yes, that's what I mean."

"So, on that principle, in furnishing your house you would buy teaspoons and tin pans for the kitchen, but not canvas paintings for the parlor. One can get along without artistic things, you know. They are impractical too, in your sense. You can not eat a canvas or wear it like a coat to keep out the cold."

"Well, impractical, useless, in that way, of course. But not in the long run. It would be useful because indirectly, at least, it would satisfy my desire for the beautiful. It would be restful to look at, cheerful to have around. I suppose I'd get some of what you call inspiration out of it. Anyhow, it would be nice to show to visitors. Besides, I could always sell it, if I got in a pinch."

"No doubt. But then you do admit that what in the long run, and indirectly, may be useful may also be rightly called practical. On second thought perhaps you would even agree with the late Mr. Chesterton when he said: 'The most impractical

of all ideals is the ideal of the

PRAYERS: (deceased) friend of Joe Stephens (bro.); aunt of Edw. and Edwin Stack (off-campus); daughter of J. Rosinski (employee); wife of Harry Miller (Wilmington, Del.). Ill, (seriously) mother of Father Brennan; father of Bill Dugan (Zahm). 4 spec. int.

immediately practical." He was a man of deep thought and rich experience, and reasoned, no doubt, that there is a vast difference between preparing for a job, the immediately practical, and preparing for life, the ultimately practical. The skill to acquire a living is one thing; the ability to live fully is another. Both are good but not equally valuable."

The Dean felt he was carrying conviction. So he continued:

"You see, when people talk about certain studies being impractical, all they mean is that they are not, or may not be immediately useful--like the foundation of a house, for instance."

"Knowledge is ultimately for life, for the future as well as for the present. And life is a practical concern, through and through. It is not all meat and drink, nor all a matter of reaching perfection culturally. And there is where the so-called 'impractical' subjects come in."

"The secrets of successful living lie partly in the heart of classical literature--it is largely the record of the permanent elements in life--partly in philosophy, which enables one to construct the moral order of his life, partly in scientific discoveries, through which he can more perfectly preserve and prolong life, and, most of all, in the doctrines of revealed religion, which give him infallible certainty of the meaning and destiny of life."

"These secrets," concluded the Dean, "are like treasures hidden in the soil. One must often dig deep to find them. But to learn how to dig for them and how to appreciate them once they have been unearthed is at once your opportunity and your privilege."

The freshman smiled--incredulously. Some freshmen are like that, and again, some are not. Not all of them are really practical.