Our Christian Responsibility for the Education of Our Children

James D. Bales

for the
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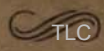

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INTRODUCTION

Various studies have shown that those who have received religious instruction in church, Sunday school, the home, and elsewhere, have better personalities in that they know better how to get along with others, and are more free from emotional excesses. The far reaching effects of this can be seen, for example, in the fact that those who have had this training are more successful in achieving harmony in marriage, than those who lack these characteristics.

Other studies have shown that there is no significant relationship between mere scholastic achievement and the developemnt of a wholesome personality. (Henry C. Link, *The Rediscovery of Morals.* New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1947, pp. 178-181.)

This emphasizes the need for Christian parents to see that all possible religious influences are brought to bear on their children as they grow up. This is *not* to suggest that without Christian schools such a religious upbringing is impossible. An effective program of education by the local congregation, and Christian education in the home where Christianity is not only taught but lived, can bring about Christian education. But it must not be overlooked that the environment in which the child is educated in the school has also very important influences on his life. And thus it is that the Christian schools can assist the parents in providing a Christian environment in which the education of their children can take place. And that such an education is effective is *demonstrated,* to return to the marriage illustration once more, by the fact that it is extremely rare for one to find couples who found their companions in Christian schools going through the divorce courts. This is not to imply that one must go to a Christian school in order to be sure that he will develop a Christian personality and build an enduring marriage. But it is to point out that in a world in which there are so many temptations and loose, un-Christian ideals, Christian parents ought to throw around their children as much as is possible of the Christian environment. We ought to take every means available to Christians to bring our young people up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, even while they are receiving their "secular" education.

The purpose of this book is not merely to prove that Christian schools have a right to exist, but also to impress on Christian parents the fact that *they* are responsible for the education of their children. This responsibility has been laid on their shoulders by the God of

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Heaven who will hold Christian parents accountable as to their faithfulness or lack of faithfulness in bringing their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. To this end parents should utilize every help possible. That some homes are failing in this duty and privilege is revealed by the fact that there are young people who have drifted away from Christ.

No effort will be made to prove that parents *must* send children to a Christian school. Circumstances differ. Their local educational environment in some cases may be wholesome, and in some cases it may not be. While it is not maintained that every Christian parent must send his children to such schools, it will be established that they have a right to do so. This right some conscientious brethren deny, believing that it usurps the authority and work of the church. That such is not the case is the author's conviction. Reasons for this conviction are set forth in the book.

No effort will be made, furthermore, to prove that every public school is a "godless" school in the sense of being ungodly. They are godless, of course, in the sense that nothing about God and His word is taught in most of them. This lack of teaching concerning God has been brought about by the sectarianism in this country which made it necessary for public, tax supported, schools to be neutral concerning these matters. Even the best of public schools, schools in which there is a wholesome environment, cannot do for the child spiritually speaking that which needs to be done and can be done during the most impressionable years of a human life. And certainly the aim of a Christian should not be just to get by but to give children the greatest possible opportunities for spiritual growth and development. And the greatest opportunities are provided for such growth when we utilize every possible opportunity for teaching the Christian way of life and for maintaining the Christian environment in which they may develop.

By Christian schools the author means schools wherein the Bible is taught daily and where conscientious effort is made to maintain an environment which is conducive to Christian growth and development. The term Christian is here used as an adjetive, just as we use it when we speak of a Christian environment. It is used in the same way that one uses the term Christian to refer to a book or a publication which sets forth and stands for Christian principles.

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Chapter I

CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS ARE SCRIPTURAL

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CHAPTER ONE

CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS ARE SCRIPTURAL

When it is maintained that Christian schools are scriptural, this does not mean that they are mentioned by name in the scriptures. It is meant that there are principles in the scriptures which endorse the principles on which Christian schools are established. In establishing this the author will employ a series of questions and answers.

I. THE CHRISTIAN AND EDUCATION

1. Is it scriptural for parents to permit their children to grow up without teaching them to work?

Those who know the scriptures know that children should be taught to work. It is right for Christians to work and wrong to refuse to work. "For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labor and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (2 Thess. 2:7-15).

This is a part of the Lord's teaching, and Christian parents are told to rear their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:1-4). Timothy was taught by his mother and his grandmother out of the scriptures which they had (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15). Certainly it will be granted by all, who know the Bible and what is involved in

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character building, that children must be taught to work.

It is also necessary for the church to teach that Christians are to work (2 Thess. 2:7-15).

2. Whose responsibility is it to see that the child and the Christian are taught how to work?

Working involves not merely the realization that one ought to work, but also the knowledge and skills which are necessary to do some particular job. Whose responsibility is it to see that the child gets a "secular education"; that is, an education which will teach him how to work and make a living? Since it is scriptural to teach that Christians should work, and that children should be taught to work, it is scriptural that they be taught the specific skills and techniques which are necessary to working.

Certainly all will agree that in a Christian home it is necessary for the parents to assume the responsibility and see that the child is taught how to work (Eph. 6:1-2). Perhaps someone suggests that it is the responsibility of the state to see that children are taught how to work? Our answer is twofold: First, there is no scripture which even remotely hints that it is the responsibility of the state. Who can produce the passage, or the inference, that this is the state's responsibility? Second, we know that it is the responsibility of the home since on the home is laid the injunction to bring up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

3. Can any of this educational work be delegated by the home?

Can this responsibility—to teach the child the specific skills necessary to making a living on a specific job—be delegated by the parents to someone else or to a group of individuals organized or banded together into an institution for such purposes? In other words, can any institution besides the home, or any individuals besides the parents, do this work of teaching children how to work?

Who can say "No" to this question? One must say "Yes," or deny that there can be any "secular" (how to make a living) education except that which can be given in the home by the parents or the rest of the family. To say "No" would mean that the child could not

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take up any job, or be taught anything about making a living, that his family could not teach him. But all of our brethren who are opposed to Christian colleges send their children to state schools or to some private schools. They thus indicate that they believe that this responsibility can be delegated by the home to another institution—to some sort of school.

4. Is there anything in the Bible which tells a Christian to what institution or persons this responsibility may be delegated?

No, except in a general way. In delegating this responsibility the parents are under an obligation to see that the religious and moral training that they have given the children in the home is not undermined by the institution to which they have delegated this responsibility for teaching the children the use of specific tools and information essential in making a living. In other words, *the parents are still responsible for the general oversight of the child's education, in that they are responsible for seeing that the child is placed in the best environment possible.* Thus the parent is discharging his responsibility in seeing that Christian training is furthered, not hindered.

Who, then, has the scriptural authority to tell Christian parents that it is wrong for them to send their children to private schools where the Bible is taught—to learn some things necessary to making a living—but right to send them to a state institution? What scripture says so? In fact, our next question is:

5. Is there anything in the Bible which says that it is the responsibility of the state to furnish secular education and that it is the responsibility of the parents to send their children to such schools?

Where does the Bible teach that it is the responsibility of the state to furnish secular education, and that the parents are to send their children to state schools? The function of the state, as presented in such passages as Romans 13, does not mention secular education. And anyone who knows the history of education knows that Rome did not maintain free, tax supported, non-sectarian, compulsory

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schools. Education was neither state supported, universal, nor compulsory. No Christian, in Paul's day, had the opportunity or the duty of sending children to a school system similar to our modern state system of schools. How, then, can one assume that the scriptures teach that Christian parents are to send their children to secular, state schools? This is not to say that it may not be scriptural, under the proper circumstances, to send children there, but who can say that the scriptures demand it? Secular education in public schools is a function which the state has assumed and concerning which the scriptures say nothing.

Perhaps one will reply that we are supposed to submit to the state in those things which it requires, and which do not involve us in disobedience to God. True. But our answer is that the state has not required that our children attend public schools. It demands that children be educated, but parents, if they so desire, can fill the state requirements by employing tutors, or patronizing private schools.

6. Would it be wrong for parents to send their children to a private school controlled by Christians, but which did not teach the Bible by word of mouth?

The brethren who oppose Christian colleges do not, so far as the author knows, maintain that it would be wrong for a group of Christians to band together to establish a secular college to teach the arts, science, and literature. Thus they would not maintain that it would be wrong for parents to send their children to such a school maintained by people who are Christian.

7. Is it wrong to teach Bible in such a school and therefore wrong to teach it by life as well as by word of mouth?

Any school teaches both in its classroom instruction and in the general environment which it maintains. A school does this regardless of whether it is conscious of it or not. A good school consciously endeavors to build such an environment that the students are taught the right attitudes and principles both in the classroom, the dormitories, and on the playground.

The Bible teaches that Christians teach in two ways: orally and by one's deeds. It is just as vital, for our own salvation, that we

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teach by our conduct as by our words. Peter told some Christian wives to so live that they would win their husbands by their very lives (I Pet. 3:1-6). Our brethren who oppose the Christian college, should oppose a school maintained by Christians who try by their manner of life to maintain a Christian environment.

The teachers in such a school would be forbidden, but these brethren, to teach the students that they ought to live a Christian life, or the things which are involved in living the Christian life. In other words, it would be right for Christians to maintain a school just so they kept it strictly secular. No distinctive Christian influence should be encouraged or tolerated as such in the school. *It would be un-Christian the moment it became Christian in its environment and teaching!*

8. Is it un-Christian for the instructors to teach students to be Christian?

Surely it is a strange situation when Christian brethren maintain that it is right for Christians to conduct schools in which no effort is made to maintain a Christian environment. It is not unscriptural for Christians to pay taxes to support institutions which are sometimes anti-Christian. And in some cases some state colleges and universities have been anti-Christian in some, to say the least, of their influence. It is not unscriptural for Christians to maintain a school which teaches secular subjects but which is neutral toward Christianity in that the Bible is not taught in the school. All this Christians may do, but they are acting unscripturally, and anti-scriptural, when the school is not only friendly to Christianity but also actively stands for Christianity. Whenever effort is made to make the school Christian in its environment and teaching, then it becomes un-Christian!

The amazing position taken by these brethren may also be illustrated in another way. It is right for a Christian, according to them, to teach in a secular school and to establish private schools. When teaching biology they could show that evolution is unscientific, but they could not draw illustrations from biology which show the wisdom of the Creator. They could not show how evolution undermines faith in the Bible. They could not show how it undermines the Biblical account of creation and our standard of morality. Christ-

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ians could teach psychology in their private school, but could not show that Christianity is psychologically sound. Christians could endeavor to teach personality development but they could not appeal to the New Testament and show that the way to develop personality is through acting on New Testament teaching. They could counsel students concerning their personal problems, but they could not appeal to the Bible and help them solve their problems in a scriptural way. They could teach a course in marriage and the home, but they could not show how the scriptures teach that a Christian home ought to be conducted. They could study astronomy but it would be wrong to show how the heavens declare the glory of God or what the Bible says about it. They could teach their students to obey the government, but they could not show what the New Testament teaches about it. They could do anything and everything for their students except show them what the Bible teaches.

According to the position of these brethren, it would not be right for the teachers in the college to teach the Bible to the students at any hour of the day or night in which the students are under their supervision—which is twenty-four hours a day in boarding schools. It would not be right for the teacher to answer questions which students might raise concerning the Bible and any phases of the Christian life. It would not be right for them to favor the Bible in defending it against the attack of evolution which might well appear in one of the textbooks.

If a teacher could meet a student privately, after class hours, to teach him the Bible, by answering some question on the Bible, it would be right that the teacher plan to make such opportunities. And it would be right to have such opportunities in mind when establishing the school. If it is right for the teacher to teach Bible after class hours, this would still be within the total program of the school. If it is right to so teach, it would be right to invite others in and even to schedule, after class hours, a regular meeting to which all would have an opportunity to attend.

If one grants this much there is no reason why it would be wrong to have daily Bible classes scheduled as a regular part of the work of

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the college. And if it is wrong, then one must be prepared to prove that it is wrong for the teachers, in a private school controlled by Christians, to try in any way to influence the students for Christ as long as the students are in their charge.

9. Are parents still responsible, directly or indirectly, for their children even though they are in school?

All must agree that it is right for parents to delegate some of this work; but who can maintain that this delegation means the washing one's hands of all responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the children whenever they are in school? Are parents in any measure responsible for the spiritual, Christian, development of the seventeen year old child even though they have sent him away to school? Or their six year old? Certainly they are.

It is therefore not only right, but necessary for children to be placed where—to say the least—the Christian nurture of the home will not be opposed. In fact, it is a question as to whether they should be sent where such will be *ignored,* although not opposed. But surely when they are sent away from home, and the home can no longer deal with the problems raised for the child in the non-Christian school environment, and when they are not yet settled in the faith, they should be sent where teachers are interested at least in their general spiritual growth and development. Why would it be wrong to place the child in such an environment for his away-from-home school life (or even while he is at home), and right to place him in a school environment which may be antagonistic, or at least indifferent to Christianity?

In the light of these considerations one must conclude that as an adjunct of the home the Christian schools can render a good service and be entirely in harmony with the scriptures.

II. THE CHRISTIAN IN BUSINESS

From another approach it can be shown that it is right for Christians to establish Christian schools. The question and answer form will be followed here also.

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1. Is it right for a Christian to teach the Bible in connection with his business?

Anyone who comprehends the scriptures knows that it is right for a Christian to teach others at any opportunity that may present itself, or that he may make. If not, then a person during business hours could never tell anyone that he was a Christian—even if asked—for that might influence the other person to become interested in what he stands for and finally to be converted. Any man in a business can talk to his customers, if he has the opportunity, concerning the Bible. If I have a store I can talk to my customers during store hours if I see fit. Furthermore, I could set aside a time during the day in my store for a Bible class—if I saw fit—to which my employees and others are invited. I can permit friends to gather around the stove in the store during the winter—or sit on the porch during the summer—and talk about the Bible. I can join in such talk and endeavor to teach them. I can encourage such in every way that I can.

He who objects to the above is putting Christianity on a part time basis, and trying only at stated intervals, and never throughout the entire day, to win others for Christ. But Christianity is a fulltime affair and if I cannot in *some way* serve God while on the job I ought to get another job. Directly or indirectly the job should make some contribution to my progress and work as a Christian, and in every task I should work as unto the Lord. How then, can it be unscriptural—when I have the opportunity—to let others know about Him whom I serve?

2. Is it right for Christians to choose professions that will give them greater contacts with people under circumstances which make it possible for them to teach others the Bible from time to time?

What Christian can say that this is not right? In fact, it is not only right but more Christians ought to have this thought in mind when choosing their life work. How can we enter into a vocation without any thought of its bearing on our lives as Christians?

3. Is it right for Christians to enter teaching as a profession?

All agree that it is right.

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4. Is it right for Christians to establish secular schools?

Brethren who oppose Christian schools grant that it is right for Christians to band together and organize private schools in which the arts, sciences, and literature are taught. It is right for such to be their business, and for them to employ Christians to help them in this work.

5. Would it be right for the teachers to try, in such a school, to teach their students to be honest in their profession?

All must agree that it would be right for Christians in these schools to teach their students that they ought to be honest in their business dealings. And, if their students were also Christians, it would be right to teach them that Christ requires them to be honest in their business and to be fair in dealing with their customers, their employees, and their employers. To deny that such is right is to affirm that the teacher, in all dealings with the students in the school, ought to conduct things on a non-Christian basis. But to affirm that it is right, is also to affirm that it is right for Christians to teach some Christian truths in the class room. If one can teach the principles of honesty and fairness from the Bible, why cannot he teach other things from the Bible?

6. Would it be right for the teachers to try to maintain a wholesome moral atmosphere in this school?

Only a pagan can say that it would be wrong! And yet, to maintain this atmosphere as it ought to be maintained one must teach principles of Christian morality by word and by deed.

7. Would it be right for the teachers to try to maintain a Christian atmosphere in this school?

To deny this is to affirm that a pagan atmosphere ought to be maintained. For after all, if Christian teachers, in a school which they control, are not to strive to maintain a Christian environment, just what sort of environment should they strive to maintain? Just what sort of environment can they strive to build and still be Christian themselves?

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8. Can a Christian atmosphere be maintained in such a school unless the Bible, in part or whole, is taught directly or indirectly?

If it were not taught by word, then it would have to be taught by deed, both in order to maintain a Christian environment, and in order for the instructors to remain Christian themselves. It shows confusion of thought for a person to oppose Christians making every effort they can to provide Christian environment and influence for students while they attend school to get an education.

9. Is there any time or place in which it is wrong to teach the Bible if people want to be taught the Bible at that time or place?

None whatsoever! Not only is it right to do so, but it is right to try to provide every opportunity possible to teach others the word of life.

10. Not profitable financially?

It may be urged that the private Christian school is not a good business venture. These schools do make appeals for money, and those who teach in them have to be good managers, as a general rule, in order to make a living while engaged in this work! This is all true. But does it invalidate our argument? No.

First, by charging high tuition and fees the schools could become better off financially, but this would make it impossible for them to reach some of the students whom they want to serve but who are poor. Thus they ask others to help them share this work, and this service.

Second, Christians teaching in public schools are in a business in which they make their living, but it is not a business which in itself brings in a lot of money. It does not bring in as much money as private education; instead, it is supported by outside contributions in the form of taxes. There are Christians who make their living in public school work, for in it they believe that they can render a great service. And they can. But the support of the school comes from sources outside the school.

Third, since the Christian school renders a service, those who

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are interested in such a service are urged to back it financially in order that its services may reach as many as possible. Those who are interested in so doing may do it, but those who are not will not be taxed.

11. The Conclusion

Christianity should permeate our entire lives. Christians should teach it to others by word and by deeds continually—so how can one object to it permeating and being taught in schools which are maintained by Christians?

Christian education is Christianity working in our schools. Is it right for a Christian to work at his Christianity wherever he is? Is it right for a Christian to do school work? Who can answer "No" to either question. Then, certainly, it is right for a Christian to "work at" his Christianity in his school work. To the extent that the school work gives him an opportunity to teach it to others, he should certainly do so.

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Chapter II

COLLEGES HAVE FALLEN

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CHAPTER TWO

COLLEGES HAVE FALLEN

Some argue that because colleges have in times past departed from the purposes for which they were established, that it is wrong to build Christian colleges today. It is true that some have done so, and then after departing exerted an influence against the purposes for which they were founded, just as they had an influence for their purposes while they were loyal to them. This, however, is not an argument against their establishment but a warning to those who administer our schools. May they be on their guard.

To argue that we should not have schools because sometimes they fall *is to imply that a thing should not be established unless its loyalty, for all time to come, can be guaranteed.* This is absurd. Have not men been converted to Christ, and then fallen away? Did not the vast majority of the congregations established in the first century finally fall away from the faith? Have not religious papers departed from their original purposes? Who will argue that it is wrong to convert men, to establish congregations, and to start papers because even these have sometimes fallen by the wayside? (We are not comparing the college with the church except in this one particular, *i.e.,* that each can depart from its original purpose.)

The lesson to be learned from the departures of the past is not that schools never should be established, but that the administration should be very careful in selecting teachers so that they can be sure that the school will continue to be loyal to the purpose for which it was founded. This should be stated in the school's charter, and the major aim of the administration and teaching staff should be to see that the purpose of the school is carried out in every aspect of the college life.

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Chapter III

THE SCHOOLS CAN BE CRITICIZED

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CHAPTER THREE

THE SCHOOLS CAN BE CRITICIZED

It is true that the schools have received criticisms. Sometimes these criticisms have been justified and sometimes they have not. Usually, the schools are glad to receive constructive criticism. If a school gets to the place that it will not gladly receive criticism—or is unwilling to fairly weigh it—then in this it manifests the wrong attitude. No one is above criticism, and he who thinks that he is either thinks more highly of himself than he ought to think, or he has something in his life that he does not intend to change and does not want to be criticized for holding to it.

Criticism, however, does not imply that the schools should not exist. It implies that they are run by human beings who may make mistakes. It implies that there is room for improvement, and the critic should always criticize with the purpose of doing good to those whom he criticizes as well as to others. And since these things are true, friends of the school have criticized some of the things in them which they believe to be wrong. This should continue.

No one, however, should quote criticisms made by friends of the schools and conclude that the critics are opposed to Christian colleges. They are only against the errors in those colleges. And yet, some opponents of Christian colleges have gathered all that they could find against some of the colleges in the writings of those who do not oppose the principles on which Christian colleges are founded. They have then presented these criticisms as if they were arguments against the very existence of Christian colleges. To do so is to confuse things that are different.

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Chapter IV

ROBBING THE CHURCH OF ITS GLORY

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CHAPTER FOUR

ROBBING THE CHURCH OF ITS GLORY

Opponents of the Christian colleges maintain that such colleges rob the church of its glory and its work, and therefore are wrong. Such is not the case, for the school is an adjunct to the home which endeavors to help the home in teaching the child how to work, while at the same time helping the home also in the continuing task of teaching young people in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

The argument that the Christian school is another institution, besides the home and the church, *is just as valid an argument against any kind of school*—including the state schools which these brethren support. All agree that character education and vocational training are things the Bible requires of Christian parents and all Christians. All agree it is right to delegate some of this responsibility to the school, which is another institution. State schools endeavor to carry on a program of character education and education in how to make a living. Christian schools do likewise, although their program of character education is much broader and is based on the Bible—which, after all, is essential to the growth of Christian character. And if these two Christian responsibilities (character education and teaching children how to make a living) can be delegated to one institution (the state school) without robbing the church or the family of their glory, and without being otherwise unscriptural, then they also can be delegated to another institution (the private schools, maintained by brethren, in which all possible is done to maintain in word and deed a Christian environment).

The private schools maintained by brethren do not endeavor to rob the church of her glory or otherwise supplement the church. If one does try it, it is an abuse of or a falling away from its original principles, and is in no wise a part of the proper conduct of Christian schools.

Children in these schools are taught to honor the church, and to work for its growth, glory, and spirituality. And, in point of fact,

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students from such schools are just as loyal to the church as are those who oppose the schools. They exalt the church, in their teaching and practice, just as those who think that such schools are unscriptural.

And as surely as there is power in teaching, it will be very stimulating to the student to be in an environment where the Bible is daily taught and an honest effort is made to conduct life on Christian principles. And without any reflection on loyal Christians who are graduates of secular colleges, and have never attended Christian schools, the author's own experience has shown that Christians who graduate from Christian colleges are, in proportion, loyal in larger numbers than those who graduate from secular colleges. This is not to say that all of the one are loyal and all of the others are disloyal. It is simply to say that by comparison the percentage of loyalty is higher for those who have graduated from colleges operated by Christian teachers.

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Chapter V

THE COLLEGES AND THE MISSIONARY SOCIETIES

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CHAPTER FIVE
THE COLLEGES AND THE MISSIONARY SOCIETIES

Brethren who oppose Christian schools maintain that they are on the same footing as missionary societies. The attempted parallel between the two does not hold good. The arguments which justify the schools do not justify the missionary societies.

First, it has been proven that it is right for Christians to engage in the school business and to teach the Bible in connection with their profession. This argument is not a parallel to any arguments which are used to justify the missionary societies.

Second, the Christian schools are an adjunct to the home; but such cannot be said for the missionary societies. There is as much similarity between some of the public schools *in principle,* when they endeavor to teach spiritual values, and the missionary society, as there is between Christian schools and the missionary society. A good portion of the Bible deals with the development of character through the implanting of spiritual values. Those public schools which endeavor to develop character are endeavoring to do something which, for the Christian, is a part of his Christian faith. It is true that they do not place these spiritual values on the firm basis of the word of God. It is also true that they do not teach as much of the spiritual values as the Christian must accept and act on. But if it is right that any of these spiritual values be taught to our children in school it is right in principle for all of them to be taught. The principle which is involved is the same principle regardless of whether ten percent, or one hundred percent, of Christian moral principles are taught. Thus if the Christian school is on a par with the missionary society, so is the public school. Where will our brethren educate their children if they are consistent in their opposition to Christian schools?

It may be replied that the Christian schools try to develop young men as preachers and that therefore no parallel can be drawn between these schools and the public schools. To this we say: (a) It would

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be right for a young Christian to take public speaking in a public school in order to better equip him for preaching the gospel. It would not be wrong, therefore, for him to take public speaking in the Christian school. If it is right for him to take such a course, it is not wrong for a Christian teacher to teach it for that purpose. (b) As already shown, there is no difference in principle between teaching a few of the spiritual values and in teaching many of the spiritual values.

Third, God's missionary society is set forth in the scriptures. It is the church. A missionary society organized by man is thus unnecessary. However, it cannot be maintained that the public school is the educational system which has been devised by God, and that therefore the private Christian school is unnecessary and in opposition to God's educational institution. God has left us free as to the institution in which our children shall receive their education in how to make a living, therefore our brethren are wrong in trying to bind on us the public school system as the educational institution ordained of God which we must patronize. They are wrong in legislating that it is right for the state to organize schools but that it is wrong for Christians to do so. Where did God give the state such authority and where did He deny such authority to Christians?

Fourth, missionary societies place preachers on the field. They decide who is to be supported and how much. They have authority over the local congregations and over the missionary work of those congregations that a college does not have or want.

Fifth, missionary societies establish and control schools on the field, so they are different from a school.

It is true, of course, that anything which serves the Christian home renders a real service to the church. But that is not a sufficient reason to maintain that the Christian school in serving the home and the church is parallel to a missionary society. It is not, as these lines of argument have shown.

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Chapter VI

THE SCRIPTURAL ALTERNATIVE

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CHAPTER SIX
THE SCRIPTURAL ALTERNATIVE

Brethren who oppose Christian colleges usually have been content to attack the practice of those who favor them rather than to affirm their own practice. Too long they have been permitted to go on without affirming and establishing the scripturalness of the way in which they educate their children through delegating much of the work to the state school system. We now ask them to prove their practice. What scripture teaches that the parents have the right to delegate the education of their children to a state institution; especially when at their best pure Christianity is not advocated, and at their worst anti-Christian principles are taught? These brethren have assumed all along that the scriptural alternative to the Christian college is the state school system. I say they have assumed it because they state that they favor the American public school system over private institutions, and they generally send their children to such schools. This assumption they have never proved. *And they can never prove that the scriptural alternative to the Christian school is the state school.* It is right to send children to such schools (that is, when the influence will not be such that it undermines in the child's life the Christian training received in the home), and it may be wrong in other instances (if Christian influence is undermined); but who can prove that *the scriptural* place to send children is to the state school, or to a purely secular private school? No one can, and these brethren will not try to prove it as a general rule. My information is limited, of course, but I have never heard of any of them affirming their practice. And if one docs decide to do it sometime, his failure to sustain his practice as the scriptural alternative to the Christian college will be so evident that some of those who agree with him will see it.

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Chapter VII

SOME STATE SCHOOLS NOW ENDEAVOR TO TEACH SPIRITUAL VALUES

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CHAPTER SEVEN
SOME STATE SCHOOLS NOW ENDEAVOR TO TEACH SPIRITUAL VALUES

Our brethren who oppose colleges in which their brethren teach the Bible maintain that the college is usurping the function of the church in this respect, and that therefore it is contrary to the scriptures. The state schools, they claim, are the ones to which we ought to send our children. The assumption is that the state school because it does not teach the Bible is in harmony with scriptural arrangements, while the other school is not out of harmony with such arrangements because it teaches the Bible.

However, in teaching the Bible the teacher is endeavoring to instill spiritual and moral principles which are vital parts of the Christian faith. Those who teach such values are teaching some of the same values that the church must teach when it teaches the Bible. All spiritual and moral values, those which are really valid, are embraced in the divine revelation—the Bible—and the church must teach these values.

It may come as a surprise to our brethren that some state schools are today more and more endeavoring to teach spiritual and moral values. Because of the ineffectiveness of religious teaching in the various religious bodies, and of the moral and spiritual teaching in the home, many children are being brought up without spiritual and moral training. More and more the public schools are trying to step into and fill up the breach which has been left by the failure of so many homes and so many organized religious bodies. It is not the purpose of the author to advance arguments one way or another concerning this effort of the public schools. He is simply pointing out that if these brethren oppose the "Bible Colleges" because they teach moral and spiritual values from the Bible (which the church is to teach), they should also oppose the present state school system which is endeavoring, in a measure, to teach such values. If it is wrong for Christians to support and patronize the Christian college (we use this term just as one would say that such and such a paper is a Christian

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publication), it is wrong to support and patronize the public schools.

A state school, however, in teaching these moral and spiritual values generally divorces them from the religious background which, for the Christian, places these values on a firm foundation of authority. In some cases, even while trying to instill these values, some teachers—I did not say all—instill an anti-supernatural view of life. Some may even maintain that these very values are simply customs of men instead of unchanging, authoritative values. Thus some of them often prevent the full development of the very values they are endeavoring to instill.

Let us now prove the statement that the state school systems are more and more endeavoring to teach spiritual and moral values—values which, for the Christian at least, are derived from the Bible—values which the Bible commands the church to teach.

1. Statements of Professors

Dr. W. C. Bower, retired Professor of Religious Education of the University of Chicago, recently wrote *Church and State in Education* (University of Chicago Press, 1944). Although he maintained that sectarianism must not be permitted in the schools, "Dr. Bower sets out to prove basic principles whereby religion of a functional, non-sectarian type may be taught in the schools, not only as a cultural subject on a par with other curriculum studies, but as a concomitant phase of American literature, history, and community relations. He would have the schools observe ceremonials and celebrations for the cultivation of religious attitudes. Religion could be employed in student counselling. Spiritual values in community relations could also be emphasized. Thus, religion would integrate western culture, which is losing its meaning through fragmentation. The teaching of such a functional religion is the task of the schools, writes Dr. Bower. Bower's idea of religion is not conceived in ecclesiastical or institutional terms. Rather, it is the orientation of life toward the whole, the integration of all values." (E. G. Homrighausen, "Book Reviews," *Theology Today,* Jan. 1945, p. 565).

Dr. Conrad H. Moehlman is a professor of Church History in the Rochester-Colgate Divinity School He has recently written

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School and Church: The American Way. "He deplores the attacks now made upon the 'godless' schools, and he decries the attempts being made to force the schools to introduce religion into the curriculum. This, he claims, is contrary to the spirit of American education; it is an unfair attack upon the religious values in our national life which are being perpetuated through the schools. In a work that is carefully documented, and full of information, he makes a stout defense of public education and comes to the conclusion that there is an American religion in existence, which is democratic, and which embodies the values of the Judaeo-Christian tradition." He thinks that the state schools "are now the only universal teachers of religious values in this country." (*Theology Today,* p. 566)

My friend, and former professor, Dr. Henry Neumann, has written an excellent book, *Education for Moral Growth,* in which he points out the numerous opportunities for public school teachers to teach moral principles through the school subjects as well as the other activities of the schools. The teaching of moral values is commended, and the only reason it is here mentioned is to point out to some of our brethren that for the Christian moral values are a part of Christian faith and life and are taught by the church also. If it is wrong for other than the church to teach Bible, it is wrong for our children to be sent to school where moral values will be taught.

Dr. Sidney L. Pressey and Francis P. Robinson have written a book entitled *Psychology and the New Education* (New York: Harper and Brothers, Revised Edition, 1944). Through their writings, and through their position in Ohio State University, they exert quite an influence on the educational attitudes and practices of many American teachers. What they recommend will be tried out in many classrooms. They devote an entire chapter of about fifty pages to "The Growth of Attitudes and of Moral and Aesthetic Standards," and what the public school can do about the development of such standards. The fundamental attitudes of life, and the moral standard, are a part of the Christian faith for the Christian. The Bible teaches us what our moral standard ought to be, and what should be our attitude toward others, and ourselves. Honesty, truthfulness, the proper attitude toward other human beings, and other aspects of character education

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are discussed in this book as a part of the task before the public school.

In one issue of the *Journal of the National Education Association* (Dec. 1947) numerous references were made to the obligation of the public schools to teach moral and spiritual values. (1) "Both marriages and divorces reached record heights in 1946. . . . There is a lesson here about the responsibility of the schools in the field of preparation for family life" (p. 621). But is it not the task of the church to teach those fundamental principles which underlie successful marriages? (2) "Our Commission (writes a Methodist lady) wishes to express appreciation for the emphasis the NEA is placing on spiritual values in the educational program. We are genuinely concerned, as you are, over the development of the whole child, and we realize that this cannot be done without including moral and spiritual values" (p. 615). (3) The editor, Joy Elmer Morgan, wrote: "As we come this year to the Christmas season, let us renew our faith in this destiny of the individual human soul lifted by true teaching thru the leavening power of God's grace to nobility and wisdom. This faith of the teacher—your faith and mine as we look into the eager faces of youth—is the hope of tomorrow, a hope that cannot fail" (p. 619). (4) Dr. Harry E. Fosdick has a sermon in this issue on "Are we Part of the Problem or of the Answer?" (p. 621). (5) "Good elementary schools," wrote Harold V. Baker, "do much more than help children to grow in knowledge, skills, and health—important as these are. In good schools children are helped to live on a high plane. They learn to understand and to believe in themselves; to get in tune with others; to have consideration for others; to enjoy learning; to appreciate and gain satisfaction from competent achievement by themselves and others in skills, the arts, music, literature; to begin to understand that there is order in the natural world that the mind of man can regard with reverence. People sometimes say that the schools should develop spiritual values, not realizing how much the schools already are doing. For millions of children the schools provide ethical, esthetic, and emotional experiences that help to elevate and liberate the human spirit" (p. 628).

The 1947 yearbook of the NEA Department of Elementary School Principals is entitled *Spiritual Values in the Elementary*

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Schools.

The Seventh Yearbook of The John Dewey Society is entitled *The Public Schools and Spiritual Values* (New York: 1944). It is edited by John S. Brubacker who, so far as the author's knowledge goes, is not an adherent to the philosophy of John Dewey, after whom the Society is named. John Dewey has been one of the influential figures in American education for many years. His influence, in so far as spiritual values are concerned, has been to undermine spiritual values, since Dewey is an atheist who believes that moral and spiritual values are simply the evolved customs of mankind. And yet, even The John Dewey Society, in whose membership are some who agree with John Dewey in such matters, published a book on the part that the public school can play in the inculcation of spiritual values. The executive board, and their advisers, of the Society concluded "that the public school does in fact and as a matter of duty should teach spiritual values" (p.vii).

In some cases, depending on the teacher, these spiritual values are related to a world view which includes God and Christianity. In other cases, they are related by the teacher to an atheistic world view. Even in the case of the teacher who is religious it is not always easy for him to teach these values in a religious setting, and on a religious basis, since he might think that he would be violating the idea that religion should not be taught in the public schools. (And if religion were taught in these schools our brethren, who oppose Christian schools, would be duty bound to object and to insist that either these moral principles be omitted entirely or that they be taught in a non-religious setting!)

Thus in many cases they would teach spiritual values in a secular setting. And the secular setting is surely the setting in which the non-religious teacher would teach spiritual values. In fact, some of them do not hesitate to teach these values in such a way as to insist that they must be based on an irreligious view of the world. Since they often do not hesitate to do this, the author sees no reason why religious teachers would be rightly censured for setting forth the spiritual values in a religious world view when they teach these values in school.

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But regardless of the other issues introduced above, it is obvious that spiritual values are taught by public schools. Walter Lippmann, who does not profess Christianity, put it even more strongly than that. He wrote: "As a matter of fact non-sectarianism is a useful political phrase rather than an accurate description of what goes on in the schools. If there is teaching of science, that teaching is by implication almost always agnostic. The fundamentalists point this out, and they are quite right. The teaching of history, under a so-called non-sectarian policy, is usually, in this country, a rather dilute Protestant version of history. The Catholics are quite right when they point this out. Occasionally, it may be, a teacher of science appears who has managed to assimilate his science to his theology; now and then a Catholic history teacher will depart from the standard textbooks to give the Catholic version of disputed events during the last few hundred years. But the chief effect of the non-sectarian policy is to weaken sectarian attachment, to wean the child from the faith of his fathers by making him feel that patriotism somehow demands that he shall not press his convictions too far, that common sense and good fellowship mean that he must not be too absolute. The leaders of the churches are aware of this peril." (Walter Lippmann, *A Preface to Morals,* pp. 77-78.)

And let it not be forgotten that for the Christian, spiritual values are a part of his religion based on the Bible. Thus, those who teach him spiritual values in public schools are teaching him a part of his religion.

"Every school in this country" said the late J. N. Armstrong, "leaves its religious stamp on its students. Higher Criticism and evolution are infusing their venom into the religious world through the schools of the land. The child returns to his home with his religious cast of mind molded by the school he attended. It is not a question whether parents will send their children where they will be surrounded with religious influence and teaching, for they cannot avoid this unless they put them in schools of infidels and have them inoculated with the infidel's religion. The question is whether they will put them under the influence of schools whose religious influence and teaching is mixed with sectarianism, digression, higher criticism and evolution,

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or whether they will place them in schools where the religious influence and teaching is as pure and unmixed as loyal Christians can make it by teaching the Bible itself faithfully and diligently daily to its students." (J. N. Armstrong, in the *Sommer-Armstrong Discussion on the Bible School,* p. 65.)

The individual who objects to the Christian college teaching Bible should object to sending his child to a public school wherein things are taught which for the Christian are a part of the Christian life. It makes no difference that the public school does not teach them as if they are a part of the Christian life. Regardless of whether or not *they* have the development of Christians, and the teaching of Christian principles, in mind, it is still true that these spiritual and moral values are a part of the things which are taught by the church and the Bible; and for the Christian they cannot be divorced from his Christian faith and life. He who teaches moral and spiritual values teaches a part of the Christian's religion. And if it is wrong for the Christian religion, or any part of it, to be taught in a Christian college by men who are Christians, it is doubly wrong for us to send our children to public schools where some principles, which for the Christian are a part of the Christian faith and life, are taught.

If the Christian college robs the church of its glory, and supplants it, by teaching Bible and Bible principles, then the public schools rob the church of its glory, and supplant it, by teaching moral and spiritual values which not only are a part of Christian life; but which also have come into our culture and public schools through the influence of the Bible.

Secular schools are trying to build certain types of character, attitudes, and ideals. And yet, for the Christian these ideals must be shaped by Bible teachings. If the public schools teach what the Bible teaches on moral and spiritual values—and they do in some cases—then it is surely right to do it in private schools such as Christian colleges. If wrong, then why should one support public schools? What kind of schools will these brethren support?

In some instances they endeavor to teach principles and attitudes which are contrary to the Christian faith. Certainly it is not right to submit our children to such an influence unless we see to it that

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it is counteracted by the teaching of the home and of the church. But even then for immature students it is hardly the right thing to subject them to such a conflict; especially when the schools will have such an influence that they will often become more powerful than the home in shaping the life of the child. How can it be scriptural to support schools, and to patronize them, wherein some un-Christian principles are taught, but wrong to support Christian schools where Christian principles are taught?

Of course, we do not imply that all schools are anti-Christian in their influence. Such is not the case, but as we shall point out it is the case in a surprising number of instances.

Perhaps some of our brethren will say: Well, let the public schools do it instead of building private schools. They are not doing and cannot do what we are doing and want done. Furthermore, one who says this would have to give up his opposition to the Christian colleges. To be consistent they should withdraw their children from these public schools.

But if they withdraw their children from public schools they must educate them privately for the state requires that the children be educated. And so to be consistent these brethren would have to establish schools which are purely secular, and in which the Bible, and every spiritual and moral value which it and the church teach, are strictly excluded. What a strange situation that will be: Christians banded together to build secular schools in order to keep from having their children taught the Bible—including its moral and spiritual values—in school!

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Chapter VIII

THE ANTI-CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE OF SOME SCHOOLS

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CHAPTER EIGHT
THE ANTI-CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE OF SOME SCHOOLS

The facts of the matter demand that we state, at the risk of being misunderstood by those who are uninformed in the matter or who are determined to misunderstand, that some state schools exercise an anti-Christian influence. We shall not only state it but prove it. This statement may seem out of harmony with the chapter which shows that spiritual and moral values are taught in state schools. It is not out of harmony with it, for in the same school one may find teachers who have entirely different attitudes, and exercise an entirely different influence on their students. Furthermore, some teachers who teach some anti-Christian things may also teach, or endeavor to teach, some spiritual and moral values. These values may even be in contradiction to some of their other teachings and attitudes.

Let us now briefly call attention to some anti-Christian principles which are set forth in the textbooks and classroom discussions of some teachers in American public schools. As we do so the reader will be impressed with the shame of the use of the public school system to spread, in some instances, anti-Christian principles. Those who inculcate such principles would be first to cry out if someone mentioned Christ or the Bible *favorably* in their texts or instruction. They would say that it was sectarianizing the schools. And yet, is it not clear that if the public schools should not teach Bible they certainly should not teach that which is anti-Christian? If the schools are not to be the instrument of the propagation of Christianity, they should not be the instrument of the propagation of the articles of faith of unbelievers. And these ideas of unbelievers—which they teach in schools supported by tax money which in a large measure comes from religious people—are articles of faith and not facts of science. (That they are articles of faith which are contrary to the facts is brought out in the *Bales-Teller Debate on Atheism.* Also in the author's *The Roots of Unbelief; The Faith and Fruits of Atheism;* and the publications recommended by the Evolution Protest Movement of which the author is the American

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secretary.) Let parents insist that the schools not be the agent of the propagation of a Godless, or Christless, faith.

1. The doctrine of uniformity

There is a doctrine abroad in the land, which was clearly predicted by the apostle Peter (2 Pet. 3:1-5), that the only causes and forces which have ever operated in the past are those which are now operating. The operations of nature today, and the laws which are operating today, are uniform with, are continuous with, the laws which have always operated in the past, and will continue to operate in the future. This doctrine, of course, has forced those who believe in it to deny that any supernatural intervention, any miracles, have ever taken place in the past. Doctors Rogers, Hubble, and Byers, of the University of Florida, state and endorse the doctrine of continuity in their textbook *Man and the Biological World* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1942, pp. 294-296). The conclusion which they draw from it—and which they teach students in tax supported schools— is *that miracles could not occur,* and they say so in so many words. Thus in a few words they deny the entire Christian faith, for the Christian faith is based on the fact that miracles have occurred and that God has revealed Himself, in a special way by supernatural means, in the Christian revelation.

This doctrine of continuity, or uniformitarianism, is the core of the philosophy of John Dewey, America's most influential educational philosopher. Dewey denies the divine and the supernatural and makes man one end of a long line, of which matter is the other end. For a more extended statement of his faith in this dogma see the author's *History of Pragmatism in American Educational Thought.*

2. The doctrine that morality is relative

The Christian believes that the moral principles revealed by God to His people are not to be changed or modified by the customs of men. And yet, in some of the state supported schools it is taught that morality is simply custom: that it has been derived from the will and practice of man, and not from supernatural revelation. And, of course, if man has constructed morality he can reconstruct it when he sees fit. The doctrine that moral principles are relative to the will,

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customs, and legislations of man instead of being fixed by the will of God is certainly an anti-Christian doctrine.

3. The dogma of organic evolution

It is true that if evolution—the theory of organic evolution— was a fact instead of an article of faith which is held contrary to the facts, it would still not get rid of the necessity for God. And yet, certainly the theory of organic evolution has been used by unbelievers as one of their main weapons against the Christian faith. And evolution is taught in state universities and colleges, as well as in textbooks in high schools and even grammar schools in some places. It is even taught in the University of Tennessee; which state has a law against teaching evolution as a fact. See such books, for illustrations, as A. Fairhurst, *Atheism in Our Universities.*

4. Naturalism or materialism in American education

One of the most recent documented treatises on the subject of the anti-Christian influence in American public education is found in Dr. Geoffrey O'Connell, *Naturalism in American Education* (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1938). Dr. O'Connell quotes some influential educators such as John Dewey, W. H. Kilpatrick, John L. Childs, E. L. Thorndike, and Harold Rugg, to show that these men have been advocating anti-Christian doctrines and have been successful to a surprising degree. These men have been in positions of influence and have instilled their anti-Christian philosophy into the minds of very many public school and university teachers. John L. Childs' *Education and the Philosophy of Experimentalism,* to cite an illustration, is itself a denial of the fundamental Christian principle— *i. e.* that God has revealed Himself. John Dewey's *Democracy and Education* is far from Christian in its influence, as H. H. Horne's criticism of it, embodied in his book *The Democratic Philosophy of Education,* clearly shows.

After proving that these men are naturalists (a more or less polite name for materialists), O'Connell raises the question as to the educational philosophies of the teachers colleges in America. One survey, of 2,000 teachers in 70 teacher training institutions, indicated that "about 50% of these teachers favor, generally speaking, the naturalistic

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viewpoint" (p. 217). In his general conclusion, O'Connell stated that "the evidence adduced in the course of this study shows that naturalism has not only entered into, but has assumed a dominant role in, American education" (p. 235). From the present author's own personal experiences in a number of colleges and universities, from his reading which has covered the history and philosophy of American education (that was his major field for his doctor's degree), and from his contact with numerous students in other state schools, the author is convinced that O'Connell's conclusion is sound insofar as the American public school system, in its higher brackets, as a whole is concerned. This is not to say that there are not many fine exceptions, but still the situation is extremely serious.

5. Dancing

More and more state schools are teaching, advocating, and sponsoring dances. And more and more, as the influence is felt, parents are condoning it! In some schools children must get special permission to be excused from dancing classes. This is another influence of the schools which the author does not believe to be conducive to the highest type of spiritual growth and development. Its influence is, in the long run, against and not for growth and development.

6. How can this be right?

If the brethren who oppose Christian colleges believe that it is wrong to support and patronize schools which teach Christianity, how can they believe that it is right to support any state school that teaches anti-Christian doctrines? What a strange situation: Christians opposed to sending their children to school where Christianity is respected and advocated, but not opposed to sending their children to schools where Christianity is opposed.

The criticism may be raised that those who believe in "Bible Colleges" often send their children to state schools. This may all be true, but it in no way lifts these other brethren from the strange situation in which their opposition to Christian schools has landed them.

The author himself has attended some state schools in completing

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his graduate work. There was at the time no school, maintained by brethren, which offered graduate work. Previously, he had attended a college maintained by brethren and he thus was in better condition to deal with the opposition to Christianity which he encountered. In his advanced school work he had some teachers who had a fine influence for good, but on the other hand there were several teachers who expressed open opposition to the Christian faith. And this would have been encountered more frequently in certain other fields of graduate study. The day is to be longed for when members of the church conduct schools from kindergarten through the final stage of graduate work.

7. A challenge and an opportunity

When one stops to consider it, the number of influential teachers who stand for and propagate naturalism, and various other forms of unbelief, in American education is amazing. This is due in part to the fact that a few influential places in American teacher training institutions were captured by materialists such as John Dewey, William H. Kilpatrick, and others. They indoctrinated and infected others with their philosophy until today there are American educators who are striving to use the American public school system as a powerful agency in the propagation of naturalism and to oppose all forms of supernaturalism.

Teachers of philosophy have also often been influential in undermining faith. Science teachers have sometimes spread the materialistic viewpoint of atheistic evolutionism.

Since the vast majority of the American youth pass through the public school system the impact of unbelief is made on the minds of our young people at a time when, and in an atmosphere where, it is apt to make a deep and lasting impression.

There are various ways to combat this attack of unbelief, one of which is herein presented. Young people who believe in the Bible should, in many cases, aspire to teaching positions in the colleges and universities of our country. They need, of course, to do the necessary studying and living which will insure a growth of their faith, rather than its destruction, during their college and university

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experiences. And after completing their work many of them should find places in the public schools, and colleges. This will help stop the attack of unbelief in three ways. First, it will mean that there are not so many teachers in positions of influence who are unbelievers. Second, the personality and belief of the teacher is bound to influence his treatment of the students and thus his influence on them. The fact that he is a believer in the Bible will tend to stabilize some of the students who today are unduly influenced by the mere fact that some of their teachers, who are highly educated, are unbelievers. These students reason that since, in some cases, their teachers are unbelievers, that belief and education are incompatible. Since they know it is right to be educated they decide that belief is irrational. If they knew, on the other hand, that many of their highly educated professors are believers in the Bible it would help them see the fallacy involved in the idea that education and humble faith are incompatible. Third, there are many classes in which a teacher's attitude concerning belief and unbelief will be revealed. For example, in science classes in which evolution is considered. Also in philosophy classes, including philosophy of education. History and psychology classes come into this same group. Opportunities are here offered for emphasis on that which is spiritual, or emphasis on that which is materialistic. Unbelievers do not hesitate to take advantage of opportunities to show which view they believe is right, and neither should believers hesitate. Numerous illustrations could be given, but it is sufficient at this point simply to notice the fact that such opportunities exist.

Believers are faced with a challenge furnished by American education. Let us hope that an increased number of scholastically minded young believers will respond to it. In this way, too, Christians can help discharge their obligation for the education of their children in a wholesome environment.

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Chapter IX

YOUTH AND UNBELIEF

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CHAPTER NINE
YOUTH AND UNBELIEF

It is common knowledge that many young people experience a fierce conflict between faith and unbelief. In this struggle some succumb. Many times, they lose their faith while in college. Why is this so? And what can be done to deal with the problem and to keep faith in the college? The problem exists in large measure because of the fact that children pass from dependence upon their parents to a period of questioning, in which is involved an effort to stand on their own feet. This period can be dealt with so that disaster does not finally result, if the situation is rightly understood and correctly approached. Let us first consider unbelief as related to the transition which takes place in the life of the adolescent as he endeavors to think for himself. Then let us see how one can keep faith in college—including secular colleges as well as Christian colleges. These considerations will help us to see how Christians can help discharge their responsibilities even when their children are in secular schools.

1. THE AGE OF SELF-ASSERTION AND UNBELIEF

Young people finally reach the age when they more and more assert their own personalities. They begin to stand on their own feet and think for themselves. This is commendable and necessary, but it is also a time which demands a great deal of wise understanding on the part of parents. It also means that before this time arrives, parents by word and example must have instilled into the character and habits of the child those principles which will act as stabilizing influences and which, although they may swing away from them for a time, will help bring them back to an even keel. Those parents who have been in the confidence of their children are the ones who, during this period of the struggle for independence, will be the ones who are given by the children access to their problems and thus opportunities, not to dictate, but to guide them.

It is at this age that many young folks begin to feel that their

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parents have been dominating them and that they are somewhat old-fashioned and behind the times. It is told of Mark Twain that when he was entering this period that he was surprised at how dumb his dad was, but that within a few years he was amazed at how much his dad had learned. In other words, he had passed through the period in which he felt that his parents were somewhat behind the times, and later had entered into the one where he recognized how little he knew and that after all his parents knew a great many things. The adolescent is passing through a period in which restraint becomes more and more irksome and seems less and less reasonable. For that reason children often rebel against the authority of the parents. A prominent psychologist, A. C. Wyckoff, has written: "If parents are wise enough to sense the need for reasonable readjustment of authority at this period, serious consequences are averted." They must recognize that more and more the child must stand on his own, and that they must give assistance that will help him in doing so, that will not hinder him and arouse his resentment.

Concerning this period, Wyckoff has said further: "The next line of defenses which are attacked are those of religious authority. For religion is a real regulative power in the life of a child. Here, however, open revolt does not accomplish the desired object. For one's own conscience is such a large factor in the problem that some other tactics must be adopted. It is for this reason that the subtle strategy of psychological camouflage is employed. While the problem is distinctly psychological, yet the intellectual difficulties which the progress of modern science and Biblical criticism have created, furnish a most convenient excuse for rejecting the authority of religion. If to the assertion: 'I do not think everything wrong you and father do,' is added: 'I do not believe everything you and father do,' the childhood defenses of home and Church are shattered. And the external authority which might have suppressed the growing individuality of the child is forced to allow this new personality to become a cooperator in making and exercising voluntary control.

"Up to this point, however, the young are only feigning intellectual unbelief. Genuine intellectual difficulties which strike deep down to the very roots of their religious faith are still unknown. Their

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real problems are moral and spiritual, and they know this perfectly well all the while they are trying to camouflage this fact by throwing up a barrage of intellectual difficulties between them and their elders. Genuine intellectual difficulties are rare among uneducated adolescents. They do not develop sufficient interest in the intellectual problems involved to make that phase of the problem of any vital importance. This is the reason they enjoy shocking their elders with their new ideas and denials. As soon as the religious worker understands this truth, it is a simple matter to dig down and find out the psychological trouble which is masquerading in the garb of intellectual unbelief. Little serious attention need be paid to the religious doubts and denials of this group of adolescents. For theirs is really pseudo-unbelief or rationalization." Wyckoff, of course, does not mean that one should not point out to them the peculiar fallacies which underlie the criticisms of religion which they have heard elsewhere and pass on to the adult. But he means that one should recognize that there are problems of adjustment beneath this brazen exterior, problems which need wise, patient attention and which must be looked for beyond the bare statements of the young person.

This stage of unbelief, however, can develop into something very serious if the child is constantly exposed to an atmosphere which is anti-Christian and which endeavors to drill into the student intellectual reasons for unbelief. In many colleges this takes place. The child is no longer under the influence of the home which gives attention to his religious life, but is placed in an atmosphere where even when religion is not opposed, in various subtle ways, at least it is not encouraged and opportunities for spiritual growth are neither required nor made available in the general environment that is maintained by the college itself. The professors occupy high positions of authority in the minds of the student and they may hang on to every word as a "thus saith the Lord." The material that is presented in class lectures may be presented with an anti-Christian bias, for the biases of such teachers will come out in their lectures as well as in the material which they require the student to read—the textbook and other assigned readings. The student has to study these things, for he must meet material on tests which are taken out of these readings. And thus while the spiritual life is receiving little or no attention, or

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food, the anti-spiritual is receiving a great deal of attention and food; and what we feed ourselves intellectually we think on; and as a man thinketh in his heart so is he.

The material presented to students, who are passing through this period of reaction against restraint, may be such as to state definitely that the facts are against religion; when all that is against it is not the facts, but the devilish, blind, bias of some unfair college professor who makes *ex cathedra* statements in such a way as to mislead the student. For example: "When Professor Leuba sums up the theological situation in these words: 'Theism having become logically impossible and pantheism practically insufficient, where shall we look for a religion of the future?' he is serving up the unripe fruits of scholarship to his students. When such statements as the above are heard in the classroom or read in his book on *A Psychological Study of Religion* (see page 321), the impression is given that to the informed, theism has 'become logically impossible' as a tenet of reason and faith. But what right has a college professor to inculcate that idea in the mind of the student? The verdict of scholarship and science has not yet been rendered in favor of atheism. And it is farther from favoring that theory than it was at the beginning of the century. A statement such as Professor Leuba makes above, might be justified in the company of his colleagues and peers, who are in position to weigh its evidence, and defend their religious beliefs; but immature adolescents have no defense against such generalizations." (Professor Albert Clarke Wyckoff, *Acute and Chronic Unbelief*. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1924, pp. 16, 17, 22, 23.) Especially when the student is in an unsettled and impressionable age, when the platform of the professor is surrounded with all the "halo" for him that once surrounded the pulpit of the preacher when the student was younger. Men of the type who do such things are far worse enemies to the welfare of humanity, to its social and moral progress, than gangsters. People as a whole know that the gangster is wrong, but the professor of the above type is supposed to represent scholarship, and an unbiased attitude. Furthermore, the attitude toward morality which some of these professors inculcate justifies in reality, although they many deny it, the moral code of the gangster. Proof of this statement will be advanced in the book, to be published by the

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author, the Lord willing, titled *Christianity's Challenge to Pragmatism.*

In order further to elaborate and illustrate the point under consideration Wyckoff put it this way: "Doubt is the natural intellectual hunger of the healthy-minded adolescent. (He is beginning to think for himself and thus to question some of the things which he has been told in times past.—J. D. B.) The interrogation point is the hands that beckons the hungry mind to the banqueting hall where modern thinking has spread a most bountiful and appetizing feast of good things. It is not to be wondered at if the hungry mind of the modern adolescent prefers these new, freshly prepared viands of the present, to the cold, or warmed-over left-overs of the intellectual feasts of our fathers. All this they may be allowed to enjoy, without having their doubts nourished into positive unbelief. It is only when abnormally stimulated by certain intellectual ideas that adolescent doubt develops into positive unbelief. For psychology has clearly proven that this same adolescent period is the period of conversion. Doubt is a peculiar mental, chemical solvent that has the power to soften beliefs and ideas so that they are capable of being remoulded. When in this plastic condition it is not a difficult task to remould such beliefs and ideas into useful beliefs, or into unbelief. And the college professor, who has the adolescent under his teaching in the classroom for several hours a day for five days a week, with the demands of examinations and tests thrown in, has the very best opportunity in the world to remould the beliefs doubt has softened, according to his will. And no preacher or religious teacher or parent, having only an occasional touch with the adolescent and no regular intellectual authority over attention, can compete against such an advantage. The Roman Catholic Church realizes that this is too precious an opportunity to take any chances on, so it turns its adolescent over to its trained religious teachers. It would be well if Protestants began to realize why unbelief is becoming epidemic among college students." (*Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.)

These considerations lead us to the next question: *How can faith be kept in college?* Of course, the principles which enable one to keep faith in college will enable him to keep faith elsewhere. Since, however, so many of the problems of faith and the causes of unbelief

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operate during the college days the problem is being considered with special reference to keeping faith in college.

2. *KEEPING FAITH IN COLLEGE*

"I wonder how an intelligent man like you can believe the Bible," remarked a well known professor, who had shown me many kindnesses, just after my doctor's dissertation had been accepted by my committee. This turned my attention again to the fact that although some people lose faith in the time of their university life, my faith had grown stronger. Why was it so? Why did some lose faith in college, and how was it possible to keep faith during graduate as well as undergraduate years? Of course, I had a favorable start. My undergraduate work had been done in Harding College where the Bible is adhered to as God's inspired word. Christians should attend such schools for at least part of their college work. This gives one a good start. For several years, however, I had done graduate work in secular schools and in some cases I had had professors who were not only unbelievers but who also made efforts, in one way or another, to shake the faith of believing students. This, I am glad to say, was not the case with the professor who asked the question which introduced this paragraph.

Let us now consider some reasons why some lose faith in college and why others experience a growth of faith under the same type of school influence.

Environment, not argument. Many times a loss of faith is experienced not because of the arguments which are brought against faith, but because one eats and breathes, so to speak, in a secular atmosphere. The spiritual man is just as much in need of spiritual food and exercises as the physical man is in need of food and exercise. One can become unhealthy through receiving false teaching concerning health and being thus lead into dissipation. He may be convinced by arguments that certain practices are not harmful when in reality they are very harmful. On the other hand, he may not be convinced by the arguments and yet he may lose his health because he fails to eat the proper food, neglects physical exercise, and does not take the proper steps to guard against disease. Just so, the arguments of an unbeliever may not be very powerful, but if a believer neglects

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spiritual food and exercise, the spiritual man becomes weaker and weaker and may finally show no signs of life.

Another factor in the environment is that the pressing duties of college work may be permitted to crowd out Bible study, prayer, and Christian association. As a man thinketh in his heart so is he. And if a man studies only secular subjects and fills his head and heart with these things only, he thinks only upon these things, and thus he does not become spiritual. He ceases to pray, and prayer is essential to the life of the soul. He neglects the assembly of the saints and thus misses the spiritual benefits of Christian fellowship and worship. He runs with a worldly group and thus is influenced by their outlook on life.

If a person expects to stay alive spiritually, he must do at least the following. *First,* he must study the Bible. He can find time for this even if he has to take some time from other activities. Set aside some time each day for Bible study and let nothing keep you from such study. You will have to put it in your daily schedule, or you will not "find" time for it. One must feed on the word of God. He cannot live by bread alone, and to try to do so is to invite disaster.

Second, he must work for Christ. If you are in college, do not regard your college life as a vacation from Christian duties. Think of how you can serve Christ in college. Contact others of like mind and arrange for a meeting at least once the week. Colleges will often let you have a room for such purposes. Some of the group may take part in the leadership of the class, and outside speakers may also be invited in to help you deal with your problems. Arrange some time to visit the sick and to help the needy. Without actual practice of the principles of Christianity, they tend to become merely verbal statements of doctrines which bear no living relationship to life. Because they are merely verbal, they do not have the ring of reality; they are vague and lifeless, and thus one finally gives them up because they seem unreal. If, on the other hand, one had actually practiced these principles, he would have experienced the fact that they are alive; that they have the ring of reality; and thus they would have become a part of him, and he would not have lost faith in them.

Third, attend church services, including Bible classes, Sunday morning and Sunday night. Also, Wednesday night, or whatever night is set aside for midweek service. Plan to do this every week, and

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then attend whatever other gatherings of Christians you have an opportunity to attend. But above all, do not neglect the above services. Worship and Christian fellowship are absolutely essential to a continuation of spiritual life, and you neglect them at the peril of *your* soul. Do not attend a college where you will be entirely cut off from Christian fellowship. If there is no congregation in the town where you attend college, advertise in the paper for contacts with other members, and start a congregation. If you are unable to do this, attend the nearest congregation, or go elsewhere to college. In fact, find out about the church before you go and look up brethren as soon as you get there. Don't put it off; delay may result in a drift into apostasy.

Fourth, make prayer a part of your life. Pray not only at stated intervals, but whenever you feel the need for it; even while walking across the campus one may breathe a prayer to God; or when faced with difficulties in the class room. Any time is prayer time.

Fifth, associate with Christian boys and girls in college. It is not always possible to find them, and when you cannot find them in the same college with you, at least seek out spiritually minded boys and girls with whom to associate.

Some people lose faith in college *because they go to college with the wrong purpose in mind.* They want to become educated in order to make a name for themselves or to enable them to make a lot of money to spend for selfish purposes. Such people, of course, will neglect the spiritual things in life and follow after those things which will bring selfish advancement. Because they have the wrong motive, they are headed in the wrong direction, in the way which leads to spiritual impoverishment and death. It is right to want an education. But the question is: For what purpose do you want it? An educated person can serve God and humanity. An uneducated one can too, for that matter. The more one knows, however, and the more one can do, the larger may be one's opportunities for service, if one is willing to dedicate what he is and has to God and the service and salvation of mankind. Some uneducated persons, in so far as the world views education, may in reality be far better educated spiritually, and with reference to service and the true meaning of life, than some who have attained high honors in secular education. One is not un-

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educated if he knows God and His will, although he may not have a degree from a secular institution. A person who is educated in heart and spirit will also want to take advantage of whatever opportunities he can make to be educated along other lines. And he should do so with the purpose of becoming an even better instrument in the hand of God. What is your purpose in seeking an education?

There are some who do not lose faith in college, *but who find out while in college that they never had much faith.* They simply had a second-hand faith. They were brought up in a religious environment, but they never really became religious. They were imitators, with reference to the spiritual life, rather than participators. They went through the forms of Christianity because others were going through these forms. They never made a personal decision for Christ. They never walked by faith, but by imitation. They copied, but they did not capture spiritual life. Therefore, when they went into a secular environment, they discovered that they did not have any spiritual foundations. They then began to imitate those around them in college as they had once imitated those who were around them when they were in a religious atmosphere. A person must not only have facts and forms, but he must also have faith.

There are some who stand in such *awe of their college professors that they take their word, without any other evidence of support, as the truth, regardless of what they may say.* I do not discourage respect for one's teachers or for true scholarship, and yet, the teacher is just a human being, a fallible one, regardless of how many degrees he may possess. He is subject to the same prejudices to which others are subject. He may be a famous scientist, but he may not have an open mind. I know of one professor who wanted to flunk a student, who was in a history class, because the student disagreed with the professor on the theory of organic evolution.

A professor is not a god, he is just a man; therefore, do not accept his word as infallible. He may be very well versed in his field, but in spite of his scholarly attainments, one must remember at least two things. *First,* his scholarship in one field does not make him an authority in another field. He may know a great deal about bugs and nothing about bugles. And yet, because he is an expert "bug-ologist" a student may think that he is an authority in religion. He may have

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never read the Bible or anything that is favorable to it. He may not be as much an authority on the Bible as a five year old child in a religious home. Therefore, one should not "let" his authority as a "bug-ologist" transfer to religion and make him an authority there. He may have a "halo" and authority when talking about bugs, but "horns" and prejudices when talking about religion. *Second,* there is a difference between the facts which the professor may know and the interpretation which he places on them. The facts are one thing and his theory, with which he attempts to unify and explain the facts, is another thing. Thus, though he may be an authority with reference to the facts, he is not necessarily one with reference to the theories. There are some professors who will tell you when they have left the realm of facts and when they have started with their theories. There are others who will not do so. Perhaps, they do not know themselves. Perhaps, they never thought about it. But as a student, you will find it necessary to distinguish between the facts and the interpretations. You may accept his facts, without accepting his theories.

There are some who cannot stand up in the face of *ridicule.* In a secular institution on the west coast one professor carried on a dialogue in which he represented the believer as saying that he was afraid to study biology lest it wreck his faith. The believer was thus placed in a ridiculous position. The writer has seen students laughed at when they made some statement which indicated their faith in God or the Bible. Some are unwilling to stand ridicule and thus they abandon their faith.

Some have been *frightened out of their weak faith* by the belligerent, cocksureness of some unbelievers. Some college students are overawed by unbelieving professors. These may talk and act as if Christianity is so blatantly false, that only a fool would believe it. It is assumed that although once it was possible to believe that now it is impossible. The impression is left on the mind of some timid believers that never before has the Bible been attacked and that since unbelievers are so certain that at last it has been overthrown, that perhaps the Bible will be unable to survive the attack.

It should be clearly recognized that the Bible has been under attack by some persons, even when it was being spoken—before being written—from the mouths of God's prophets of old. The central theme

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of the Bible, Jesus Christ, was under attack in His lifetime and they placed Him on the cross, but they did not do away with Him. Just so with His word, it has been under attack but after each fierce encounter it shines brighter than before.

In order that young people might recognize that unbelievers have assured the world in centuries past that the Bible was now demolished, the following quotations are presented.

The first is from the pen of Joseph Butler and was written in 1736. "It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted, by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry: but that it is, now at length, discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it, as if, in the present age, this was an agreed point among all people of discernment; and nothing remained, but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were by way of reprisals, for having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world. On the contrary, this much, at least, will be here found, not taken for granted, but proved, that any reasonable man, who will thoroughly consider the matter, may be as much assured, as he is of his own being, that it is not, however, so clear a case, that there is nothing in it. There is, I think, strong evidence of its truth; but it is certain no one can, upon principles of reason, be satisfied of the contrary. And the practical consequence to be drawn from this, is not attended to, by everyone who is concerned in it." (*The Analogy of Religion,* 20th Edition, 1858, pp. 28-29.)

"Burnet tells that about the year 1700 it becomes a common topic to treat all mysteries in religion as the contrivance of priests, and 'priestcraft' came into fashion as a term of derision. Dean Swift, in 1708, dwells upon the rapidity with which freethinking ideals had spread from the upper class to the body of the people. It was commonly held, he said that the system of the Gospel had become antiquated and explored, after the fate of other systems, the common folks having grown ashamed of it, as their betters had done before. Still later, in 1754, it was publicly suggested that the churches should be turned into freethinking meeting-houses, and a new liturgy compiled, opposite to our present one, and that instead of lessons being taken from the Bible, they should consist of extracts from the work of the Deists." (John Langtry, *A Struggle for Life,* pp. 38-39.)

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H. A. Taine, in *The Ancient Regime,* (p. 293), wrote as follows concerning 18th century France. "A little while ago some one put this question to one of the most respectable curates in Paris: Do you think that the bishops who insist so strenuously on religion have much of it themselves? The worthy pastor replied, after a moment's hesitation: 'There may be four or five among them who still believe.' "

Some of that generation predicted that the Bible would soon be only a museum piece, but today it is still the world's best seller. The Bible wears out its critics instead of being worn out by them.

"Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith's door
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
When looking in, I saw upon the floor,
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.

'How many anvils have you had,' said I,
'To wear and batter all these hammers so?'
'Just one,' said he; then said with twinkling eye,
'The anvil wears the hammers out, you know.'

And so, I thought, the anvil of God's word
For ages skeptic's blows have beat upon;
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The anvil is unharmed—the hammers gone!"

—*Anonymous*

And so we say to the timid believer, be not afraid of the noise made by some unbelievers. The Bible has stood the test of time and of every form of attack and its voice will be heard long after that of the unbeliever has been silenced.

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