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Miscellanea

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Miscellanea

On the Character of the Christian College

Writing in the *Christian Century* on the subject "Rethinking the Christian College," Prof. W. Burnet Easton, Jr., of Massachusetts State College, Amherst, expresses important views. We quote his article in part:

"Properly speaking, the Christian college is concerned not with teaching *religion*, but with teaching the *Christian* religion. As Christians, next to our own soul's salvation, our major function in life is to persuade men and women to accept the Christian faith and to live in the Christian way. More precisely, the Protestant Christian college ought to be primarily concerned with the Protestant interpretation of the Christian faith, which we believe to be the true interpretation. This does not mean that a Christian college might not offer courses in comparative religions or in the history of religions. But these are not its major responsibility. And they are not substitutes for Christianity. The Christian college's first responsibility is to graduate students who are convinced Christians, who know what they believe and why.

"There are some, perhaps many, who will say that this is the function of the church, but it is also a function of the Christian college. Those who deny it have not faced the most profound problem of Christian higher education.

"The fact is that there is a basic and inevitable conflict between a Christian education and a 'liberal arts' education. By and large, the liberal arts philosophy of education is directed toward the pursuit of truth, which nobody ever quite catches. In fact, most of our liberal arts colleges glory in the fact that they are 'seekers after the truth.' But Christianity is not a pursuit of the truth. It is a declaration of the truth already revealed, in which all other truths must find their meaning. This is as basically different from the current liberal arts philosophy of education as day is from night. Moreover, to put Christianity into a liberal arts environment is to destroy the Christian faith, for then, of necessity, it can be presented as only one of the many partial truths. This is what has actually happened in our Christian colleges. Christianity (and usually it is not even Christianity but religion) becomes a department and a fragment of the college picture. Even if it is made an important fragment, it is still a distortion of the Christian truth and places Christianity in a false light. Indeed, it seems fair to say that a Christian liberal arts college is a contradiction in terms.

"The criticism of the liberal arts college from the point of view of its cafeteria nature, and of its failure to have a unifying philosophy of education, has been made often enough. The most famous critic is probably Chancellor Hutchins of Chicago. He would make metaphysics the unifying factor. Unfortunately many Christians have hailed this as a hopeful sign. Dr. Hutchins' criticisms of the liberal arts formula have been trenchant, and his courageous readiness to try a new philosophy

is admirable. But, from a Christian point of view, a metaphysics may be no better than a secular or cafeteria philosophy. Indeed, it may be worse, for it gives the illusion of having solved the problem when it only offers a substitute heresy for the true faith. Christianly speaking, heresy is always more dangerous than paganism. Nevertheless one wishes that Christian educators had the same acuteness and administrative courage Chancellor Hutchins has shown.

"The unifying factor for a Christian college must be Christian theology or else the college should not call itself Christian. And this means more than a compulsory chapel and having a 'professor of religion.' If the Christian conceptions of God and man and their relationships are true (and as Christians we accept them as true), there can be no area of life that a Christian theology does not inform. A Christian college is a college that makes every department support and defend the Christian faith. Its primary function is to turn out graduates who are first Christians and secondarily doctors, lawyers, or merchants."
A.

Concerning Communism

The fact that Russia, officially, is a Communist nation has blinded many Americans to the true meaning and threat of Communism. The fact that Dr. Harold Laski, now prominent in the new British Government, is a militant and shrewd champion of Communism, brings the threat of that philosophy closer to us. We should not let ourselves be deceived. We have been watching Russia's experiment for some years, and by this time we should be able to see how it is panning out. Communism has brought to the peoples of the Soviet Republics no freedom, but regimentation. Away back in 1931, Russia formally gave up the principle of "equal division of unequal earnings," and today she has a large group of "proletarian millionaires" and other privileged groups, whose members enjoy special pensions, whose children attend special schools. From the economic point of view, Communism has failed in Russia. From the point of view of personal liberty it has failed. And its effort to stamp out religion from the life of the people was a pronounced failure before it had fairly begun. Our nation should and can keep on good terms with Russia; but our people should see clearly that Communism, as a form of government, as an economic system and as a religion, has no rightful place in America.—Dr. David De Forest Burrell in *The Presbyterian*.

