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Editorial

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Editorial

It has been my privilege during these past months, to spend time studying the history of higher education in America. From the beginning it is a *fascinating* story, for it tells about the brave efforts of a nucleus of Cambridge and Oxford-trained gentlemen, "which placed at the disposal of American youth so extraordinary a number of educational institutions" (*The American College and University: A History*, by Frederick Rudolph. New York: Vintage Books, 1962, p. 3).

But the story is also *frightening*—especially to those involved in Christian higher education. How so? Because it tells about colleges and universities established so that "Every one shall consider the mayne End of his life & studies, to know God & Jesus Christ, which is Eternall life," which eventually came to the conclusion that evangelical Christianity had little to say to the academic community in America (*Higher Education in Transition*, by John Brubacher and Willis Rudy. New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1958, p. 8). Such is the story of Harvard, William and Mary, Yale, Princeton, King's College, Brown, Rutgers and Dartmouth—all established during the Colonial Period. The role of Christianity was important in founding each of these institutions. But each, in its turn, either neglected or turned away from its Christian rootage.

How does one explain such developments? Did Harvard, for example, fail to give due attention to the life of its students? Indeed not. The behavior of the students was clearly defined. The students were required to "know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life." They had to read "the Scriptures twice a day." Those attending Harvard were commanded to "carefully shun all gestures that show any contempt or neglect of God's ordinances" in the

church services. Further, they were to "eschew all profanation of God's holy name, attributes, word, ordinances, and times of worship, and study with reverence and love carefully to retain God and his truth in their minds." (*American Higher Education: A Documentary History*, edited by Richard Hofstadter and Wilson Smith. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1961, p. 8) Or was Harvard perhaps indifferent to the doctrinal positions of its president and faculty? Hardly. For example, the Overseers of the university forced the resignation of the first president, Henry Dunster, because he became entangled "in the snares of Anabaptism" (Hofstadter and Smith, p. 19).

Obviously we cannot engage in a satisfactory inquiry into this matter within the limits of a brief editorial. But there is one thing that is striking about the founding of these colleges, i.e. Christianity was not *integrated* with the academic enterprise. When Harvard's charter of 1650 defines the academic purpose of the college it simply refers to "the advancement of all good literature, arts and science" and the "education of the English and Indian youth of this country in knowledge and godliness" (Hofstadter and Smith, p. 10). We should, I believe seriously consider that this may have been one of the primary reasons why Harvard, influenced by a "virtual intellectual awakening," eventually "fell away form orthodox Calvinism very early" in the 19th Century (Rudolph, p. 73).

I believe, further, that this should impress upon all of us the tremendous importance of integrated, Scripturally-oriented higher education.

J. B. Hulst