
Very Late -- But Welcome.

"President Alexander G. Ruthven of the University of Michigan proposed in a recent address a plan of character training for students and the appointment of a university counsellor in religion. He will find a vast body of people in Michigan who will hope for adoption of such a plan in the very near future.

"As has been said many times, one of the major faults of today's institutions of higher learning - in fact, the greatest of all faults - is their failure to reinforce or even retain character. Too often college studies break down faiths through presentation of half-truths without bothering to tell the whole story. Too often students are given the agnosticism of Spencer and Kant, and left stranded without having pointed out to them the fallacies of such teachings. Too often colleges substitute behaviorism or codes of ethics for religion.

"Many a fine lad has entered college a devout believer in religion only to be graduated as an agnostic materialist and perhaps even an atheist. The college thus builds without a foundation. It teaches the sciences, etc., but neglects the first of all essentials of success in life, character.

"President Shaw of Michigan State College has been working for some time on a plan somewhat similar to that which seems to be in the back of Dr. Ruthven's head. Some time ago in a Grand Rapids address President Shaw declared his conviction that every college student should go to a church, a cathedral, a synagogue or a meeting house; but it was entirely within the college's province to insist upon some form of worship. The Shaw plan lets the student choose his church, insisting only that somewhere he maintain contact with faith.

"There is in these days of economic reverses no man or woman more pitiful than the victim of depression who has no religious staff upon which to lean, no faith to bolster him in defeat. The college student who faces life with a cynical atheism may sneer at religion, just as Soviet Russia sneers; but let him look around. He will find that those men and women who hold their heads high in these times and in whose eyes gleams the determination to carry on, despite reverses, are those whose faiths are firmly grounded in religious convictions.

"After all, man is more than a machine. The University which trains men and women without heed for character is delinquent in its responsibilities. It is doing no more for its students than a circus trainer does for dumb brutes. The one trains them to turn somersaults, the other to recite law of mix medicines." -- The Grand Rapids Herald.

A perspicacious editorial, that. Would that the whole secular press of the United States were as keen and as honest. Had it been, cynicism would not have spread so rapidly, agnosticism would not be so rampant at the present time. For a generation now the dumbbell professor has made the front page by the simple expedient of a smartaleck statement; and by the process of attrition the fragment of faith in the Protestant conscience was worn away.

How much President Ruthven can accomplish by this new expedient (the details of which we haven't seen) we do not know. He seems to have very good dispositions; we hope his logic reaches far enough for him to avoid the mistake made by his remote predecessor, President Burton, who established the so-called School of Religion at Ann Arbor. President Burton proposed teaching the "fundamentals underlying all religions" as a cure for moral evils; the Bulletin reminded him that it is faith in specific truths, not knowledge of underlying principles, plus the grace of God, that makes people behave under temptation to misbehave.

PRAYERS: Three relatives and a friend ill; a relative and two friends killed; 4 sp. int.