

A STATEMENT FROM ILIFF SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

On Sunday morning, January 19, "The Rocky Mountain News," of Denver, Colorado, printed a report which had been adopted a few days previously by the Denver Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church attacking the University of Denver and the Iliff School of Theology as being unsafe institutions from the standpoint of evangelical religion. Until the present moment I have not made any reply publicly to this attack because I regarded it as purely a local matter, discussion of which in the public press could only result in aggravating denominational differences and in making the cause of religion ridiculous in the eyes of the unchurched.

As was to be expected, the Presbyterian press has given some publicity to the attack. So far as I know the Methodist press has had enough confidence in us to disregard the whole matter, except in one instance. But requests have come for a statement from the school. --Hence the breaking of our rule of silence by this plain recital of facts to which all Methodists are entitled.

1. When this committee was appointed by the Denver Presbytery to investigate the schools of another denomination, (an extraordinary proceeding in this twentieth century) I invited them in the most cordial way to visit the Iliff School of Theology, spending as much time as possible in our classes talking to professors and students, and examining our texts and reference books. No member of the committee ever set foot inside the school!
2. As soon as the report was published, I asked the Denver Methodist Ministers' Meeting to appoint a committee to go into the whole matter of this alleged investigation. The Committee was appointed with Dr. Charles L. Mead, pastor of Trinity Methodist Church, Denver, as chairman. The committee has asked repeatedly for the privilege of examining the evidence upon which the report of the Presbyterian Committee was based, but up to this time they have never been permitted to do so.
3. Two members of this Presbyterian committee had children in the University of Denver all the time this alleged investigation was under way. One of them made special arrangements as late as the first week in January for his son to continue in school. (The report of the committee was published in "The Rocky Mountain News" January 19.) His son dropped out of school some weeks later on account of sickness. The daughters of the other member of the committee (who was the chairman and who is reported to have done all the work) are yet in school at the University and have been continuously since the beginning of the school year. However bad the institution may be, it seems to be good enough for the children of these committeemen.
4. Methodists will be interested to know that the session of Central Presbyterian Church, Denver, (which is as conspicuous in that denomination as Trinity Church is among Methodists) practically repudiated the action of the Presbytery by asking for a reconsideration of this report.



5. The report of the committee, according to its own statement, is based upon objectionable statements which they claim to have found in the text and reference books used in the school. But in no instance is the title of a book mentioned, to say nothing of indicating page and paragraph where the offending statement is to be found. We have no way of knowing that any of these books are referred to by our teachers with approval. And everyone knows that teachers refer to some books and authors very often for the very reason that they disapprove them.

These facts discredit completely this alleged investigation. We do not pretend to be reactionary in our teaching at Iliff. We try to keep our minds open to the truth of God as well as our hearts warm with the love of God. This is done without decreasing in the least our loyalty to the fundamentals of faith. In order to bring out the kind of report it was appointed to make, this committee found it necessary to decline to do anything that would help it discover the real facts concerning our teaching. Its work is characterized all the way through by unpardonable inconsistency and reprehensible lack of candor. Its record of the discovery of heresy at Iliff is to be taken just as seriously as Dr. Cook's record of his discovery of the North Pole.

--- James A. Beebe,  
President Iliff School of Theology,  
Denver, Colorado.