Religious Education: The official journal of the Religious Education Association

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/urea20>

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James D. Moffatt LL.D. ^a

^a President , Washington and Jefferson College , Washington, Pa

Published online: 10 Jul 2006.

To cite this article: James D. Moffatt LL.D. (1910) "THE DEBT OF THE NATION TO THE DENOMINATIONAL COLLEGE.", Religious Education: The official journal of the Religious Education Association, 5:1, 46-51, DOI: [10.1080/0034408100050105](https://doi.org/10.1080/0034408100050105)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0034408100050105>

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"THE DEBT OF THE NATION TO THE DENOMINATIONAL COLLEGE."

JAMES D. MOFFATT, LL.D.

President, Washington and Jefferson College, Washington, Pa.

A full account of what the United States owes, directly and indirectly to denominational colleges would include a history of higher education in our country; and the colleges and universities of the present time that might be omitted, as owing nothing to denominational effort, would be few indeed. In making this general statement "Denominational" is used in a broad sense. There is a narrow meaning given to the term by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching for the purpose of designating a class of colleges that it cannot admit to its benefits. A denominational college, for its purpose, is one controlled directly or indirectly by an ecclesiastical organization. But the Carnegie Foundation does not exclude colleges founded by a denomination, formerly controlled by a denomination, maintained and controlled by members of a denomination who are acting as persons or citizens and not as representatives of their denomination, nor colleges still in sympathetic relations to a denomination; provided, in all these cases, there is no real control or legal right of control by a denomination. But aside from the specific purpose that determines the meaning of "denominational" for the Carnegie Foundation, the common usage of the term makes it include a much longer list of colleges. If we rank as denominational colleges all those that were founded by denominational initiative, or by persons who were members of a denomination and who were carrying out the impulses created by denominational life, colleges that have maintained a sympathetic relation to one or more denominations although never controlled by their official action, then of the existing colleges and universities about three-fourths can be classed as denominational; and the non-denominational will be found to be made up principally of State institutions supported by taxation, and technical colleges.

In the Report of the Commissioner of Education for 1908 there are reported 464 colleges and universities. Of these insti-

tutions 165 report that they are non-sectarian and 299 give the names of the denominations with which they are affiliated. But a careful inspection of the names of the 165 institutions that report "non-sectarian" reveals the fact that many of them are using this term as indicating that they are not subject to the control of any denomination at present. A list of the same institutions in 1893 reveals the fact that 25 of them that report in 1908 that they are non-sectarian reported in 1893 the names of denominations to which they were somehow related. But with such knowledge of the history of others of the list as may readily be obtained in public documents I have not found it difficult to add 24 more names to the 25 that, in my judgment, may be transferred from the non-sectarian class to the denominational class—with the understanding that the latter designation does not imply that these 49 are under any ecclesiastical control. If this transfer be allowed the proportion will stand 116 non-denominational to 348 denominational, the proportion of denominational institutions in this broad sense being three-fourths of the whole number.

Exception may be taken to my classing as denominational institutions that classify themselves as non-sectarian. But I must insist that denominational and non-sectarian are not exclusive of each other, nor so far antagonistic that an institution may not owe its existence to a denomination and yet be conducted as a non-sectarian institution.

Marietta College of Ohio is a good example of this combination of denominational and non-sectarian in one institution. The first trustees of that institution, members of three denominations, in their first announcement declared as follows—"The Board wishes it to be distinctly understood that the essential doctrines and duties of the Christian religion will be assiduously inculcated, but no sectarian peculiarities of belief will be taught."

Moreover, in determining the debt of the nation to the Denominational College we cannot be confined to the existing conditions of colleges but must include in our survey the whole history of institutions. It may not be proper to call Harvard University today a denominational university, but it would certainly not do to overlook the fact that it was founded and conducted for many years as a denominational college. This is also true of

William and Mary in Virginia, Yale in Connecticut, Princeton in New Jersey, Brown in Rhode Island, Columbia in New York; in fact it is true of all the institutions that were founded in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, except nine, that were founded as State Institutions. Union College in Schenectady, N. Y., was founded in 1795 as a non-sectarian college, and has claimed to be the first non-sectarian college chartered, yet it is noteworthy that its name, Union, was given to it because it was a union of denominations that founded the college and determined that it should be unsectarian in its curriculum and management; and it has always had the sympathetic co-operation of the Christian people who put aside their care for their peculiarities of doctrine and worship to co-operate in a common work.

Of the nine State institutions it would be interesting to know more fully the history, in order that we might determine whether they were wholly free from denominational zeal for education in their earlier years. In many instances it is certain that it was the demand of citizens who were imbued with zeal for education, which in the early days meant Christian education, which zeal was fostered most earnestly in the denominations, that led to the founding of State universities. In most cases, perhaps in all, the first presidents were ministers and the denominations were informally represented in the Boards of Trustees and faculties. The regulations that were enacted for the government of students were as rigidly religious as in the case of any of the contemporary denominational schools. In North Carolina Scotch-Irish Presbyterianism was the dominant denomination and it is attributed to their influence that the first constitution of the State called for the creation of a university, and when it was organized a Presbyterian minister was the whole faculty. Attendance at chapel service was not optional but compulsory, and required twice a day, at sunrise and sunset.

But suppose we admit that institutions founded by states and cities and supported by taxation are not denominational and ought not to be sectarian, may not some credit for their coming into being be due to the denominational colleges that preceded them? I have no doubt of it. All the earlier State and non-sectarian institutions sprang up, not in opposition to denominational interests, but in harmony with them and in accordance

with a principle that the denominations approved and fostered. The separation of Church and State was mutually agreed upon. The establishment of State institutions that should be conducted in a non-sectarian spirit was not merely agreeable to denominations generally, but the Denominational Colleges had themselves set the example. In many instances where the entire burden of founding a college had been assumed by a denomination, or a company of denominational persons, they provided for the non-sectarian character of the entire conduct of the institution, and took no precautions against its becoming non-sectarian, or passing into relations to another denomination. Thus Princeton, almost exclusively Presbyterian in its trustees and faculty for the greater part of its history, could become as non-sectarian as any other college without any change in its charter. Dickinson and Alleghany College in Pennsylvania were both founded and chartered by Presbyterians, but both passed into their present affiliation with the Methodist Episcopal Church without change of charter. The college I am connected with, in like manner, has been intimately associated with the Presbyterian denomination for a century and a quarter, yet neither the charter for the original academy nor that for the college contemplated any other than a non-sectarian, although Christian, career.

I believe the cases are few in which the teaching has looked toward proselyting or even confirming the faith of students in the creed and worship of the particular church with which students and college were affiliated. Our earlier denominational colleges certainly learned to distinguish between the peculiarities of denominations and the elements of Christian belief and practice common to all denominations, and I venture to say there are few of the denominational colleges of today that do not respect these same distinctions. For this non-sectarian way of conducting colleges without permitting them to become unchristian or to lessen their influence in behalf of Christian living, which many of our so-called non-sectarian and State Universities have also followed, some credit is due to the denominational colleges of our early history.

The value of this later service may be better appreciated when we consider some of the more modern developments of the non-sectarian tendency. It is one thing to advocate the essential

beliefs and duties of Christianity in a way neither to offend nor to assist any particular sect; it is quite another thing so to identify Christianity with sectarian peculiarities that in the attempt to be non-sectarian one becomes unchristian, either hostile or indifferent to it. When non-sectarian education is carried so far as this no Christian knows how he can consent to it. The denominations that have been united in approving of the course that excludes sectarian teaching from colleges while commending the Christian religion in its essentials, have necessarily been alarmed when the Christian religion itself is treated as the religion of a sect. The exclusion of the use of the Bible and the forms of Christian worship, the elimination of the religious sanctions from the foundations of ethics, and the liberty accorded to teachers to express their doubts concerning the fundamental doctrines taught in Christian homes and churches, combine to constitute a form of non-sectarianism quite at variance with that known in the earlier State Institutions. Indeed it tends to become a new form of sectarianism. Christianity has its sects, perhaps unfortunately, but anti-christianity has also its sects; and there is danger that a college may carry its avoidance of one form of sectarianism to such an extreme as to favor another form of sectarianism far more at variance with the principle of separation of Church and State as practiced in this Christian land, than any college under the control of a Christian denomination is likely to do. It is this fear that non-sectarian education may go to this extreme length that has alarmed Christian people and fostered the conviction that church denominations should tighten rather than loosen their control over the colleges they have founded and maintained. I think, however, that there is a safe and sane method of favoring Christian living without offensive sectarianism that will hold its place of supremacy as long as the people of the United States continue to be predominantly Christian. But we ought not to overlook the fact that we are indebted to the denominational college for its introduction, rather than to any political principle or practice. I do not regard it as an invention or as a temporary expedient to promote patronage. It is a legitimate evolution of denominationism itself. A completely unified Christian church could never have given it to us. Such a church would almost inevitably in-

sist on every article of belief and every form of worship as essential. In the earlier years of a new denomination its peculiar beliefs and customs are sure to be emphasized, but in due time all denominations come to see that what is common to all Christian denominations must be the most important thing; and when one has sufficiently apologized for its separate existence and begins to realize that non-christian people are more in need of conversion than the brethren of the sister denominations, it becomes increasingly natural to emphasize the common beliefs of the Christian faith and life, and to refer less frequently to its distinctive creed.

There never was a time in the history of denominational Christianity in this country when there was as nearly unanimous readiness to combine on essentials and to reserve non-essentials to church and family gatherings where all agree about them. Therefore it does not seem unreasonable to hope that the State universities will vie with denominational colleges in magnifying the importance of the principles of the Christian religion in their unsectarian aspects.

This will be recognized as a very limited account of our "Nation's Debt to the Denominational College." It has seemed to me, however, that when you know that three-fourths of all our colleges and universities are now denominational, or have been denominational in the greater part of their history, you can readily imagine how many of the great leaders of all good movements in our career as a nation have been trained in these schools. It has also been so often pointed out that the supply of the Christian ministry has come almost wholly from this class of institutions, that I need not repeat this story.

And when we can give the earlier denominational colleges the credit of having introduced and practiced so successfully the principle of making education Christian without offending sectarian prejudices; and of having demonstrated that even State institutions can help along the cause of the Christian religion without violating the principle that assigns different provinces to the Church and State, we may feel still more indebted to them, and cherish the hope that the patriotism that supports the institutions of the state need not be encouraging the production of a godless citizenship.