

✓
PRINCETON SERMONS

CHIEFLY BY

THE PROFESSORS IN PRINCETON
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

NEW YORK

CHICAGO

30 Union Square East

148-150 Madison Street

Publishers of Evangelical Literature

COPYRIGHT,
1893,
FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY.

The Carlton Press
171, 173 Macdougall Street, New York

RELIGION IN COLLEGE.*

BY PRESIDENT FRANCIS L. PATTON, D.D., LL.D.

"I write unto you, young men."—1. JOHN 2:13.

IF any one should say that it is intrinsically harder for men to be religious than women, I do not know that I should dispute the proposition. I certainly should not do it without making allowance for the special temptations to which men are subject, the irreligious atmospheres into which they are thrown, and the many influences unfriendly to religion which seem to beset husbands, sons and brothers, of which wives and mothers and sisters are in a measure at least happily ignorant. And so I can understand the special interest with which an audience of men is regarded, and the special ground for gratitude that there is when in some time of religious interest the claims of the Gospel take hold of men.

There is good reason, too, for the particular interest that is felt in young men, and above all,

* Preached at the opening of the college year.

the religious life of young men. For they seem to carry with them the world's fortunes. The passing generation sees the promise of its own immortality in the rich new life of these young men. Their life is all before them. They have no past. Their future is, so to speak, a matter of their own making. We commit the world of the future to their senses; the bright electric nights to their vision; the new discoveries of science to their admiration. "We shall not live to see the day, but you will," we are accustomed to say, and so we use the younger generation to give ourselves an artificial longevity. There is a peculiar sympathy which a young man awakens in us—awakens, I mean, especially in men. We understand him. How much of our life he is repeating! How in all he does he seems to be plagiarizing from the book of our own memory! His hopes, his ambitions, his dreams, his enthusiasms, sometimes his magnified estimate of himself and his disregard of the wisdom of his elders—have we not experienced it all? His follies, too, and his blunders, his non-malicious wrong-doing, sometimes even his sins—did we not go before him? Ah then, unless we are selfish, unless we are unwilling that others shall excel us—here is the secret of our anxiety, of our interest in the welfare of these young lives. It is the contrast between

ourselves conditioned, handicapped by age, by habit, by the momentum we have gathered in the rush down the stream, and these young men with their future before them and in their own hands that draws us to them. If we had our lives to live over again, we say, we should act differently. We should study this and not neglect that. But now it is too late, and we must make the best of such undisciplined or ill-disciplined powers as we have. But these young men we think can avoid these mistakes; and we would fain, if they would let us act as pilot for them, steer them clear of the rocks on which our own barks were well-nigh shipwrecked years ago. Oh, how wise and good the race would be if wisdom were cumulative, and we the heirs of all the ages had come into possession of an unwasted inheritance!

And when to youth we add the advantage of intellectual culture we magnify the interest felt in those who possess them both. For it needs no prophet to see in them the men who for good or ill will shape the history of the next generation. Men fail sometimes to fulfill the promise of their youth. They grow sick or lose heart, or succumb to luxury, or fall into evil habits; but for all that the world's hope and the world's future are with the educated young men of to-day.

The college graduate is of more importance, I dare say, than the undergraduate. It is fair to suppose that he is a larger factor in the great world's life. Indeed, it is in order to get ready for that great world that we come to college; and so because the graduate has gone out from us we must not on that account hold him in light esteem. But it is the undergraduate who has special interest in our eyes. There are good reasons for this. The college world is *sui generis*. College life changes a man the moment he begins to live it. Men come hither from all parts of the country; they represent different habits of thought, states of society, and modes of existence. And when they are here they preserve an individuality that saves them from any loss of identity in their intercourse with one another. They can be separated into groups according to several principles of division, and these groups have appropriate designations in our rich academic vernacular. But to the outside world they all look alike, they think alike, they talk alike, they are imbued with the same spirit and seem to possess a common life. They have their burning questions and their organs of opinion. They have their own vocabulary and, to a certain extent, their own code of ethics.

There are good and bad features in this segre-

gated academic life. It would be better on some accounts if we were in closer sympathy with the every-day life of the world. But on the other hand there is something elevating in the ideas that bring about this state of things. A man need not study hard in order to keep his academic standing, but the studious men give college life its character. And there is that in intellectual work that separates a man from the world. Bring men of intellectual tastes together and you of necessity establish an intellectual caste. You create a community that loves refinement and that protests against all that is sordid and vulgarizing.

I am expressing myself, therefore, in the tamest words when I say that no audience can excite my interest like the one that faces me to-day. You are standing on the threshold of manhood or have barely crossed it. You have had your first glimpses of the new world of thought and knowledge that is open to your exploration. You have begun to feel your own power and to try your strength in grappling with the great questions of life and destiny. Your thoughts have not yet dug for themselves the grooves which make the thinking of some people easy by making it narrow and repetitious. You have hardly decided yet what channels your energies shall run in, and you like to keep it

still an open question what your profession shall be, lest you come prematurely into bondage to a career. You are at the transition stage, perhaps, in your religious life, when the faith of childhood is hardening into reasoned conviction, or when perhaps you fear a schism between your reason and your heart. And in the short life of an academic generation you will go out from this unique undergraduate existence into the larger life of the world, helped, it may be—God forbid that you should be hindered—in your dealings with these great questions by what you hear from us who meanwhile are your official guides. I ask no greater privilege on earth than that I may be able from time to time to speak in a worthy, helpful way from this pulpit to you and to those who, after you, shall occupy these pews.

My text does not shut me up to any given line of thought, but you will already have gathered that my remarks will be based upon the relations of religion to college life. Let me have your attention, then, while I say a few words in reference to two questions: 1. How religion should affect your college life. 2. How college life should affect your religion.

I. I take it for granted that, in a certain sense at least, most of you are religious men. Many of you

are avowedly so. You come for the most part from religious homes. You are men of religious convictions, even though you may have given no formal expression to your convictions. You have not discarded the faith in which you were trained, though possibly you have not made any acknowledgment of it. You will so far admit the claims of the Gospel as to recognize your obligations to conform to its teaching, however much in the case of some of you your lives may contradict that teaching.

How should the Gospel, as you have been taught it, affect your college career? How should it operate upon that individual and corporate life of which we are bound to take cognizance in the administration of college affairs?

The day has gone by when it was necessary to show that a man might be a Christian and at the same time enjoy life. The Christian who thinks that depression of spirits is a sign of piety belongs to an extinct type. When it is urged, therefore, that athletic sports foster a manly spirit and develop healthy tissue; when it is said that the element of emulation is necessary to give them zest; and when without undue waste of time, without the sacrifice—as has confessedly been the case in more than one instance—of an entire session's work

in the class-room, when, without contributing to the gambling habit—which has already become a national curse—the representatives of leading colleges engage in honorable and gentlemanly contests for supremacy; I do not feel that there is in all this any necessary compromise of Christian principle, and it would never occur to me to repent at my leisure of any impulsive enthusiasm that I may have evinced. There is no reason why a man should forfeit his manliness by being a Christian. He should cultivate a gentle spirit, and the passive virtues have a high place among the Christian graces. With the etiquette, with the unwritten code of honor existing among undergraduates which controls so much of their relation to one another and to college authorities, I have a great deal of sympathy; though I think that some good principles are allowed too wide a range of application. A man is not called upon—at least in ordinary circumstances—to be a tale-bearer or a spy even in the interests of religion. I have no difficulty in making pretty large concessions to undergraduate sentiment in more things than one. It would be hard for you to make demands with respect to the inviolability of personality and the rights of manhood that I am not prepared to grant. You sustain relations to the governing body of this

college that give rise to perplexing problems and that involve difficulties that you hardly appreciate. But I would rather bear with the difficulties than take an unbidden step across the threshold of your inner life. The incredulous look, the suggestion that impeaches your motive, the inquiry that needlessly assails the very citadel of your manhood, you have a right to be aggrieved at. There is no fundamental difference of sentiment between professors and students in this college so far as these matters are concerned, though it is more than likely there may be a difference of emphasis. You would very properly have us remember that you are men. We, on the other hand, cannot well forget that you are young men. That is the whole of it. And it should not be a matter of offense if, when I speak of the excellences of your life, I call your attention to some of its limitations.

When you and I are old enough we shall be sedate perhaps, calm, self-contained, judicial. Now, however, our friends must bear with us; and if we are only ingenuous, kind-hearted, and responsive to affectionate treatment, they must give us credit for it; and we must not take it ill if they tell us plainly that we are impulsive, hot-headed, swayed by feeling, and a trifle inconsiderate. I dare say we are. But if we are Christians, and we profess

to make practical use of Christian principles, we should study to conform our conduct to these principles. It will not do for us to fall back upon our Christian faith as an atonement for our unchristian practice.

There are a great many ways in which I might profitably apply Christian principle to college life. I think the lack of conscientiousness is perhaps a serious matter with all of us. Many a man, I am sure, would find a spur to diligence in study if he would seriously interrogate his conscience as to the use of his own time and his father's money during his undergraduate days. Many a man would be saved from the indiscretions incident to the young gregarious life of college students if he would take time to reflect upon his personal accountability to God. And here I am reminded of one or two at least of the faults that are characteristic of your class which I think your religion ought to enable you to redress.

We must rely upon personal religion to correct the evil tendency of the gregarious habit in college students by the assertion of individual responsibility. There is a tendency for the individual to lose himself in the organism that he belongs to. That there is a good side to this I can very readily allow. It saves a man from conceit, it is a check

upon the egotism that intellectual life is so apt to foster, it is a lesson in the great art of bearing one another's burdens, it is an illustration of the truth that we are members one of another—when a student is ready to sink personal advantage for the honor of his class, or when all make common cause in the interest of one. We should lose much if we did not have the instinct that leads us to realize a corporate life. The Church is founded upon this idea. When one member suffers all the members suffer with it. Society itself presupposes it. And when, in our selfishness, in our greed of distinction or of gain, in our pride of intellect and self-sufficiency, we isolate ourselves, or are cut off from fellowship by the tacit mandate of our fellows, we are working for the disintegration of social life. I love the principle that lies at the bottom of corporate undergraduate class-sentiment. It is to a great extent a peculiarity of American colleges. It is something that our system of prizes offered in competition has so far not superseded. And much as I believe in giving honor where honor is due, and holding out inducements for high intellectual attainment, I should be sorry if a spirit of individualism, of jealous and querulous antagonism, should ever grow up among the undergraduates of our colleges, that would make it necessary for Professor

Bryce to qualify the generous words which he uses in his recent book on the American Commonwealth, when, after speaking of some of the characteristics of the American University, he says: "The other merit is that the love of knowledge and truth is not, among the better minds, vulgarized by being made the slave of competition and of the passion for quick and conspicuous success. An American student is not induced by his university to think less of the intrinsic value of what he is learning than of how far it will pay in an examination, nor does he regard his ablest fellow-students as his rivals over a difficult course for high stakes, rivals whose speed and strength he must be constantly comparing with his own." There is, however, a bad side to this corporate or class sentiment, and it is that under the operation of it a man will let his conscience sleep and make the corporate sentiment do her work. You do not like to seem peculiar; you do not care to be over-righteous or over-wise. You do not think that there can be much harm in what all the rest approve. And so, true to your gregarious instincts, true to that subtle law of your nature that affirms the solidarity of social life, you force conscience to abdicate when she stands up for the sovereignty of the individual, and you follow the multitude to do evil. I do not know a

more needed lesson among college men than that concerning the sacredness of the individual conscience. There is a great deal in the inspiration of a common cause; but there is a limit to a man's obligation to sacrifice his personality even in a good cause. Let no man invade your self-hood. Do not put your personality into a common fund. Do not tamper with the autonomy of your own conscience by putting it under the control of an organization. I look upon it as one of the most disastrous things in our moral life to-day that we are so under the tyranny of public sentiment, so conditioned by the fear of what other people will say or think, that we do not give our conscience a fair chance, and in consequence are beginning to lose the sense of face-to-face accountability to God. If this be so, even with regard to things that at least can be said to have good motives behind them, how much more are we to be blamed when we allow ourselves to tolerate or take part in proceedings that we would have no thought of defending, except on the plea that they all do it.

We must also rely upon the religious convictions of Christian men to correct a false doctrine of relativity that prevails among college students. Theoretically we are agreed: right is right; wrong is wrong; always, everywhere. Practically, it is oth-

erwise. There is one standard for the individual, another for the organization. Let us not deal with this question by way of excessive refinement. Cases do differ, and where conduct is considered, time, place, and circumstances must be considered. There is no rudeness offered by a slap on the shoulder where that is a recognized mode of salutation among comrades. Whether entering your house without knocking is an insult or only a sign of friendship depends on what our relations are. Whether a given act is an injury depends on how it is taken: *Volenti non fit injuria*: those old Romans put a great deal of sense into their maxims. And yet there is an abuse of this idea of relativity in morals that calls for very serious consideration. If you say that it goes everywhere and affects Christians generally, I am sorry to admit that this is true. Some men do in Europe what they will not do at home. Some are dishonest and untruthful in the minor matters and conventionalities of life, who in more serious things are very scrupulous and honest. This, however, is no excuse for that phase of relativity with which we are made familiar in college morals according to which a freshman's room is an exception to the law that a man's house is his castle; according to which it is wrong to lie, but right to deceive a professor; according to which it

is wrong to steal, but right to take aids to reflection into an examination hall.

Let me not be understood as making a sweeping allegation in what I say. I am aware of the high moral tone that prevails in this college; and that the matters referred to are of comparatively infrequent occurrence, and that when they do occur it is but rarely that they imply any fixed determination of character. In respect to some of these matters there is a growing sentiment among undergraduates that will soon, I hope, become so strong as to supersede both law and police; for I have more confidence in the Christian conscience than I have in any other agency. Our hope of reforming college morals lies in addressing the conscience. It is only as laws reach the conscience that they have much practical value. Therefore, when they are oppressive and suggest injustice, they should be modified in the interest of morality.

We must look, then, to the religious men of the college to exert positive influence in the creation of a proper public sentiment. They are numerous enough, they are possessed of sufficient weight of character, and their influential position in the great centers of undergraduate influence is great enough, to enable them to control sentiment; and when it is understood that undergraduate sentiment will

not tolerate the presence of the man who habitually defies the law of God and of good manners, the era of academic freedom will dawn.

I appeal, therefore, to your Christian sentiments and your religious convictions, gentlemen, as the basis, and the only basis upon which we can proceed, toward the abolition of multitudinous laws, toward the repeal of regulations that seem in the judgment of some to be out of keeping with the life of full-grown men.

I think there are some things that a man's manliness should do for him, and that certainly his religion should do for him. It should give him such a conscientious desire to receive instruction that it would not be necessary to keep a double-entry account of his attendance in the class-room, with a debit to absence and a credit to excuse; it should inspire even a somewhat feeble person with strength to stand on his feet during the singing of a morning hymn; and it should furnish a motive for a proper use of time in the acquisition of knowledge that would make it a superfluous labor for professors to find mathematical equivalents in whole numbers and fractions of an examination paper that represents in too many cases the indolence of a term and the industry of the night before.

You complain of bondage and sigh for freedom.

I sympathize with you. I am on your side. But the matter is in your own hands. And when in reference to those things that now make laws a necessity there shall have come about that change of sentiment that plainly says, "When I was a child I thought as a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, but when I became a man I put away childish things"—then, too, will come the freedom that you seek; for the law will cease to be statute by being transformed into life, and it will thenceforth be the perfect law of liberty.

In what I have been saying I have had special reference to the bearing of your religious profession upon your corporate life as a student-body and upon the relation which you sustain as a body of undergraduates to the college authorities. I have not said anything about the influence which your religion should exert in keeping you from spiritual harm: and one would think that if Christian convictions are worth anything they should enable you to say "No" to temptation, and resist solicitations to vice. It is to be feared, however, that there is a great deal of weak religion in the world, and I am afraid that matters are not improved by the unmanly way in which we sometimes talk upon the subject. It is a pity that we accustom ourselves to this effeminate mode of regarding Christian

faith: when instead of being a shield which protects us from assaults, instead of being a stout club with which we knock temptation on the head, instead of being a sword wherewith we slay our spiritual enemies, it is regarded rather as a very weak companion that we must nurse tenderly and that cannot go out at night. I wish there were more robust piety in the world and less of the sickly kind. There would then be less occasion for the solicitude that parents now feel regarding the religious health of their sons who come to college. I must, however, respect this solicitude.

II. Having, therefore, spoken in the first place on the question, *How religion should affect your college life*, I must now speak on the question, *How college life should affect your religion*. Many an anxious parent is raising this question to-day. He knows that in this seat of learning his son will have many advantages of an intellectual kind, but he wonders whether he will not also be exposed to a great many temptations, and whether in his gain of learning he may not lose his soul. There can be no doubt that a college man has to face temptations. We do our best to keep immoral influences out of the college, and I believe in dealing with these influences with a strong hand. When common fame accuses a man of exerting a corrupting

influence in the college, I want no maxims from the common law to stand in the way of college purity. Do not quote under such circumstances the doctrine of second jeopardy, or say that the law looks *in favorem vitæ*. Do not tell me that a man is innocent until he is found to be guilty, or suppose that the provisions of the criminal suit will apply to college procedure. There are times when a man should be held guilty until he is found innocent, and when it is for him to vindicate himself and not for us to convict him.

But when we have done our best, it will be impossible for us to guarantee those who come here against temptations. Adolescence has its perils, and I do not know that a man would escape them if he remained at home. Parents sometimes speak of the special temptations of college life : as though there were no temptations in business ; as though clerks in banks and in brokers' offices were all the time under holy influences ; as though the philosophers of Wall Street were somehow in closer touch with the ten commandments. I suppose that men in shops and on farms have to face temptation. A man may shun his kind, but he cannot shun himself. He may avoid all company but his own, and sometimes that is the worst.

There are perils to morals, and there are perils

to faith in connection with a college life—probably no greater in college than elsewhere. Men sometimes make sad failures in college. They leave home with good intentions and noble purpose, but are weak-willed and wanting in stability, form bad companionships, and are led into corrupting practices. They come from homes where they have been kept under constant watch and have had to give strict account of their time, and find even the limited freedom allowed them here too much for them: they become indolent and lose relish for study. They are thrown into a larger companionship than they had ever known before, and when they find that their capacity for leadership in all that is daring and in contravention of established law has made them popular, their scholarly ambitions die a very easy death.

I fear lest there may be some of you who are making these mistakes, and I am sorry for you; but I am more sorry for your fathers and mothers who sent you here, and whose agony of disappointment I think no one can well understand who has not had boys of his own. And yet a man who succumbs to temptation in college would in all probability fare no better elsewhere. Sooner or later a man must learn to take care of himself. He must come into possession of his freedom, and it is no

small part of a good education to prepare a man in the best manner for the use of that freedom. I do not think that it is wise to perpetuate in college the methods of the preparatory school. Rules there must be, but they should be as few and simple as possible. Requirements of attendance there should be, and a proper method of enforcing them, but they should be in keeping with the advancing years, the maturing powers, and the approaching manhood of those to whom they apply. And it seems to me that it is one of the special features of your life here that you come into possession of that freedom of thought and action that you rightly prize as one of the chief attributes of your manhood, under the best conditions. You are invested with the franchises of manhood in a time and way that suggest personal responsibility; and so that instead of opening a door for self-indulgence, they become a factor in your moral education. I do not think that the college student feels on his twenty-first birthday an impulse to throw off the yoke of parental authority; I am inclined to suppose that he is only made the more conscious by the occasion that he must soon take the responsibility of his future in his own keeping. You are living under conditions best fitted to make you feel what Dr. Chalmers called the expulsive power of a

new affection. You are dealing with serious problems. You are reading the best books. Your employments are elevating. You are handling great questions in history, morals, economics, politics; and whether these questions are treated under distinctively religious conceptions or not, they suggest religious ideas, for they suggest the idea of the fitting, the best, the right, the true. You are not simply studying facts. You are not asking merely what is, but what ought to be. You are forming ideals, and when you are doing that you are on the border-land of religion. It is not religious prejudice, it is sound philosophy that Principal Shairp gives utterance to when he says that religion is the goal of culture.

A man's studies should have a moral as well as an intellectual influence upon him. Physics should make him more truthful, Astronomy more reverent, Literature more genial, Social Science more benevolent, Philosophy more believing. The law of the Lord is perfect. Nature teaches that as well as Scripture. The star keeps its appointment with the observer, and the belated Frenchman only revealed his vanity and his ignorance when he asked the astronomer to *encore* the eclipse. And besides this indirect religious influence that serious study in all lines is fitted to exert, there is in this college

especially, and I trust there always will be, a body of men who, however strong they may be in their departments, and however enthusiastic they may be in the prosecution of them, are not ashamed to say: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, the Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son." To this Christian influence many a man in the years to come will express obligation for the perpetuation of his religious faith. Many a man will say when asked what saved him from skepticism, in words that bear a different meaning from that which he who wrote them intended:

"For rigorous teachers seized my youth
And purged its faith and trimmed its fire,
Showed me the high white Star of Truth,
There bade me gaze and there aspire."

There are, as I have already said, perils of faith as well as perils of morals in connection with a career in college. This is unavoidable. The possibility of religious doubt can be avoided only by avoiding religious questions altogether; and religious questions can be avoided only by deliberately choosing a life of stupidity and ignorance. All questions are at bottom religious questions; all inquiries have religious implications. Back of physics lie metaphysics. Behind the facts of history lies the philosophy of history. Economic

questions raise ethical problems, and our view of ethical problems will depend very much upon whether we believe in God. College men have also among them those who are under strong impulse to antagonize established beliefs, or who seek to show originality by constructing a universe of their own. There are conceited men who show their intellectual pride by treating religious faith with scorn; and weak-minded men who come under the spell of a favorite author and cannot admire his style without imbibing his views. And there are besides those who feel honestly, earnestly, interested in knowing for themselves the reasons for the faith in which they were trained. They will not consent to hold a merely traditional creed, and, though it cost them many a struggle, are determined to reach bed-rock before they consent to build the house of faith.

The man of this sort—I have great respect for him—is very apt to be an educated man :

“Perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out ;
There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

“He fought his doubts and gathered strength ;
He would not make his judgment blind,
He faced the specters of the mind
And laid them ; thus he came, at length,
To find a stronger faith his own.”

And yet when we remember how skepticism parades itself in our newspapers, publishes itself in our magazines, lectures to us from the rostrum, and assails our ears in the street-car; when we see the facility with which the charlatan poses as a philosopher, and how a witty infidel can produce the impression of being the sum of all wisdom, we need not suppose that the college student is exposed to any special temptations. On the contrary, the very conditions under which he carries on his work are favorable to the conservation of his religious faith.

You have learned very little, my friends, if you have not already learned that the kings of thought—those, that is to say, who reign by divine right—are very different from those who have been crowned kings by an indiscriminating public. Real culture is aristocratic; and you will naturally be legitimists in your intellectual partisanship. You will not let Tyndall speak as your authority in physics, nor regard Haeckel as infallible in biology, and you will not credit Herbert Spencer with the omniscience that his ambitious system would seem to imply. Your training has taught you that a man does not acquire a right to speak with authority on all subjects because he has made one subject his own. You know the limits of de-

monstrative certainty, and you know, as the common mind does not know, that men are making demands for a kind and a degree of proof for historic Christianity that, applied to other subjects, would throw the whole business of investigation into hopeless bankruptcy. You will not raise foolish questions regarding the trustworthiness of the entire text of Scripture when you are told that the best manuscripts do not support the statement in the gospel about the angel at the pool of Bethesda; for you have no doubt about Virgil's poem, though the lines beginning, "*Ille ego qui quondam,*" etc., that in the old editions stood at the opening of the *Æneid*, are now understood to be spurious. You will not wonder whether your New Testament is the genuine product of the writers whose names are affixed to its parts, because we have lost the autograph copies and the text has been edited out of manuscripts of a later day; for part of your education consists in teaching you the facts concerning the transmission of ancient books, and you are reading to-day, without a shadow of doubt as to their genuineness, the love-poems of Catullus to Lesbia, when we know that our existing text was made out of a single manuscript that turned up in Verona in the fourteenth century. Differences of opinion among theologians and

the rancor of theological debate will appear as shallow arguments with you—though they are sometimes urged as possessing great importance—against the possibility of any knowledge upon the topics they concern; for there is hardly a subject in your curriculum that has not had a history of conflicting sentiments and that is not at this moment represented by rival schools.

I regard the conditions of your training here as favorable in the highest degree to your religious life. You are receiving a discipline of your powers that should save you from the sophistries to which the uneducated fall such easy victims. You are acquiring a knowledge of the great subjects of debate, and an estimate of the men who have most right to be regarded as authorities respecting them, that will keep you from calling any man master whose only claim to such recognition is his entertaining declamation. Besides that, you are dealing with secular themes under Christian conceptions, and your attention is turned to the specific evidences that accredit those Christian conceptions. There is also an undergraduate sentiment represented by the ripest scholars and the men of highest intellectual rank among us that is not only favorable to Christian life, but also aggressively and earnestly interested in Christian work. So

that, if your religious life is not strengthened and stimulated by your connection with the college, the fault will not be with the college, but with you.

I know that there is a band of Christian young men in this college who are self-denying and unsparing of effort and pains in their endeavor to bring religious motives to bear upon their fellow-students; and I can hope for nothing better for some of you than that you may come within the scope of their influence. I speak with due allowance for temptations that beset students in every college, but I am nevertheless of the opinion that there are no circumstances under which a man is so likely to receive good impressions, and to be affected by religious influences that will abide through his whole life, as during the four years of a college course in an institution founded, as this is, upon Christian principles, and administered with special regard to the maintenance of vital piety. But I must remind you of the personal responsibility that you should feel in this matter. You can make your college career very much what you choose to make it. I hope that it will prove a blessing to you, and that you will go out into the world with a larger equipment of both faith and knowledge. But to secure this result a great deal depends upon yourselves, and what you will do will be deter-

mined very largely by the way you begin. Better late than never, is a good motto; but—better not be late. It is better to begin right than to discover toward the close of the year that you have made a mistake.

Let me counsel you, then, to make your life in college a religious life; to interest yourselves in religious matters; to identify yourselves with the Christian elements in the college that seek your coöperation; and to give studious regard to the maintenance of religious habits and the fostering of religious convictions.

Let your religion control your college life, and then you may rest assured that your college life will react in strengthening, maturing, deepening, broadening, and elevating your Christian faith.