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Tower Topics: There Will Always Be a Bottom Half (article for THE ECHO)

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Echo

TOWER TOPICS

There Will Always Be a Bottom Half

The president of an ivy league college told the story of the student who was asked by his dean, "Are you in the upper half of your class?" "No," said the student, "I am one of those who make the upper half possible."

If there is to be an upper half, there must always be a bottom half, even in the ivy league colleges. This suggests that even those who never achieve rank in the upper half of the class can also do work of high quality and can secure a high-quality education. Competition for academic rank is an incentive to good work, but the quality of the work done by those who "make the upper half possible" should still be respectable and acceptable by all of the quality standards of higher education.

Mediocrity should be below the level of the work done by those who are in the bottom half of the class. The distribution between the halves should not be based on differences between good work and poor work, but should, rather, be based on individual differences in capacity and ability. The measures which represent our achievement should indicate that we have worked at the top level of our potential; thus we need never be ashamed of the results.

In order to provide a situation in which this is possible, an honest effort is made to establish admission policies which are both selective and constructive. It would be unfair to admit students who, because of inadequate backgrounds or too-low ability levels, could not do the kind and quality of work which is necessary for the fullest realization of the benefits of the Taylor program. Accordingly, when the student is admitted we have already determined that, in our judgment, (of course, mistakes are made occasionally) he is able to perform above the level of mediocrity. So, let even those who "make the upper half possible" strive for excellence, and thereby achieve the best with their God-given opportunity in Christian higher education.

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