

Editorials

E. S. James

Baptist vs. Dawson!

Englishman's Interpretation Not Needed

Most of the men who signed the Declaration of Independence 185 years ago yesterday had been subjects of King George's government. They spoke the English language. They had some strong ties with the mother country, for friends and relatives were there. It was their ancestors who had demanded the Magna Charta centuries before. After they became colonists here they were taxed without representation in the English government, and the time had come when they could bear it no longer. Eleven years later they adopted a constitution for the regulation of the new nation, and from time to time amendments were made to it according to the will of the people. Most persons know that the most famous of these amendments is the first one which guarantees religious liberty to every citizen, and many believe that without this amendment the new nation could not have lived for long.

Today that first amendment is under the heaviest assault ever made on any part of the constitution. While some statesmen are doing all they possibly can to preserve it in its true meaning, there are formidable forces at work night and day to find some means of circumventing it. Some members of the Catholic hierarchy have been quoted as saying that means of getting around its prohibitions will be found ultimately.

Those who are American citizens have the moral right to voice their sentiments about what the amendment means, but some of us resent the efforts of an Englishman to tell us Americans what it does and does not mean. Professor Christopher Dawson is a subject of the Queen's government. He is presently serving as Professor of Catholic Studies in Harvard Divinity School. How a Protestant divinity school happened to have a chair of Catholic studies

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how a RC. at Harvard?

is not explained, but the press reports the visiting English Catholic professor as pleading for tax support for parochial schools in this country. He is quoted as saying, "To deny government support to parochial schools is an obvious injustice and a denial of religious freedom, and any attempt to remedy it is invariably blocked by an appeal to the first amendment to the constitution."

Since the American constitution with its amendments is the answer of our colonial forefathers to English oppression, perhaps we can get along very well today without having one of them come over and interpret it for us. This instrument that guarantees separation of church and state has made our country strong enough to rescue the Englishman's country twice from annihilation. Its guarantee of religious freedom enables the Catholic professor to expound his faith on the campus of a Protestant-founded university. Up until now our own lawyers and statesmen have been able to interpret the constitution. If the minions of the Vatican who hold citizenship in some other country want to live here for a season and enjoy American freedom we would suggest that they attend their own business and let Americans take care of their own.

minions of Vatican

Should We Apologize For Teaching Doctrine?

Every pastor has seen some of his people blush when he expounded doctrines that were contrary to the faith of visitors in his congregation. Most of them have seen some of their deacons wince when the unscriptural preachments of others were denounced. Occasionally a preacher is cautioned by his people to be careful about what he says lest he offend non-Baptists. No further explanation is needed for the vapid, shallow preaching that is sometimes heard from Baptist pulpits. Of course the preachers should have enough courage to preach what they find in the Bible, but the people in the pews are even more to blame for the fact that too many Baptists know too little about Bible doctrines.

People of all faiths or no faith are always welcome in a Baptist congregation, but they know when they come that they may hear something they do not believe nor practice. Why should any preacher or layman apologize for teaching the doctrines as his church understands them? If a Baptist is preaching in a union service of many faiths he will do well to avoid the controversial as far as possible, but in his own pulpit he need never apologize for the Baptist position. If others do not want to hear it, they are not obligated to attend the services.

The same principle holds true in a Baptist hospital, or benevolent home. Why should a Baptist nurse, chaplain or doctor in a Baptist hospital