
Catholic vs Secular Colleges--I.

Professor Hugo S. Taylor writes, in the Commonweal for February 14, that Catholics would do well to attend Princeton and other secular institutions, instead of going to Catholic colleges, because the secular schools have better equipment and a more distinguished personnel. He quotes Monsignor Sheen to the effect that "the stage will be cleansed by and through Catholicism, that the medical profession will be made moral by and through Catholic doctors, that the law will be made honest by and through Catholic lawyers." And he draws the conclusion that the secular college will become Christian by and through Catholic students!

Monsignor Sheen certainly did not mean that the stage, the medical profession, and the law would be made moral by putting Freshmen, who have not yet learned to think for themselves, into classes taught by non-religious or atheistic professors who might fill their minds with immoral theories and false philosophies! He meant that these professions could be purified by actors, doctors, and lawyers who were well grounded in Catholic doctrines and who were leaders in their professions.

Everyone who has had anything to do with the care of souls can point to scores of boys who have lost their faith by attending secular colleges. What chance has a boy just out of high school to cope with a professor whose mind has been trained by years of study and teaching? The professor has acquired a polish and fluency in his speech that carries conviction. He knows how to turn a phrase so that its smoothest surface will appear. He is an authority in his special subject--in Chemistry, History, Mathematics or what not--and the Freshman who has learned to admire him will not realize perhaps that his philosophy is pagan and his ideas on religion warped and twisted. The Freshman takes in his teachers' views indiscriminately, and, as a result, he often comes out of the secular school not so truly learned as thoroughly pagan.

It makes little difference how impersonal the subject, if the professor happens to be a communist or an atheist he will inject communism and atheism into his teachings, whether he intends to do so or not. Men do not gather grapes from thorns nor figs from thistles.

Dan Gilbert, in his book, "Crucifying Christ in Our Colleges," gives a shocking account of the immoral teachings that some of our best known professors are handing out daily in our secular schools. Read that book and shudder at what Catholic boys and girls are exposed to in State and secular colleges! (Does Professor Taylor know that President Angell of Yale comes out publicly for free love and birth control, that Harvard's President Emeritus presents an entirely new religion--"The Christianity of the Twentieth Century?")

If the building up of our Catholic college system were just a costly mistake, if the hierarchy and the clergy have gone astray on the point, it is high time that Professor Taylor should put them right. We do not believe, however, that very many Catholics will share his views.

As to equipment and personnel altogether too much stress has been laid on these things. Catholic papers have pointed out recently that the great discoveries have not come from the spacious, well-equipped laboratories, but from dingy back rooms and made-over sheds. Genius has a knack of making its own equipment. And while Catholic colleges have not large endowments in money, they have endowment in flesh and blood, in the lives of men and women who give their services without asking material remuneration. This endowment compensates to a great extent for what Catholic colleges lack in material wealth. But even if enormous, money-endowments were necessary to prepare the chemist or physicist, should one risk his faith, and his soul perhaps, to take advantage of them?

PRAYERS: (deceased) great-uncle of F. P. Shapiro (OC); uncle of Fr. O'Toole. Ill, Prof. Fred Myers; father of Joe Fitzgerald; mother of Rev. J. Hugh O'Donnell, v. pres.