

Address by President Robert H. Wright

Sept. 27, 1924.

Scripture lesson- 11 verses from the 22nd Chapter
of the Book of Proverbs.

I want to talk to you this morning on the subject of religion. We have the largest enrollment we have ever had, and I am confidently looking forward to this year as being the very best year, so far, in the history of this college. We had a meeting of the faculty last night, and you have a splendid body of people to work for you this year, and with your co-operation we hope to make this a real effort making year in the history of this college.

This is the first Saturday, for many of you, away from home, and at college. As you begin, many of you will continue. There will be a few who will fall by the wayside; that's the sad part of life, but it is always true. I do hope there will not be one this year.

In the development of human character, in the rounding out of human life, we need to have strong physical bodies, and we want to develop keen active mental life. We want every student who comes to this college to be physically and mentally fit; capable and ready to meet the responsibilities of life as they come to you, but we realize that just these ~~fundamentals~~ ^{fundamentals} do not make the complete human being. There must be developed in every individual the spirit-life, because there is found in the spirit-life the great fundamental springs of activity for the mental and physical life. There is a sense in which the spirit life is the only real life. O, you may say I am not religious. Yes you are. Every human being is religious. I have seen a few in my life that try to make no religion their religion but they ^{are} religiously ~~find~~ ^{are} religious. In other words they are religious. Every normal human being is religious. Well, you say, this is a State school, and you can't teach religion. It is a State school, and for that reason we can teach religion, not demominational ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ any particular sense, not any particular belief.

One of the reasons that North Carolina did not join the union along with the first eleven states was that there was no protection there against the religious life, and if the state stood for that before it was a member of the union, I see no reason why it shouldn't stand for it since all the states in union do. It is no concern to the state of North Carolina which church you belong to. We are not concerned particularly about that, but it is of concern to all right minded citizens every where that other right minded citizens develop the spirit life, and that means of course membership in some way, shape or form, ~~with~~ some religious organization. It makes no difference to the college what church you attend, but it does make some difference to us whether you attend any or not. You can not make the most out of life unless you develop your spiritual life, and the organization in America ~~for~~ ^{for} the development of the spirit life is called the church. Now, I am using that in the broadest sense, not with reference to any particular ^{kind} of religious body. I want to ask you as good citizens to go to Sunday School tomorrow if your church has a Sunday School, and you will find a church of your persuasion, almost sure to ~~a~~ find one in the community.

The Y. W. C. A. usually arranges some one to go with you to the different churches, and I am going to ask them to do that for you to-morrow as they have been doing it heretofore, and tonight when you come here I am going to ask them to announce to you where you are to assemble in order that you may go to the different churches. I want you to join the Sunday School tomorrow, and I want you to stay to the church services. The people of this community will gladly welcome you to the churches of this community. I want to tell you exactly which church for you to ~~attend~~ go to. It doesn't make any difference to the management of the college, but it does make a great deal of difference to you and to your home people. You select the church of your choice, and go to that church tomorrow. Join the Sunday School. Sunday School meets at 9:45. Enroll as a member of that Sunday School, and attend that Sunday School every Sunday morning you are here in college, and when the services are over at the Sunday School stay to the church services in that particular church. It makes no difference what church it is to the college, but you let it be your church. O, but I know Miss Mary Jones who is a member of X church, and I am not a member of that church, I believe I will go with her. Now don't do that you go to the church of your choice. If you are a member of the church go to the church you are a member of and join that Sunday School and stay to the church services at that church. If there are two churches of your persuasion go to one of the two, don't try to go to both, you can't be a member of both Sunday Schools. Make a church home for your spiritual life tomorrow, and use that as your church home while you are a student in college here. You can not grow in your spirit life if you withdraw yourself from the organization that is working in that direction, ~~then~~ when the opportunity is given you I hope you will join the Young Women's Christian Association. That is a student organization and it is undenominational. They have their Bible study classes and their prayer services, and every Sunday evening they have a service for the entire college in this auditorium. The college realizing the importance of this in the life of the student body has a standing offer to the Young Womens Christian Association to pay the travelling expenses of a minister once a month within a radius of a hundred miles of this place. In other words the college is backing the religious activities of the students of the college, because the college realizes that no man is a perfect man who is not a spiritual human being. It is the spirit life that prompts the activities of every human being. It is out of the soul that come the real issues of life. It is out of the inner life that come the promptings that are manifested in the mental and physical activities, and so it is vital to you that you develop the spirit side of your life.

I am glad from one viewpoint that the college does not try to control and shape your spirit life. You can not legislate morality or spirituality. The people of the United States and of this state have tried, by placing on the statute books, certain laws to legislate morality, and they have made a dismal failure, because the moral side, the spirit side of human life is an individual problem, and it can not be made other than an individual problem. The best the college can do is to help you get into that kind of environment that will enable your spirit life to grow, but we, in the organization of the college can not make you develop your spirit life. It is something that comes from within each individual, and it is something that you alone are held responsible for, and you alone some day have to stand

and give an account of how you have conducted your spirit life, and it will ~~be~~ then your problem just as it is your problem today, so when we view it from that standpoint, I am glad that each individual is an individual and has the individual responsibility for the development of his spirit life. Young women, I hope that during this college year each one of you will remember that the spirit life is your individual responsibility, and that you alone can develop it. You, working with the Great God of this Universe, you, working with the Great Spirit, and only you working with the Great Spirit can develop properly your spirit life.