

Chapel, October 12, 1926, President Wright

I want to speak to you this morning on three subjects.

I have observed and I am sure you have observed on last Sunday and the Sunday before the conduct of students and other people on and near Fifth Street. I think it is absolutely disgraceful. I hope you are as disgusted with it as I am. I am going to ask the Student Government Association to take it in charge, and I am going to ask the student body to get behind it and see if you can't remedy the thing that is going on on Fifth Street. I know you can do it if you want to and I am going to give you a chance to do it. I had much rather you would do it than for the college to have to do it. If you do not do it, the college will. Girls just marching up and down like people in an insane asylum, walking around behind the bars talking to everybody on the outside. Young women, this is not that kind of a place. Girls hollering "Hello!" to everything that rides by. Now, young women, do you know what type of women do that kind of thing? You can't afford it. There is a class of folks you can't afford to put yourself in line with. There are some things that we can't do with propriety. You can find plenty of "Jelly Beans" that will answer every hello you will give them and then go on by. Girls go down here on these entrances and sit there and when I come along they show that they are nervous. Well, I know that they have been doing something that they ought not to have been doing, or they thought they ought not to have been doing it. Whenever my presence creates an excitement, I know that something has been going on that ought not to have been going on. Young women, I have defended this generation of young people and I expect to continue to defend it. I believe there is as much good in the young folks of today, I believe there is more good in the young folks of today, than there has been in any preceding generation of young people. And I am talking to you from the depths of my heart when I say it. I honestly believe that, but there have always been people who stepped beyond the bounds of propriety. That has always been true and it is still true. The type of girl that wants to

do the kind of thing that you know about and that I know about that is going on here is not the type of girl that I think will make a good teacher. She is not the type of girl that I want in this college. If you do not have any higher ideals than that you are not fit to teach the children of North Carolina, because you will instill that kind of ideals in them, and that is not the type of ideal that makes for good citizenship. The world is suffering for leaders, suffering for a lack of people who are willing to do the right thing, obey the laws and conform to those things that are high and noble in human life. You are training yourselves to be leaders of ^{the} children of North Carolina into the right way to live, not into the wrong way. "But, Mr. Wright, we do that at home." Yes, you know all the folks at home, but you don't know all of these people. "But I happened to know those who were in that car." All right, the rest of the folks don't know that you know them. The people in the car just back of that one don't know that you know them, and the people in the car just in front of that one don't know it. And they say, "There's one, watch her. I'll bet she will go to ride with him later." And I am not sure he would lose his bet. I am not blaming the automobile. It is a God-send, but everything that comes has possibilities of good and bad. It depends upon how you use it.

You don't know how it hurts me to have to put those chains up on these grounds on Saturday night. I would be proud to be able to say to the world that our grounds are public and that the people behave themselves aright toward the student body, but the people of the community don't do it. They get in automobiles, stick their feet out, just to show you how mean they are. They drive through the campus and holler. You have a right to enjoy the grounds that were made for you, but if you stand on Fifth Street and beckon to people they are going to come, and they will continue to come. You can control this thing.

When I was ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ a boy I went to a picnic and there was a young man who was pretty well known in the community. He had moved to

a town that was forty or fifty miles away, and forty or fifty miles away was farther away then than it is now. He took a friend of his and came down to his home place to attend this picnic. The fact that this other young man was a friend of his was all that was necessary for the young women to accept this visitor and they accepted him. He was introduced to a number of the finest young women in that community, and they all took him in as one of their party, sitting and talking to him. One of them asked him what was his business in X, giving the name of the town. He said, "I work in a bar room." In twenty minutes there wasn't a girl at that picnic who would talk to him. He was left alone. They didn't declare it from the house-tops but they whispered it among themselves and passed it around that Will's friend was a bar keeper and a bar keeper wasn't welcome in that society. In a short time he was walking down the railroad track by himself. The young women at that picnic controlled the situation, and I am just as convinced as I can be that you young women in this college can control that Fifth Street situation if you want to. I am persuaded that there is enough of the right spirit in this college to control it. That is one of your biggest problems. I am not going to tell you what to do. I want you to do it in your way.

There is another thing that I want to talk to you about this morning that is entirely different, and that is about doing your work this term. I don't know that you have read a catalogue, most people do not read catalogues, but there is a reason for writing a catalogue. If you will turn to page 26, you will find the following: "If a student makes one or more 5's he shall be required to drop as many hours of work as he failed to pass, provided that no first year student be required to drop more than three hours of work for the first term, and provided further that no student be permitted to register the next term who has failed in fifty per cent of his work, except by recommendation from his teachers to the credits committee and approval of the president! We haven't been able to put this into full operation because it wasn't published until this catalogue and there has been a term since most of you/ young women were here.

If a student is poorly prepared and, therefore, not able to carry the full course of work, it isn't treating that student right to require her to take the full course. It isn't treating the student right. We are looking at it from your standpoint. I know that in most places, especially in the high schools, if a student is failing in his work, they give him the full course, and say make up your failure. In other words, they give him more work than the regular course. That isn't right. Understand, we are assuming that you are willing to work and trying to do your work. All our regulations are made on the assumption that the student comes here to work. If you work and still make a failure, it isn't fair to you to keep you here and it isn't fair to your parents. So if we are sure you are going to fail, we simply say to you, drop three hours of work and see if you can carry the rest of it. If you are so poorly prepared, or for any reason you can't master fifty per cent of the work, it is treating you and your parents wrong to try to keep you when you can't do it. Many of these failures are due to poor training back yonder in the high school. I am sorry that this is true, but it is true, and you and I are working to remedy that for the next generation of children that come along. The time to get that work is now, not just before examinations. If you don't understand it, if it is all cloudy to you, go and talk to your teacher. Your teacher will be glad to help you. It will be a privilege of her's or of his to help you make your adjustments. I know that sometimes parents and sometimes students feel that a regulation of this kind is hard on the students. It isn't, young women, it is the only fair way to treat you. If you are just loafing, if that is what you are doing, you are in the wrong place. I don't want you to go home yet. I don't want you to go home half as much as some of you want to go. I hope you have got over that. You know you will get over homesickness, and it has never killed any one yet, but I want you to get busy with your work, and I want you to take up these ^{suggestions} ~~subjects~~ that will be of help to you. I want you to understand that our policy is to be of help to you.

The third thing, a number came to chapel late this morning. I am glad you came late though you were marked absent. It shows the right spirit, but be here on time. Be to your post of duty every time on time.