CHAPTER 8

The Story within the Stories

Until the later nineteenth century it was conventional for colleges in the United States to be identified by association with a Christian church.[1] Their founding, faculty, students, funding, piety, morality, and religious study (but not much other study) were braided together into a cord that tethered college to church. Yet we have seen that this church-college relation could be feeble on the brightest of days, and in the longer judgment of history the churches may be more harshly judged for continuing to claim colleges than for nagging them.

When we say a college was founded by a church, we speak more analogically than literally. Some of these colleges were founded by the initiative of local communities, like Lafayette. Others were founded by church initiative, e.g., Gettysburg, Virginia Union, New Rochelle, and Ohio Wesleyan. Others, by a combination of church and citizens, like Linfield, or by a group of locals who were both church and citizenry, like Dordt. Millsaps sprang from the wish of a church and the wherewithal of a single benefactor.

Despite these variations of sponsorship and initiative and motivation, the early educators themselves were usually people in ministry. There were always some preachers, priests, pastors, and nuns more disposed or able to teach than to preach. It was a natural work for them. Many who did accept calls to the pastorate traditionally supplemented their income by taking in students. The full-time tutors of the gentry were often in holy orders. Since the older churches and denominations expected some level of literacy in their clergy, and since even the newer, anti-intellectual movements turned in that direction after their first polemics were spent, most ministers were equipped to teach at some level. Lawyers and doctors, apothecaries and surveyors, bankers and journalists may have shared the same elementary training, yet they were not expected to be schoolmasters. The tutelary function of the teacher was conventionally assumed to be well suited to the Christian minister. Perhaps the recompense for ministry was poor enough to lessen the risks of a change to the classroom.

It is a commonplace that most of these institutions were begun, as the

sponsors of Davidson put it, "for securing the means of Education to young men within our bounds of hopeful talents and piety, preparatory to the Gospel ministry" (1845). Dartmouth reckoned that a quarter of its early graduates had followed that path to ministry (1877); Gettysburg, 56 percent (1882); Lafayette, 14 percent (1889); Millsaps counted 36 percent (1902); St. Olaf, 29 percent (1924); Azusa Pacific, 31 percent (1940). The expectation, however, was that prospective parsons would not come in crowds. Therefore the founders counted on young people interested in the law and in medicine and in other skilled professions to come along as well. The common curriculum was intended for them all, as well as for the children of the gentry, who would need it to administer their estates with dignity.

Not a single college studied here was opened with the proviso that only students of the affiliate church or denomination were welcome. To the contrary, most legislatures imposed nondiscrimination in the charters they granted. Thus Ohio Wesleyan was "forever to be conducted on the most liberal principles, accessible to all religious denominations and designed for the benefit of our citizens in general." Some sponsors were quite vexed by such unsolicited amendments but in time found them providential, and their promotional literature eventually made a large point of saying that they were ready to serve students of any faith. New Rochelle said it simply: "Members of all denominations received." Some Protestant colleges drew the line at Catholics, Jews, and Unitarians, and encoded this unwillingness in their positive welcome to "all evangelical Christians." But that is because they did not expect to need Catholics or Jews or Unitarians. When they did, they admitted them. When they needed them badly, they welcomed them.

There was another natural linkage between the church and the early college. In the eighteenth century, and in rural areas until the end of the nineteenth century, the territorial and state governments secured their revenues from land sales, tolls, fees, poll taxes, monopolies, and fines. Taxation was viewed with ardent hostility by the citizenry, as were all appropriations which might augment it. We have read of several timely state grants to some of these colleges in their infancy, but they were usually without an encore. The only social entity which had a regular claim upon household incomes was the church. Therefore almost all these attempts to open a college (including the begging journey by two priests who dunned the Irish gold miners at Yankee Jim's, Rabbit Creek, and Poker Flat for Saint Mary's) have been addressed to the patronage of sponsoring churches. There was the added likelihood that congregations who were persuaded to send students, especially students with ministry in mind, might also send contributions in the form of scholarships.

Early Protestant colleges initiated their students into the piety and the discipline of a parson's household; the model for the Catholics was that of pupils in conventual schools. Their mentors held them to it until the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, when the students noticed the faculty furtively defecting from their role as disciplinary models and agents. The students began to badger the administration to alleviate their devotional duties and behavioral restrictions, item

by item. The long pressing and yielding, voiced by rhythmic argument and obnoxiousness, was comparable, in its stubborn importunity-and-resistance, to the yielding by the British monarchy to parliamentary rule. One of the social forces that came to distinguish and divide administrators from faculty professionally was the way the latter soon left responsibility for student piety and morality in the hands of the former. It was later, when the administrators in their turn created a class of religious functionaries — chaplains, Y secretaries, deans of students, et al. — to relieve them, too, of those responsibilities, that ecclesial piety and discipline were shown to be only loosely and incoherently bound to the central purposes of the colleges.

Students found little nourishment for their Christian faith in the classical curriculum which held fast until the latter nineteenth century. Emerson called it "an old granny system." As one Pennsylvania legislator put it in his harangue against a charter for Lafayette: "The knowledge of all the dead languages, would not furnish a single idea, that could not be communicated in English . . . and [has] added no more to scientific knowledge than the croaking of frogs" (1825). Lafayette's most celebrated professor, Frederick March, agreed, and deplored the failure of American colleges to follow the Renaissance, which had studied the early Christian writers and "never imagined it possible that the best years of youth should be spent in mastering the refinements of a mythology and life which at first they feared and loathed, and which at last became as remote and unreal to them as the Veda is to us. . . . It is strange that our children should spend years on the faint Homeric echoes of Virgil, and commit to memory the graceful epicureanism of Horace, and never see the *Dies Irae*" (1874). It was in the mid–twentieth century that Will Herberg was asking his Christian friends why they had ever clung to such "a thinly Christianized version of the Greek ideal of intellectual self-realization. . . . If man's good was the 'life according to reason,' as it was in the classical-humanistic ideal, then a liberal education along academic lines was obviously appropriate; but how appropriate was it, indeed what sense did it make, if man's good was what the Christian faith must hold it to be — to know and do the will of God?" (1961).

The Christian faith was not studied academically in the American colleges, even after Charles Eliot had succeeded in annihilating the classical curriculum. On Protestant campuses where all belief was ascribed to the Scriptures, there was no respectable Bible study. The lecture series on moral philosophy customarily delivered by nineteenth-century Protestant college presidents to their seniors dealt in apologetics and relied upon Scottish commonsense philosophy, but did not customarily drift into disciplined exposition of the faith itself. On those Protestant campuses which expected more of conversion than of right belief, learning and religion could be mutually exclusive: classes would have to be suspended for days or weeks when religion got into full cry. On the Catholic campuses, where the church with her theologians was hailed as the mistress of faith, the catechism was the only book to come off the shelf for religion class. The serious study of religion was left for later, for the seminaries, where the respective scholasticisms

of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were opened for learning, to no great benefit. The absence of vital theological inquiry was sure evidence that there was no faith studiously and strenuously enough engaged to validate the marketing claim that the campuses were "permeated" by it. One who doubts the stagnation of theology ought to read the intradenominational debates over the most vital subject of the nineteenth century — slavery. It is likely that the occasional debate with religious implications staged by the students in their own literary societies was better sourced and more theologically speculative than what occurred in their academic recitations.

The colleges and universities in the United States grew in youthful age, if not in wisdom and grace, in an era when the Christian churches were conspicuously unprovided with the very faculties the church would require to be a patron of higher learning. Yet in the last hundred years many of the prerequisites to faith seeking and sparring for understanding have developed. The informative disciplines of history and politics, the interpretive disciplines of philosophy and exegesis, and the imaginative disciplines of natural science, sociology, and economics, have enjoyed a steady maturation. Within the Christian communions, along with renewals of piety and liturgy, there has been remarkable development in the interpretation of Scripture and the rest of the corpus of tradition, in both positive and speculative theology, and in the capacity in the various churches to sustain a dialectic that is both authoritative and forthright, intramurally and extramurally. Just when the churches were developing these manifold powers to engage in broad-spectrum, scholarly, and critical discourse, however, a great failure of nerve devastated their capacity to be worthy patrons of higher education. Just when scholars had begun to be equipped to teach serious theology, colleges and universities implicitly decided that serious theology was not appropriate. This promise of theology as a mature discipline seemed to occur on the very eve of the defection by each denominational cadre of colleges and universities from the claim or aspiration to teach it. For the liberal Protestants this was occurring around the turn of the century; for the Catholics it awaited the 1960s.

It does not require a Marxist historian to ascertain that the religious identity of most of these colleges was, as they began, circumstantial and indirect. The teachers were ministers for whom this was a preferred or more available alternative to preaching. The colleges were identified with a church or denomination, usually but not always that of the president, with the expectation that patronage (in students and grants) would be forthcoming. The students were primarily recruited from within the sponsoring church or denomination, but the college's catchment zone was determined more by its geographical radius than by that of orthodoxy. Even under the most ecclesially attentive patronage, like that of the Missouri Lutherans, Christian Reformed, and Catholics, colleges were ready to accept the fees of all who could accept them.

It is fair to say that while every one of these colleges was from the start identified with a specific church, denomination, or movement, there was no

manifest intensity in that identification, no very express concern to confirm or to be intellectually confirmed or critical within the particular faith of their communion. There was hardly any expectation that the *quality* of faith in the church stood to be strongly served by its colleges. It was the piety that they thought they knew how to serve.

Yearning to Be Free

It required only the possibility of emancipation-and-survival to provoke the educators' preference for autonomy. The cordage that held college and church together began to unravel.

Access to independent funding often provided the first inspiration to the colleges that they might stand on their own. The patronage of the churches was often stingy, and their chosen trustees were sometimes there more to be humored than to help. As the colleges gained in sophistication and financial stability, they naturally suffered church fools less gladly. These mutual disservices tended to loosen their liaisons of convenience. For some colleges effective emancipation came in the form of a sudden, large benefaction. Major Millsaps emancipated his namesake from the very start, D. K. Pearsons did it for Beloit, Ario Pardee for Lafayette, Maxwell Chambers and then the Dukes for Davidson, the Reynolds family for Wake Forest, and Carnegie for several of them. Once the annual scrabbling for students and solvency could be relieved, and patient growth begun, the colleges naturally began to think themselves less answerable to the churches. As the president of Brown University is said to have put it: "When I speak in Baptist churches and their mission boards, Brown is a church-related university. When I speak to the officers of the educational foundations, Brown is a *university.*"

Alumni also came along as an emancipating asset for the colleges. It took years for them to fructify as substantial contributors. But from earliest times some of them had been achieving prominence and affluence in their own right, and the more successful alumni tended to migrate away from the rural constituency surrounding the country colleges and to cluster in the large cities. From the middle of the nineteenth century they began to pester their *almae matres* for representation on their boards, and to be given some statutory seats, and then more seats. Davidson began to choose alumni trustees in 1876, Lafayette in 1888, Beloit in 1903, Linfield in 1926. At first alumni were given only the privilege of nominating; later they secured the power to elect. By 1909 alumni trustees controlled the Dartmouth board. This seriously undercut the traditional trusteeships, which had been denominational and regional when they represented the sponsoring church judicatories.

One feature of the emancipation process which took a long time to develop was the definitive marginalization of theological discourse. After the Civil War, as college and university teachers began to receive graduate training, and libraries

and laboratories were enlarged, and learned societies and journals nurtured disciplinary guilds, and as vocational prospects heightened student interest in the newer studies, academic disciplines began to mature, to ramify, to divide, and to contend for more room within the student curriculum. This usually had the effect of shouldering academic religion aside. Already in 1861 President Kirkpatrick of Davidson saw this under way: "There is a tendency in all literary institutions to eliminate by degrees the religious elements if any have been incorporated in their primary schemes. I am constrained to say that I fear that such a tendency has been developed . . . in consequence of the desire, and a very natural one it is, on the part of the several instructors to obtain each more time for the special studies of his department."

The postbellum study of religion did not enjoy a competitive season of development on these college campuses. Kant and Hegel, Strauss and Ritschl, Renan and Nietzsche, Mill and Marx, Darwin and Huxley had all kicked loose a great avalanche of doubt regarding the authenticity and historicity and interpretation of traditional Christian belief, and by the 1870s American Christians were becoming polarized. Many conservatives swung out and became angry confessionalists; and liberals often became modernists. New colleges were founded by polarized constituencies who refused to patronize the older ones. Seminaries had long since been founded because colleges were gone astray (Andover in the face of Harvard, Princeton Seminary rather than the College of New Jersey [Princeton]), but now counterseminaries were opened. After the Lutheran General Synod split, for instance, the seminary in Philadelphia was founded to rival the one in Gettysburg. New journals were founded to grapple with the established ones. George Peterson has narrated the convulsions at Amherst, Bowdoin, Dartmouth, Union, Wesleyan, and Williams, where an early ascendancy of the liberals was followed by an orthodox restoration, and then, in the late 1880s and early 1890s, by a forceful overthrow by progressives.

But after several decades of hostilities, academics and divines were so wearied by the polemics that there was an ennui, a distaste for dialectical religious inquiry. The effect of this was not simply to marginalize theological expression, but to reconstrue the colleges' own self-understandings as Christian. The word "sectarian" had always been a no-go word on the campuses: it had first meant an inhospitable sponsoring church or denomination. After the dust had settled, "sectarian" had become a word of sharper offense because it evoked the painful animosities of old religious quarrels. In its newer sense, "sectarian" denoted any doctrinal preoccupations that spoiled the religious, devotional, and behavioral commonplaces which the modernists took as cultural lozenges. But some of their adversaries were also in need of a more soothing rhetoric. The Calvinists were heavy with the cudgels during this struggle, for they had the most emphatically explicit doctrinal structure to defend. The liberal wing of the Calvinists who survived the polemics were particularly leery of any further doctrinal dispute, and it was they who led the way into a newly evasive rhetoric.

Asa Dodge Smith of Dartmouth offers a fair representation of the older, hearty blather:

> The College . . . should be distinctly and eminently *Christian.* Not in the narrow, sectarian sense — that be far from us — but in the broadest evangelical view. . . . Christianity is the great unity. . . . All things are Christ's; all dominions, dignities, potences; it is especially meet that we say, to-day, all institutions. It is the grossest wrong practically to hold otherwise. It is loss, too, and nowhere more palpably than in the educational sphere. It is no cant saying to affirm, and that in a more than spiritual sense, that in Christ "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." At His throne the lines of all science terminate; above all, the science that has man for its subject. Of all history, for example, rightly read, how is He the burden and the glory! (1863)

After the theology wars, as Peterson puts it, evangelical religion would be "replaced by a more gentle, more rational, and more socially minded Christianity." Congregationalists led the way. Gun-shy liberals learned to talk religiously without giving offense, by saying much and affirming little. Secretary Bliss out in the West was determined to open a Christian school whose only definitions were "non-sectarian," "non-ecclesiastical," "non-polemical," and "liberal-minded" (1881). The word "Christian," he explained, "is a term of very wide meaning." Professor Porter at Beloit turned away from all dispute: "I sometimes think it is the last stage of grace when a man has as much respect for another's convictions as for his own." William Jewett Tucker, roughed up at the Andover heresy trial, wanted never to speak of any "distinctive tenets," which would be sectarian, but only of "those fundamental obligations and incentives of religion in which we are all substantially agreed" (1909). Tucker was describing Dartmouth exactly as Horace Mann had described the state elementary and secondary schools, which were to teach values and a worldview "on which all reasonable men agree," by which Mann confidently meant the "pure religion of heaven," Unitarianism.[2] Tucker looked past the "content of faith" to the "tone of faith"; it was not what one believed, but how — indeed, how becomingly. "Formerly the distinction was, Is a man orthodox or heterodox? To-day the distinction is, — Is a man an optimist or a pessimist? Our religious beliefs and denials are experienced in shades and colors rather than in sharp and rigid outlines" (1910). Hopkins, Tucker's protégé, cut this to half strength with neutral spirit and put forward "friendliness and good will" as "the essence of the religion Jesus taught" (1921). Young men were initiated into the evangelical YMCA by affirming "the Christian ideals of character and service," which amounted to "clean living and all-around manhood" (1919).

This is what happened to the denominations most affected by the strains of the 1880s and 1890s. But this same polarizing struggle was visited upon the churches and their colleges again in the fundamentalist controversy of the 1920s, when it struck others who had had less grief earlier. The Missouri Synod entered

into long crisis in the 1960s; the Catholics, who had been waved off from modernism after the turn of the century, entered their crazy season in the 1960s and 1970s; and the Southern Baptists, in the 1980s. Usually when the heavy weather struck the churches, the colleges felt their affiliation to be a burden, and through a variety of maneuvers drew themselves beyond arm's length. One must say "felt" rather than "found," because the ecclesial interferences alleged by the colleges were more by way of anticipation than of realization. Somehow the turbulence required by religious fidelity and self-definition became so distasteful, so mortifying, that these colleges found it preferable to lay serious religious studies aside. Why that was so, we must presently try to determine.

Primacy of the President

In many of these stories the critical turn away from Christian accountability was taken under the clear initiative of a single president. Our first narrative offers a strong example. William Jewett Tucker, determined to liberate Dartmouth from all that Samuel Colcord Bartlett had stood for, was a modernist, a social reformer and a gentleman, religiously observant but not religiously motivated. He led his college to be the same. But because he and his generation continued steadfastly in their religious observance, it was not clear to him or to most of them quite what he was doing. It usually became clear later, on another president's watch, when there was neither conviction nor observance extant, that the purge of Christian purpose was there to be seen. Thus what began under Tucker (1893-1909) became visible and determinative during the regime of Ernest Hopkins (1916-45). This same two-stroke pattern applies largely to Eaton (1886-1917) and Maurer (1924-42) at Beloit, Henry Hanson (1923-52) and Glassick (1977-90) at Gettysburg, Martin (1958-68) and Spencer (1968-84) at Davidson, Bergethon (1958-78) and Ellis (1978-90) at Lafayette, Finger (1952-64) and Harmon (1978-) at Millsaps, Scales (1967-83) and Hearn (1983-) at Wake Forest, Dillin (1943-68) and Bull (1992-) at Linfield, Walsh (1958-68) and Monan (1972-96) at Boston College, Falls (1963-70) and Kelly (1972-97) at New Rochelle. St. Olaf underwent considerable estrangement from the church under both the Rand (1963-80) and the Foss (1980-85) administrations, but the process may have been checked somewhat under George (1985-94). The Lutheran dynamics at Concordia were none the better for the Zimmerman presidency (1973-83), and under Krentz (1983-) it is not clear that they improve. Saint Mary's seems unrecoverably changed during the long Anderson (1969-97) regime, but the energy of Catholic activists buffers some of that change for the present. At Azusa Pacific the many compromises under Sago (1976-89) may be reversed by Felix (1990-), but that is not yet clear.

This salient role of the president is not so clear in the way some colleges have become estranged from their religious identities. At Ohio Wesleyan the process is now complete under President Harmon, but it is difficult to identify any moment

of critical turn; the process was long and continuous. At Virginia Union the relation with the American Baptist Churches was so compromised by a benevolently racist patronage of blacks by whites that the severance from Baptist sponsorship left behind little affective or effective desire for the university to be intentionally Baptist, even by relation to its two neighboring black conventions. Dordt continues on: with difficulties, but thus far without crisis.

With very few exceptions, the presidents who have been the strategists of religious alienation have been large souled, attractive, and trusted. They typically felt that their institutions were somehow confined, stifled, or trivialized by their church or denomination or order, and at a critical moment they greatly enhanced the professionalism, resources, and clientele of their colleges. As they enacted a new age on their campuses, they tended to point out the deficiencies of the past, though only as a foil for what they proposed as a future. They rarely criticized the religious sponsorship openly. There was usually no rhetoric of rejection, no breakaway surge, no praise of secularization, except perhaps among the Catholics. Even when there was a secession from formal oversight by church authorities, such as at Lafayette, Wake Forest, and Boston College, the claim and the belief were that the institution would of course remain as Presbyterian, Baptist, or Catholic as ever. Indeed, all change was supposed to be gain, without a sense of loss.

The Breakaway from Governance

Though the early interaction between colleges and churches was more circumstantial than vital, there came a time when the colleges broke away. What constitutes that critical turn away from religious affiliation? It is tempting to identify it with the moment when the sponsoring church was removed from college governance. In many institutions there were, from the time of foundation, some rights to governance vested in a synod, conference, convention, board, religious order, or other denominational body, from which the college or university somehow freed itself. Millsaps, Ohio Wesleyan, Wake Forest, Virginia Union, and Boston College are instances of this. Lafayette had given over such rights and later took them back. The self-perpetuating boards at Dartmouth, Beloit, Linfield, and Gettysburg had by their preference, not by any obligation, been dominated by members of their sponsoring denominations until, at once or over time, they turned away from that association. Davidson, St. Olaf and Concordia, and Saint Mary's all continue to have their respective presbytery, synod, or institute variously empowered in their governance, yet to strikingly different effect. Azusa Pacific, truly multidenominational all along, has never had governance ties with any denomination; Dordt remains peaceably under governance which is effectively but not legally denominational. The fact that these last two institutions, which are ostensibly polar opposites with regard to their governance, are so similarly stable thus far in their religious commitments reminds us that legalities illustrate but need not control the character of colleges.

There is no single pattern for these disengagements. In some cases it was the work of a single meeting. This was usually because, although the judicatory held powers from the charter (typically, to influence the selection of board members), it was the board itself that had the power to amend the charter and thus withdraw those powers. On other occasions the disengagement required mutual agreement, and it required years, sometimes decades, to achieve. In very few instances was the breach a reaction to direct harassment by the churches, though the presidents at Dartmouth, Wake Forest, and Virginia Union had their stories to tell. The church representatives offended more by ineptitude than by intrusion. Often the menace they presented was not that they were bent upon imposing their policies on the educators, but that they held residuary policy powers without the apparent competence to use them constructively.

There was the further problem that they held these powers, not because the colleges respected the churches' confidence or oversight, but because they needed the churches' money. Some institutions walked away in order to qualify for better money: Dartmouth and Beloit had their eye on Carnegie awards, and Lafayette, Boston, Millsaps, and New Rochelle six decades later were standing in the need of grants. But some of the mainline Protestant denominations who had been such listless financial patrons in earlier days chose to take no offense at being disempowered, and actually increased their subsidies after disenfranchisement, thereby offering the paradoxical sight of denominations sinking into poverty just as their former colleges were uncorking the champagne. Religious severity and economic advantage, imagined or real, may have provided the occasion, and sometimes the pretext, for these *coups d'école,* but not their cause, not their deeper explanation.

There is no simple equivalence between church participation in college governance and an effective symbiosis between them. Some informal or customary relations have been among the more lively. St. Olaf was thick with friendly synods in the years before formal affiliation. The absence of Ursulines from their own college's board throughout its early years in no way distanced New Rochelle from the order. And no authority in the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina could have held Wake Forest to being Baptist if the faculty and/or the students had not been active Baptists. These stories of legal estrangement are important sidebars to the main story of alienation, but they are not the main plot.

The Faculty Loses Interest

College and university histories are in large part given their bearings by official policy documents. But academic kind cannot bear very much reality, and their public declarations are often poorly indicative of what is really under way. Whatever presidents and trustees do, whatever be the market forces imposed by those who pay (students and benefactors), the inertial force of these institutions is in their faculties. And in our saga, the faculty was the first constituency to lose interest in

their colleges being Lutheran or Catholic or Congregational. The faculty shifted from clerical to lay status before the presidency did. The faculty resided farther from their students, became dissociated from responsibility for their moral discipline and from partnership in their piety. The faculty became more interested in their own academic disciplines (already in the early days when most teachers had to teach several disciplines), then exclusively so. As the disciplines, their literatures, their research, and their academic appointments broke out into ever more specificity, the professional identity and interest of each faculty member became accordingly more narrow. Faculty became more specified, which made it more likely that one might move between institutions to enjoy a more advantageous "fit" in a more specified situation. Thus in 1870 Mr. Jones might hold the professorship of mathematics, with responsibilities anywhere in the natural sciences; his son, Mr. Jones, might be hired in 1900 as professor of chemistry; his son, Dr. Jones, in 1930 might teach only organic chemistry; his son, Dr. Jones, might specialize in polymer chemistry by 1960; and his daughter, Dr. Jones, would in 1990 be hired as a protein chemist. And she might migrate through three or four institutions to find the best home for her special competence, unlike her great-great-grandfather who had taught at one college all his life. The self-understanding of the teacher was slowly detaching itself from the colleagueship where he or she taught and fastening itself to the colleagueship of the discipline, and also of the teaching profession as that became more tangibly organized. The teacher thereby came to love his or her career more than his or her college. And if the college identified itself as Reformed or Universalist, whether confessionally or only nominally, the teacher no longer did. The faculty were expected to be as ardent as clergymen, but that ardor began its long cooling into indifference.

Because stridency is usually no help to a career, the growing indifference of the professorste to the religious identity of the colleges was usually expressed by silence and absence. At first they took the religious character of the college for granted, or even as a saving grace; but it became an aspect, like the food service, which did not require their management. In that mode they might attend chapel, but no longer be called upon to lead the prayers. Later the religious aspect would take on the weight of a burden, and they would find reasons not to go to chapel. Later still, they needed no reasons. And if in early years they would be chided for it, the chiding rarefied, then ceased. Then it became a matter of indifference in the evaluation of prospective colleagues, though for some years the subject of religion might continue to be raised in the interview with the president or, later, the dean. But those exchanges quickly became stylized: the president's question would be framed in increasingly helpful, i.e., indistinct, terminology, and would lead dialectically to an answer that was an equally indistinct affirmation. As the process worked its way closer toward its term, those conversations brought forth affirmations in tones that shifted from assurance to nonchalance, to impatience, and then to affront. By that time the requisite faculty solidarity with the character of the college would have been significantly reduced as to both noun and verb. The

identity would slide from Methodist to evangelical, to Christian, to religious, to wholesome, to "the goals of the college" which by then were stated in intangible terms. The required affirmation would devolve from active membership in the sponsoring church or denomination to nominal membership, to acceptance of the college's own faith statement, to silent tolerance of the ill-specified purposes of the institution.

To illustrate: though Davidson College was chartered to ignore the religious denominations of its students (1838), the faculty had to take the same "vows" as Presbyterian clergy, accepting the authority of the Scriptures and of the PCUS. The college explained this requirement candidly: "When religion sets up a distinctive claim to attention; when it demands a separation from the fashionable customs of the world, and administers unequivocal reproof for particular faults, then, it becomes an unwelcome intruder; and, if its rights are not made an inherent part of the institution, it will be ejected." But to avoid the taint of sectarianism, Presbyterian Davidson said it claimed only "the broad principles of revealed religion" (1845). Later, however, the ideal Davidson professor was being described as a "Christian gentleman" who never smoked, swore, or sipped (1904). It was significant that those qualifications were behavioral, not ecclesial; they stipulated the desired effects, not their desiring cause. As competent Presbyterian teachers became harder to hire, Davidson became "much more concerned that a man shall be a positive Christian and exercise Christian influence over young men, and that he shall be orthodox in all the great fundamental truths of Scripture" (1921). In 1938 the ordination vows were still being administered, but only to tenured professors. By 1945 one-fourth of the tenured professors (except in Bible and philosophy) might belong to any evangelical church, yet the same vow was still — awkwardly — exacted of them all. Years of low-grade anguish followed, while the reproach of "sectarian" festered within the college's soul like a splinter, until all faculty except the professors of Bible and philosophy were bound only to a vague vow that anyone but a Rosicrucian could accept (1957). By 1964 Davidson saw its loyalty reaching "beyond the bonds of denomination to the Christian Community as a whole," and looked for "genuine spirituality," "humane instincts," and "Christian character" in its faculty — an update of the nonsipping gentleman. Incoming faculty were required only to belong to an evangelical church, accept the Bible as revealing God's will, and approve a filmy statement of purpose. An exposé in the *New York Times* shamed Davidson into removing all its vows, but "in no way lessened the college's commitment to Christian purpose" (1965). By 1972 Davidson faculty members had to appear "prepared conscientiously to uphold and increase its effectiveness as an institution of Christian learning," and in order to be tenured they had to be members of some Christian church. A strident voice from the Department of Bible and Religion denounced this contentless obligation as "a direct contradiction of our public espousal of an open and unlimited search for truth," and insisted Davidson emerge from its "pious isolation" and fearlessly welcome adversaries. The board then timidly authorized an occasional "reverent seeker" who would

respect the Christian tradition without accepting it (1974). Then came Ronald Linden. A newly hired young Jewish political scientist, neither reverent nor seeking, he scorned Davidson's hiring policies as "morally repugnant" and had his job offer withdrawn. After an inferno of protest the trustees asked only that faculty be tolerant, if they could not be accepting (1977). In 1994 there were new proposals that the president and trustees need not be Presbyterians. The argument was once more framed by the same censorious theologian: to remain a self-consciously church-related college, Davidson must welcome faculty regardless of religious conviction. A critical mass of scholars "committed to our heritage" would somehow appear spontaneously and manage to maintain some kind of "relation to the Christian faith." Whatever that faith is imagined to be, it is clearly no longer one that "demands a separation from the fashionable customs of the world, and administers unequivocal reproof for particular faults." When the trustees' decision came down in 1996, intended to define and invigorate the college's relationship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in North Carolina, it determined that the president was the only person on the Davidson campus who would henceforth have to belong to that church. Here the much-invoked notion of "critical mass" was compressed to its absolute and mirthful minimum.

"Sectarian" was a reproach that never lost its power to unnerve the Davidson authorities. From the very beginning, it would seem, they could find no grounds for believing that a fellowship of scholarly Presbyterians might claim or offer any defensible educational advantage, what Marsden and Longfield call a "determinative perspective." One is reminded of the Lutherans' astounding belief that a college that was homogeneous in its theism could find no effective place in a society that is pluralistic. The self-doubt about "sectarianism" has been surpassed recently by the Catholics, who seem persuaded that a fellowship of scholarly Catholics would be at an actual disadvantage. The Jesuit presidents argued that to prepare Catholics for public witness their colleges should be as pluralistic inside as the society outside. The Jesuit community at BC took it as their duty to replicate the diversity of the public culture on their campus. Jesuit father William Byron, who presided over both Scranton and Catholic Universities, has also argued on behalf of diversity: "It would not be a good thing to have an all-Catholic board, an all-Catholic administration, faculty, staff and student body."[3] No one cautions against a board composed entirely of Americans, or a faculty composed only of publishing scholars, or a student body in which every member could write effectively. A shared faith seems to be the only hazardous affinity.

Ursuline sister Alice Gallin, sometime executive secretary of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, has made the more radical claim that shared faith has no business sponsoring education:

> My theological understanding of faith, and the obedience which is consequent upon it, is that it is a gift from the Lord which enables us to say "I believe." . . . I do not see how it can be the ground for the institution's existence. I think, on

> the contrary, that the only legitimate goal of a college or university is an "educational" purpose, i.e., to empower students to develop habits of mind such as analysis, criticism, synthesis, disciplined thinking.

In a word, the church, understood as the communion of those who confess together the same faith, cannot rightly sponsor — or perhaps even endure — disciplined, principled inquiry.

Faith is thus not expected to enable anyone to say "I know" or "I understand" or "I contend." If, as she argues, Catholic convictions are so private and individualistic that the church cannot rely upon its faith for any characteristic analysis, criticism, synthesis, or disciplined thinking, then Boston College's academic vice president makes perfect sense to say that his faculty's faith has no bearing on their intellectual calling: "It's inappropriate to ask a job candidate their religion. When we're hiring an economist, we're interested in hiring the best economist." This reflects the same attitude as the Thomist inclined to say he was a philosopher "who happens also to be a Catholic."[4] The intellectual irrelevance of faith was as clearly stated by Beloit's President Maurer: "The warrant of religion is twofold: to speak to the moral conscience of the scholar, but to refrain from confronting his intellect." If Catholic faith can offer no insightful element of perfection to the practice and critique of economics, then Boston College should have neither the wish nor the ambition to present itself as an undertaking of Catholic scholars.

Yet it is a Catholic theologian at Saint Mary's who offers the wryest comment on how the faculty ceased to be a fellowship of faith:

> We hire computer programmers, experts in finance, literary deconstructionists, coaches, and what have you — all without regard to their faith. We recruit students for our sports teams for their athletic ability, not their religious profession. We start graduate programs in various professional arenas, all without regard to religion. And one day we wake up and find ourselves in an institution more and more secular in tone. Some of us are as shocked as Claude Rains in the classic movie *Casablanca* when he hears that gambling is going on in Rick's Cafe.

The flight from "sectarianism," in its most modern surge since World War II, has blended into a more general change within American higher education. Campuses of every sort — urban universities, commuter colleges, liberal arts colleges, technical schools, church-related colleges and universities, branch campuses, evening schools — all began to fill out their programs and diversify their offerings. In their competitive drive to appeal to all available students, the single-gender schools became coed, liberal arts campuses pullulated vocational training, technical schools began to offer general education, universities added on more professional schools, junior colleges began to build up baccalaureate programs, undergraduate campuses begot graduate courses, then programs, then degrees. The result was paradoxical:

the competitive drive to replicate all possible diversity within each campus caused a sharp decline in diversity between them. The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education warned of "a trend towards homogenization." This was doubly paradoxical, because the academy had accepted the questionable task of socializing American youth, but then created an on-campus culture that was increasingly unresponsive to the needs of its sponsoring cultures. The universities and colleges created a culture of their own, stubbornly submissive to the professional predilections of the academic professionals.[5] This was the context in which so many Christian colleges and universities became ashamed of their mandate to house, serve, and criticize their sponsoring communities. To justify it they invoked the need for diversity, thereby depriving their churches of their intellectual ateliers, and depriving the nation of diverse campuses.

Owen Chadwick has argued eloquently that the drive to secularize European society in the nineteenth century was itself taken to be a religious process. "Most of the men who tried to separate the Churches from the State, wanted to make society more Christian even while they made the State more secular." Next they assailed the churches themselves, but generally not religion itself. They proposed, instead, less compromised objects for human homage: civilization, rational inquiry, communism, science, fatherland. Many, like Tolstoy, attacked the Christian churches in the name of Christ but absolutized what they took to be the old Christian morality, now freed from the old Christians and their creeds. Chadwick's remark about Voltaire and Rousseau powerfully evokes what we have seen in these case studies: they "had not overturned the Church but replaced it. They, the philosophers, were the new Papacy which France gave to the world; stripping the essentials of the old religion and reforming it for us. Christianity secularized but still Christianity."[6] So many of the academics in our chronicle withdrew their campuses from the reach of their churches, imagining or saying they were doing a favor to both church and academy. In doing so, most often they were not liberating learning from an authoritative master-perspective. Under cover of the usual banalities — "Judaeo-Christian values," "the broad principles of revealed religion," etc. — they were usually just transferring their credence to those old divine surrogates: civilization, rational inquiry, communism, science, fatherland.

Patterns That Repeat

Almost without exception a rhetoric of concern began on these campuses just as the critical turn had been made. When the covenants and statements of purpose and conferences on the church relationship were produced, they served as a distraction from the fact that the turn had already passed the point of no return. It was common for educators and church executives to express their concern that their college *could,* or *might,* follow others into secularity, a decade or so after such misgivings had become useless. From another point of view they were not quite

useless, because their real function was to provide cover and time for the new commitment to take hold. Also, these vision statements and preambles to bylaws invariably addressed outcomes instead of causes. For instance, they easily spoke of the college persevering in its offer of Christian values, but never of hiring those who could and would do the offering. While working on the menu they declined to hire a cook.

The impetus for many of the critical turns was the fear or threat of main force by the church, usually through whatever access it had to governance or the budget. Yet they were almost always false scares. The clearest example is offered by the Catholics, who gave great amplification to miscellaneous grumblings from Rome so that their leap over the wall (which was invariably approved by nearby religious authorities) would be shown to best advantage in the eyes of the academy and of government funders as the right move to be truly independent, and answerable to no one.

There was some paradox in that. It became a commonplace to classify both church and state as outside forces whose inclination to meddle in the academy must be fearlessly resisted. The church has compliantly withdrawn to an impotent distance, while civil authorities at every level now make no apology for imposing their laws and regulations on zoning, gender and ethnic imperatives for enrollment, occupational safety, hiring and faculty appointments, the positioning of chapels, the array of varsity sports, et cetera. Colleges that for fifty years have refused to disclose to their patronal presbyteries how many Presbyterians they enroll are faithfully reporting to the federal government how many students of Samoan extraction they enroll.

But the greatest outside authority to which all these colleges in our study now defer is that of the academy itself. When the Western Association of States and Colleges told Saint Mary's it could not prefer Catholics in faculty hiring, the college felt forced to acquiesce. Meanwhile the sponsoring Christian Brothers were strongly distressed that the faculty included so few authentic Catholics, but to them the college did not feel forced to acquiesce.

The critical turn, as we have seen, often involved forcing those who spoke for the church out of college governance. Whatever the reason for each college's move, the reason publicly given was that the college would be fatally compromised if it were subject to any outside authority (no one ever seems to have asked what that might mean for state colleges and military academies). When the colleges adamantly refused to be answerable to their maternal churches through governance, it would still have been possible for the churches to engage in their own accreditation. If the regional associations, the nursing profession, the bar association, the chemical engineers, and so many other associations of shared interest insisted on determining whether the colleges and universities passed muster from their perspective, the churches might have done the same. When the Jesuit colleges threw off the authority of the provincial superiors, the latter did propose in 1969 that criteria of "Jesuitness" be published, and that a regular accreditation procedure

should then verify whether each college qualified. The presidents were acutely troubled by that prospect, and successfully insisted that their institutions be acknowledged as authentically Jesuit on their own say-so. The Jesuit presidents' fears might have been allayed had they studied the University Senate, which since 1892 has set standards for, and accredited, Methodist schools. In recent years the Senate has disciplined various institutions for financial mismanagement and athletic scandal, but never for religious default. As long as "church relatedness" is assessed by the "common core of values rooted in the Judaeo-Christian heritage and the tenets of a free democratic society," no such discomfort is likely.

One other recurring feature in the process of emancipation has been the singular role played by Catholics. We have seen the uniquely widespread antipathy to the Catholic expansion in higher education by Protestant educators and churchmen of yesteryear. Today Catholics compose the largest undergraduate groups at Dartmouth, Beloit, Lafayette, Ohio Wesleyan, Linfield, Wake Forest, and Gettysburg, in addition to Boston College and Saint Mary's; they are now probably the second-largest cohort at Davidson, St. Olaf, Concordia, and Azusa Pacific, and the third-largest at Millsaps and Virginia Union. Only at New Rochelle and Dordt are they insignificant numerically. There are three times as many Catholics as Lutherans at Gettysburg, and twice as many Catholics as Baptists at Linfield. At Ohio Wesleyan the Catholics have been the dominant group for more than twenty years. At Lafayette they have taken over the handsome college chapel. Throughout the nation, 30 percent of all freshmen now report themselves as Catholics.[7] In the years when Protestant colleges assumed that their chapel services were universally acceptable, it was often the Catholics, who had not yet crossed the threshold of Pietism, Judaeo-Christian values, and "the broad principles of revealed religion," and had not yet learned to take offense at accusations of sectarianism, that tended to say they had no intention of fulfilling any alien chapel requirement. Since they then had more financial clout at college than the intrepid but lonely James Foley who came to Beloit in 1866, the rules soon bent for them, and once that exception was made it was difficult to hold the line on anyone else. But many Catholics are now card-carrying pietists, and have become less inclined to consider their own colleges as the right choice. By lowering the enrollments there they have provoked formerly Catholic colleges to turn to a market wherein religion is insignificant, as in the case of New Rochelle. Thus theirs has been a doubly secularizing influence.

Of all the colleges studied, only a handful now enroll an undergraduate majority from their founding church: Boston College, Dordt, Saint Mary's, Virginia Union, and St. Olaf.

A Transfer of Identity from Church to Nation and Guild

Throughout the period we have been studying, both the Protestant churches and denominations and the Catholic Church were suffering from theological traditions

whose metabolic rate and vital signs were near moribund. The most formidable theological renaissance among Protestants, the neo-orthodoxy of Reinhold and H. Richard Niebuhr and of Paul Tillich, burnt down to the cinders of death-of-God and process theology. The Catholic theological renaissance energized by Vatican II is also dead-ending in the hands of some who live by the reforms but not the fidelities. For want of a vital theological stimulus over the years, the colleges could have no access to an energized and critical faith. In colleges whose patronal faith was at least historically self-conscious and not too distorted by polemic, sound scholarship could offer some access to Christian tradition. But they usually lacked a critical philosophical tradition as well, even an interest in philosophy or history, so these colleges were innocent of the important languages whereby the discourses of faith and worship and theology could be made conversant with those of the other academic disciplines. One result of the narrowing definition of each faculty member's academic interests was an education that might include very little of the history, philosophy, and theology required to give them a disciplined perspective on their own scholarly pursuits. This was perpetuated by their isolation as teachers. On the typical campus a typical student might be studying and discussing medieval philosophy, modern drama, advanced calculus, the Hebrew prophets, and constitutional law, to be followed the next semester by another medley of disciplines, while the typical faculty member would be teaching and discussing a single discipline, semester after semester. The almost inevitable result among the family was inquiry without any conscious perspective, not just a perspective of faith. If the faith of the Christian sponsors was really "permeating" these colleges, it was more like mildew than grace.

Lacking the thoughtful critique of the world and its cultures (and of the church) which the Christian faith was reputedly responsible to provoke, the colleges were helpless to prevent their sense of religious self-identity from degrading into one of morals, then piety, then manners, then class or ethnicity or nationalism. When the Jesuit community invokes Ignatian spirituality to appraise all "culture in and around us as graced at its core by God's self-giving" and "discloses God drawing all that is of our world and all that is human into God's own life," the traditional Christian cultural critique has been blunted. Often religious sponsors had so low a sense of church that they could supply their colleges with no communion of sound and thoughtful piety, but only a weak, unreflective, and unself-renewing set of observances. Thus the president at Lafayette could say: "The chapel service gives an opportunity to touch all the students with educational matters of importance which cannot be stressed in the full schedule of the classroom: The observance of great anniversaries; the explanation of great events; as the recent eclipse of the sun (April 28, 1930); contact with fine music, appreciation of which added to any man's life; initiation of members of the honor societies of the college and other student ceremonies."

Lacking (in most instances) the support of a church or denomination that had retained a sense of prophetic independence, the colleges were the more easily

suborned by nationalism and its half brother, the jingoism of the academy. We have seen how the colleges began to use patriotic language. It was as if they were looking for a new larger community to serve, now that they no longer spoke of serving Christ or the church. Maurer at Beloit said this: "Faculties in the colleges should be made up of men with a social spirit, men who love America, who are good citizens, who respect the American people. . . . Having that sort of man on our faculties, we should let him alone" (1936). Valentine said Gettysburg educated students "for their place and duties in both society and the State" (1882); his successor Hanson saw religious education as patriotic, preparing students for civil society (1934); Langsam, his successor, said they were producing effective Christian citizens and leaders for tomorrow (1952); Mohn saw St. Olaf helping to meld the German Lutherans into America, and offering learning "worthy of our record as a nation" (1889); the New Rochelle graduates were told in 1961, "We now have a chance to demonstrate that American Catholics are . . . thinking, intelligent Americans with the welfare of the country they love at heart." Cornelius Haggard in Azusa warned his students away from "the moral pollution around us" (1947), but was "committed to inculcating those moral and spiritual values and virtues which have made America great. . . . Patriotically, we are 'squares' " (1972). In Sioux Center, the Christian Reformed had wanted no part of any Fourth of July celebration in 1887, but eighty years later they were mighty impatient with the "immoral" opposition to the Vietnam War, which they blamed on subversive influence by their Canadian brethren. This intensified patriotism was being readied to exalt the nation as beneficiary of the primary loyalty which had traditionally been accorded to church. No one anywhere was worried that to be American might be more sectarian than being Methodist.

The elements of the slow but apparently irrevocable cleavage of colleges from churches were many. The church was replaced as a financial patron by alumni, foundations, philanthropists, and the government. The regional accrediting associations, the alumni, and the government replaced the church as the primary authorities to whom the college would give an accounting of its stewardship. The study of their faith became academically marginalized, and the understanding of religion was degraded by translation into reductive banalities for promotional use. Presidential hubris found fulfillment in cultivating the colleges to follow the academic pacesetters, which were selective state and independent universities. The faculty transferred their primary loyalties from their college to their disciplines and their guild, and were thereby antagonistic to any competing norms of professional excellence related to the church.

Why did these emancipations, which were to be radical and apparently irreversible, convey to their sponsors little sense of drastic change, and no sense of loss? Usually, though not always, the change of a college or university's character went largely unnoticed because of the stability of the cultural symbols, which altered more slowly. The replacement of the church-related faculty may already have been practically complete, while the student body continued to be recruited

from the traditional clientele. The fund-raising actually intensified its appeal to believing contributors whose principal attachment to the institution was their belief that it represented all they had hoped for: real learning linked to real piety. All gain with no loss. Often a new chapel was built or the old one transfigured just in time to be a mausoleum for the faith of the past. The reductive slogans that we have heard from all these schools were intended — unwittingly, of course, as was so much else — to reassure the native constituency that the aspirations of the past were being realized better now. The linguistic generalities had to be stretched ever more broadly to relate realities that were diverging farther each year. The period of transition which looked to, and ensured, a radically different future was usually characterized by a celebration, in the fabric of the campus and the rhetoric of its managers, of continuity with the past.

The crucial issue was whether the college as a professional subcommunity of the church could address its intellectual pursuits with an insight, and a tradition, and a communal dynamic that are privileged. In the perspective that became dominant, that would be an unacceptable aspiration. It assumes that a church is privileged, and "sectarian" is the epithet for that kind of presumption. After being frightened off any self-identification as Presbyterian or Reformed or Episcopal or Congregational, the college began to replace its church with a descending succession of acceptably inclusive identifiers, increasingly hospitable to all denominations, and after a while, to atheism as well. In the course of this thinning sense of self, as the religious lineaments became less substantial, it has been natural for the college community to gather about other, more empathetic, identities. Identities of class, of ethnicity, and of nationality easily moved in to accompany religion, and then to help ease it aside.

The Pietist Instability

The pattern of devotional piety and the discipline of a moral life were foundational aspects of the Christian colleges which finally waned and vanished. Vital theological reflection was something missing from the start, then became available only when Christian devotion and discipline had all but vaporized, and for want of them died quickly of embarrassment. One might well infer that none of the three — piety, morality, or theology — has much stability without the others. But there is a fourth, catalytic, element in the Christian character of the colleges, one equally needed for their symbiotic flourishing, and that is the church, a historically continuous community with its own mind and way of life. The early church-relationships of the colleges, as we have remarked, were mostly adventitious. These many pages have given no more than a suggestion of the many peevish moves by judicatories to lessen or stop their subsidies to their affiliate colleges, and of the devious and snooty resistance by educators when their Christian authenticity was being questioned.

But this domestic bickering only mildly subverted the relationship between churches and colleges. More important in their estrangement was the subversive influence of Pietism. The original outbreak of the Pietist instinct was reformist. Men like Johann Arndt (1555-1621), Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705), August Hermann Francke (1663-1727), and Gottfried Arnold (1666-1714) deplored how thoroughly their Protestant churches had backslid from the sixteenth-century Reformation. Hardly a century had passed before the magistrates of the church had reconstructed another hierarchy, the theologians had reconstructed another pedantic scholasticism, and the ministers had disabled the reformed worship by formalities that smothered sincere spontaneity. Within both major Reformation traditions, Lutheran and Calvinist, this prophetic complaint was voiced at the same time. Together they incited another reformation (the third, if one counts the late medieval and early Renaissance outburst of mendicant, pacifist, and devotional lay reforms as the first). For America the Pietist reformation was very important, for the Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists, and Quakers were among its progeny. Also, it was the follow-up American pietisms (when applied to later movements the term is used analogously, which we shall signify by lowercasing it), in the Great Awakening of the eighteenth century and the Second Great Awakening of the nineteenth century, that begot dozens of new, native-born denominations in the United States. If one takes these pietist outbreaks as a template that also largely matches the Catholic experience after the Second Vatican Council, the pattern will be even more generally explanatory.

The Pietists propounded the primacy of spirit over letter, commitment over institution, affect over intellect, laity over clergy, invisible church over visible, and they looked to the earliest Christian communities for their models. By holding up the simpler beginnings of the Christian faith as their model, they were able to isolate the original meaning and authentic dynamism of many elements of Christian life that had subsequently been adapted and amended beyond recognition, and seemed spent. This return to origins begot a strong ecumenism which encouraged Lutherans and Calvinists in the movement to reach over the fences of their respective quarrels, and even elicited an occasional amiable word for their common adversary, the Catholics.

The Pietist reform and its later pietist iterations react to a dispirited and sclerotic church, and direct their impatient energy to a redefinition of ancient institutions. They reach back both imaginatively and historically to the original sense and inspiration of church order, worship, discipline, preaching, and theology. If they have further strength they may also deliver a prophetic critique of the family, the civil powers, the classes in society, the relations of nations and peoples, and the stewardship of property. The pietist knack is to confront a snarled tangle of custom, construal and protected interests, and to point a prophetic finger at the obscured nucleus of truth within. Thus pietists are inveterate simplifiers. They are poetic, as Jeremiah and Jesus and Francis were. They break out with zinging one-liners that raze institutions to rubble, only to raise them to a life renewed. They

leave people with a restored sense of purpose, priority, the "point of it all." The authentic pietist speaks to a generation whose life in the church has been hopelessly disordered and makes clean sense of the gospel that is ever ancient, ever new. For them it is a deliverance.

But pietists also have a second-generation audience, who now know little or nothing of the tradition. To them, this reformed presentation is wondrously clear, preciously simple, and cogent because so easily comprehended. But they are easily misled. They grasp the "point," but not the "all." And they can come to imagine that the point is all there is. John Wesley was a Pietist. He uttered illuminating and arresting insights that were meant to purify the priorities of his church, the Church of England. But others who came after took the new without the old and created something much simpler, the Methodist church, which had a cleaner voice but fewer overtones and echoes. William Rainey Harper passed for a pietist already on the slide: for him "the essence" of the teachings of Jesus and Israel's inspired prophets and sages was "fear of the Lord," "belief in and acceptance of One who has power to help." He was offering this essence, not as an interpretive key to understanding the prophets, the sages, and the Gospels, but as a slogan to replace them. The devolution was usually rapid. Frederick Robertson was a pietist who held to and refreshed the tradition; his devotee William Jewett Tucker was a liberal indifferentist who discarded the tradition but retained its pieties; and his disciple Ernest Hopkins was the rationalist who believed in none of it.

A pietist directly addresses people who have inherited a confused tradition, and when he or she says that "all property is God's," or that "we are all brothers and sisters and call no man teacher," and that "it is all summed up in love," the short saying is like a single wink from Alec Guinness near the end of a complex film, a wink that suddenly makes sense of it all to the attentive viewer. But to a patron who walked into the theater in the midst of the final reel the wink might as well be a flirtatious come-on, for it is all the newcomer can see. To someone who has absorbed the lore of Ananias and Sapphira, the martyrdom of Lawrence, Antony in the desert of Egypt, Augustine on grace, Gregory the Great on pastoral care, Bede on the conflict of Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Christianity, John Damascene's dialogue between a Christian and a Saracen, Maximos the Confessor on charity, Julian of Norwich on the divine love, besides some of Dante and Anne Hutchinson and Dean Swift and Berdyaev and Marx . . . to such a listener the pietist's dense toss-off, "How could I own anything?" is enough to set her ears ringing and rearranging down the years. By contrast, to someone whose head is so empty as to make confusion impossible, for someone who is starting from an intellectual ground zero, the toss-off could be a quip that becomes the cornerstone of a new and lethally naive *Weltanschauung*. This ability of the unformed addressee to receive what the pietist intended as a restorative insight, and to mistake it as a freestanding truth instead, and thereby to take in hand terribly less than was handed on, is what has made pietist reforms so powerfully clichéd and unstable.

Pietism was driven by fervor, and even in the hands of scholars it was naive about history: it underestimated the need of Christianity to grow through time and circumstance, and its ability to modify or molt older forms without renouncing their purposes. The emphasis on spirit, enthusiasm, and unmediated grace repressed any strong sense of the visible church as an incarnate undertaking, as the body of Christ. Thus what began as ecumenical fraternization often disintegrated into endless fission. The newer denominations, unlike the older churches, often owed their birth to a single quarrel or a single charismatic figure rather than a thoroughgoing reading of the gospel. Admittedly, the newer generation was much less likely to take up the sword over sprinkling versus immersing as men of old might have done over supralapsarianism versus infralapsarianism. But eventually pietism persuaded itself that the individual, and perhaps the local congregation, is the only authentic bearer of the adjective "Christian." By the time pietism had devolved this far, it could not possibly be the sponsor of a stable sense of church. Its doctrine was also very transient, for its foundational insights, once they were imagined to be free-floating concepts instead of the manifold convictions that a continuous community had been inspired to wring from its strenuous experience, became banal commonplaces. Once pried out of their history and their church, they had no capacity to endure much history or church. So they begot piety unsustained by morality, church without theology, preaching without sacrament, community without order. They would inevitably have a short half-life.

As the pietist renewal degraded, it seemed to devolve in two different ways. People determined to persevere as Christians developed a liberal piety whose wisdom had to be framed so broadly as to lack all depth. It had all the pungency of a cliché. Liberalism, in this religious mode, could be infectiously tedious.

There was another, quite contrary pattern among those whom the pietists gave a great distaste for church. Pietist historians had narrated how much conflict and violence had been begotten by ecclesial differences. And while their hope for the future was to repristinate Christian faith and free it from those old animosities, their reading of the Christian past was one of chagrin and contrition. There were others, far less enthusiastic than they for Jesus, who looked over their shoulders at this same sad history and saw it as Europe's folly. All those quarrels over the *homoousios* and *homoiousios,* Communion from the cup, predestination, apostolic succession, total depravity, infant baptism, and so much else, persuaded this generation that all the bickering had been no more important than the tithing of anise and cumin. Indeed, they thought, those were all unresolvable quarrels, because they could appeal to nothing stronger than unverifiable opinion. Thus the credibility vacuum created by pietism came naturally to be filled by rationalism, which proffered a more peaceable life by refusing to discuss anything beyond what could be resolved consensually by appeal to empirical evidence.

Rationalism, the whelp of pietism, was misbegotten. It was anything but pious. Out of little more than habit it provided itself with Deism, the religious equivalent of safe sex. Deists offered their compliments, if not their praise, to the godhead, if not to God, who was on display in creation, though certainly not in redemption. For those who liked their Deism in costume, there was Freemasonry. But whether it was god without garb or garb without God, Deism was little more than deviancy. For rationalism was Christianity's enemy. Its explicit grudge was directed at Christianity's partisan belligerents who had disturbed the peace with their gang wars. But in time the deeper odium came to light, and it was not for the warring Christians. It was for Christ: God who walked in Galilee, and who disturbingly still held the first allegiance of people in Gloucestershire and Ghana, Goa and Göteborg, Guadalajara and the Gironde. The rationalists were not without their own allegiance. Having blamed Christianity for the wars of religion that had made Europe despair of peace, they turned instead to the nation-states, provided they be governed by rational politics in the hands of people with no rival loyalties. Thus those gentlemen in Virginia, who on Sundays paid their respects to the Great Artificer, shunned more serious religions as "factions" whose loyalties threatened the Great Loyalty of the state. Rationalists with civic clout were mostly gentlefolk, and could thus be excused somewhat for not having noticed that those wars of religion had had more than a little to do with nationality, and ethnicity, and class, and commerce. It also escaped their notice how easily their own national loyalties were reinforced by race and class: reinforced in ways that always placed them well uphill and upwind from those to whom the Divine Architect had inscrutably given a lesser measure of Fortune, yet expected the fullest measure of loyalty to the People.

Pietism as It Affected the Colleges

The pietist view eventually shared by these various denominations and churches was that religious endeavors on campus should be focused upon the individual life of faith, as distinct from the shared labor of learning. Religion's move to the academic periphery was not so much the work of godless intellectuals as of pious educators who, since the onset of pietism, had seen religion as embodied so uniquely in the personal profession of faith that it could not be seen to have a stake in social learning. The radical disjunction between divine knowledge and human knowledge had been central to classical Reformation thinking, and its unintended outcome was to sequester religious piety from secular learning. The older, pre-Reformation view, that faith was goaded by revelation to seek further understanding, and that learning itself could be an act of piety — indeed, the form of piety proper to a college or university — succumbed to the view that worship and moral behavior were to be the defining acts of a Christian academic fellowship. Later, worship and moral behavior were easily set aside because no one could imagine they had anything to do with learning.[8]

The inquiries of science created a mode of learning that was self-consciously and aggressively autonomous, and its practitioners soon found "sectarian faith" to be an offensive foreign body on campus. They prevailed, and mainline Protestant academics ratified their victory by insisting that faith might be grounded on private affect, not communal inquiry. They willingly forwent any crucial concern for the work of the intellect, and accepted comfortably enough that religious enterprise at a college or university might direct itself to the welfare of the learners but not to that of the learning. Evangelical Protestants and Catholics would later be drawn into this same attitude and its inexorable sequelae.

The critical turn of allegedly Christian colleges and universities in the United States has been a modern rerun of the degradation of an unstable pietism through liberal indifferentism into rationalism. The prototypical colleges happened to be staffed by clergy and somewhat subsidized by churches, and to be ordered by a piety and a discipline that were taken for granted by those clergy and those churches. Whether it was the Congregationalists at Dartmouth or the Presbyterians at Lafayette or the Methodists at Ohio Wesleyan or the Baptists at Wake Forest or the Lutherans at Gettysburg, the religious mode was pietism in its first stage: each person ultimately alone in the hand of God, construing the faith in simplicity, praying in open fellowship, and confident of solidarity with most other right-minded Christians. Even the Calvinists and Lutherans had muted some of the controversial emphases of their heritages, or moved them off to the edge, as of less importance, even bothersome. Thus, from the very start, the educators did not imagine themselves to belong to a communion that had credibly received a faith once delivered to the saints, a faith which bound them in closest fellowship to all those who had shared it since the apostles, and which would allow them, the more educated they became, to become all the more able to share judgments, both constructive and critical, of their country, their culture, and their church itself. By being reduced to simplistic rudiments, their faith was not ready to rush to any such judgment.

This was not so true of the evangelicals or the Missouri Synod Lutherans, or of the Christian Reformed, or of the Catholics. They sometimes stood apart, and rather enjoyed outright nonpietism. One thinks of St. Olaf's dedication to "preserve the pupils in the true Christian faith, as taught by the Evangelical Lutheran Church and nothing taught in contravention with the Symbolum Apostolicum, Nicenum & Athanasianum; the Unaltered Confession delivered to the Emperor Charles the Fifth at Augsburg in Germany in the year of our Lord 1530 and the small Catechism of Luther" (1874), and of Azusa Pacific president Eli Reece's orthodox invective against "Bible penknifers, miracle rejectors, God minifiers, man magnifiers, hell expungers and those with animal ancestors" (±1919). But those Lutherans, Reformed, and Catholics would, each in their own climacteric, enter the ambit of pietism. A memorable illustration of this is provided by a modern Catholic creed:

Affirmation of Faith

I believe in people, and in a world in which it is good to live for all humankind; and that it is our task to create such a world.
I believe in equal rights for all people — in love, justice, fellowship, and peace.
I must continually act out these beliefs.
I am inspired to do so because I believe in Jesus of Nazareth, and I want to orient my life to him.
In doing so, I believe that I am drawn into the mysterious relationship with the one, whom he called his Father.
Because of my belief in Jesus, I make no claims to exclusivity.
I shall work together with others for a better world because I believe in the community of the faithful, and in our task to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.
But all of this in humility, realizing my own shortcomings every day.
And I believe in the resurrection — whatever it may mean. Amen.[9]

The colleges of the pietists who would later be called "mainline" Protestants usually had a very slow early development. But once their enrollments and finances were stabilized, and they were less in need of the only things their churches or denominations had been asked to provide — students and subsidies — they naturally let those relationships atrophy as they entered into a more principled indifferentism.[10] What they needed was precisely what they lacked: learned and articulate believers who were not only open to all truth, but possessed of advantages in approaching all truth: graced master insights, an interpretive community, and an authentic tradition. The great need was not to equalize all truths but to order them.

The Christian character of the colleges was rarely vitally resident in its academics, and had to live an eccentric existence in chapel, in volunteer service, and in clean living and all-around manhood. It was "the added plus." Though the bond holding college to church was never sturdy, and had been unraveling, the educators grew self-conscious as they began to move away, and needed to reassure their clientele and themselves that the college itself would maintain the old religious benefits: "friendliness and good will"; "a more gentle, more rational, and more socially minded Christianity"; student conduct "in harmony with the Golden Rule, and the behavior of gentlemen"; "Christianity, in all its essential doctrines," taught "without interfering with anyone's conscience" — whatever it all might mean. The worm was in the wood.

The pietist organism, which eventually found cogent belief toxic, was producing its unmistakable rhetorical symptoms. Ohio Wesleyan's charter provided that it was "forever to be conducted on the most liberal principles, accessible to all denominations, and designed for the benefit of our citizens in general." Much later Herbert Welch, who went on from being president to being a bishop, said: "The Christian college, in short, is one whose ideals and aims are determined by

the great conceptions of life which we count distinctively Christian." Were one to read these apart from their historical context, one might imagine that OWU was claiming a distinctiveness in 1916 that it had disavowed in 1842. Quite the contrary: in 1842 the Methodists in Ohio would have admitted, at least privately, that there were some denominations with whom they did have some serious differences. In 1916 Bishop Welch may have thought anyone demented who did not share in his great, distinctively Christian conceptions. They were distinctive of a Christianity which was so appealing because it had been reduced to indistinct clichés. On this view of Christian faith, Gettysburg could coherently say in 1916 that the absolute requirement for a faculty appointment is that one be "a Christian gentleman of the highest type." What was said at Millsaps in the midst of charter revisions in 1985 may be read in the same genre: "The college's purpose and mission does not include teaching doctrine or demanding conformity, but rather operates from a core of truth which is affirmed with all Christian people." Millsaps' perfect refrain to this is a stanza of academic platitudes: "dignity and respect, trust and mutual support, sense of national heritage and global consciousness, affecting the state with the best of Church and higher education values."

When old Aaron Chapin, once a Presbyterian, stood up in the Congregational church at Beloit and shut down a tiresome debate by saying, "Congregationalism is common sense," those who knew all the wrangles and crises between the two half-sister denominations might take his aphorism as an interpretive insight. But many who stood at a distance from that history could take it for a reductive definition of Congregationalism as a sort of no-nonsense, frontier comradeship and — this is the point — little more.

To study these stories one must be able to distinguish simple pieties from those which are terse but profound. The narratives in this study abound in simplicities. Unfortunately, many are of the former kind: simple outside and simple inside. If it is a self-standing whole, a simple statement can be so uncomplicated that it speaks beguilingly to people who wrongly assume that it is the private entrance to a great store of wisdom. When Andrew Carnegie and his deputy, Henry Pritchett, said they wanted religion without dogmas or churches or man-made theology (1908-9), they were eager for simplicity, for a program without echoes or overtones. Or meaning.

In the case of the Christian colleges and universities, the pietist slide into liberal indifferentism was usually accomplished early — when the founders used promotional language, not just to make all Christian students feel welcome, but to make them all feel equally at home. To do this they offered public accounts of their enterprise which in other hands at other times might have been penetrating insights, but in their hands became banalities. That listless genre, often compromised by duplicity, lasted for years without further degradation, perhaps because like all conventional white lies it was understood by its clientele. Samuel Schmucker gave himself away when he said at the outset that "the college he aimed at was to be un-sectarian in its instruction, but at the same time to be prevailingly under Lutheran

influence and control" (1831). But Gettysburg was a beneficiary of Pietism, and gradually Schmucker's college did become unsectarian, by a reductive shrinking of the corporate faith to whatever every student would abide. That was something serious Lutherans could have no lasting drive to influence or control.

From Indifferentism to Rationalism

Once the colleges had settled into the indifferentism their inclusivist language expressed, they were within reach of that more degraded and more incisive form of liberalism: rationalism. Rationalism in the United States has not diffused evenly, but has accumulated as toxins do in certain organs of the culture, lately including the federal judiciary, the state ("public") schools, and the universities. Recent constitutional jurisprudence has strongly favored rationalism and its discovery that any serious and public Christianity must be a threat to intellectual comity and national solidarity. But an even stronger enhancer of rationalism for the colleges we have studied was the academy and its culture. When the church colleges and universities made their way upward — as they thought — and emancipated themselves from what had been the indolent oversight of their pietist parents, they had no ambition more compelling than to enjoy the hospitality of the secular academy. Before long they were at close range, exclaiming on how big the academy's eyes were, how long her ears, how awesome her teeth. The colleges had freed themselves from "encroachment" by the church, now seen as an "external authority," an "outside interest." Chapel, long degraded into assembly, was gone. Religion was replaced by not-very-religious studies. The native faculty who had shared faith with the college were succeeded by a faculty whose faith was now mutually regarded as a topic of conversation inappropriate between academics. There was a new "unashamed," "unabashed," "unapologetic" vocabulary that invoked "a virile, rugged, red-blooded manhood, which is passionately loyal to the worthwhile ideals," "critical mass," "core of values," "growth in self-acceptance," "Judaeo-Christian tradition," "heritage," "values," "all truth is of God," and "an intangible but real atmosphere" associated with "concern for the individual."

Caring.

When this process had run its course among mainline Protestants, Catholics suddenly entered the pietist experience and have been making their way much more swiftly through indifferentism into rationalism. Certain other holdout churches may have been entering the cycle more recently. The process moves along more surely than it appears. A college or university may have irreversibly descended into the terminal phase, while concerned folk on campus are still openly expressing their distracted worry that someday, somehow, if they are not attentive, the place "could" give way.

One of the persuasions of pietism was that there is a solo Christianity: engendered, nourished, and revitalized in the individual. This generic and lonely

discipleship does not come through the church, and it can regard all churches the way a consumer sizes up competing vendors. The major characters we have depicted here would never imagine that Christian faith without the Christian church is like a seed which falls on the rock, sprouts in a crevice of rainwater, then wilts under the heat of the next sun. But they encouraged many of these colleges to claim the benefits of Christian communion without the communion itself. Thus President Warren about Ohio Wesleyan: "I don't think it has lost its religious identity altogether. . . . we still carry many elements of the Methodist tradition; that ethos still influences a belief in the democratic process, a concern for the disadvantaged, a commitment to the education of all persons." Wake Forest claims certain inheritances from its Baptist "background": insistence on the separation of church and state, a feisty academic freedom, the mutual critique of reason and revelation. But such an "ethos" no longer vitalized and shaped by its mother faith is already in the process of decomposition. And without any vital participation in the Baptist give-and-take, Wake Forest has no stable way authentically to refresh these inherited insights.

Colleges and Churches Jointly Responsible

Our stories have been recounted from the vantage point of the campus, and one could gain the impression that the separation from the churches was initiated and achieved by the educators alone. That would be a mistake, for the dynamics of separation were two-sided. The degradation of pietism to indifferentism was an initiative from within the churches. Authentic ecumenism discovers wholesome elements of Christian faith or piety in another communion, admits their authenticity, and takes them as incentives to emulation and self-renewal. Authentic reform is the rediscovery of wholesome elements in a church's past which have been lost, and takes them as cues for renewal. Degradable pietism is wrongly confused with both ecumenism and reform by its promoters, but it proceeds from the contrary instinct. It does not reappropriate elements of the faith that had been neglected or misunderstood because of past antagonisms and distorting polemics. Instead, it moves to deactivate controversial features within one's own communion in order to broker a shared agreement on the "basics," first with other communions, but then with the wider society which neither knows nor desires a communion of faith. Another, more stable instinct might value and renew the elements of piety for their intrinsic coherence within a matrix of revealed and pondered faith. The pietisms we have seen at work here tend to slough off those elements of piety that were compromised by a contentious history. Thus it is not surprising that the process of degradation paradoxically first lets go of the "basics" (indifferentism) and then lets go of the church (rationalism). Yet, it must be repeated, this self-destructive pathology arose first within the churches, not within the colleges.

Another negative influence from within the churches has been a variety of

embittered and pugnacious *bêtes noires,* conservatives who have targeted and harassed the educators who were trying to upgrade their colleges, and by their rancor assured the latter of widespread sympathy. In the story of the defection of Vanderbilt University, told elsewhere, Bishop Elijah Hoss — academic, journalist, and member of the Vanderbilt Board of Trust — became an unremitting scourge of James Kirkland, whose contempt for traditional piety was drawing the university away from Methodism.

> Bishop Hoss, who was one of the few to intuit the destination for which Chancellor Kirkland was bound, happened to be a strident, impassioned, and unattractive antagonist, who defined the issues in so anti-intellectual a way that he strengthened Kirkland's credibility among those who sought an institution of rigorous learning. As often happens, the church was served by officers to whom advanced learning was an unknown. Hoss was the very incarnation of that to which an ambitious company of scholars would not wish to be accountable.[11]

Edwards A. Park, Ethelbert Dudley Warfield, William Jennings Bryan, those fundamentalist rural pastors from the hills of North Carolina, Cecil Ray, Jacob A. O. Preus, and Cardinal Pizzardo are figures in our stories who likewise thought they saw godless, secessionist mischief among the educators. But they were so maladroit, so obviously distrustful of innovative scholarship, that their antagonism only enhanced the public credibility of those they distrusted. Thus the churches were at fault in their inability to raise up a more prophetic and learned criticism of their centrifugal colleges and their leaders.

Also, after their institutions had severed all interactive relations, the churches have speciously continued to claim them as their own. Thus the Congregationalists restored Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, Smith, Bowdoin, and other old defectors to their published list of institutions in 1940, later removed them again, and astonishingly reinstated them a second time in 1960. Years after Boston, Wesleyan, Albion, Allegheny, Southern California, Northwestern, Lawrence, and Westminster began publicly to present themselves as "private and non-sectarian," and to ignore requests by the church's University Senate for information, they were still doggedly included on the Methodist lists. The American Baptists were listing the University of Chicago as late as 1964, on the absurd pretext that "the question of official policy concerning relationship is open for continuing consideration" (certainly not in Hyde Park). Denominational executives for most of the churches studied here admit privately that many (in some instances, almost all) of the colleges listed regard their affiliation as a dead letter, and in some instances an annoyance, yet in many cases they still receive modest annual subsidies from the churches, which justify their continued listing. The churches apparently find some measure of reflected glory in these anachronistic affiliations, but they thereby forfeit their duty and ability to discern what it really might mean to be a limb of the church. Some faculty at St. Olaf say that Presidents Rand and Foss had all but severed the ties

with the church when Mel George came along and strove to reverse the trend. They believe that the ELCA educational executives actually favored a secularized model and disfavored his restorationist efforts.

The churches have been heavily complicit in the defection of most colleges from any effective Christian sponsorship. One sign of their co-responsibility is their astounding co-creation of a remarkably degraded rhetoric. As this study has so often noted, the divorce between colleges and churches has been befogged by vision statements, mission statements, goals statements, statements of purpose, covenants, bylaws, catalogue blurbs, reports from seminars and retreats, conversations, and other bilious prose which surge in greatest abundance just when the critical turn has been made, just when there is no longer any realistic possibility of restoration. Thus "The Jesuit University as a Counter-Culture" is circulated after it becomes irrefragably certain that the university has succumbed to the culture. The Methodist Board of Higher Education announces that its colleges will take on the task of evangelizing the United Methodist Church and sensitizing it "to intellectual, moral and value-centered issues . . . to affirm a universal gospel for a universal community," by which time the colleges could not care less.

Reductionist rhetoric pours forth in a swill of non-sense. Ernest Hopkins says of Eleazar Wheelock: "The founder's altruistic purpose of converting the heathen savage to the glory of God becomes in modern parlance a desire to convert society to the welfare of man. Either purpose requires the highest idealism, and the highest idealism is the purest religion, the symbol of which is God and the manifestation of which is the spirit of Christ." Muhlenberg College says its traditions as a church-related college do not require a shared Lutheran faith, worship, or morality. Instead (not also, but instead) they entail "a respect for persons who differ, a readiness to engage open-mindedly in a corporate search for truth, and attentiveness to the role of values in the educational task . . . the growth of students as whole persons . . . a willingness and capacity, at times and in ways appropriate to an academic community, to treat fairly the Christian point of view."

Educators anxiously disclaim any distinctive Christian vision. William Rainey Harper's "essence" of Jesus and the prophets, "fear of the Lord . . . belief in and acceptance of One who has power to help," is one example. Lafayette's Wenzlau soars on a wave of confusion: "No student or other individual is required to adopt or accept the University's set of values or any particular value or value system. However, the person must be responsible for actions taken based on whatever values or value system the person employs especially when those values are not consistent with those of the University." What if it is Bugsy Malone who enrolls, instead of Tom Playfair? The Boston College Jesuits confusedly argue that BC serves a pluralist society, not by being a distinctive institution with its own convictions and commitments, but by being a characterless amalgam of diversity: "a pluralist society requires institutions which are effectively pluralist in outlook." BC will thus offer its students, not the beat of a different drummer, but the dissonance of a band without a score. New Rochelle struggled valiantly to describe

its concerns as meaninglessly as possible: "values which motivated the founding . . . openness to the shape of the future . . . quest for meaning in life . . . sensitivity to human dignity . . . growth in self acceptance."

This degraded rhetoric in which both colleges and churches have indulged is more delusional than deceitful. It bespeaks an ardent conviction that the colleges' educational purposes have remained the same, only now they are being pursued more sagaciously. Those who speak this way are being beguiled more than anyone who cares to listen. Both educators and church officers have been persuaded that their churches have no intellectual insight or critical gift that would distinguish them as academic mentors. To sidestep embarrassment they must reduce their description of the colleges' ambitions and the churches' expectations to secular bafflegab. This strange discourse deserves a Pascal to describe it, for it has been providing the background music to distract everyone but cantankerous critics from watching the critical swerve from pietism directly into indifferentism and then into the academic variant of rationalism.

An End or a Beginning

The process of alienation which these stories have narrated, and which this study has surely only partially understood, has produced colleges and universities that, in their otherwise successful pursuit of intellectual sophistication and competence, have accepted one great change. It is a change they might not, on reflection, have intended. As we have seen, however, reflection was lacking, and was nervously replaced with rhetoric.

The rhetoric generated by these innovating academics has invariably adopted the academic motif of intellectual freedom, patient research, evidence-based judgment, and rational argument. The implicit image is of free agents engaged in free inquiry and free conclusions. Naturally a Christian church which offers the gospel for conviction and commitment exacts an intellectual loyalty that makes it a meddling patron of education thus understood. Rational discourse in the contemporary academy believes — or says — that it can abide no prior convictions, commitments, or loyalties. But Christian scholars, to be at home in this kind of academy, need not actually forswear their faith. All they must do is agree to criticize the church by the norms of the academy, and to judge the gospel by the culture. And most of them have burnt that incense when bidden.

What the academicians ignore, partly because they do not wish to know it and partly because their Christian colleagues have so feebly manifested it, is that the gospel within the church has continually been at the center of intense and critical dialectic: textual, hermeneutical, historical, intercultural, philosophical, theological. Further, the church has steadfastly recognized the revelatory powers of inspiration, witness, repentance, and communal conflict within and without, as a stimulant to continuous redefinition and purification. These are intellectual resources about

which the contemporary academy, for the most part, has only crude and tendentious intimations.

Christian scholars knowledgeable in the long dialectical tradition of their faith know that it has zestfully grappled with criticism in diverse cultures and centuries. It has been able to learn: often when it was right, and also from when it was wrong. If Christian scholars have the insight and the nerve to believe that the gospel and its church are gifted, that together they offer a privileged insight, a "determinative perspective," then they will be grateful to grapple some more, using the very insights of the gospel to judge critically both the church and the academy and the culture.

But if they lose their nerve and are intimidated by their academic colleagues, as is true of most of the characters in these stories, they, too, will end up judging the church by the academy and the gospel by the culture. In time, they will probably lose the capacity to tell them apart. They will fail to judge the academy, or to notice intellectuals who are in thrall, not free; argument that is not rational; judgments that have become dogmas roughly enforced.

Readers who have seen this story through thus far will naturally wonder whether this is the end: the end of Christian colleges and universities. They may be annoyed with a book that portrays Christian higher learning as sympathetic yet somehow fated to succumb. The author does not believe that sophisticated learning is like wealth and power, those inexorable corrupters of authentic faith. Yet these stories do imply that higher learning, if not an irresistible seducer, is still a very able one. The mind's affluence does seem at least as beguiling as that of the body. There was, in the stories told here, little learned rage against the dying of the light. Yet this book is written in the belief that the ambition to unite "knowledge and vital piety" is a wholesome and hopeful and stubborn one. It is a shame that so much of yesterday's efforts has become compost for those of tomorrow.

Readers may have expected instruction on how to avoid the failures of the past (and present). But that is not the purpose of this book. The failures of the past, so clearly patterned, so foolishly ignored, and so lethally repeated, emerge pretty clearly from these stories. Anyone who requires further imagination to recognize and remedy them is not up to the task of trying again, and better.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 8

1. Though most colleges first functioned at the preparatory level of the academy and many later developed into universities, they were typically founded with the title of "college," which for simplicity's sake we shall now use to refer to all these institutions. Also, though churches and denominations are different forms of Christian fellowship, we shall now use only "church" for simplicity's sake.

2. Charles L. Glenn and Joshua L. Glenn, "Making Room for Religious Conviction in Democracy's Schools," in *Schooling Christians: "Holy Experiments" in American Higher Education,* ed. Stanley Hauerwas and John H. Westerhoff (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 88-114.

3. William J. Byron, S.J., *Quadrangle Considerations* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1989), 22.

4. Alasdair MacIntyre, "How Is Intellectual Excellence in Philosophy to Be Understood by a Catholic Philosopher? What Has Philosophy to Contribute to Catholic Intellectual Excellence?" *Current Issues in Catholic Education* 12, no. 1 (summer 1991): 48.

5. Richard M. Freeland, *Academia's Golden Age: Universities in Massachusetts, 1945-1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 3, 114-19; Lenore O'Boyle, "Learning for Its Own Sake: The German University as Nineteenth Century Model," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 25, no. 1 (January 1983): 3-25; Robert Birnbaum, *Maintaining Diversity in Higher Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993).

6. Owen Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 93, 156.

7. Catholics constitute the largest denominational group in all U.S. colleges and universities taken together. L. J. Sax, A. W. Astin, W. S. Korn, and K. M. Mahoney, *The American Freshman: Norms for Fall 1995* (Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, University of California, Los Angeles, 1995). Sixty years earlier, Catholics made up the second-largest cohort (second to Methodists), with 15 percent. Gould Wickey, "A National Survey of the Religious Preferences of Students in American Colleges and Universities, 1936-1937," *Christian Education* 21 (1937): 49-55.

8. This has been very cogently argued by Henry C. Johnson, Jr., "Down from the Mountain: Secularization and Higher Education in America," *Review of Politics* 54 (fall 1992): 551-88.

9. "Affirmation of Faith" used at Eucharist by a Call to Action group in Wichita, Kansas.

10. For an account of how this matches the experience of the churches themselves, see Benton Johnson, Dean R. Hoge, and Donald A. Luidens, "Mainline Churches: The Real Reason for Decline," *First Things* 31 (March 1993): 13-18.

11. James Tunstead Burtchaell, C.S.C., "The Alienation of Christian Higher Education in America: Diagnosis and Prognosis," in *Schooling Christians,* 144-45; also as "The Decline and Fall of the Christian College," *First Things* 12 (April 1991): 16-29; 13 (May 1991): 30-38.