

CHAPTER 13
DAILY CHAPEL

NEXT to the library, without which a college cannot exist, daily chapel can be the most powerful center of influence on a college campus. Daily chapel has been a very significant part of the life of most American colleges and universities. It can be so still, where the enrollment is not too large. Where the college enrolls few enough students so they can all assemble together in the chapel available, great values are conserved through required daily attendance.

The position of president was formerly held almost exclusively by clergymen. To them chapel was a very natural and essential service. Clergymen are less frequently appointed now, and many presidents recruited from the laity have failed to grasp the value of chapel as a spiritual and social influence, and as an institutional center about which the very diversified life of the modern college can revolve.

It is a great thing for all the students to assemble together daily, to meet each other on the way to and from chapel, and to sit together by classes. It is a great thing for the president to preside, to read a portion of Scripture and lead this great group of students in prayer and for all to join in a familiar hymn. It is a great thing for the president to be able to address briefly the entire student body on any matter of common concern, to see them all daily, and to be seen by them.

It is difficult to sum it up in a convincing way, but as one who attended compulsory daily chapel, and who presided at chapel for sixteen years, the writer is glad to register his faith in it as a college institution.

College chapel is a religious service. It cannot be main-

tained on the basis of being instructive. It is and always was a simple assembly of students and faculty in a brief, formal religious service. Where an attempt has been made to turn it over to the students, to bring in interesting speakers, to make it a musical entertainment or otherwise distort its religious character, the result has almost invariably been the abandonment of chapel.

In many instances the student body outgrew any available assembly hall, and required chapel had to be given up. College chapel is a rather intimate service and loses its values where thousands hear through loud speakers.

Where it is continued as a voluntary service, it may well be worth while, but a very definite part of its strength lies somehow in all students assembling by classes and in the consciousness that each feels himself to be a part of the whole college.

In many institutions, required daily chapel is definitely a thing of the past, and it cannot be revived. Where the college is still small and where it is still required, it should be cherished as one of the most important and precious academic functions.