

Resignation of President Chaplin

To the trustees of Waterville College.

Gentlemen:

You are already apprised that, in consequence of some late disturbances in this college, my intentions to resign the office which I have so long held in it was announced to the students on the 17th instant. My views in relation to that subject remain unchanged. Under existing circumstances, I see no reason to expect, that a reconsideration will be affected between me and the disaffected students. And I need not tell you that so long as disaffection on their part continues, all attempts on mine to do them good, either by imparting instruction or by the exercise of authority must be unavailing. I therefore wish to be understood as now resigning, in due form, the office which, for so many years, I have held by your appointment and under your direction. Accept, Gentlemen, my grateful acknowledgment of the many tokens of friendship and confidence with which you have been pleased to honor me, both as individuals and as members of this Board. May we always cherish the friendly feelings which have so long existed between us: and may you be successful in all your endeavors to promote the cause of learning and religion, both here and elsewhere.

As many of the students of the college have manifested dissatisfaction towards me in a somewhat extraordinary manner, it seems to me important that an inquiry should be instituted into my official conduct, particularly that part of it which relates to the Address delivered by me in the College Chapel on the 13th inst. Such an investigation is in my apprehension, the only proper expedient which you can employ for ascertaining whether I am, or am not, still deserving of your confidence. And you cannot but feel, Gentlemen, that if I have not forfeited any claim to your regards, you are bound to give me such testimonials as will ensure me the approbation of an enlightened and impartial public. To a man in my situation, a good name is of vast importance; the loss of it an incalculable evil. My imperfections are certainly many. I know them well; I feel them every day. But I am not conscious of having materially failed of fulfilling my obligations in relation to the college. I address you as an honest man, who has honestly endeavored to discharge the duties which your appointment had devolved upon him. And I cannot feel willing to be sent away as a culprit, after having faithfully and laboriously served this college and this place for 15 years.

When I first came to Waterville, the place where these college buildings now stand was covered with trees and bushes. I need not tell you that, by the assistance and blessing of the Almighty, something has been done; nor need I mention the instruments whom he has chiefly employed.

In stating the reasons for my own resignation, I have said nothing respecting any other officer of the college. It is, however, unquestionably true, that the same reasons may be urged in favor of the resignation of Prof. Conant. He will, accordingly, tender his resignation this very day. And as, during his ten years connection with the college he has proved himself to be a very laborious and able instructor, and a most efficient disciplinarian; and as, besides, he has made

great sacrifices to the college of property, and personal comfort, you will not I trust, suffer him to leave this place with a tarnished or impaired reputation.

In relation to my son who, during the past year, has had a professorship in the college, I would remark, that as the compensation allowed him for his services has been nothing more than the salary of a tutor, it was thought unjust to expect of him much service in the discipline of the college. This circumstance will account for the fact, that, during the late disturbances, he has not incurred the displeasure of the students. He has, however, resolved to leave the college, and will, accordingly, send in his resignation, before the close of the present session.

In closing this communication, I would devoutly acknowledge the Divine Hand in all the success which has attended your efforts and mine to promote the interests of learning and religion, and in our preservation amidst all the changes and sufferings through which we have been called to pass, since our connection with the seminary commenced. My removal to this place was the result of solemn impressions of duty, and was accompanied by a deep and abiding sense of my dependence on God. My motto was, "I know, O Lord, that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." I generally acted in conformity with this motto. In my perplexities (and they were not few) I sought direction at the throne of grace, and although I have experienced great and sore troubles, I see no cause to repent my having come to Waterville. He who, I trust, sent me hither, has mercifully guided and sustained me continually and has granted me the satisfaction of seeing this seminary prosper beyond the most sanguine expectations of its friends. To his blessing, Gentlemen, and to your fostering care, I now most affectionately commend it.

With sentiments of gratitude and respect, I am,
Gentlemen,
Your friend and servant,
JER. CHAPLIN.