

(Wright)

CHAPEL, January 31, 1931

-- President Wright

Scripture lesson: 112th Psalm

I am quite sure that you enjoyed the musical program last evening and I want to thank those who brought the Trio to us and thank Miss Gorrell for telling us how and when to cheer the musicians. Programs of that kind help one a great deal. In developing one's life it is necessary to develop the artistic as well as the practical. The person who can enjoy the artistic things of life is the person who lives the fuller life.

I want to take the remaining part of the chapel period this morning to talk to you on this subject: should chapel attendance be compulsory? There is a question mark in the minds of a number of people, good people, about that one question. Should attendance on class be compulsory? This is a question in the minds of a lot of good teachers. There are school systems in the world in which attendance on class is not compulsory. There are places where students go and register and show up at examinations, and may not attend any work at all during the year so far as the regulations of the institution are concerned--not required to attend. Should we have any required subjects for a student to take? There was a high school in the United States a few years ago that made everything elective. Simply said you must have a certain number of credits. It was making an experiment to see if students would dodge the so-called hard subjects. It was found that they did not. It wasn't necessary to require students to take anything, but just to have a required number of credits. But it didn't take. Throughout the world it was not accepted. It didn't take in colleges; they still require

certain subjects for admission in college. Elective courses, only, in colleges and freedom from attending classes hasn't taken throughout the world. Teachers still don't believe that is the way to run a college. If you go to a medical school you have no electives at all. All are required because one must do certain things to be a doctor. The same is true in a dental college or a law school. You may go beyond that in a law school but you stay in college longer.

We people in this country believe that there are certain definite things that folks ought to do, and in making out our courses of study require certain things. If you wish to be a teacher certain definite things are set down by the colleges as required courses of work. If you attend classes you get something out of them, if you cut you don't. Therefore we require people to attend classes. Then why, if the spirit life is the big thing of life, why should we not go to chapel? Personally, I can't see why we shouldn't, and haven't seen it. I am open to conviction. But perhaps you say you can't make a person religious. No, you can't, but recitations can't make a girl pass her work, either. But you can expose her to it and give her a chance. Most of the people who make these negative suggestions are people who do not want to develop along those lines --not all, perhaps, but most of them.

I was talking with a man three or four years ago on the subject of prohibition. I thought he was a prohibitionist. It didn't make much difference with me, however, but I thought he was. He took a very strong position against our present prohibition law in the United States and in part I agreed with him, because I think we went about it in the wrong way, as a nation. I got on the other side to bring out his point. We had considerable argument, and I didn't convince him. Later I found that that man kept moonshine liquor in his home all the time. He was never

known to be drunk, but was a constant drinker. I don't mean that everybody who doesn't like prohibition drinks; I don't mean that, at all, but it is the part of every person as a good citizen to conform to the laws of our state, county, and nation, or any other organization of which we are members, and give those organizations our undivided support. Usually, the people who are constantly kicking are not working along the lines which I suggested yesterday for having changes made and are simply people who don't want to do the things regulations require and those folks are not good citizens in any community.

If one's spirit life is one's eternal life then it is one of the duties of the college to throw around the students of the college every possible influence to stimulate and develop the growth of the spiritual life of the student body.

I don't know how many people, probably fifty, have asked me ^{during the past year} lately about our chapel and I have told them we require the students to attend five times a week, that we felt and hoped we were helping them in this way. I have yet to find one who didn't approve it most heartily. As best we can find out this is in keeping with the spirit of the state of North Carolina; in keeping with the spirit of our people. In the talk that Mr. ^{Pelham} Pelliner gave us the other day he spoke of that type of person sometimes called the roughneck that you might sometimes have to teach. I was glad that I could say to him, on the way out, that these girls won't have to teach that kind of boys and girls. He said "Dr., you are certainly fortunate." The spirit of our people is different from that. It is the spirit that wants to get the best there is out of life; a willingness to make almost any sacrifice to bring about the highest type of citizens possible.

This is being shown in our present legislature. They may not do the best thing but they are doing the best they can and doing it for the boyhood and girlhood of North Carolina. Then why shouldn't we show them that we are striving to develop the best side of human life.

I know how the great mass of students in this college feel about this and I thank God for the spirit here. I ^{was} ~~wad~~ delighted to learn the number of girls taking the Bible courses and realize the spirit that is in this school, that will help every boy and girl who comes here, and I thank God for it. I don't want that spirit to enter our college that will make people shun the place of worship and make people stay away from the exercise the college carries on to help develop the spiritual life.

Should chapel be compulsory? Until we can get rid of that spirit -- yes. If we didn't have that spirit it wouldn't be necessary, but even then it would be advisable. It is advisable for young people to have regulations that will help us whip our lives into that channel that will help them develop in the best possible way.

May this college never have any regulation that ^{will not} ~~won't~~ help develop the best there is in life.