

The Modern Arena

Paul, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, (15, 32) says that he fought with beasts at Ephesus. He does not refer to his experience boastfully, but to emphasize the statement that it was of no advantage to have done so if the dead rise not.

Several of our state universities, some of our denominational schools and even a few of our theological seminaries furnish arenas in which young Christians, not so firmly rooted in their faith as Paul, have to fight for their spiritual lives against a brute doctrine that is quite popular among some teachers. It is the doctrine to which Darwin's name is attached that links man in blood relationship with the beasts of the jungle.

Christian parents may not be aware of the extent to which the religious faith of their children is being undermined by an hypothesis—a guess—without a fact in the Bible or in nature to support it. It rests wholly upon imagination and is defended with fiction that surpasses the wildest flights of the Arabian Nights.

Having had opportunity to make a personal investigation I feel it my duty to warn the lovers of the Bible of the insidious attacks which are being made upon every vital part of the Word of God. A father tells me of a daughter educated at Wellesley who calmly informs him that no one believes in the Bible now; a teacher in Columbia University begins his lessons in geology by asking students to lay aside all that they have learned in Sunday school; a professor of the University of Wisconsin tells his class that the Bible is a collection of myths; a professor of philosophy at Ann Arbor occupies a Sunday evening explaining to an audience that Christianity is a state of mind and that there are only two books in the Bible with any literary merit; another professor in the same institution informs students that he once taught a Sunday school class and was active in the Y. M. C. A. but that no thinking man can believe in God or the Bible; a woman teacher in the public school in Indiana rebukes a boy for answering that Adam was the first man, explaining to him and the class that the "tree man" was the first man; a young man in South Carolina traces his atheism back to two teachers in a Christian college; a senior in an Illinois high school writes that he became skeptical during his sophomore year but has been brought back by influences outside of school while others of his class are agnostics; a professor in Yale has the reputation of making atheists of all who come under his influence—this information was given by a boy whose brother has come under the influence of this teacher; a professor in Bryn Mawr combats Christianity for a session and then puts to his class the question whether or not there is a God and is happy to find that a majority of the class vote that there is no God; a professor in a Christian college writes a book in which the virgin birth of Christ is disputed; one professor declares that life is merely a by-product and will ultimately be produced in the laboratory; another says that the ingredients necessary to create life have already been brought together and that life will be developed from these ingredients, adding however that it will require a million years to do it. These are a few of the illustrations furnished by informants whom I have reason to believe.

My own experience confirms the information that has been brought to me. For instance, I spoke recently at Madison, Wisconsin, to an audience of more than nineteen hundred, mostly students. The president of the university, with whom I had a pleasant chat at dinner, heard with complacency that one of the professors in his institution had told his class that the Bible was a collection of myths but was very angry when I presented to the students the other side of Darwinism. In an interview given the following day he is quoted as saying: "I must plainly say that when one attempts to induce young people to unite their religious faith to discredit scientific doctrines he commits a grievous error and endangers the religious life of those whom he is trying to help," adding that the address (the substance of this address was printed in *The Commoner* in April under the title "The Menace of Darwinism"), was of the kind listened to by their fathers and

grandfathers. He does not complain of the kind of teaching the students under him are receiving but he looks with contempt upon the interpretation placed upon the Bible by the fathers and grandfathers of his students.

The Christians of today who believe in the Bible as it has been interpreted for centuries may find it worth while to inquire into the effect of some of the things that are taught in these days by those who call themselves scientists. Christianity has no reason to fear any FACT that science can discover because truths never conflict. Christianity has no reason to fear any scientific theory supported by FACTS. Christianity is not opposed to science; it welcomes light from every source and it appreciates the real work done by science. Science is classified knowledge and knowledge is power. When science builds upon facts it is invincible. Science has given us remedies for diseases—remedies for yellow fever and typhoid fever recently—but is built upon facts; science has given us rules for the use of electricity, steam, water and gas, but is built upon facts; science has improved agriculture, industry and commerce, but is built upon facts. It is scientific guessing, UNSUPPORTED BY FACTS, that Christianity rejects; it is the guessing of so called scientists that is today a menace to Christianity and civilization.

If the University of Wisconsin is to discard the Bible and substitute the guesses of scientists in its place—as it does in teaching Darwinism—and then objects to the students hearing the other side, it should take the public into its confidence and reveal what is going on within its walls. It might, for instance, issue an announcement like this: Our class rooms furnish an arena in which a brutish doctrine tears to pieces the religious faith of young men and young women; parents of the children are cordially invited to witness the spectacle.

Why should Christian taxpayers permit the Bible to be attacked by their hired servants where defense is not permitted? Why should the children be taught that it is more important to know the age of the rocks than to trust in the "Rock of Ages"? Why should the emphasis be placed on the distance between the stars rather than upon Him who binds "the sweet influences of Pleiades," "looses the bands of Orion," and "guides Arcturus with his suns"? Why are professors allowed to substitute Darwin's fictitious history of man, and his fanciful description of man's progress up through apehood, for the Bible's description of man's creation by special act of the Almighty, according to a divine plan and for a divine purpose? Why are Darwin's eight hundred repetitions of "we may well suppose" substituted for the "thus saith the Lord" of the Scriptures?

The natural and logical effect of these teachings—dreams that are in reality more frightful than nightmares—is to convert the Bible into a story book, reduce Christ to the stature of a man with an ape for an ancestor on his mother's side, at least, (and, as many evolutionists believe, also on his father's side), to diminish the student's faith in God, rob him of his desire to pray, extinguish his hope of heaven and his fear of future punishment. This is not only the natural effect of such teachings but it is what is being actually done.

Mr. James H. Leuba, professor of psychology at Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvania, issued a book in 1916, entitled "Belief in God and Immortality," published by Sherman French & Co., Boston. In this book he presents evidence to show that among the highly educated, belief in a personal God and personal immortality is dying out. He assures his readers that "the abandonment of the belief in a personal God and personal immortality, THOUGH IT INVOLVES THE OVERTHROW OF EXISTING RELIGIONS, need not bring to an end religious life." That is to say, no one need be disturbed by his predictions except those who believe in "EXISTING RELIGIONS." He fortifies his prediction with statistics. He has submitted a questionnaire to a list of one thousand scientists selected from a book entitled "American Men of Science," which he says includes 5,500 names, practically every American who may be called a scientist, and reports their answers which show that more than one-half of these prominent scientists do not, according to their own answers, believe in a personal God or personal immortality. He says that the percentage of unbelievers is higher among biologists than among

other scientists. He finds practically the same percentage of unbelievers among prominent historians, psychologists, and sociologists as among scientists generally. He also questions the students of nine representative colleges and finds the largest percentage of believers in the freshman class and the smallest in the senior class. This he regards as a striking result. He finds that only 15 per cent of the freshmen reject immortality while 30 per cent of the juniors have given it up. I quote the following from page 280 of his book: "The student statistics show that young people enter college with the beliefs still accepted, more or less perfunctorily, in the average home of the land and that as their mental powers mature and their horizon widens a large percentage of them abandon the cardinal Christian beliefs. It seems probable that on leaving college from forty to forty-five per cent of the students deny or doubt the fundamental dogmas of the Christian religion. The marked decrease in belief that takes place during the adolescent years in those who spend those years in study under the influence of persons of high culture is a portentous indication of the fate which, according to our statistics, increased knowledge and the possession of certain capacities leading to eminence reserve to the beliefs in a personal God and in personal immortality?"

Does any Christian believe that intelligence is necessarily antagonistic to Christianity? Certainly not; on the contrary, real intelligence will increase reverence for God and for his Word. It is sham intelligence that leads men away from God; it is sham intelligence that had deluded students and denuded them of the spiritual element in life. No other sham intelligence has been so powerful for evil as the doctrine that man, instead of being made in the image of God, as the Bible declares, is a descendant of the ape family. And yet a multitude of highly paid teachers—teachers paid by public taxation—are so wedded to this unsupported and ridiculous hypothesis that they encourage students to accept it and are indignant when the other side is presented.

The tests by which we select university instructors do not always give us the information most needed. We get the measure of their brains but that is no indication of the strength of the spiritual in their lives. Darwinism had led many into mind-worship—a worship more destructive than the worship of images. The worshiper of images may look through the image to the God for whom the image stands, but the mind-worshiper is too absorbed in meditation upon his own greatness to think of any being higher than himself. Darwinism, when taken seriously, swells the head and shrivels the heart.

Our religion is built upon love and love is a heart quality. In the Old Testament as well as in the New we are taught that "out of the heart are the issues of life." The real thinking is done in the heart. Pascal says that the heart has reasons which the mind cannot understand, because the heart is of an infinitely higher character. The mind is a splendid machine when it is properly handled, but it has to be handled. The principal work of the mind is to manufacture reasons for doing what the heart wants to do, and it is a poor mind that cannot manufacture reasons satisfactory to the heart for which it works.

Darwinism attacks the faith of the student just at the time when the spirit of dependence is giving way to the spirit of independence. This is the age when self confidence reaches its maximum. It is the time when he is inclined to think his parents are old fogies—he does not need to have men like the President of the University of Wisconsin ridicule the beliefs of his father, mother and grandparents. The student's attention is focused upon the physical sciences which deal with the things which the senses can discern. He is unduly impressed with the importance of the things that are seen and is led to ignore the things that are unseen, forgetting that "the things that are seen are temporal; the things that are unseen are eternal." What of the things that are spiritually discerned? Should they be overlooked? We cannot afford to bring student life down to a materialistic basis; nothing that can be put into the head will offset the heart's loss if faith is extinguished. It is more important that the graduate shall be able to say with Paul "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision" than that he shall be able to boast of a highly disciplined mind. What is a mind worth to society or to its possessor without a heart to direct it? It is of no more value than the most expensive gun when the