

Chapel, Friday Morning, October 2, 1925

Robert H. Wright.

I do not know just how many students we have here this morning. We have registered 647 and there are others, so I do not know just what our enrollment is or what it is going to be. I do know that this chapel looks like it is full and I see some going up in the gallery.

Young women, we are glad to see you. We are pleased to know that you have made arrangements, those who could not get in the dormitories, to live in the community and to come to college. I will be frank with you, however, we have about 100 more than we ought to have, but I am not going to talk to you about that this morning. I am glad you are here.

If there is any truth in statistics, and some man says there is not, there are about 2,000 students, or would-be students in North Carolina this year -- 2,000 graduates of high schools, who wanted to come to college in North Carolina this year who could not get into college. That is a distressing condition to me. Our state has not enlarged its institutions of higher learning as rapidly as our people have builded high schools and as rapidly as our children have finished the high school courses. I do not know just when North Carolina is going to awake to the situation, I hope before you go back and stir them up, but I am afraid you are going to have to have an important hand in waking our people to our repsonsibility to our children. You are here in this college. You are in the one college in North Carolina that is devoting its entire energy to the one purpose of preparing people for efficient service in the schools of our state. That is what we do. We do not pretend to do anything else. Ours is strictly a professional school for people who want to practice the profession of teaching, just as definitely a professional school for teachers as is a medical school for doctors, or a law school for lawyers, or a theological seminary for preachers.

We are assuming, therefore, that when you come to this institution, you have come here with a realization of the purposes of this institution and with a desire on your part to make of yourself the most efficient teacher possible. To be sure the work that a person takes to train for the profession of teaching is perhaps as fine a college course to live by as can be found anywhere, but it is ^{given} with a view of helping those who take the work to become efficient teachers. Your work here is a work that should prepare you for efficient service in the schools of our state. This being the case, it is very important that you take a definite course of study and that you take a complete course of study, and that you do not try to take more than a complete course. Now, let me explain what I mean. There are people who come to college for the first time who have a preconceived idea of what they want to do, and that is all right. I am not objecting to that, but sometimes they want to take a little of this and a little of that and so on. A professional school cannot offer courses of that kind. If you are going to be a primary teacher, there is a very definite line of work for you to follow. It is put in the course of study. It is balanced so as to give you what you should have and not to give you anything except what you should have. If you leave out a part of it, it will not be the best course to pursue to become a primary teacher, or if you take more, you may suffer from mental indigestion. It does not pay to overeat even though it may be a box of candy that he sent to you. In other words, we have here a faculty specially trained, each one for his particular line accordingly, and this faculty has worked out the best course of study that we know how to work out so as to help you to make the best primary teacher, or the best grammar grade teacher, or the best high school teacher possible. Now, if you want to get the most out of your study, and I know you do, then it will pay you to take a straight course of study. "But, Mr. Wright, I want so and so". "All right, maybe we can give it to you." And then when in

the course of study you have come to that, you have had it and must take something else, there is a conflict on your schedule. The result will be that you will not do a year's work. "But I can do 21 hours of work." Well, I don't know how smart you are. Maybe you can, but I don't believe it. I don't think you ought to. I have heard of one man who ate twelve loaves of bread and 10 hog heads at one time. I don't believe you can eat that much and I would not have believed that this man could ~~have done~~ it if he hadn't done it, and I know it wasn't good for him because he did not eat anything else for two weeks and there was a reason why. You take a straight course of study and do that course of study. Take it all and don't take any more than all, and you will have enough. Let me get away from the routine for just a minute.

Do you realize the responsibility that rests upon you by virtue of the fact that you are now college students. O, I realize that it is just the next year beyond the high school, and I hope every teacher in this college will realize that. But somehow the world is looking to the college men and women of today for its leaders and they are criticizing all that we do because we are in the midst of a period of criticism of all the leaders of the world. There is a fight on throughout these United States against higher education. There are college presidents in America today who say that a large percent of the boys and girls who go to college out to be kept at home and put to work, that they are simply going to college to have a good time or to please Mama and Papa, that they are being sent to college, that we ought somehow to fix a test and give to all of them and eliminate from our college a large per cent of those who are now in college and take only the intellectuals. Yes, there are college presidents in the United States today taking that position. There are ministers in the churches taking a similar position. There are editors and publishers of newspapers and magazines taking the same position. They are all wrong, because that is not the spirit of democracy. That is not

the spirit of this great Republic of ours. A government like ours in which the highest position is open to the most lowly citizen, is a government that stands for an equal opportunity for every child in America, and the boy or girl wherever he or she may be should be given every opportunity to improve himself for the responsibilities that are to come to him; as a citizen of our Republic, it makes no difference who he may be, he must be given a chance to make the most possible out of his life. That is true democracy, and I, for one, am going to fight that spirit of aristocracy, perhaps we might call it, that spirit of intellectual aristocracy that is sweeping from high places and from low places in this Republic of ours.

There are people who say that unless you can stand a certain given test that you ought to be assigned to manual labor. Who gave any man the power to be a judge, or set a limit to the possibilities of a God given life in a Republic like ours. Thank God we live in a country in which the burning ambition of youth may work its way out, and the youth may go on and on just as far as he has ability to go and reach the heights to which his ability will allow him to go. But you are college women now and there rests upon you a responsibility to demonstrate to these people the worthwhileness of giving all of our children a chance in college, if they want to go, and the best way for you to demonstrate that is by making good. As a student here in this college this year, you owe that responsibility to your college, you owe that responsibility to your family, to your country, you owe it to your self and you owe it to your God. I read this passage of scripture this morning, selected it on purpose. When God created man, he said "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it." He gave man dominion over the fish of the sea, the fowls of the air, every animal and every creeping thing on the face of the earth, over every plant of every kind. He gave man dominion over the

earth, placing that responsibility of subduing it and finding God's law and using these things that God has given us for our good and for God's glory. There is a fight between ignorance and intelligence. There are people who believe that it is sinful to find out things about God's laws. They are just like folks were hundreds of years ago when they began to learn something about chemistry. Do you know that the best people thought that those people who were working in chemistry were the servants of the Devil and they called them the workers in "black art". In other words, we must not know too much. But God said "Subdue this earth". God gave us dominion over it. The responsibility of doing the very best you can is a responsibility that you owe to God as well as to your country, your college, your home and yourself.

You are in a new environment. It is all new to some of you, and you come up to some girl and say "Where can I register?" "I do not know." She is just as made as you are and she does not know a bit more about it than you do, for over half of you are new. You think -"what sort of folks have I come in touch with?" And then you go off and have a good crying spell, I expect you have and you say, "I wish I was back home", And there isn't any place like home. I know it is all new and all strange and you don't know what to do, nor how to do and you feel like - "O, well, it isn't worth it. What is the use of it all?" It is terrible to be homesick; you know that is all it is, just homesick, and it won't kill you. It may be contagious, but it won't kill you. Now, you may think I am cruel, but I am glad you are homesick. I am glad you love your home well enough to get homesick. That is a good sign that there is something in you, you are worth having, you are worth working with. Now, I don't mean that you have got to get homesick to be worth working with, but, young friends, that thing we call home is at the very foundation of this civilization of ours, and if we ~~did~~ not love our homes, though we may not cry about it, we would not have the great country that we have and the high type of citizenship, and the high type of people that we have. It centers in the home and I am glad you love your homes and feel toward it like you do, but I would not give two cents for you if you did not have backbone enough to resist that temptation and to go forward with your purpose in

life to make good.

You are going to find your associates. There are students in this college who will be helpful to you, and there are students whose influence will be hurtful. You are going to make your own close friends and companions, and they are going to be of service to help push you up, or they are going to be like millstones around your neck to drag you back. I wish you could have read a letter that I received this summer from a girl, whom, I am sorry to say, I could not take back in the college - how she said, "it was all due to the other girl whose company I kept. She said "Mr. Wright, if I had not made that kind of companions, I could have gone on." It was the kind of letter that goes right straight to one's heart, and I thought how important it must be to the young woman who goes off to college to make the right kind of contacts with her college mates. Hold your ideals high, young women, and don't take anyone as your friend who does not have high ideals, the right kind of ambitions, the right kind of purposes, who does not have the real stamina of clean minded true American womanhood, and there is nothing more ennobling in this world than the true minded, noble American woman. The kind of companions that you take on are going to help you or they are going to handicap you during this college year. Be careful of the kind of associates that you take close ~~in your xxxxxxxx life~~ to you in your life. Make your adjustments to this new environment just as quickly as you can and rest assured that the college feels its responsibility for you, and that we are going to give you every opportunity possible to make the most out of this year in your life, and I want to say to you from deep down in my heart that I have faith in you all. I am so sick and tired of these people who are constantly decrying from the platform, the pulpit and in the public press that this generation of boys and girls is going straight to the devil. I am against those folks and I am with the boys and girls of today. I know that the same kind of ambitions that has burned in the hearts of their fathers and mothers burns in the hearts and souls of the boys and girls of today. All

my life I have heard people decrying the sins of "this generation". Before the great World War I heard people say, hundreds of people, that the boys of today do not have the character that their fathers had and would not make the soldiers that their fathers made. I pray God that they may never again have to make soldiers, but the great World War gave that generation of boys a chance, and I want to tell you that they did not make the soldiers that their fathers made, but they made better soldiers. They demonstrated to the world that they loved their country and that they had the spirit of patriotism and the courage that equaled the spirit of patriotism and the courage of any preceding generation that the world has ever known, and in my judgment surpassed the courage and patriotism of any preceding generation. I know that you young women are just as ambitious to make the most possible out of your life as an individual as any young women have ever been. I know you are going to make good. O, I hear old people talk about the paint and powder, the drug store, that is what they call it now, that the girls are putting on their faces today, and I think some of you do put too much, but sometimes I hear old women talking that way with their own faces powdered and you can't tell whether they are old or young. They have been taking treatment to take the wrinkles out. And I hear them talking about the styles of today, about how absurd they are. Thank God, the styles are more sensible today than they have ever been. I haven't a bit of patience with those little things that are here today and gone tomorrow. Back down in my heart is the ambition to make something out of my life that is worth while, and I know that you have that ambition, and I want to assure you that this college is going to help you to make the most out of your life possible.

Just one other thing, as I can't be here tomorrow, I want you to do one thing for me next Sunday. I want you to sit down Sunday and write a love letter, a long one, and send it to your mother. You can write the other one if you want to. I am asking you to write this one because I want

you to write it. Don't send a message to your mother that will tear her all to pieces. If you are so homesick that you must write her, write her anything in the world that you want to, just put it down, page after page of it, and then tear it up and put it in the waste basket. It will do you good to write her and get it out of your system. Every year some girl tears the home folks up and they come down to see me and by the time they get here the girl is all right. They are making a sacrifice for you and don't make it any harder than you have to. There is no one on earth so close to you as Mother. Write her a long letter, a letter that will make her glad that she is making the sacrifice to send you to college and you will be glad and feel better and she will be glad and feel better. It is the thing to do.

Those students who are not living in the dormitories, please stay in the chapel. The other are dismissed.