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THE TEMPLE OF GOD. MAY 20 1926
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Baccalaureate Address

—TO THE—

CLASS OF '91.

JUNE 14, 1891.



—BY—

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JOSEPH F. TUTTLE, 1818-1901

PRESIDENT OF WABASH COLLEGE,

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THE TEMPLE OF GOD.

“The fire shall try every man’s work.” 1 Cor. 3: 13.

Matter is indestructible except by the divine power which created it. The forms which matter may assume are infinite in number. The flower, the oak, and the cedars of Lebanon, perish. The Matter-horn and Mount Washington are not as lofty as they once were. And yet when we desire to mention some unchangeable object we refer to the mountain “which abideth forever.” The great mountains, Tabor and Lebanon, which David saw, and the stars which he considered three thousand years ago are unchanged. They are called the eternal buildings of God. In the language of earth these are indestructible. After a while the mountains shall melt with fervent heat, and the heavens be rolled together like a scroll.

St. Paul was speaking of a great object which he compared to a temple when he said “the fire shall try every man’s work.” That is, shall determine whether or no it is destructible.

The buildings of man are sometimes made of clay and stubble, or of dried grass. Fire quickly destroys them. So it does buildings of wood. Some magnificent buildings are

of stone and wood. The Temple at Jerusalem was such a building, and so was the Temple of Diana at Ephesus. The soldiers of Titus burned the first and Erostratus, the immortal fool, the second. The Karnac and the Pyramids, the Parthenon, and the Colosseum, were built of stone. They remain to this day and no fire that man can kindle can destroy them. The fire if applied would prove them to be indestructible. As Milton says such buildings do not perish even if assaulted by—"whirlwind of tempestuous fire."

Of what Temple does St. Paul speak when he says "the fire shall try every man's work?" He declares that if what man builds is made of wood, hay, clay, stubble, silver, gold, or precious stones, the fire shall reveal the fact. Built of one kind of material the fire shall burn it up. Built of another material, as precious stones the temple shall not be consumed even by so terrible an agent as fire.

In these discussions I do not mean to lose force by being too literal. I note however that my text and its contents, honestly developed, give us the following parts:

1. In order that the temple may abide the test of fire it must have an indestructible *foundation*.
2. It must be built of indestructible *material*.
3. It must have a wise *builder*.

First, a temple to stand the test of fire must have an indestructible foundation.

Modern research finds that Solomon built his temple on foundations of stone. The soldiers of Nebuchadnezzar and Titus burned the temple but could not burn the foundations. The vast ruins at Thebes and Rome show them to have been built on rock.

The temple of St. Paul which was to defy the test of fire was built on the imperishable rock Jesus the Christ.

Secondly, a temple to defy the test of fire must have a superstructure of indestructible materials.

The wood used in Solomon's temple was precious, and beautiful, and yet combustible. Its foundation of rock could not save its superstructure of stone and wood when tried by fire.

The Temple of Minerva was built entirely of stone and it abides to-day as one of the imperishable wonders of the world.

St. Paul spoke of a temple which had both its foundation and superstructure, of materials which could not be destroyed by fire.

Thirdly. Such an abiding temple must have a builder. Its plan is not a matter of chance. The stones in its foundations and walls, its pillars and its architraves, and statues do not come by chance from the right quarries and get themselves into the right forms and places. Human hands directed by a wise master-builder must build the temple. The Parthenon, was built under the direction of Phidias. Every stone and column, and capital, is his thought

built under his inspiration. A peasant's "humble thatch" must have a builder—much more such a temple as St. Paul describes.

No one doubts this when applied to buildings in which men live and worship, however humble or grand. A building must have a builder.

What temple did St. Paul refer to in this passage from which the text is taken? *A good man.* There are many kinds of men. There are dishonest men, impious men, unclean men, beastly men, bad men—and there are good men.

Of what kind does St. Paul speak, bad men or good men?

This may be said of a bad man, he does not need to be built; he is already built. It is true he had help in his bad work, yet he was the chief builder of his own bad self. The responsibility of building and defiling this ugly and destructible temple is chiefly his. Indeed this is true. A man does not need help to be bad. If he wants to make of himself a bad man of any kind, he does not need to invoke the aid of other architects. A temple of Satan is easily and quickly built.

But to build a "Temple of the Holy Ghost," to erect a temple called "a good man" made divinely noble by a genuine manhood is a very difficult achievement. There have been, and there are yet, such temples inhabited by the kindest humanities and the divinest graces.

And how is such a temple built? Let us

not forget that everything is naturally against the builder of such a temple. When Pericles empowered Phidias to build the Parthenon, Mar's Hills furnished him at once an imperishable foundation of rock. But when our government ordered a magnificent building to be erected at New Orleans, it was only with the greatest difficulty that a sure foundation could be prepared for the building.

The temple, of which I am now speaking, has to encounter the almost fathomless morass of a depraved moral nature in order to lay there the foundation. Each human soul is morally bad at the start, and yet in such a soul there is to be laid the foundation, which is Jesus Christ. That foundation has been laid there in spite of many obstacles which seemed insurmountable and in numberless instances.

Granted now that the foundation of the temple of which St. Paul is speaking has been laid—the temple called “a good man”—what next? Of course the construction of the temple. We aim to build one that can be tried by fire. Where shall we find the precious stones for its walls? Am I straining the figure of my text unduly in saying that man's *Physical Nature* is an important, precious stone in the temple?

Whatever may be the method of its production, creation or evolution, man is a most wonderful being. The physical agent of the soul is unequalled in the entire range of ma-

terial structures. Aside from its relations to man's higher life, the human body is the noblest of God's works. Our Lord once called his own body "this temple" and St. Paul called it "a temple of the Holy Ghost."

Man needs a sound body as well as a sound soul. God has imbedded in the Decalogue commands to build up a healthy body. The laws of self-control, regulating all the appetites are as positive as those applying to the spiritual nature of man.

I cannot doubt that *Physical Temperance* is one of the precious stones to be built into the temple we call a good man. It is one of the most beautiful. Sometimes we see a man of such physical perfection, so clear and pure in his habits, and so upright in his manhood that we are compelled to admire him.

Next to this precious stone of temperance is that of the well cultured intellect. Let us name it *Education*. It is needless to dwell on it. It is the theme of universal eulogy, and the lack of it of universal regret. I refer to that education which enables a man to use his intellect correctly and vigorously.

The two combined in one man, as we well know, may not make him a good man. A man physically may be perfect, and his mind educated with the utmost 'culture, and yet he be bad.

Yet these two—temperance and education—are precious stones when built into that grand temple which we call a man.

But man in his noblest self, is not merely

a physical and knowing being,—he is more. He is a moral being. He can discern the difference between right and wrong, good and evil. He feels the sense of duty. He is capable of saying, “this ought I to do,” and also “this ought I not to do.”

In the perfection of his moral nature, man reaches his true ends and greatness, and it is precisely here we find his chief weakness. He is such that a sinful nature easily becomes concrete in a sinful man. In building that temple of God—a good man—we must take this fact at its full value. And, therefore, we must build into the temple the precious stone of *penitence*. Out of a sinful nature no temple of God can be built without this.

The examples are innumerable. Two bad men quarried and cut and built this stone of penitence into God’s temple—David and the Prodigal Son—and so must every sinful soul. For him, if there be no penitence, there can be no temple of God.

Shall we, from another ledge, break the stone of *Faith*, precious, beautiful, eternal? The foundation is Jesus Christ, and Faith, one of the precious stones in the superstructure which is to stand the test of fire. Faith, says the Apostle in his great philosophical poem on charity, abides, not as great as love but as indestructible. The sinful Peter in his tremendous fall, and the Philippian jailer in his dire extremity of ruin, and the thief on the cross, each one laid the precious stone of

Faith in the temple which he would build for God.

And there is another stone. The others are indeed precious, but this is infinitely precious. It is *Love*. It seems to be the substance of the Foundation, and the most glorious in the superstructure. God is Love. Jesus is Love. The Holy Spirit of God is Love. On the foundation, and on each precious stone in the temple shines the motto, "Herein is Love!"

And are these all? There is another precious stone. We call it *Hope*. Its constituent elements are desire, and expectation. And for the temple we build as a habitation of God, we seek this precious stone which blends the longing of a sinful soul to be saved, and the expectation of being saved, into the infinitely precious Hope that he shall be saved, and Hope is eternal as Faith and Love. The three shall abide. They shall not perish even if tried by fire.

And there is another precious stone to be built into this temple. Let us call it *Personal Goodness*. We sometimes call it "good works." St. Paul denounced these when regarded as a foundation in place of Jesus Christ. By them no soul has been justified. St. James lauds good works, not as the foundation of the temple, but as precious stones in the walls of the temple. The two apostles mean the same thing. A temple without "a Christ" for a foundation, or one without "good works"—

personal goodness for precious stones in its superstructure, would be both hateful and impossible. Solomon might as well have attempted to build his temple on a foundation of clay, and its walls of hay, as for a human soul to build a temple for God without a Christ for its foundation, and without the precious stones of penitence, faith, love, hope, and personal goodness for its walls. St. Peter makes out a list of these precious stones of exceeding interest. They may be regarded as his analysis of our term personal goodness. He speaks of certain "exceeding great and precious promises," diligence or industry, manliness or virtue, knowledge, temperance—self control in all the faculties of man; body and spirit—patience, goodness, brotherly kindness, charity or love.

The Apostles, St. Paul and St. Peter are at one as to this temple of God. O beautiful temple of God! a good human soul! a good man! built on Jesus Christ! of stones such as these worthy to be in the walls of the temple above, and adorned with such divine jewels as please God!

The poet happily describes the Temple of Solomon as

"A mount of snow Fretted with golden pinnacles"

But what is that compared with the temple of which St. Paul speaks, built on such a foundation as Jesus Christ, and of such precious stones as penitence, faith, love, hope, personal goodness, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly

kindness and charity? What is any human temple built by Solomon, or Pericles, or Rameses as compared with that temple of which St. Paul speaks in terms of exalted eloquence? A good human soul, redeemed and glorified and to abide forever—a temple of the eternal God!

And now having considered the *foundation* on which the temple which we call a *good man*, is built, and the *precious stones* of which it is built, let us now inquire *who is the builder*. We do not know who built the vast temples of the Upper Nile, nor the Temple of Diana at Ephesus, nor the superb Cathedral at Cologne, nor its peer, the Cathedral of York—yet one would like to know their names.

I have been speaking of a temple as described by St. Paul, a temple of God, and I ask, who is the builder of this temple? In the highest and most absolute sense, God Himself is its builder. But I am following St. Paul's lively comparison of a good man to a temple of God, and I ask who built *this* temple? St. Paul says man himself built it, for he not only says to these Christian souls, "Ye are God's building;" but he also uses these words, "if *any man build* on this foundation," and again these words, "*every man's work*—that is, as a temple builder—shall be made manifest, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try *every man's work* of what sort it is."

Man himself builds this temple—a good

man—for God, and this seems to me the most startling part of my text. I do not wonder when it is said that “God created the heaven and the earth,” for “the heaven of heavens” is his greater temple. I do not wonder that Wren was set to building St. Paul and Angelo St. Peter’s, but I cannot suppress my amazement, that with all his infirmities man is commissioned by God to build such a temple—“Build yourself into a temple in which I may dwell!” Such is God’s decree.

How does man execute this order? How does he build this temple? As the architect selected the goodly stones for the Parthenon, man takes the precious stones of penitence, faith, love, hope, brotherly kindness, industry, manliness, integrity, temperance, pure-heartedness, patience, and every grace of Christian manhood, and himself personally builds them into the walls of the temple he rears to God.

He does this, It is his *own* act. *He* is the builder. He worships, and loves, and obeys God. He takes tenderly the hand of his suffering brother. I utter no heresy as I sum up this whole temple—building business by asserting with the utmost emphasis that man himself is the builder of himself into a good man. He is a self built temple of God—God’s shrine.

This is not false doctrine for our Lord teaches it in the Judgement scene in the 25th. of St. Matthew. Jesus loves the man who feeds

the hungry, clothes the naked, relieves the sick, helps the sick, and saves the lost. Jesus loves the man who invites the heavy laden to come unto him, who in his stead wipes away the tears of the sufferer, who is feet to the lame, and eyes to the blind and ears to the deaf. Jesus loves the man who himself has become a good man by winning the bad to goodness, helping the wretched and sinful and lost, to Him who can save them. Thus as in every way this man is striving to make men happy by making them good, he makes his own soul happy. He creates within himself divine music. Even as the singers and players on instruments make an earthly temple ring with melodies sweet to the musicians and also to God.

It is blessed to think, that He whose Temple is "the heaven of heavens" loves to dwell in the temple of a good human soul. Nay, more, a temple which the good man has built of himself.

Thus far I have regarded my text from a purely religious point of view. But the same is true, if we consider man merely as a moral and social being. Human life separated from the life beyond may have its foundation in a sound morality—a high and honorable principle. It may not be the highest morality, but it is admirable in many respects. It is easy to cite cases of integrity, honesty brotherliness, charity, goodness, which excite our admiration.

As in the first case, so in this—man him-

self is the builder of this temple. He builds himself by single acts of right choice, and right doing and by cherishing in himself lofty aims, principles, ideals. Such characters are not rare. There are men who have the foundation of character in the morality of the Decalogue, and the Sermon on the Mount. This morality is approved by human reason and illustrated by numberless examples, and such a character though not strictly religious, may be compared to a temple, the beauty of which called forth the admiration of Jesus Christ as one day he looked on a certain young man and loved him.

The same is true of men, who by earnest culture have made themselves famous in the walks of professional and business life, especially when distinguished by exalted humanity in the service of mankind. They may not be Christian in the highest sense, yet are they admirable because of what they have made of themselves, and of some of them we might use the words of Jesus to the Scribe: "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God."

We must now consider one more thing. This temple of God, which a good man builds is indestructible, even when tried by fire. The fire may be time, experience, or human judgment—each of which tries man and determines what he is. These fiery tests have consumed many a temple which professed to be built for God.

The final, and most terrible test of char-

acter is the judgement day of God. Its fire will burn up the wood, hay, stubble, with which men try to build eternal temples.

And then that divine temple which we call *a good man* shall abide—even the fiery tests of time, experience human judgment, and the Judgment Day—tried by fire, it shall be proven eternal as God.

Gentlemen Seniors:

First and highest of all, the man of whom St. Paul is speaking as a temple of God is a believer in Jesus Christ—he is a Christian. His faith rests on the only foundation and holds in glorious unity every stone of the temple. His intellect, sensibilities, and will—his body and his soul—are built on Jesus Christ, the only foundation. He not only has a good name, but he is a good man. When he worships and when he lives—whatever his experiences in suffering the will of God, or in doing it, he is building a temple of God—a good man. It is wonderful that under any conditions a man can build such a temple.

There is another view. The good man not only believes, but he lives. Because he believes right he lives right. We may convert the proposition and assert that his right life is the proof of his right faith. Were he to say “if I live right it makes no difference what I believe,” his temple would rest on a foundation of sand.

Faith—life! let either be the subject of

your logical judgment—let it be Faith and life, or Life and faith! how true and beautiful it is! It is the morality of soul, and also the morality of life—and in either form what a thing of beauty it is—a temple without an imperfect stone! and he who does not build it must be condemned as unwise.

To sum up what has been said *Character* is the temple we build to God. Man's chief business is that of a builder of character, the imperishable temple he is to rear as the shrine of God.

And young men, this is to be your chief business. It is not to amass riches, nor achieve fame, nor reach pleasure. You have a far higher achievement to make—you are to make yourselves good men—you are to make yourselves temples of God! You are to secure all the precious stones of godly faith, and godly living and build them into the temple of a noble manhood in which the Lord God may dwell. Your chief end in this life is to glorify and forever enjoy God by becoming good men. That is the greatest want of the world. We need more wealth, more food, more clothing, better houses, more humane laws, greater, richer and more widely diffused intelligence. There are many things we need for the good of the world. But we need most of all more concrete human goodness, more men who *are* good—who are the beautiful and imperishable temples of *God*.

The transition may seem abrupt, as I ask

of you, young men, members of the class of '91—what kind of temples are you? You have had the opportunities and the means of building yourselves into temples in which God may dwell. You have spent these years close to the great quarries of precious stone. Here are the priceless blocks of penitence and faith, and hope, and love and patience, and knowledge and humanity and brotherly kindness and unselfishness, and goodness—the precious stones which in infinite abundance are found in the rock ledges of God's love and human charity. What use have you made of them? What kind of temples have you been building? What kind of men are you now? How much better men are you than when you came here? Are you stronger men, purer men, trustier men, humaner men? Can you be more safely entrusted with the money, the reputation, the welfare of your fellowmen, and the interests of society?

You have been building structures of some sort, of what sort? beautiful temples of God? or the defiled temples of selfishness and sin to be occupied by demons?

The opportunities have been grand; how have you improved them?

Your stewardship here is finished, and your Master is saying to you "give an account of your stewardship."

My young friends open the books of memory, turn slowly the leaves and tell your own hearts what the record is and what must be the sentence of God. Look I pray you on the temple of character you have built

during these years and pass a candid judgement on your work.

Perhaps I err. The building is not yet finished. Life is yet before you—perhaps long years. God only knows. And at this interesting crisis, when you leave this part of your life to enter an other, I pray you if you have not done altogether as well as you might, do better for the future. Make past mistakes the stepping stones to future success.

You perhaps think me severe. I do not mean to be so. But in any case it is true “faithful are the wounds of a friend.”

To live and work, and achieve and die make up a golden circle—which may be linked with the blessedness of a world beyond. And so I say again to each one of you, make of yourself in all the relations you hold to God and man, a comely temple of God!

Farewell! And may God bless you!

1922