

The New Attack On Christianity

By Gordon H. Clark

WHEN we as Christian parents state the need for establishing Christian schools, it is ordinarily in terms of the advantages our own children will receive. It is not only normal and natural to consider our own children, it is legitimate and necessary to do so, for God has made us primarily responsible for our own children. But if they are our first responsibility, we also recognize a second responsibility for other children, other people, and society as a whole. The purpose of this talk is to emphasize the need for Christian schools in American society today. In the end these wider needs will not conflict with our private domestic concern for our own children, but on the contrary will aid us in the task that is nearest our hearts. Surely we would agree that our own children would benefit if they could live in a decent, honest, moral, God-fearing society. Negatively they would be exposed to fewer temptations, fewer hindrances, fewer enemies; and positively they could better develop in Christian character. During the period of the Judges the Jews forsook the worship of Jehovah because of the heathen examples in their midst. Young Christians and even older ones are susceptible to the power of example. And the less crime, the less blasphemy, the less secularism, the better it will be for our children's development. Therefore the point I wish to make in this talk is that Christian schools are needed for the preservation and rejuvenation of our Christian heritage that is in grave danger of being silenced and extinguished.

ATTACKS ON CHRISTIANITY

America became a great nation for a variety of reasons. One was the immense natural wealth within its borders. Another was the desire for political freedom that animated the colonists and later immigrants. But this desire for freedom was grounded in the belief in inalienable God-given rights. Not all of our early citizens were evangelical Christians, but presumably the majority were. The minority accepted or at least did not reject standards of morality based on the Ten Com-

Dr. Clark's Thesis: "Today we witness a full attack against Christianity, against freedom, against our Colonial heritage. The Ten Commandments are openly attacked, and a new way of life is recommended."

mandments. It is therefore indisputable that the character of America has been largely molded by Christian ideals. The citizens, even the Christians, may not always have lived up to the ideals, but they acknowledged them and in varying degrees supported the Christian religion.

But today we witness a full attack against Christianity, against freedom, against our colonial heritage. The Ten Commandments are openly attacked, and a new way of life is recommended.

1. For example, this past spring I was talking with a college professor who is emphatic in his advocacy of a liberal arts education. Because of his decided views on a liberal education, I was taken aback when he argued that parents who may be punished for maltreating their children, beating them, injuring them, should also be punished for maltreating their minds by teaching them religious ideas. According to him, so it seems, children belong, not to their parents, but primarily to society. And this man is by no means a communist, either.

This view that would rob parents of their children and place them under the tutelage of strangers seems to be gaining favor. The professional educators often manage to produce the impression that parents are nuisances and that children belong to the county board of school commissioners. While this view is a contemporary view, it is also an ancient view. Aristotle advocated a political theory that denied the right of private education; the state was to decide how many children should be born, how long they should go to school, what religion they should be taught, and even what courses they should take in college. Aristotle was a totalitarian; he believed that the State should regulate everything.

And it ought to be emphasized that present day liberals are really not liberals at all. They are thoroughly reactionary; they are opposed to inalienable rights; and they are forcing on us a totalitarian bureaucracy. But in order that the argument may not seem to depend on a private conversation, the second example can be found in a book published for all to read.

2. Dr. Corliss Lamont in the second edition of his *Humanism as a Philosophy*, p. 323, writes as follows:

"The concept of educational democracy implies the administration of schools . . . whether public or private, according to democratic principles, including non-discrimination in admissions policy. . . . It also covers academic freedom—the right of teachers and students to express their ideas on any subject whatsoever, provided only that they remain within the law."

The meaning of this quotation may not be apparent from a first reading. But note, the author speaks of private schools as well as public schools. And he places two restrictions on them. Private schools should not discriminate in admitting students. They should be required by law to admit anyone academically eligible. Thus, if Jewish parents wanted a Jewish environment for their children, they should be prevented by law and their schools should be forced to admit as many Catholics as applied. Catholic schools would be forced by law to admit all the atheists, Jews, and evangelicals who wished to enter. And Protestants would be denied the right to give their children a Protestant educational environment. But this is not the worst of it. Lamont goes on to deny Protestants the right to give their children a Christian education, for not only should non-Christians be admitted as students, the faculty itself should be made non-Christian by law. The teachers are to teach any philosophy whatever provided only that they remain within the law. In other words Lamont opposes religious freedom. He aims to prevent the establishment and operation of Christian schools. Christian parents are to be denied the political right to

choose Christian teachers for their children.

This same intolerance, this same bigotry, this same hatred of our American principles of religious liberty is also found in the volume, *Philosophy of Education*, by William Heard Kilpatrick of Columbia University. He shows scorn for those "who still believe it right for parents . . . to implant their own doctrines in the young" (p. 122); and he opposes the parental right of religious liberty by an appeal to democracy. Religion is not democratic. Democracy has been a noble ideal, but when as in Russia and as in Kilpatrick it is given a meaning that would prohibit parents from giving Christian instruction to their own children, then I would conclude that the term democracy has been perverted to be a disguise for brutal totalitarianism. Since Kilpatrick is a naturalist, he naturally repudiates God-given inalienable rights (p. 53); private schools should be abolished because "it seems much better for all the population to mingle together in one system of public education" (p. 354); and, consistently, religious differences, which he calls antagonisms, are not to be cultivated (p. 412), but presumably everyone is to be converted to naturalistic atheism.

Now, I submit, this indicates a great need for Christian schools in our nation. The best way to preserve our religious and political liberties is to exercise them. We need an informed younger generation to oppose totalitarianism. Children are not the creatures of the state. Parents have unalienable God-given rights, and Christian schools are one of the best means of preserving and passing on our precious heritage.

3. A third example of the anti-Christian virus that is corroding American culture is found in a textbook, *Constructive Ethics*, perhaps better named *Destructive Ethics*, by T. V. Smith. Smith for many years was professor of philosophy at the University of Chicago, and for a term or two, a Democratic representative in Congress. Now he is professor in Syracuse University. It would be instructive and appalling to study several passages in his textbook, but there is time for only one. T. V. Smith on p. 95 writes:

"This maximum claim (of Christianity) procures individual peace of mind, but by introducing or aggravating social if not political tensions. It not only assumes Absolute Truth . . . but it also pre-

sumes absolute access to Absolute Truth, a presumption which is not easily, perhaps not safely, to be allowed in a democratic world."

That which we have, the unchanging truth of God in the Bible, gives peace of mind, as Smith admits; and I trust that you as well as I have attained that emotional and intellectual stability that can face without qualm the historical calamities of our day. But, says Smith, a democratic world cannot easily or safely permit people to enjoy this peace of mind. The preaching of Christianity must be suppressed because it is undemocratic. Many are called; few are chosen; and the majority must repress the minority. Implicit in Smith's argument is the denial of religious liberty. Democracy for Smith means majority rule and minorities have no rights. This eminent professor therefore is advocating totalitarianism; even if he does not fully understand the implications of his own words, nonetheless it is clear that he is calling for the persecution and suppression of Christians. He wants to establish a pagan America. And his aim has been too nearly, too uncomfortably, accomplished. The best means, surely one of the best means of halting this trend to pagan totalitarianism is to exercise our religious liberties and establish Christian schools that will inculcate Christian morals, Christian philosophy, Christian politics, Christian culture. The public may be deterred from suppressing evangelical Christianity, if evangelical Christianity is vigorous enough.

4. Additional examples of individual opinion hostile to Christianity would give cumulative evidence of the present danger, but the present danger to our Christian liberties can be made clearer by examples taken from more strictly educational activities. The fourth example therefore will be the meeting of the American Association of School Administrators, held in Boston during the 1951-52 school year. One of its main themes was an attack on the right of parents to give their children a Christian education. The attack was led by James B. Conant, president of Harvard University. Strange it is that Harvard should oppose private education. Harvard was founded as a private Christian college. It has long since repudiated the Christianity of its founders, and now it seems to be repudiating private schools. But a denial of the right to establish and operate private schools means nothing less than giving government a monopoly on raising children. Apparently

Christian parents are not fit to train up a child in the way he should go; but a secular totalitarian bureaucracy is the proper agency to put ideas in children's minds.

President Conant's speech is not the first instance of Harvard opposition to freedom of speech. In 1950 the Macmillan Company was subjected to pressure because it had published a book, *Worlds in Collision* by Dr. Immanuel Velikovsky. Whether or not this pressure was an organized boycott, as Dr. Velikovsky charges and as the *New York Post* claimed, at least it is clear that Harvard professors and others brought such pressure against the Macmillan Company that the publishing house relinquished its property rights in the book to a competitor and fired an officer of twenty-six years standing who had recommended publishing the book. Such attempts as these to suppress the publication of divergent views should be remembered when secular educational associations talk piously of academic freedom. They do not want freedom for all. They want freedom for themselves and suppression for others.

Following up President Conant's attack on private Christian education in the American Association of School Administrators was a speech by Dr. John K. Norton, Professor of Education at the Teachers College of Columbia University. Dr. Norton argued that private Christian education would bring about divisions in our democratic society. Apparently Dr. Norton thinks there should be no divisions. Everyone should think alike, everyone should have the same religion and belong to the same political party. When the secularists were in the minority they clamored for division; they did not want to agree with the dominant Christian culture; but now that secularism has become strong and has banished Christian doctrine and morality from the schools, these educators want to extinguish Christian philosophy and enforce a secular uniformity. Don't be deceived by educators' clamor for academic freedom. These secularists want freedom, protected freedom for their secular philosophy, but they wish to deny Christians the freedom to practice and propagate Christianity. They remind me of certain committees on civil liberties which will defend radicals, communists, and traitors, but will never lift their voice in favor of liberty for con-

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servatives. And it is the conservatives who are now on the defensive. Godless education and political radicalism are on the ascendancy. Therefore the conservatives must lift their own voices in their own defense. And one most effective way is the establishment of Christian schools throughout the land. We need Christian schools and we need them badly.

5. There is time for only one more example of the anti-Christian animus that pervades secular educational procedure. It has to do with the accrediting agencies that set standards for colleges so that a given degree represents roughly the same type of work in all colleges. The agencies may examine the financial resources of a college, the athletic program, faculty preparation, library facilities, and the grading system. Supposedly they are not to examine the point of view, if any, that the college wishes to inculcate. Up to the present Christian colleges have received accreditation on the same basis as other colleges, and there are Baptist colleges, Presbyterian colleges, Catholic colleges that are accredited.

But recently in the east it seems that the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges has decided to examine the doctrine of Christian colleges and refuse accreditation if the doctrine does not suit them. This Commission has issued a report on Shelton College in New York that is a direct attack on religious liberty. Shelton College already has an excellent standing with the New York Board of Regents, and very likely it will win admittance into the Middle States Association; but it is instructive to see the initial reasoning of this Commission. It argues that a doctrinal platform abridges academic freedom and suggests that colleges with doctrinal platforms should not be accredited. It also sneers at the college as having a "very limited constituency with little understanding of the meaning and implications of liberal education."

If the principles of this report should be adopted it will mean that the propagation of Christianity in educational institutions is forbidden. Only secular anti-Christian education will be permitted. Only colleges that accept and inculcate the secular philosophy of the accrediting agencies will have their students recognized. And this is what is called academic

freedom. It is, as I said before, freedom for secularism but it is not freedom for Christians. It is another step in the growing totalitarian suppression of Christianity.

To combat this evil force great numbers of Christian elementary schools should be started, Christian high schools should be established, and great financial support should be given to the Christian colleges now in existence.

This matter of accreditation may require a legal fight all the way to the U. S. Supreme Court. That takes money. But it would be well spent if it could force the secular educators to respect religious liberty. A specious plea of academic freedom - so often used to defend communists and other radicals - must not be allowed to impair the inalienable right of religious freedom.

The U. S. Supreme Court has recently approved of released time from elementary schools for the purpose of religious education. The anti-Christian forces did not want children of Christian parents to receive even an hour a week of religious instruction. They argued in effect that the child belongs to the school system - at least five days a week - the schools owned the time and the children should not be released. But inasmuch as tax money was not used to support religious instruction, the Supreme Court decided that it was legal. For this decision against the determined attack of atheists, we are truly grateful.

But released time is nothing but an insufficient palliative. One hour a week to counteract all secular education is not enough. Our children have the right to a Christian education. The public schools crowd out God five days a week from 8:15 to 3:15. They distort history. They omit or distort morality. They put pressure on the children to engage in extracurricular activities that at best ignore God and at worst transgress his commandments. The whole effect is to teach that God does not exist or if He does He is not important. One hour a week of released time is no solution to our problem.

*The WITNESS takes
this opportunity of wish-
ing all its readers a truly
Christian Christmas.*

We have a right to give our children a Christian education. We have a right to tell them of the progress of Christianity in history, of its struggles, its triumphs, and its defeats: how it was opposed by paganism, idolatry and Popery; how persecution stamped out the gospel in Spain, Italy, and France; and how persecution rages in Catholic countries today. This history, this important history is not given in the public schools. We have the right to teach the contents of the Bible, which in some states is banned in the public schools. We have the right to inculcate Christian morality as based on God's commands and to teach the evil of some of the social extracurricular programs of the public schools. We have a right to religious liberty in spite of all the secular educators and accrediting agencies with their desire of totalitarian control. Christian schools are badly needed in America today as a protection of these rights. We need a generation to fight for our heritage of religious freedom. America used to be predominantly Christian; today evangelical, historic Christianity is a minority view. It would be a tragedy indeed if our American ideals of minority rights and religious freedom should be suppressed and replaced by a godless totalitarianism. It would be a tragedy for our children, for your children and mine. It is our children in whom we are primarily interested who are suffering and would suffer more by such a tragedy. One of the best ways to avert it is the establishment of Christian schools.

II THESSALONIANS

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"not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord" (Rom. 12:11).

Paul warns them that these injunctions of his are to be heeded by the wayward Christians (3:14-15).

BENEDICTION AND SALUTATION (3:16-18).

Paul again returns to the theme of peace, as he desires the Thessalonians to live untroubled peaceful lives. God can give them that peace.

Since there was a forged epistle in circulation (2:2), the Apostle makes sure they recognize the authenticity of this one so he calls attention to his personal signature which he appends to each genuine epistle.