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THE YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION AND THE PROBLEM OF RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE IN COLLEGES.

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a higher stamp of worth upon his personal attainments than they deserve. I was once making an address to a body of ministers in one of our large cities upon the treatment of doubt among young men, and made an appeal that one should meet such perplexities sympathetically. In the beginning of the discussion which followed, an elderly man arose, who, I afterward learned, had been for many years the president of a theological seminary, and remarked that he wanted only to sanction the need of meeting the doubts of young men sympathetically, but also reverently; for he had learned that in the midst of their doubts great things were coming to pass, and he could learn as much from the young men as they could learn from him. That was a real teacher.

The final point that I should like to emphasize is the one as stated in the beginning, which has to do with the importance of broad-minded and large-spirited *men* in college life who have distinctively the human touch. We need men who have worked their lives out into some degree of clearness; who appreciate spiritual values and who have faith in them, and who have a conviction that they are laying hold upon eternal values. We need men who live naturally; who have the spirit of good fellowship, of kindly cheer and uplift; who combine the sense of humor with profound sincerity; who are scholarly and absolutely fair minded, but who do not mistake symbols for realities. We need men who have faced life enough to appreciate its problems, but can be constructive and can help the students to be so. If honesty has had to take away some of the supposedly essential elements of faith, they have strength enough to find still deeper meanings that are not shaken. We need men, no matter what their departments shall be, who use what they teach to bring truth to life in men and women, and whose highest joy and largest recompense is in witnessing the blossoming out of human minds and hearts into beautiful personalities.

THE YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION AND THE PROBLEM OF RELIGIOUS INFLU- ENCE IN COLLEGES.¹

THERESA M. WILBUR.

National Secretary of the Young Women's Christian Association.

For the past two years the national board of the Young Women's Christian Association has been seeking very definitely to learn the criticisms of those who are interested in the work of the associations. We feel peculiarly grateful to Dr. Starbuck for the frank statement of his opinion.

¹ A discussion of the foregoing paper by Professor Edwin D. Starbuck.

If I have understood aright the answers which the students gave to Dr. Starbuck's questionnaire, those students who depreciated the work of the Christian associations, depreciated as well all conventional agencies for the deepening of the spiritual life of the universities. Moreover, from the discussion which has followed the reading of his paper, we are ourselves somewhat at sea to know just how we should proceed in view of present-day conditions. Is it strange that in a time when there is so much of confusion regarding the best methods for the future that some of our association leaders should cling to methods that have in the past been successful, even though they may not represent the nicest adjustment to the present situation? Those who may withdraw a little from the active prosecution of a work can easily see imperfections in the methods of those who are pushed to the front in active service. The Christian associations are at work in the universities today, and it is not strange that in the eagerness to secure results they are conservative as regards the abandonment of methods which have proved successful.

One vital principle of the Young Women's Christian Association, which must be reckoned with, if we are to understand its work, is its missionary purpose. The association is frank in the statement of its purpose, not merely to strengthen the spiritual lives of the Christian students, but to increase the number of Christian students. It purposes to send into the world women who have a missionary purpose in their lives, one which will find expression through service in the United States as well as in foreign lands.

May I state one way in which the Young Women's Christian Association is attempting to meet the present situation? We are offering a more thorough system of training to the prospective student secretaries. We find that the college graduates who enter our training school are often young women who have been much confused in their religious thinking while in college. Their wills are set in the right direction, but there is need for the most careful grounding in the reasons for the faith that is in them, before they begin their work as secretaries in student centers. In several of our summer conferences we offered courses on Christian fundamentals, and these courses were remarkably popular with the students. One course of study, while it was entirely constructive, sought to give a method of approach to the great Christian verities, and attempted in no way a compilation of Bible verses or proofs.