

THE COLLEGE Y. M. C. A.

A brief sketch of the Young Men's Christian Association in colleges may prove of interest. It is a modern movement. In college history it has been far from the rule for colleges to be remarkable for religious earnestness. In fact, it is too true that college life and irreligion have been associated. Throughout America the past half-century has witnessed a Christian movement in colleges which affords cause for devout thankfulness. The first regularly organized Christian societies in the colleges were organized in the University of Virginia and the University of Michigan in the year 1858. The next twenty years saw the organization of about twenty-five societies. In June, 1877, was held the first Intercollegiate Convention of the Young Men's Christian Association. At this convention twenty-one colleges were represented. The wonderful spread of the movement can be realized when we consider that in 1858 there were only two religious societies in all the colleges of America, and that two years ago, in 1895, four hundred and seventy-five associations were reported as being organized, with a membership of 30,000 students. Surely, when we consider the difficulties that oppose the successful carrying forward of religious work in colleges, and consider the success that has up to the present attended the movement, we must believe that God is in the work. Those who believe that they see in the young men's movement in colleges one of the indications that the Heavenly King is marshalling His forces for a more earnest and more widely extended conflict with the powers of darkness, sin and error than the world has yet witnessed, are surely not without reason for indulging in such a hope.

Many considerations might be urged as reasons why Christian students should enter heartily into religious service in connection with our Y. M. C. A. Associations, but space will not permit me to refer to more than three. It is a protection to the Christian student. There is, I believe, no more dangerous time, no time when

temptations are stronger and more subtle than during college life. To some there are temptations to pronouncedly immoral practices; to some temptations toward skepticism; to some temptations toward the satisfying of selfish ambitions, which results in something very far removed from the cultivating of that love that seeketh not her own. The author of all evil is not slow to recognize nor tardy in seizing points of strategic importance in the great moral conflict between light and darkness, and as the moral condition of those who leave college is almost invariably fixed, it should not be a matter of surprise that there are innumerable traps laid here that have in the past caused the destruction of many a boy who once gave promise of a good and useful life. If our associations exert a protective influence, then they rightly claim the sympathy and support of all to whom Christianity means the same as it did to St. Paul, a wrestling not against flesh and blood, but against wicked spirits in heavenly places.

The second consideration is that our association tends to keep before Christian students the unchanging truth "None of us liveth unto himself." I believe there is no time during the whole life of a college student when personal influence counts for so much, either for good or evil, as during the comparatively short time spent at college, and yet no truth is more easily lost sight of than this. The close application to study that is required, and the feeling of irresponsible freedom that is associated with life at college have a very strong tendency toward causing a man to forget that his life, by an irrevocable law, must be re-lived in the lives of his companions. If his life has been unselfish and strong, because strengthened by Him who can "strengthen with all might," that life will be re-lived in the lives of his intimate companions, and who can tell where that influence will cease? While on the other hand, if while named by the sacred name of Christian, his life is marked by no earnestness of purpose nor any of the