

## FAITH IN AND INTO HIGHER EDUCATION

In his baccalaureate address to the graduating class at Harvard University, in June 1961, Dr. Pusey, the President, told his departing students: "...in the West...we have had a series of consecutive generations neglectful of their spiritual inheritance." And again: "Worship in our world is held back generally today by widespread spiritual rootlessness..." ("Best Sermons, 1962", Protestant Edition.)

Let us look at an area of higher education in the past for at least one cause of "widespread spiritual rootlessness" today.

In 1810 the University of Berlin was newly formed, and the underlying philosophy was that a University's first duty was to discover truth, not to propagate it. This was not a sudden break with the past; it was a step in keeping with the trend of the times. The eighteenth century was, and still is, referred to as the century of enlightenment. Man's mind had been "freed" back in the Renaissance period. Roger Bacon in the sixteenth century had set the pattern for modern inductive reasoning. Science was "on the march."

The spirit of Berlin University was contagious; discovery of truth was the motto. Germany set the pattern for a number of other countries, including America. A century ago an American who could show that he had attended a German University stood out in his country as an educated person - above his fellows. The roll-call of our University Presidents a generation ago reveals that many had attended German Universities: Eliot of Harvard, Butler of Columbia, Gilman of Johns Hopkins, Angell of Michigan - to mention only a few. The new spirit of the University, the search for truth, was expressed by Eliot of Harvard: "It is not the function of the teacher...even to recommend to (the pupil) any one set of opinions as better than any other. Exposition, not imposition, of opinions is the professor's part." A harmless statement when used to express the new freedom which had come to the University, but a dangerous statement if not balanced by what is equally fundamental: there are eternal truths which should be passed on from generation to generation; man will neglect them at his peril. Germany did just that, as we shall see.

Science came to include the study of mind as well as the so-called physical

world; and the method of the physical sciences was used. Wundt, in the University of Leipzig, set up the first Psychological Laboratory. What could be demonstrated was to be believed; what could not be demonstrated was to be held in question until more facts were available. Auguste Comte of France (1798-1857) provided the philosophical support with his Positivism - only that which can be demonstrated to man's senses is to be believed. Titchener studied under Wundt; came to Cornell University and set up a Psychological Laboratory; and by the time he left he had sent out fifty Ph.D.'s trained in the Mechanistic theory of Psychology, many of them to take up teaching in other American Universities. (Lecture by Harold Rugg, Teachers College, Columbia University, Feb. 20, 1946.) A Psychology with no room for Christian faith had been imported from Germany.

Our Philosophy of Education did not escape the influence. Dewey, the leader in the field for a time, wrote: "...the educational process has no end beyond itself; it is its own end; ... Since in reality there is nothing to which growth is relative save to more growth, there is nothing to which education is subordinate save more education." ("Democracy and Education" -- John Dewey.) Many a

teacher in our public schools came to consider experience as the best source of our sense of values -- Pragmatism. The religious basis for morality was thus for many weakened, and for others entirely removed.

Kilpatrick, a popular interpreter of Dewey, sets us all adrift. "Choose and compare two sample bits of life. Are they the same in worth or is one better than the other? You hesitate. 'Thinking as I do, this is better than that; but my standards may be wrong; how do I know?' Your hesitation is just. You do not know. Know is a strong word. You may be wrong. ... Your standards to the end will -- and should -- remain hypotheses. This belongs to the kind of world we live in." ("Education for a Changing Civilization" -- William Heard Kilpatrick.)

What a contrast is provided by a citizen who has come to know a few important things: "Man on his highest level believes in the absoluteness of God. What is right in His sight is eternally right, and what is wrong is eternally wrong. The right is to be embraced and struggled for, and by strategy, learning, and acumen must be maintained and vindicated at the conference table and through the courts; what is wrong must be avoided

and condemned even if it means losing a big fee or falling into disfavor with certain groups if, as a judge, you decide a case the way you conscientiously interpret the law and honestly believe it should be decided." (Judge Edward J. Griffiths -- *The Sunday School Times*, March 9, 1963.)

Here is a philosophy on which a country can be built. Its source is the Scriptures where it is revealed that God is real; He is sovereign. He has established the laws of Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Human Relations; and a study of these subjects is, to the Christian student, an effort to discover, classify and apply God's laws. To the extent that Jesus Christ is Lord of his life, the Christian student has the advantage of being driven by worthy motives. He seeks to apply the laws which he learns, in any and all fields, to the service of mankind, for thus he serves his sovereign God.

Now a look at some of the fruits of a godless higher education. First, the case of Germany. Not only was God left out and man's reason placed as the final court of appeal, but man was taken to be the product of an animal struggle upward, the "survival of the fittest." And, just one logical step further, the German

people could step higher still by a physical struggle as man had risen from the animals. The Kaiser in World War I, and Hitler in World War II, held such a philosophy. Nelson states the case against Hitler: "Few people realize that Hitler, in bringing about the war, merely put into practice what he believed about human evolution. Men rose out of the animals by fighting, he said in 'Mein Kampf'. The strongest survived and the weakest perished. This struggle, 'wherein one being feeds on another and the blood of the weaker is the life of the stronger' has continued from time immemorable and must continue until the most highly advanced branch of humanity (which he thought was the German) dominates the whole earth." ("Before Abraham" -- Byron C. Nelson.)

The world paid a high price in war to save itself from the consequences of such "higher education." During World War I America understood this, and a loud voice was raised against the philosophy of the German, Nietzsche, who had been most consistent in his conclusions, arriving at the point where he condemned Christ as an enemy of society, and the Christian virtues of love and sympathy as character weaknesses.

But in America as well the philosophy, which put man instead of God on the throne, had its effect. Clarence Darrow was the noted lawyer who defended Leopold and Loeb, murderers of Bobby Frank. Speaking of Dicky Loeb, and addressing the court, Darrow spoke of the evolutionary philosophy which the young man had been taught in the University, namely, "that the intelligent were beyond good and evil; that the laws for good and the laws for evil did not apply to anyone that approached the superman. . . Then who is to blame? The University would be more to blame than he is. The scholars of the world would be more to blame than he is. Your Honor, it is hardly fair to hang a 19-year-old boy for the philosophy that was taught him at the University." (Quoted in "Tennessee Evolution Trial.")

What that influence in our Universities has done to America it is impossible to measure; but does it not account to a great degree for the assumption on the part of many that right is what we find most advantageous at the time? Does it not account for much of the lack of concern to preserve our Christian heritage?

There is frequent reference today to godless Communism. Did Communism bring godless materialism to America?

Karl Marx was not born until 1818, when Auguste Comte was twenty years old. Marx learned Darwinism; he learned the philosophy of Positivism, just as our educated leaders learned it in German Universities; he came to look upon man, not God, as the final authority; as he saw labor conditions in industrial England he came to hold that important half-truth that the way to make man better is to change his environment. (This is not to suggest that we ignore the threat of Communism; it is to place the materialistic atheism of Communism in its proper setting.)

In America the ground was already prepared in our Universities when Communism came. Was it Communism which led the California Federation of Teachers, at their Twentieth Annual Convention last December, to decide that all religious practices should be banned in public schools? The 100 delegates urged that: 1. "Recitation of prayers in public schools be eliminated. 2. School assembly programs, musical and Christmas programs, be planned emphasizing cultural themes and putting religion in a social and cultural context. . ." (Los Angeles Times, December 31, 1962.)

When working for their degrees in Col-

leges, Universities and Teachers' Colleges, these teachers must have been told, as Kilpatrick could so clearly and effectively tell his students: "Your standards to the end will -- and should -- remain hypotheses."

When the Senate of the United States came to consider the question of conferring on Sir Winston Churchill honorary American citizenship, there was no debate. No one needed to be reminded that he was worthy of the honor. When in April 1949 Sir Winston was brought to America by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to speak at the inauguration of the new President of the Institute, the question was, would he extol man or man's Creator? He sounded a warning: "Little did we guess that what has been called the Century of the Common Man would witness as its outstanding feature more common men killing each other with greater facilities than any other five centuries put together... We took it almost for granted that science would confer continual boons and blessings upon us... Science bestowed immense new power on man, and at the same time created conditions which were largely beyond his comprehension, and still more beyond his control..."

"I say that the flame of Christian ethics is still our highest guide. To guard and cherish it is our first interest both spiritually and materially." ("Where is Man? -- A Mid-Century Appraisal", *Time Magazine*, April 11, 1949.)

That "flame of Christian ethics" must be "guarded and cherished" in our higher education, for the philosophy of our leaders tends to become, in time, the unexpressed and unwritten, though none the less real, philosophy of the man in the street.

We have come to place much *faith* in higher education.

Let us exert ourselves to bring *faith* into higher education!