

sonable persuasion—a silent, retiring, but ever-present force—should stand the imperative figure of law, always in abeyance, but always there. And above all, as just urged, let not the cause of this compulsion be mixed up with a secular regulation, but depend on its own inherent rectitude and conformity with the Divine Will. The student is to understand that he must come; but then this “must” has nothing, to do with the local policy. It is the combined dictate of revelation of history, of human want and welfare, and of the ripest judgment of all wise men. So an external order must be maintained. The intrinsic right of the matter is satisfied in no other way. Disturbance, loud whispering, the furtive use of a book or pencil, a slouched dress, or a longing attitude, should all be prohibited at every cost. If the pupil pleads that his heart is not in the service, and that an outside compliance is an insincerity, the fallacy can easily be shown him. The rule comes to aid his deficiency, and disposes everything to facilitate an interested participation. Besides, there are others close by who are really and thoughtfully worshipping, entitled to decorous surroundings. There is not the least hostility to free and cordial devotions in such regulations. Every sensible man knows that his strongest and happiest and healthiest labors are braced up and kept in place by law. Every transition from term-time to vacation, or from professional tasks to purely voluntary ones, illustrates that. As we lately heard one of our most faithful and unremitting scientific minds,—one where we should have hardly suspected the existence of any such reliance, express it,—“Our most spontaneous studies have to be subjected to some form of constraint.” We get our freedom under a yoke. Besides, the fundamental idea of a college or a school is that its members are “under tutors and governors;” and the success of every part of the educational process depends on the forming hand of law. Here, then, seems to be the true principle; the secular discipline of an institution has no right to subordinate the devotions to itself, nor to use them for its purposes; but those devotions demand a rational and gracious discipline of their own, in keeping with their dignity, and precise enough for their external protection.

Though perfect order, or the nearest possible approximation to it, ought to be insisted on, after the form of the exercise is determined, we held that Christian pains should be taken to remove every burdensome element and circumstance pertaining to it. A principal one is often found in an unseasonable hour. The lessons and lectures of college, especially when the numbers of students are large, require a long day. It is a common impression that the day should begin with public prayer. This often brings that service so early that the prayer-bell acts as a wrench to pull the reluctant attendants out of their beds. This is laying upon a duty, which needs every accessory to make it agreeable and attractive, a foreign and extrinsic load, giving it a bad reputation. We account it an irreverence to bring inevitable and superfluous dislike on any worship. Morning prayers should be held at an hour when every healthy student may be reasonably expected to be up and dressed. Otherwise, a habit of feeling and of speaking is gradually engendered incompatible with due veneration.

In Harvard University the experiment has been tried, within a year or two, of assembling for morning prayers after breakfast, and indeed at two or three different times, in the first part of the day. The result, on the whole, has been favorable to making the prayers the first exercise, before breakfast; and this appears to be the preference of the students themselves, both on the score of natural fitness and personal convenience. The subject justifies an extensive comparison of different judgments and experiences.

This seems to us quite clear, that whatever sacrifices of comfort, or effort of the will, this attendance may demand, the sacrifices and the effort ought to be borne by the board of government and instruction along with the pupils. With a few allowances, the prayers are indeed just as important for the one class as the other. If the officers are absent, it is at least natural that the pupils should tacitly ask why they are obliged to be present. The great law of voluntary self-denial comes into action here, as in so many of the relations of teachers to their scholars. Say what we will about universal principles, the ethics of a college and a school are peculiar. They exempt from no general duty, but they impose special and local ones of their own. The great universal principle is to do the most good in all circumstances. So sensitive are the moral sympathies of these seminaries, that a conscientious, high-principled Christian teacher will put away from him many an indulgence otherwise harmless, and cheerfully take up many a task otherwise needless, solely from a reference to the moral purity of those under his care, and in deference to that grand ethical law so nobly interpreted by Paul in the fourteenth chapter to the Romans. We are persuaded that very much of the present disaffection in these institutions at the exacted attendance would gradually disappear, if it were seen that the officers all regularly came of their own accord. Nor should they come merely to use an oversight of the under-graduates. That may be done incidentally. The prime purpose should be to engage honestly in the worship, to offer praise and supplication to the Lord of life, to learn that august lesson of faith and love toward Him, of whom “day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto

night showeth knowledge,” which is just as necessary for the strong and the wise, as for the weak and simple.

We come back from the details of method,—none of which can be insignificant where the end is so high,—to the spiritual forces involved, and the infinite object contemplated. God, who alone is true, has promised that he will hear the prayers of his people, and has conditioned the bestowment of his richest blessings on their being sought in singleness of heart. The history of our country is all bright with evidences how he watches over the nurseries of a pure learning, and from the very beginning has turned the seats of Christian education into fountains to gladden the wilderness and the city of God. “Such prayers as Dr. Dwight poured forth in the Chapel of Yale College, when, in the agony of his spirit, he wrestled with God, as well as struggled with men, for the victory over error and sin, never fall powerless on the ear of man or God, never fail to carry the worshipper into the very presence of their maker.” Nor was it ever plainer than now, that the healing branch of devotion needs to be thrown into the head waters of popular intelligence to sweeten their bitterness. Intellectual pride, a cultured self-will, unbelieving science, literary conceit, all lift their disgusting signals to show us that the knowledge of this world is not to be mistaken for the wisdom of Heaven. Knowledge is power, but what kind of power? A power of beneficence or a power of destruction? That depends on other questions. For what is knowledge sought? To whom is it consecrated? Into whose name is it baptized? Let us save ourselves, if we may, from a brain developed only to be demonized, and from the delusion of mastering the secrets of nature only to be brought into a poor bondage to ambition. Knowledge is not sufficient of itself. Now, as of old, and forever, it must wait reverently on the Unseen, and kneel in lowly faith. Men may talk of the pure and passionless air of scientific research, of the certainties of scientific deduction, of the absoluteness of scientific conclusions, decrying, at the same time, the strifes, and altercations, and fluctuations of theology, as if thereby to affirm some independence of thought on God, or some superiority of the understanding over the heart. It is an impertinent comparison and an insane jealousy. Let them explore their own fallacies. Let them not confound theology and religion, nor the processes of science with its ultimate results. Let them read the biographies of scholars, and the history of thought; let them trace the course of the principal scientific discoveries within the last dozen years; let them acquaint themselves with the quarrels of authors, and the disputes of schools, and the gossip of cliques. They will soon find that petty contentions are not confined to ecclesiastical councils, though Heaven knows *their* air is too foul and vexed with them. They will see that everywhere the mind wants the guidance of God’s Spirit; that education without piety is only a multiplying of the means of mischief; and that Christ came into the world as much to teach scholars humility, as to comfort the illiterate. No: those who say such things are not the strong friends of science, nor the true advocates of her dignity, but novitiates in her sacred tuition, and flippant champions whom she disowns. Knowledge and faith have one interest, one aim, one God and Saviour to confess and serve; and therefore over every step in education, every lesson in learning, every day of the student’s tried and tempted life, should be spread the hallowing peace and the saving benediction of prayer.

Deep down in their souls students feel this. At least in their better moments they realize it. Even the most impulsive and inconsiderate have some dim, instinctive witnessing within them that it is good to call on God. Many an earnest believer has felt his first renewing convictions, the first strong grasp of the hand of remorse, the first touch of penitential sorrow, amidst these apparently neglected entreaties. The sure arrow from the Divine Word has there reached many a haughty and obdurate heart. The silent struggle in a young man’s exposed nature, between early principle and fierce solicitation, has often received there the blessed help that secured the victory to virtue. Some germ of holy resolution has found nourishment, and light, and air to grow in. Some half-formed plan of dissipation or vicious amusement has there risen up in its hideous aspect, and been forever dashed to the earth and broken to pieces. Some yielding rectitude or chastity has been reassured and set on its blameless way again in gratitude and joy. Images of home have come before the closed eyes. The voices of mother and sister, of the affectionate pastor that childhood had revered, and of many a saint on earth or angel in heaven beside, have seemed to speak and plead in the simple, fervent petitions. Could the secrets hid in the hearts of educated men be revealed, we have no doubt it would be seen how large a part the college prayers bore in the initiation or the reinvigorating of their best designs. Many a man has there, in silence, said honestly and faithfully to his own conscience, “To-day I shall live more righteously; meanness and sin shall be more hateful to me, generosity and goodness more lovely;” and all the day has answered to the pledge. Admonitions, that would have been rejected if offered from man to man, work their effectual plea in the indirect persuasion of a request to the Father of Light. Noble friendships between young hearts have felt themselves more disinterested and more secure for the holy appeal to the Source of Love. The