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Clarke's "Church, Community and State in Relation to Education: Towards a Theory of School Organization;" Hilliard, Lee, Rupp, and Niblett's "Christianity in Education: The Hibbert Lectures;" Pollard's "Education and the Spirit of Man" - Book Review

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Fred Clarke (ed.)

***Church, Community and State in Relation to Education: Towards a
Theory of School Organization***

New York: Routledge, 2012 hb 244pp \$120

ISBN 978-0-415-67539-0

F. H. Hilliard, Desmond Lee, Gordon Rupp, W. R. Niblett

Christianity in Education: The Hibbert Lectures, 1965

New York: Routledge, 2011 hb 108pp \$105.00

ISBN 978-0-415-67545-1

Francis Pollard

Education and the Spirit of Man

New York: Routledge, 2011 hb 88pp \$95.00

ISBN 978-0-415-69764-4

In an ambitious program made possible by new printing technologies, Routledge has recently released dozens of reprint volumes on all aspects of education, all of them having first appeared in the last century. The series includes these three gems that deal specifically with Christian faith and education.

The first of these, edited by Fred Clarke, grew out of a 1937 Oxford conference on Church, Community and State and originally appeared in 1938, published by George Allen and Unwin in London. Organizers of that conference, witnessing increased pressure to secularize public education in Britain, asked how the church should respond. Three quarters of a century on, the concerns the 1937 Hibbert lecturers raised about secularized education have all been realized, in some jurisdictions to a degree far beyond what they could have imagined. But the essays retain a tone or sense of relevance, not just of historical interest.

In hindsight, the various authors expressed prescient concern about what to do with and in schools in democratic nations compared to what

both the Soviets and increasingly the nasty German and Italian governments had done with their schools as blunt instruments of state power. But their concerns have turned out to be prescient in another sense, one they never could have anticipated. We hear more frequently now than ever before about the ability of government to create a surveillance society. Readers could approach the first two chapters, by Clarke and W. Zenkovsky, and the seventh chapter, by “X,” as warnings for our time, asking both what the church and what schools can do to equip citizens of threatened democracies to respond to diminished privacy and freedom of communication.

Even at 75 years of age, P. Monroe’s essay on the various patterns of relationships between church, state, and school (chapter 3) will help readers clarify their thinking on this important question. Of course, much has changed since he wrote, but the framework remains helpful, even though his distinction between state and government falters at a few points. Chapter 4, by C. R. Morris, focuses on some of the pressures facing liberal education. It follows Monroe’s essay nicely and notes the irony that sometimes states take charge of liberal learning. After confessing to being short on practical suggestions, Morris provides ten pages of ideas about how to protect and extend liberal education. The main drawback of his chapter, given the book’s title, is perhaps that Morris focuses so little on Christian perspectives on education; his essay reads more like a paradigmatic and, sadly, unremarkable philosophy of education discussion characteristic of the time of writing.

Chapter 5, by J. Smith, briefly traces the secularization of education in Europe and England. Smith laments the attendant losses he observes and, like most other authors represented in this volume, raises the question of what to do about schools, given the changes underway, or on their way. Readers may want only to skim P. Kohnstamm’s overview of Christian education, and give their time instead to the chapter written by “X” (whom readers will suspect was German and wrote anonymously because he or she feared the Nazi government’s response to what the chapter contains). The chapter “The Educational Task of the Church at the Present Time,” lives up to its own billing, and more than seven decades later, it stands up well. Current readers will certainly find it historically interesting, but parts of it read as if X were writing today. The mystery of the author’s identity intrigues, of course, but, aside from that, the chapter contains

much for readers in contemporary democracies who believe that education is under threat.

Overall, the collection from Clarke and all will satisfy most readers. As was the Clarke volume, the Hilliard, Lee, Rupp, and Niblett volume was first published by George Allen and Unwin, in this case in 1966. The first two chapters till some familiar ground about the church's role in providing education throughout history (in chapter 1) and in Britain (in chapter 2). However, in the first chapter Hilliard demonstrates familiarity with a wider range of sources than most who now review the same story, making for writing that feels new. Likewise, the picture he draws in chapter 2, of Christianity in county schools, demonstrates careful work. Writing styles may have changed since 1965, but Hilliard's chapters stand.

Lee's third chapter runs parallel to Hilliard's second; he deals with independent schools as another then-contemporary form of educational provision. He sets his chapter clearly both in Britain and in the 1960s but he raises questions true for independent schoolers in all jurisdictions at all times. What is the relationship of the Christian school to the church? By what criteria does one select teaching staff for the Christian school? What level of biblical knowledge should the Christian school assume in its students?

Chapters 4–6, by Rupp, Niblett, and Rupp respectively, address issues in higher education. Chapter 4 returns to the historical themes of chapter 1, although Rupp largely steers clear of the material Hilliard presents. *Christianity in Education* might have been structured more simply had Hilliard and Rupp cowritten a single chapter on the history of church involvement in education, but the book does not suffer much for the repetition. Because of the themes he takes up, Niblett's chapter 5 reads like it could have been published yesterday. He addresses the tension between curriculum contents and the dispositions and attitudes that we want—or used to want—students to learn while they are with us. The “used to want” is key here; if universities and colleges have abandoned the mandate to serve as moral educators, where will students learn to be moral? Readers of this journal will know that Niblett's question remains with us to this day. For that reason, his address has a relevance that defies its own age.

Rupp closes the book with an essay that reads like a bit of a grand vision for the university. He calls for Christian academics to serve as a kind of priesthood for the university. Readers of his essay may have trouble resisting a feeling that he is somewhat optimistic about the academy's

receptivity to faith-informed life and thinking or the church's potential to have a role in the university, but he nevertheless presents a somewhat inspiring vision.

Turning very briefly to Pollard's Swarthmore Lectures, originally from the same publisher as the two later volumes under review here, we find a series of five talks given by one lecturer for English Friends (Quakers) in 1932. The Swarthmore lectures began in 1908 and continue to this day, so Pollard's title stands in a tradition. The age of his lectures shows at many points, but contemporary educators might find his lectures a bit of a holiday, given the complete absence of stress on results or achievement. Furthermore, he asks questions about the purposes of schools that one rarely hears today, questions regarding the at-bottom purposes of education, or regarding the role of education in bringing about a more peaceful world order. With a publication date of 1933, Pollard's title precedes the other two volumes reviewed here. Readers will find much of value in what Pollard offers, but they will find his final chapter, "Quakerism and the Mission of Education," especially rewarding. There, he lays out a bold, deeply Quaker vision for schools, using unambiguous phrasing about what schools must include in curriculum. He writes that "wars must be unmasked" (p. 71), that "other nations must be studied sympathetically," (p. 72), and that history courses should attend to those people who have had influence through "quiet ways of the spirit, in patient endurance, in faithful courage, in unstinted service, in planting fruitful thoughts [in people's minds]" . . . or who have "stood alone or with a handful of adherents against a deriding or persecuting world" (pp. 72-73). Such is the flavor of this book, and, for my money, this decades-old call for educators to aim at such large and godly purposes comes as cold water in the desert of contemporary educational writing.

Libraries purchasing these Routledge volumes will undoubtedly get caught in an irony if they weeded these very titles only a few years before purchasing these reprints. That possibility aside, all three volumes contain riches for contemporary educators who tire of reading new books repeating the same ideas about the educational trend of the moment. By removing their readers to another time, these books will also take their readers to another, larger world. For that reason, I recommend all three without reservation.

Ken Badley