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Just What is Your Proposition, Mr. Burton?

On three occasions recently President Burton, of the University of Michigan, has spoken out in meeting on the evils of student life, and each time he has walked right up to the problem and backed right down without solving it. His first speech was delivered before a convention on Christian education, his second was to the students of his own University, and his third, last week, was addressed to a meeting of the Michigan High School teachers.

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In this last speech he tells us that the college students are completely "jazzified," because they come from "jazzified homes," where culture is rated zero. He blames the individual conscience for moral evils, the conscience that has ceased to distinguish between right and wrong. But he spoils it all by adding: "Not that I would want to establish the absolute between right and wrong."

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Mr. Burton, you have no right to criticize your neighbor if you refuse standards of objective morality. The gunman and the libertine are following their conscience just as you are following yours. If you refuse to accept the word of God on standards of morality, if you refuse the Ten Commandments and the infallible authority of God's agency in interpreting them, you create the very condition which you deplore. Unless God has spoken, and unless there is a heaven and a hell to back up the Commandments of God, each man is left to shift for himself and selfishness will dictate what is right and what is wrong.

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Morality got on very well on absolute standards until man's will ceased to be free. Determinism took away choice. Morality then limped along under the fiction of an unjust God who commanded what the will was predetermined to do, until Christ ceased to be Divine, and became a lofty but foolish philosopher.

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President Butler, of Columbia, comes closer to the truth when he traces the sharp rise in the crime rate from 1890, the time of the introduction of the elective system into education. The elective system, which made the student decide what should constitute his education, undermined authority and nullified experience. Authority must return in principle-- parental authority, teaching authority, political authority, divine authority,-- if education and life are to be unjazzed.

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President Burton leaves us without a solution.

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Prefect of Religion.