
"Them's Harsh Words, Reverend."

A Herald and Examiner report of a sermon by the Reverend William Ward Ayer, pastor of the Central Baptist Church in Gary, quotes him as follows:

"Whether we admit or deny it, we have come to a day when men, drunk with their own power and wisdom, have built up a philosophy which, if it does not completely exclude God, at least ignores Him and completely excludes the revelation God has given in the Bible.

"Religion is absent in the elementary schools, but oftentimes irreligion is taught. The great colleges founded by Christians and dedicated to the propagation of the gospel, now have atheists and agnostics as professors, and in some instances are destroying the faith of their students by the thousands.

"Even such religious leaders as Dr. Fosdick are ready to believe that ears were evolved by the playing of sound waves upon the skin of some prehistoric creatures, and eyes evolved by the playing of light waves upon him in the dim and distant past.

"Darwin is the patron saint of modernists in religion, and when the great Riverside Baptist Church was thrown open in New York it was discovered that a statue of Darwin occupied a place alongside of Peter and Paul and James and John.

"Dr. Fosdick is the high priest of this new temple, and Mr. Rockefeller is the man whose millions created the edifice. Through his educational foundations he has a strangle hold on the educational life of American colleges, and through his gifts he has kept the machinery of the Northern Baptist Convention well oiled and running to please him."

One can't help feeling for Dr. Ayer in his problem (which is the problem of the Protestant fundamentalist, who sees his religious structure undermined by the waves of unbelief), but a Catholic can't help thinking at the same time of the prophecy of Christ about what happens to the house built on sand. Sand is no firmer foundation than oil; rock is what Our Lord recommends and what He used as a foundation for His Church.

Dig a little deeper, Doctor. Notre Dame is devoted to higher education, and it has helped her religion, not hurt it; Notre Dame has received a quarter of a million from the Rockefeller Foundation to pay salaries to secular professors, and that hasn't crippled her in any way; Notre Dame has no objection to evolution as a working hypothesis in embryology and comparative anatomy, and her students and professors may, if they choose, believe that God worked through secondary causes to produce the creatures that serve us daily.

If the elementary schools are non-religious or irreligious, isn't it because your fundamentalist ancestors welcomed the public school plan of the agnostic Horace Mann while Catholics were building their own schools to keep religion alive? And if Fosdick and Rockefeller are modernists, isn't it because they have logically had to face the alternative of either rejecting the infallibility of the Bible or of accepting with it an infallible teacher to say what it means when its meaning is questioned? No, Dr. Ayer; aim your shafts at Martin Luther, John Knox, Roger Williams, and the real authors of modernism, and you will do better work. A sparrow is noisy, but don't mistake a sparrow for a hawk.

PRAYERS: Jos. Foley's father died Monday evening. Eugene Rau has been called home by the grave illness of his father. E. Krusiec's mother is suffering severe pain, with no prospect of medical relief. A relative of Dave Rusk died yesterday. An aunt of Robert Strob is quite ill. Five special intentions.