

reject only the bad. If I have a basin of dirty water, I can get rid of it only by throwing it away. But if I pour it about the roots of a living tree, every particle of impurity will be left to remain in the soil, and the roots will drink up only that which to them is pure and healthful. So religion as a life stirring the young heart will purify, not cast away all the exhilarating and health-giving forms of boyish sport and excitement.

*To present religion in this way to college boys, the workers must be men of strong spiritual nature, men of deep feeling, of great faith, of fine enthusiasm, great hearts.* If you can find an old man with a young heart, so much the better; if not, young men themselves must take the lead. But whoever leads must have *life within; mere dead form will not do.* And herein lies one of the chief advantages of the Y. M. C. A. in promoting Christian work in colleges. It has not yet grown rigidly formal in its modes of work. It can adapt itself, and in the hands of college boys themselves, it will naturally shape itself to meet their own needs. But after thirty years of college life, in which we have continually mingled with college meetings conducted by the boys themselves, we have found the meeting most full of the emotional to be the most successful and popular.

We have thus far been thinking of students in the earlier part of their course, such as the Freshman, Sophomore, or academy boy on this continent, or the Eton or Rugby boy of England. But as a student reaches higher stages of advancement, a change comes over his nature. The great questions and doubts of philosophy begin to arise. The scientific discipline which demands a why and a wherefore for every assertion, begins to enforce its claims in regard to religious truth, and then the student arrives at the most critical point of his spiritual life, and those who help him must be wise indeed. And first of all we would say that the kind of work on which we have already enlarged is of essential service here. To those whose piety is fervent—who have a strong well-assured living faith, not a mere credence, but the faith which brings the soul into the presence-chamber of Deity—this crisis of doubt comes with far less danger. Whether they can solve the problem by reason or not, they *feel* that there is a God, and that His voice speaks within their hearts. And this strong assurance of faith is a sheet anchor holding secure against the first blasts of scepticism. If, on the other hand, the inward spirit-given faith has been neglected, and the religious emotions and affections have been allowed to decline, no general theory of religion can give full security to the young mind against the first strong assaults of doubt. Doubt comes with the first imperfect attempts of the mind to form a philosophy. Intellectual assurance is the work of the most profound and perfect philosophy.

“A little learning is a dangerous thing;  
Drink deep or touch not the Pierian spring.”

But while our philosophy is seeking these deep foundations for faith (and this is often a work of long years), on what is faith meantime to rest? On traditional belief? Nay: for the first assaults of doubt have overthrown that. It is the most sacred princi-