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Bible Forethoughts

Harding College,

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“For brethren, ye have been called unto **liberty**; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by **love** serve one another. For the law is fulfilled in the word, even this; thou shalt love thy **neighbor** as thyself.” Gal. 5:13

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INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

W. Joe Hacker, Jr., D.R.E.

Individual freedom and individual responsibility mixed together in proper proportions combine to make a balanced perspective toward life. We are individuals living in a society of individuals. Life presents a dual role in the sense that we are "doers" of acts and we are also "done-to."

Individual responsibility is demonstrated early in the home environment. A child spills the milk at the breakfast table. It becomes the responsibility of someone to clean up the mess. At sometime in life a child must learn that with the freedom to eat with others comes the responsibility to be clean and un-offensive to others. The society of the breakfast table makes demands upon the mess-maker to clean up the mess for which he is responsible.

One of the earliest lessons in the scripture is the lesson of responsibility. Adam and Eve learned freedom depended upon acting responsibly toward the commands of God. Cain exercised individual freedom in slaying Able. But, he was not relieved of the responsibility for his immoral act. His philosophy of extreme individualism caused him to make the statement, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Such a philosophy of life brings anarchy to an individual and to a society. Israel practiced this during the period of the judges when every man did that which was right in his own sight.

Freedom of choice, intelligence, education, and maturity bring increased individual responsibility to those who possess them. An important need in society, in the church, and among individuals is the policy expressed by R. H. Taft in a 1964 "Meet the Press" interview. He said, "I called for a policy of responsible individualism."

Responsible individualism is important to our nation. Ward Quall, general manager of WGN in Chicago, recently said, "The one indispensable ingredient of liberty is responsibility! If you are willing to live in enslavement, then you don't have to take any responsibility for the way the country is run."

Unrestrained individualism is a curse to our society today.

Unrestrained individualism is the philosophy of the robber in the night — "What is yours is mine, I will take it." It is the philosophy of the person pursuing his selfish interests in business or professional life justifying the means by the end, disregarding the effect upon others. Unrestrained individualism is beating up a stranger in the night on a city street for "kicks." It is playing "chicken" on a public highway. Unrestrained individualism is not wanting to get involved with the needs of other humans because it may cost some time, some convenience, or some effort.

Such a philosophy is illustrated by the forty people exercising their freedom to watch a girl stabbed and raped at 3:40 in the afternoon on a Bronx street. Unrestrained individualism was practiced by the community of Kew Gardens, New York when 37 people watched Kitty Genovese murdered and waited 35 minutes before calling the police. One man was questioned as to why he did not come to her aid or call the police. He practiced his freedom by saying, "I was tired. I went back to bed."

And the Lord said unto Cain, "Where is thy brother Able." . . . "Am I my brother's keeper?"



The Christian practices responsible individualism. Each person is created in the image of God. Man alone bears that image. This gives us the ability to rise above mere impressions and sensations to pursue an intelligent, purposeful, and responsible course in life.

The Bible abounds with illustrations of responsible individualism. Stewardship indicates a responsibility to serve. Discipleship suggests a responsibility to follow the Master. Brotherhood indicates we are to be responsible to edify, to encourage, to aid the needy. Sainthood declares a responsibility to live by a certain moral and spiritual standard so the world may call us Christian.

We are freed from the law of Moses to a responsible freedom in Christ. Many of the principles found under grace declare responsibility akin to precept. We are free — but not free to harm a brother's conscience (I Cor. 8:10; 10:25-28). We are free — but not free to be immoral. We read in Gal. 5:13, "For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For the law is fulfilled in the word, even this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." We are free — but not free to be licentious for we are partakers of a divine nature (I Pet. 1:4).

Paul reminds us that no man lives unto himself or dies unto himself (Rom. 14:7). We are both "doers" and "done-to." Out of this comes responsibility. Dostoevsky said, "Little heart of mine, my joy, believe me, everyone is really responsible to all men for all men and for everything. I don't know how to explain it to you, but I feel it so painfully even." (Brothers Karamazov)

Our life, our intelligence, our citizenship, our faith tell us to be responsible individuals. Edward Maher said, "Accept responsibility with your head high, face challenges with your head straight, and thank God with your head bowed." □

This article is a summary of a speech given by Dr. Hacker in chapel at Harding College during the fall semester 1966.

A CHRISTIAN LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE

Eván Ulrey, Ph.D.

Can a liberal arts education be truly liberal and openminded? Can the liberal arts, if dominated by the Christian approach, truly "humanize" students? Many educators would answer no to this question. A Christian scholar would surely answer yes, particularly if he is permitted to define humanize. No harm is done the word scholar by the qualifying adjective Christian. The term could appropriately be reversed, for neither is harm done to the concept Christian by the qualifier scholar.

If rational inquiry and tentativeness characterize the liberal arts, faith and personal commitment as characteristics of the Christian perspective are not contradictory of rationality and tentativeness. The New Testament may seem to indicate that there is a conflict between the wisdom of God and the foolishness of men. History has fully demonstrated conflicts between theologians and philosophers—theologians and educators—theologians and scientists—theologians and literary scholars. Theologians or their opponents are not necessarily always on the side of God's wisdom or of man's foolishness. Men, whether theologians, philosophers, or scientists, tend to cross and recross the lines between truth and error. Truth does not play favorites. The blame thus for the conflicts between men and ideas could hardly be attributed to any single cause. Perhaps a major cause is in our tendency as men to make hasty conclusions and pronouncements regarding truth which are unjustified by our research or by the evidence. Pride of intellect is an occupational hazard of scholarship.

The Christian scholar must guard against pride while pursuing truth. In this pursuit several guidelines may be set up. (1) The Christian scholar allows revelation to illuminate, interpret, and correct man's learning (see Herbert Giesbrecht, **Christianity Today**, Sept. 2, 1966, pp. 8-10). (2) Christianity shares with traditional western liberal education a central belief in the individual human dignity of personality. (3) The Christian scholar is committed to all valid truth. For him no genuine learning from any source

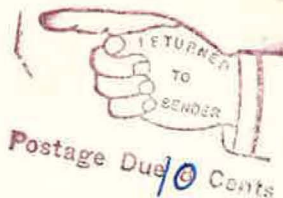
can be alien or contradictory to Christian truth. God is truth and it is impossible for Him to lie. To contrast deliberately "sacred" and "secular" is intolerable. (4) The Christian scholar will (can't help it — it is what he believes on the evidence) approach his subject with Christian predispositions. (5) The Christian scholar will recognize the uniqueness of the Christian mind to furnish a frame of reference that will pull together otherwise seemingly disparate fragments of knowledge, thereby serving as an integrating factor in education. (6) The Christian scholar will recognize the integrity of the subject matter he teaches but beyond that he will try to understand and teach how his particular subject is related to the moral nature and purpose of man in the universe, as these are revealed by God in the scriptures. Integration of human and divine knowledge must be attempted and some degree of success achieved. (7) The Christian scholar will not be isolated from his own academic community nor will he in all (or necessarily in any) respects conform to other's academic standards or conclusions. (8) Genuine Christian faith does not require intellectual mediocrity or dishonesty. It does require intellectual humility.

In conclusion, Carl F. H. Henry says, "No college campus that professes to be Christian can evade an academic duty to deal with the truth-claim of historical Christianity in relation to the truth of philosophy, science and history. Is the truth of the Christian religion valid? If the teacher of a Christian college cannot give a reasoned affirmative answer to that question he may be in some sense a scholar but he is not a Christian scholar and the 'Christian' in the goals of the college is a false claim to that extent." (**Christianity Today**, May 21, 1965, p. 19)

At no previous time in history has the world scene been more in need of a demonstration of the truth-claims of the religion of Christ. The Christian college can function in a unique fashion to accomplish this objective. □

This article is a summary of a speech given by Dr. Ulrey at the Harding College faculty pre-session conference for the school year 1966-67.

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