

A UNIVERSITY CHURCH.

Suggested Solution of Yale's Chapel Problem.

To the Editor of YALE ALUMNI WEEKLY:

The present opportunity is a favorable one for discussing important Yale matters without embarrassment to either the outgoing or the incoming administration, and with possible advantage to the University. One of the matters which will probably demand attention before long is a re-adjustment of the relations of the College church to the University.

In several directions the administration of Yale has been broadened so as to promote as symmetrically as possible the interests of its various departments, and efforts have been made to make their members all feel that they are sharers together of a common University life. A marked exception to this enlightened policy has been the absence of official provision for the religious needs of students who are not in the Academical Department.

The College church was organized at the middle of the last century, when there was only one department to be provided for, and it has remained ever since simply a college church. A building was put up large enough to accommodate the students at the beginning, and two other chapels have been built, each larger than the one before, but always with reference to the size of the College alone. Meanwhile, other departments have been organized, and have grown in size and importance, until now their membership amounts to one half that of the whole University. For these students, no church with its opportunities for worship and instruction has been provided. They would of course be welcomed at the Chapel, but there is no room for them, and that results from the practise of requiring the attendance of the Academic students. These alone fill the building.

To them the College has faithfully discharged its duty according to its light, but in such a way that it has been obliged to neglect others, in large numbers, who equally need religious instruction. The Sheffield School alone is now larger than the College was at any time during its first hundred and fifty years. In the Law and Medical Schools are numbers of young men of the same age as many in the upper classes in College. To all these Yale owes the same religious duty that it owes to its Academic students. But this duty cannot be discharged in the traditional way of required attendance. To say nothing of the size of the audience room which would be required to accommodate the students of all departments, other adverse considerations would prevail.

Now while required attendance of all is out of the question, voluntary attendance offered to all is entirely feasible, for the Chapel is large enough for a congregation made up of willing worshippers from all sections of the University. With proper attention to the quality of the preaching and of the music, it cannot be doubted that a good congregation could be gathered, and Yale would then discharge its duty to those of its students who are now excluded from the advantages of its religious instruction. Is it not the mission of the College church to become, in this, the only possible way, a true University church?

GRADUATE.

Compulsory Chapel.

In a recent number of the *Yale News* the question of compulsory Chapel attendance was laid before the University and the desire expressed that there be a discussion of its benefits and disadvantages. The *News* believes it is one of the most important questions, from an undergraduate standpoint, that the new administration will have to decide and opened the discussion with letters on the subject from President Charles W. Eliot of Harvard, and President M. Woolsey Stryker of Hamilton College. The letters are printed below:

PRESIDENT ELIOT'S LETTER.

Harvard University,
Cambridge, Apr. 21, 1899.

I am happy to answer briefly, from the Harvard point of view, your ques-

tions of April 20th, about the "College Pastor" and "Compulsory Chapel."

Harvard College abolished compulsory attendance at prayers in 1886, and so far as I know, opinion here is unanimous that the change has been an unqualified gain. Among the preachers to the University who have conducted the chapel exercises since 1886, there has been only one opinion—namely, that the cause of religion in the College has been greatly served by the substitution of voluntary attendance for compulsory.

As to the expediency of having one College pastor, our experience indicates that for us it is better to have each year a variety of preachers representing several denominations. We have each year a board of five preachers, each serving about six weeks, and in addition our Professor of Christian Morals acts as a preacher, and makes all the arrangements for the services in Appleton Chapel during the year. He is, as it were, a permanent chairman of a board, the membership of which changes rather rapidly, most of the preachers serving for not more than three years in succession. I believe that an arrangement of this sort is more interesting to our students and better for the University than the employment of a single College preacher.

CHARLES W. ELIOT.

The other letter is from President Stryker of Hamilton College, who recently spoke in Battell Chapel, and is a strong plea for the continuance of the present system.

PRESIDENT STRYKER'S LETTER.

Hamilton College,
Clinton, N. Y. Apr. 29, 1899.

I have queried whether it would be in good taste for me to express my views for a Yale publication upon all the matters involved in your note and request. But I concluded that it cannot be intrusive for me to answer in part.

Frankly, and as to the main question, I believe thoroughly in required attendance upon the simple religious exercises of our college chapels. I believe in having such exercises. Worship and prayer should go with study and with all the concentrated, abounding and formative life of the college years. Nothing in God's world is merely secular—not language nor history nor philosophy. Each has to face the wonders of His works. I do not beg the question—I answer it, and say that reverence and its social affirmation is indispensably connected with criticism, investigation and research. It becomes a great school to make God the synthesis of all its striving. Deliver me from one that does not.

The word "compulsory" is invidious; but requirement which covers regularity, and standing, may as justly cover a daily convening to acknowledge and entreat the Giver of all good.

Nor should, nor need be, this exercise perfunctory. It should be simple, short, alive and general. It is manly to pray. It is ungentlemanly not to. Praise, too, is an instinct to wise men.

The influence of this gathering is far greater than is recognized. It has hold upon thoughts that are deeper than words. It becomes a great scholarly corporation to own Him that begot and blesses it.

Moreover, the social side of college prayers is of great value—it has a morale of its own. If religion were abandoned it would be well still to gather a college at the head of the day—"compelled," if you prefer it, if no more than to read maxims from Aurelius and to sing "Hail, Columbia"! The solidarity of a student body counts. This daily affirms and augments that. Fortunately we are not shut up to choose only between secularity and sectarianism.

What is genuine in Christianity claims all honest hearts. Such an exercise should and can affirm this.

God is not an elective! It would be a sorry double centennial for Yale that should date the surrender of the corporate act of praise and petition, the whole, daily and cheerful acknowledgment of His "eminent domain" who "taught her to go." It would be a surrender and a recantation.

Bear with my plainness.

Yours very sincerely,

M. WOOLSEY STRYKER.

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Storrs Lectures.

The Storrs lectures for 1899 in the Law School will be given by the Hon. John M. Harlan, LL.D., Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court. The course which will consist of five lectures, will be on the subject of "Constitutional Law," the first one to be given May 23, at 5 o'clock in Osborn Hall. The subjects of each lecture will be announced later.

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