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Christian Magnanimity. A Baccalaureate Discourse.
delivered at Dartmouth College, July 14, 1867,
by Asa D. Smith, President, Hanover, N.H.
1867

CHRISTIAN MAGNANIMITY.

A

BACCALAUREATE DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED AT

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BY ASA D. SMITH,

PRESIDENT.

HANOVER, N. H. :
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DISCOURSE.

PSALM 119: 32.

"I WILL RUN THE WAY OF THY COMMANDMENTS, WHEN THOU SHALT
ENLARGE MY HEART."

AMONG the characters of Bunyan's matchless allegory, one of the most attractive and imposing is that of Greatheart. With what interest did we muse in childhood—an interest hardly lessened by the clearer comprehension of maturer years—on the graphic record of his valor; of his braving not the lions only, but their terrible ally, Giant Bloody-man; of his fearlessness in the presence of the fiend of the Valley of the Shadow of Death; of his battle with Giant Maul, who like some modern giants, "did use to spoil young pilgrims with sophistry;" of his rescue of Mr. Feeblemind from Giant Slaygood; of his belaboring and wounding the "monster like a dragon," with seven heads and ten horns; of his conflict with Giant Despair, ending with the death of the huge tormentor and the demolition of Doubt-

ing Castle. Nor was it a mere brute courage that the shrewd dreamer thus shadowed forth. There were in his hero such clearness and compass of thought; such nobleness of purpose; such gentle and generous affections, beaming forth in all the various colloquies; such a balance and symmetry of character; there was in whatever he did such an unaffected loftiness of bearing; that from all Bunyan's curious "commodity of names," not one could have been selected more suitable than Great-heart.

A fitting embodiment have we here of just the style of excellence presented in our text. Eschewing all littleness, the Psalmist longs for enlargement of heart. Nor is it the merely emotional nature he means. A wide scope, as used in the Scripture, has the term heart, taking in the whole mental and moral being. He would be one of the high-souled men, in whom our complex nature has its grandest development. And he craves this fullness of stature for the best ends. It is essential to duty, to usefulness, to achievement, in their most exalted forms. So was it then; and so is it pre-eminently now. There may be a folding of the hands to sleep without it, or a careless lingering, or a slow and listless walking; but no speeding as of a strong man that runneth a race. He that in these times, especially, would be swift and potent in the way of

goodness must be no mean-natured man; he must have the height and depth and length and breadth of character to which, as we understand it, the text points. He must be distinguished, in a word, by what may be properly termed CHRISTIAN MAGNANIMITY. It is of this complex and priceless attribute, that we propose now to speak, setting forth and commending, as we may, its chief aspects and elements.

As first among these, we name *aspiration*. We name it first, because it is, in some sense, most fundamental. It is the stamp of divinity on the human soul; as unperverted, the very likeness of God. It distinguishes man from the brute. The spirit of a beast, we are told, "goeth downward;" and it looketh ever downward—its dull gaze is continually on the same old plane of sense. It deals ever with actuals, and these of the lowest sort. The spirit of a man "goeth upward;" and it looketh ever upward, with a vision reaching beyond the stars. Man, too, is conversant with actuals; but he is made for ideals also—the actuals are ever reminders of them. Into the homeliest warp of life he weaves ever the golden threads of imagination; with the tiniest atom of the finite he links ever the infinite. He touches, indeed, no exact circle, or angle, or right line, but in the warped and jagged approximation, he ever beholds one—in the fire-mist he sees rounded worlds.

In all the ways and works of his kind—his own not excepted—nothing meets him but is more or less faulty; yet beyond and above all, the faultless reveals itself. And unto what the eye sees, the heart is made to go forth with unappeasable longings, such as control the head, the hands, the entire being. The troop of ideals are as God's host—they are very angels, beckoning him skyward, as with the music of paradise. If true to the law of his nature, and to the privileges of a Christian birth right, aspiration passes more and more into reality; he not only looks but moves upward—the untired wing becoming stronger, the eagle eye clearer, and the whole being more and more radiant with the reflected glory of the Infinite. These natures of ours were made evidently for endless development and expansion. As the fair and noble ideals of time are but the steps of the ladder reaching from earth to heaven, so shall the cycles of eternity be but a progressive actualization of all the soul's highest conceptions.

Such is man normally; but not always such is the man of every day life or of history. Aspiration, true and effective, we have said, is characteristic of our kind. Principles and ideals are our prerogative and our glory. But our glory may be turned into shame, and the fruitful field of our heritage into a wilderness. Just at the point we are now making, runs the line of demarcation between the better and

the baser spirits of our race. This one word, aspiration, is an infallible touchstone. Tell me how much or how little a man has of it, in whatever sphere, and I will tell you how worthy or how worthless he is. Capacity is of small moment, comparatively—so auspices, facilities, opening pathways, broad spheres of action. If aspiration be lacking, you shall have but the firm track, and the well-wrought engine, with no propelling power.

How sad the illustrations of this view, that meet us in every quarter. Especially sad is it, when the heart that might have been enlarged unto the noblest outgoes is shrivelled unto all littleness. Here is a student, for example, who with fine parts and and fine opportunities, is content with the lowest possible attainments. He does what he must, and that only. He has no self-propulsion. He floats with the current, welcoming every little restful, delaying eddy. Vacations are his trances; holidays are the gems in his calendar; leaves of absence are as golden ingots. Ideals he scarce knows; he has dismissed them all from his soul, now so contracted by consequence that they could hardly find entrance. He works by constraint, not with a joyous spontaneity. There is, with him, no running in the way of scholarly duty. With all furtive staves and patent crutches, it is but a hobbling pace he goes; and if he manages to finish, after a manner, the prescribed

curriculum, when he takes his place among the world's workers, you have but another cypher on the wrong side of the digits. Here is a professional man, a lawyer, a physician, or—shall we say it?—a clergyman, satisfied to tread ever the old mill-horse track, with no vision or inspiration of grand Olympian stadia, of the goal and the laurel. The world tolerates such men, but it is little profited by them; it honors them little. They bequeath to survivors no fragrant memory; no Old Mortality disturbs the moss that gathers on their tombstones.

The grace we commend has been the desideratum of every age; but our own times, in the marvellous unfolding of human destiny,—our own country, especially, in its grand and ever multiplying opportunities,—seem most imperatively to call for it. There is scarce a place here for the laggard and the driveller. Our transatlantic friends find fault, sometimes, with the intensity of our American life. But how, with the history that incites us; with the foundations that are to be laid here, and the structures that are to be upreared; with the vantage ground for all influence that the Great Republic holds, and the free course it opens to all honorable ambition; can any life that deserves the name, be other than intense? A dull and dead humanity must that be—ready for grave clothes and a dubious epitaph—that

is unmoved by the watchwords of all progress borne to us from the four winds.

Yet, while we thus speak, let not our thought be restricted to the more showy and imposing lines of effort, or to aught of glitter or magnificence in the external. True, aspiration tends naturally to a broadening of the sphere of action. It is worthy of honorable precedence, and so apt enough to gain it. Yet the old saying holds good ever, that the mind is its own place. It may be noble any where, and so ennoble its surroundings. As well by the cotter under his thatched roof, as by the dweller in a metropolitan palace; as well by the sentinel pacing his weary and perilous round, as by the general in his guarded tent; as well by the humblest menial, even the poor serf, as by the titled master, or the king on his throne; as well—to come nearer home—by the merest tyro in knowledge, as by him who can “measure earth, weigh air, and state the tides;” may the element of greatness before us be brightly exemplified. It is greatness of soul, we speak of;—not of position, we repeat it, but of conception, of aim, of endeavor, of all fidelity. It is the simple feeling, which has been a mine of wealth, of power, of reputation, to many a man, that whatever is worth doing, is worth well doing. It is the stern resolve, controlling the whole being, to come short in nothing; to finish the pin-head as conscientiously as the dia-

mond; to make perfection in all things, from the greatest even unto the least, the one alluring and commanding object. You need not doubt that a man of such a habitude, be his outward estate what it may, will "mount up with wings as eagles, will run and not be weary, will walk and not faint." Yea, a cottage shall be as a lordly mansion about him, and his homeliest garb as royal robes.

We name as the second element of Christian magnanimity, *public spirit*. This is the natural offshoot of true benevolence; or rather it is a chief phase of that primal and central virtue. Benevolence, though it has a mission at home, may not linger there. It respects all being. It regards more than its own all public interests, just because in a proper estimate they transcend its own. All that we mean by the phrase public spirit, would be included in a full, unimpeded, unqualified development of the charity engendered and fostered by the gospel. But manifold are the obliquities of human nature, and the gospel in this respect, as in many others, has seldom free course.

It is hindered often by personal idiosyncrasies. Greatly do they err who fancy that all soils are alike to the seed of divine truth, and that if you have but the proper root, you may look for an oak or a banyan tree as well in one place as another. We have a chemistry of earths to learn, as well in the

psychological as the agricultural sphere. A sad overlooking of first truths is it to forget, that fruits of goodness, as well as the peach and the apricot, call for sunny exposures, and are apt to be dwarfed on cold northern hill-sides. Some men are constitutionally narrow-minded, and it is hard for them to help it. They take no broad views of any subject. They are as the

——“critic fly, whose feeble ray scarce spreads
An inch around.”

They see not the relation of things; they follow not the lines of interdependence, as they stretch out far and wide. They take one-sided views; they have little capacity to apprehend things in all their multiform aspects. They dwell in a microcosm. And their affectional moods are of the same cast. They mean to do right, we will concede; but it is right marked out with the surveyor's chain—not right as the winds measure it, or the dews, or the rains, or the all-visiting sunlight. They are narrow-hearted, as well as narrow-minded. You see in them no prompt, far-reaching sympathy, no readiness beforehand, no spontaneous, uncalculating charity, so that “to their power” you may “bear record, yea and beyond their power.” As an almost necessary sequence, they have little enterprise. Propose whatever new thing you please, and there is a lion in the way. They have expansion neither of mind nor of

heart duly to apprehend it. Running in old and easy grooves, they interpose whatever obstacles they may to all progress. They mean not to be selfish, we will suppose; but their chief care is really for their own interests—their charity not only begins but abides at home. What is the nation, the world even, what is posterity, to these attenuated souls, a million of whom would scarce match one Greatheart? You meet such persons everywhere—in halls of learning, in the neighborhood, the parish, the town meeting, the legislative chamber, the church even. In what need stand they of the blessing set forth in the text. Oh for some quickening influence, some leaven of grace, to lift up and enlarge to a true manliness of stature their pigmy natures.

That which is partly natural may be favored by circumstances, and by traditional and hereditary forces. It has been thought by some that the Puritan training, worthy of all commendation in the main, and leading to grand results, has been, in the point we are now considering, a little defective. Nothing is so great under the sun, but it has some touch of weakness. And as the failings of good men not infrequently “lean to virtue’s side,” so their virtues, through the infirmity of human nature, may become failings. The Puritan, in his best estate, has an exceedingly sharp intellect, passing ever below the surface of things, and resting only in great fundamen-

tal principles. He is a geologist, in his tastes, rather than a geographer. Principles are the pearls, for which he is content to be a weary diver in the vast sea of thought; and for which, as he brings them up from the depths, he would battle as for his life. He would go on a crusade for them to earth's remotest regions; nay, if they were to be fought for under the rings of Saturn, and you could show a call and a conveyance, New England might be relied on to furnish an army for the service. But when the *public* are put for the *principle*, and the springs of action must be largely a quick outgushing sympathy, a feeling of brotherhood, a blending of heart with kindred hearts, a merging of the individual in the mass, there is some slight abatement of our confidence. Even in church matters, as those twin elements, autonomy and fellowship, struggle with each other—albeit in their mutual relations they should resemble the binary stars—the former almost always gains the victory. The latter is in danger ever of becoming a rope of sand. Individualism is one of the prominent traits of Puritan character—a noble trait under proper limitations, but in excess certainly, when, as has been said, society tends to “a granulated state.” A broad and genial solidarity should be conjoined with it. While the Puritan cultivates self-reliance and self-assertion—while he can stand alone, if need be, against the world—he should have a care that his in-

dependence become not isolation. He should foster, with all vigilance, his social aptitudes. He should give outflow and scope to his affectional nature; he should see to it, that a generous public spirit be, in his character, as the evergreen coronal about the granite peak.

"None of us liveth to himself," and "We are members one of another"—blessed oracles of a vital Christianity! Fitting expressions of the public spirit we inculcate! Oh, for more of the temper of him who cried, "Blot me, I pray me out of thy book;" of him who said, "Lo, I have sinned and I have done wickedly, but these sheep, what have they done?" of him who exclaimed, "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh;" of him whose prayer was, "Give me Scotland, or I die;" of our own martyr President, who with a strange forecast, declared himself willing, for the nation's sake, even to fall by the assassin's hand. How imperatively does the age call for such a spirit. How, in the marvellous progress of things, are all narrow views rebuked, all limitations to a little circle of private interests. What broad vistas are opening out on every hand. How, by railroads and telegraphs, by travel and commerce, by interchanges of literature and international diplomacies, and though last, not least, by the far reaching explorations and all comprehending

schemes and influences of the great missionary enterprise, is the world being brought together. What a unifying process is going forward. Into what bold relief is the divinely revealed law of human brotherhood passing. There may be names many and hues various; but how increasingly evident to all is the one blood. Everything is taking on an ecumenical aspect. The glow of a more human life, and the expansion of a broader, even a Christian philosophy, is passing into the once gaunt and fleshless forms of political economy and international law. Even while we speak, in the capital of old Gaul, where so many horrors, both ancient and modern, of unscrupulous and sanguinary selfishness have been enacted, a spectacle meets the eye of gathered multitudes, illustrating beyond all that the wildest imagination would once have conceived, the advance of the world toward a blessed unity. In all the contributions of science and art to the Great Exposition, in all the motley groups drawn there, I see at once the symbols and the prophecies of a glorious future. No time is this for mole-eyed provincialism or self-seeking pettyness. And nowhere is the meanness of spirit which we deprecate more out of place than in this land of ours—this great central empire, unique yet all-embracing; drawing into its veins the life-blood of all the nations, and sending back to theirs a healing and purifying in-

fluence; this model land, in its great original institutions; this chief power for the uplifting of a fallen world. He must be singularly untrue to his American affinities, as well as to all divine teaching, who fails to be, in the moods of his heart, as well as his speculations and opinions, a publicist of the largest measure.

Another element of the magnanimity we commend, is *an unpartisan habitude*. This might indeed, have been included under the last head; but it deserves, for its importance, distinct notice. We may utter thus, besides, a needful protest against a possible perversion. It is not enough that you lift a man from the low level of an unmodified selfishness; that you bid him think of others, and care for them, and work with them. The outgoing of the soul may after all have an unworthy restriction; instead of a world-wide charity, you may have but a sinister aim; the public served may be but a clique, and that clique only self slightly enlarged or newly invested. Let there be no misapprehension here. So long as the world stands, there will be diversities of opinion; not even the highest moral attainments will forbid them, resulting as they do from original and ever-during varieties of our common humanity. And out of these diversities, parties, in some sort, will always arise; opinions and interests, in other words, will gather each its own circle of adhe-

rents. There will be denominations, we incline to think, even in the Millennium. Absolute unity comes only of absolute perfection. And good results from all this, kept, as it should be, under the guidance of Christian principle. Keen inquiry is promoted. Creeds, theories, methods are sifted; much chaff is swept away by the winds of discussion. Very inert would the human mind become, if all were held inevitably to the same line of thought; and we know not what monstrosities of belief might result. It is not to the existence of parties, simply considered, that we object; they may be honest, candid, mutually loving and helpful, and so blessed both of God and man. We have Ephraim and Judah on the canvass of prophecy, yet not vexing each other. We have the lion and the lamb, retaining each his identity, yet lying down together. What we condemn and deprecate, as inconsistent with all true greatness of soul, is the mood of him who makes party ultimate and all; not the channel or instrument of truth, but its measure; not a wise and well used method of his mind, but its sovereign; who with a narrowness of heart accordant with his thought, gives up to it, as has been well said, "what was meant for mankind."

Manifold are the springs of this unseemly and noxious habitude. It may come of mental imbecility. Incapable of walking by himself, one may cling to

a leader, and seek further support for his trembling limbs in the close files of the led. How natural, that standing thus only, he should magnify his chief dependence. It may come of interest, which often takes the name of principle, nay, which often passes with one's self for honest conviction. It may come of pride of opinion and a natural obstinacy; or a combativeness which fights hard for whatever it has espoused; or an original clannishness more intense in some than in others. Some men are singularly gregarious in their opinions; there is no precipice of absurdity which they will not leap in droves. A formalistic turn may in others be the source of the evil, a looking to shapes rather than substances, and an inability to recognize essences under any other than a familiar aspect. Give them the old square loaf, and they can digest it; make it round or oblong, and though of the finest of the wheat, they hold it worthless.

Be its genesis what it may, the partisan habit is little and belittling. It does unmeasured harm. It desiccates the heart, and inflames it often. It engenders envyings, jealousies and bitter strifes. Within the sphere even of science and literature, its evil influence has been felt. Its eye has been dim to the brightest discoveries; the finest classifications have been to it as confusion worse confounded; it has scarce yielded to the force even of mathemati-

cal demonstration. When Harvey died, there were probably not forty physicians in England who believed in the circulation of the blood. They held generally with the old party, refusing to tread any but the old paths. Every one knows what Jenner had to contend with in his attempt, as bleareyed opponents phrased it, to "bestialize his species." The fairest forms of history have often been touched and disfigured by this same evil genius; and it has wrought sad estrangements in the republic of letters. I need not tell you what it is in the political sphere, how blind and bigoted, putting light for darkness and darkness for light, how uncandid, censorious, ferocious. Nor need I dilate on the evils of religious sectarianism. With all the allowance we have made, how has Christianity been dishonored by it; how has the truth suffered; what injustice has been done to opponents, what men of straw, what hobgoblins of heresy have been fabricated and battled with; how intent have men been on the color of the ribbon that has bound their beliefs together, on the mere form of the vessel that has contained the water of life. From divisions thus caused what weakness has ensued, what individual barrenness, what local desolation. Many a town could be found in our land—not a few among these New England hills—where no sound of the church-going bell is heard, just because there is not enough of a large-hearted broth-

erliness—a magnifying of the great verities of our common Christianity—to hold in abeyance the shibboleths of half a dozen contending sects. Meanwhile, the rejecters of the Gospel look on, saying, “See how these Christians *hate* one another.”

Such has been the past; but we are happy to believe that a better day is dawning upon us. With progress in other respects, there has been an evident increase of the truly catholic spirit; that which does not ignore differences but estimates them aright, which disparages not the fundamental, but distinguishes it from the accidental and the temporary, and which can love on even when lines of thought diverge. A closer fellowship, a more candid, receptive temper adorns and ennobles, we think, the realm of letters. There is less of clanship there. Political acerbity—far as we now are from the best estate—is yet, we judge, somewhat abated. There is in the party journals too much, indeed, yet less than there once was, of personal vituperation. There has been a gain in the religious world. There is less of controversy, and it is assuming a milder tone. The day is past when a writer like Toplady, author of the sweet hymn, “Rock of Ages, cleft for me,” could style one of his pieces against Mr. John Wesley, “An Old Fox Tarred and Feathered;” and the grave and learned Lightfoot could call his reply to Mr. Heming, “A Battle with a Wasps’ Nest”—the productions an-

swering throughout to their quaint and fierce titles. There is every where an increasing tendency to Christian union. Denominational lines are not indeed obliterated, but they are growing fainter, and men look more lovingly over them. In the one Great Name, lesser names are more and more merged. If men think not together wholly—as who would care to have them?—they are more and more working together. Rival prints, of essentially the same faith, are not merely joining hands for the Master, but coming into formal oneness; and different branches of the same great family, as of the Presbyterians in Scotland and America, unnaturally severed for a time, are planning for a re-union. Who would not bid God-speed to such movements, harbingers as they are of the day, when the different banners, if such remain, around which Christians gather, shall be only the convenient ensigns by which a great host is marshalled—the tokens not of radical division but of real unity, not of weakness but of strength and victory?

True loftiness of soul is ever unpartisan. Its great aims rise above the pettinesses of the clique or the clan. With its eye on alpine heights, the mole-hills are forgotten. It is intent on truth—truth in its essence; and it heeds little comparatively the varying forms in which it may be presented. It remembers ever, that all great verities are many-sided,

that all vitality tends naturally to variety. Only stagnancy holds an unvarying shape; only death is absolutely uniform. It welcomes substantial good under whatever name. It judges with all fairness, with all gracious allowance, with all gentle forbearance. It calls for no consuming fire from heaven, but pities where it cannot approve, and recognises a brother in every honest worker for truth and righteousness. In the outflow of all generous affections, it disarms prejudice, it multiplies allies, it makes for itself a clear and sunny pathway. Well may our prayer be, as we muse on its triumphs, "Enlarge thus my heart, and I will run the way of thy commandments."

Another element of Christian magnanimity, quiet and undemonstrative, yet worthy of emphatic notice, is a *forgiving spirit*. Say not that we are recurring to the very alphabet of goodness, learned by us in childhood as the Lord's Prayer fell from maternal lips. Alphabetic our doctrine may be, but it is the sublimest lesson of the Christian life. We point to the loftiest excellence both of God and man. It was when Immanuel cried, amid the agonies of the cross, "Father forgive them"—not when he calmed the sea, and cast out demons, and raised the dead—that his glory culminated. Nor is it the excellence of this trait only that moves us, it is of immense practical value. Occasions for it every walk of life

will present, but they are especially numerous amid the great tasks and conflicts to which educated men are called. It is indispensable, they will find, if not to success in every sense, yet to a truly noble career.

It is always observable that a narrow nature is apt to lack this temper. It exalts self and so is exacerbated unduly by all rivalries and oppositions. Morbidly sensitive, it recoils from every touch. It magnifies minor things. To its disordered vision all objects are liable to be miscolored and misshaped, so that trifles light as air become

“Confirmations strong

As proofs of Holy Writ.”

The whole pathway of life is crowded thus with annoyances and miseries; and to whatever great interests are concerned, harm is sure to result. How many church quarrels, issuing in disastrous schisms, might have been prevented, if one or two individuals had been blest with a moderate share of self-forgetfulness, and a consequent disposition to overlook real or fancied personal wrongs. Personal pique is the secret of half the cases which ecclesiastical councils are called to adjudicate. Not that this lies on the surface. Goodly words are there, high-sounding professions of principle, and of regard for the honor of religion; but the mask is very transparent. “He is very zealous for the divine glory,” it was shrewdly said of a certain leading ecclesiastic;

"but he has the happy faculty of always seeing that the glory of God and his own interest are identical." From like causes, flow like effects in the secular sphere. I need not tell you what national convulsions in the old world, what wasting wars even, have sprung from personal animosities, taking sometimes, indeed, the form of mere ambition, but often the more despicable one of private revenge. Nor has our own country been wholly exempt from such evils. Not to speak of ill-advised policies and much bad legislation, or of protracted party strifes traceable in large measure to individual resentments, it may well be questioned, whether if the great statesman of South Carolina and the sturdy old iconoclast of Tennessee, had felt a little more forgivingly toward each other, the dragon's teeth of nullification would have been scattered as they were in the South, and the terrible crop of armed men have sprung up.

We forget not, in all this, the distinction so apt to be overlooked, between private revenge and public justice. Feel as we may individually, we must give the latter due course. Benevolence demands it—we may be guilty otherwise of wide-spread wrong. Cases there are in which no sprinkling of rose water may be a substitute for the shedding of blood. We may—we must, if we would be good citizens—stand for law and for justice. We must hold to principle, at whatever hazard. It may be a duty often to vin-

dicate, with a strong hand, the rights of others; and there are rights of our own which we may not relinquish—lightly to esteem them would be a public evil. But as to merely private wrongs, such as being past cannot be remedied, it is the part of a high-souled man, ordinarily, to write them in the sand. "True," he will say, "I have been disparaged, aspersed, defrauded; I have been hated without a cause. But there is no duty to be done; so let me possess my soul in patience. What are my interests compared with the great objects that fill my vision, the great interests to which my life is consecrated? Let no trivial annoyance divert me from them. Let me beware of putting personalities in place of principles—of forsaking a good cause because the names even of my bitterest foes chance to be linked with it. Like the great-hearted Paul, let me rejoice in the help they render, though it be even of envy and strife. Serene in conscious integrity, and in the assurance of a glorious issue, let me pity rather than seek vengeance; and with a heart enlarged to run the way of God's commandments, let me commit to his keeping my every interest." He who can say this, is a nobleman both by nature and by grace. He has gained the greatest of all victories, self-conquest, the prelude to every other; and his name, we may be sure, men "will not willingly let die."

We name as the last element of the style of character before us, *faith*. We mean by this not simple credence, but the consent and concentration of the whole being, the fealty of the heart as well as the mind. We mean Christian faith—the cordial reception of the whole divine Word, and of God as revealed in it; nay, of God in Christ, not imputing unto us our trespasses, but through the one great offering, and by the inworking Spirit, reconciling us to himself. A potent element is a mere secular faith; it is a great worker in this world's affairs, and a great conqueror. But earth is only a point in the universe, and the life that now is, but a vapor. Our immortal nature assumes its due proportions only as our spiritual interests are regarded, and so, above all, the life that is to come. With whatever self-estimation, it is degraded and dwarfed otherwise. Nay, we thus subserve best the interests of time, related as they all are, in a just view, to our eternal destiny. It is only the man of faith, that is, in all respects, the veritable Greatheart.

In the nature of the case, it must be so. Unbelief is self-regardful, self-reliant, self-absorbed. It accepts only what it understands, and so abides of necessity within a narrow circle. Even there, it knows doubtingly; for what is there, to a blade of grass or a grain of sand, that we really comprehend. Poor, indeed, must he be in human science,

who will take nothing on trust; who will receive no fact, however attested, without a discernment of its innermost being. The true student of nature, must sit as a little child at her feet. Of like temper is the true disciple of nature's God. He learns by faith rather than demonstration; and so the soul's tether is broken. It goes abroad. It expatiates at God's bidding, and under his guidance, in a limitless field. It mounts heavenward, stars burning along its pathway, constellations flaming out upon it. In the meekness and joyousness of simple trust, it is enriched and enlarged with all divine lore. God's thoughts are its thoughts. God's knowledges, so far as the case requires, and the finite capacity goes, are its knowledges. And with all the grandeur of the objects it contemplates, just such as fill the mind and heart of the Infinite—objects which by a law of our being must needs assimilate—to what sublimity of stature must it rise.

Faith is the golden zone that binds together all the other elements we have named, and links them all with the throne of God. It gives to aspiration its true impulse and direction, distinguishing it from all the forms of a base and sordid emulation. Without it, indeed, little more than the name would be left us. It is the foster-mother of all public spirit, rebuking, as under the shadow of the Cross it needs must, all selfishness, and accepting heartily

the doctrine of the one origin, the one destiny, the one common humanity. Its circuit is the globe—nay, the universe. And while, by the great realities it grasps, it awakens all high endeavor, it gives the amplest outflow and the broadest scope to all beautiful sympathies. It delivers the social and the fraternal from every bond of partizanship. In the comprehensiveness both of its vision and its regards, it is above all party. Born of the truth, it is a dear lover of truth; never bartering it for empty names, recognizing it wherever found, and overpassing all factitious lines to give it welcome. Laying its hand on the head of the spotless Sacrifice, weeping its own tears of contrition, and taking the Great Sufferer as an ensample, it cannot but exercise all tenderness and forbearance toward even its foes. It has no leisure or strength for private vengeance. Entrusted with the loftiest mission beneath the sun, the reclaiming of a world to truth and righteousness; having God as its portion and heaven as its home; standing thus on a height far above the insignificant provocations of earth; it may well respond to them all, "I have a great work and a great joy—I cannot come down." Ye who would rise above all low patterns and precedents, and attain to the true dignity of human nature, the largeness of soul which we have imperfectly outlined, see to it that ye be men of faith.

YOUNG GENTLEMEN OF THE GRADUATING CLASS:

There is a special reason why the exercises of the present hour should have for me a peculiar interest. The years of your College life, now about to close, have been nearly those of my own official service. I found you here indeed, but you had just entered. It has been mine, in connection with my beloved and honored associates, to guide your steps almost from the outset, and to mark with ever increasing gratification, the development of your powers. As the hour of parting draws near, I cannot but linger in grateful recollection on the past. I cannot but bear testimony to the pleasantness of the relations which have subsisted between us; to your deferential, courteous, and even filial bearing. Under the prompting of a full heart, my eye glances into your future. I think of it with solicitude, yet with no despondency. I saw you from my window, not long ago, planting almost beneath the shadow of the old Dartmouth Hall, your Class Tree—the sapling elm that shall live and grow on when the places that have known you here shall know you no more. As I heard you sing the simple and touching song of “Twenty Years Ago”—which I shall always associate with the Class of Sixty-seven—hope sang in my ear, as haply she did in yours, a song of fifty years to come. Will that lay of a fond fancy pass into fact? As those years come

and go, if God shall be pleased to grant them, will they be filled with usefulness, with true joy, with merited honor? This is the question with which these last public counsels may fitly be concerned.

I have sought partly to meet it in the unfolding of our subject. From all the circuit of my thought, I could select for you no more appropriate life-theme. What remains but that I bid you bear it hence, and translate it into fair and noble action? Nay, speaks not your Alma Mater to-day? With her matronly form not bent but made more erect and queenly by the weight of nearly a century; with the thousands of her alumni scattered over the earth, and the long record of her achievements for science, for literature, for jurisprudence, for the gospel, for the nation, and for mankind; urges she not upon you the very lesson we have been setting forth? In the life-course before you, be no narrow, craven spirit yours. Be men indeed—high-minded, large-hearted men. Let aspiration characterize you. Be content never with low attainments. Attempt great things, expect great things.

"In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of life,
Be not like dumb driven cattle,
Be a hero in the strife.

Whatever your hands find to do, do it with your might, thinking nothing well done when it might be

better done. Be not isolated and self-centred. Let your thoughts and affections go abroad; cultivate a generous sympathy and a far-reaching public spirit. Be ready to merge your own advantage in the general welfare. Be commonwealth's men; be national, be cosmopolitan, in your regards. Eschew all selfish, dwarfed and dwarfing partisanship; live for no coterie or sect, but for truth and goodness. Let a sweet, forbearing charity arm you against whatever provocation; let it invest you with a dignity and power more than regal. And let faith, the fundamental and crowning element of all true moral greatness, grace and master your souls; that faith which shall unite you to Christ, and make Him at once your joy, your pattern, your strength, and your portion. With lives so shaped, though we part we shall meet again; yea, in the land of all divine magnanimities, where all that is noblest in time shall have a full and wondrous culmination, as if the light of the moon had become as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun sevenfold, as the light of seven days.



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