

Called very good

- Baccalaureate Sermon 1985.

Seek ye first the K. of G. and his righteousness. Matt 6-33
Luke 12-31

The congregation this evening will understand that I am ~~addressing~~ speaking as though entirely to these graduating students - They are at a most particular time and place in life. This day & week is not like any ordinary time, such as we all see from week to week - but it is a great crossroads of life - at the closing of one era & beginning of a new one, regardless of what they shall do hereafter. From now on their status in the home, church, state, among the workers of the world, in a & at least some 50 (10 of graduates) will be quite materially changed.

The school authorities of this and so far as I know of every high school in America, ~~ask for~~ hold a service of this kind and ask some minister to preach a final sermon, make a last charge from a pulpit; or give some last advice or philosophy of life, at this time, crucial time in the career of these young people in the hope that the minister shall be wise and utter words of wisdom and leave in their minds a lasting impression for good.

Young people, this I will endeavor to do.

In the first place I choose a text, you can never forget.

The words are familiar. You have often heard them before.

Seek ye first the K. of G. and his righteousness -

The council might as well be caught in other words -

He, as saying the dying words of David to Solomon. My son he says, I go the way of all the earth - be thou strong therefore and shew thyself a man. Any charge to live an honest useful, life a life devoted to what we call the better things; would make a good text. If Jesus or some great saint or scholar could speak to you to night - the theme of his address would be essentially this - whatever the form of words used - I can think of many possible texts - "Keep thy heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life - or seek peace & pursue it - or many a proverb.

The lecturer or preacher would not take this last hour to teach you natural history or chemistry, or dynamics or mathematics or any other science than moral-spiritual-religious-science. Some speakers would get at the subject in one way & some in another but they would all speak on the same essential theme. There are doing ^{preaching} these days 1000s of dactyanaurate addressees. and some of eminent preachers. Read as many as you will. They are all about this same thing. If a Jesus, an Isaiah or Paul or a Cadmus or a Fordish were present they would all use this hour for the same purpose.

It is not mere advice that we would offer but some observation out of life's experiences. Let me assure you first of all that everyone here present every one in America in all the world, if he or she is sane, wish you every happiness life can mete out to you. We hope that you will find your niche in the scheme of things where you can fit and be useful & valuable members of society. A great deal of money, ^{spent} a great deal of parental sacrifice has been made to bring you to this day - or to put a diploma of graduation into your hands. You have had to do considerable work and for some of you no doubt some hard grueling work. That possibly sometimes did not seem worth the effort to realize this objective. Some of you will be able to go on in higher schools - and have already put another objective of the kind ahead of you. We think of you as lucky, fortunate, favored if you can continue in school and prepare for some profession - as doctors, ^{teaching} medicine, Ministry or Priesthood, or only for cultural reasons. But the school of life, of experience, of work & industry into which some of you are of necessity forced is after all the great school and your opportunities of study, ^{of} mental improvement, & our classical education need not end now. Many men & women who never had the opportunities of colleges & universities have been our very greatest business men, statesmen, ministers and even literary men and some became heads of colleges and some wonderful engineers, builders of sky scrapers, Bridges, Roads great agriculturists - & have distinguished themselves in every branch of human endeavor. A. Lincoln did not stop his education with the few mos. of schooling he had. A. Johnson could not even read or sign his own name until after he was married at 30 when his wife became his teacher and started his academic education.

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The stories of our heroes are most encouraging especially for those of you whose school days are over. I urge upon you that all your life you read biography as much as you can. It will give you heart and courage and you will observe too the theme of my sermons - these successful members of society without exception had worthy ends - great and definite objectives of life -

We may suppose that they were all tempted - discouraged - sometimes groping in the dark - wondering whether the light were worth the candle - if sacrifice payed. If there might not be an easier way - minded on occasion to give up & surrender to the outward pressure. The handicaps to great - give up. But they did not & are honored.

Now here are some who have achieved worldly success perhaps become very rich and powerful - who are not loved by humanity in general whose names are execrated who are really despised & hated. I could name some of them easily but really it may be better taste to omit their names. But all our corruptionists all our criminals, our anti-social members of society regardless of their wealth or power are anathema to us. Not one of them may be truly called a success for they militate in some way against the Layspersons, the security, & well being of others. The golden rule is after all the only rule that works well in society. Any infringement or violation of it makes at last for sorrow to all concerned. I have known many selfish, & self seeking people in my time but I've never come across a happy person of the kind. I know of people who draw into their shells ~~like a turtle~~ as it were, who have little or nothing to do with neighbors or others, they are hamsters in a way, but are no good to anybody or anything. They have no worthy objective in life. It matters to no body whether they live or die - sometimes society would be benefited if they died - but certainly their lives are well nigh useless, and certainly society has not sacrificed as it has for you, that you go out from our school to be of no use to society. Your parents, your teachers & the taxpayers have worked for a purpose - a great objective that your lives will be valuable to society - that you may better

do your part. Very soon now, just a few years more and you will be in exactly the same position your seniors are now. You will be the fathers & mothers, teachers & taxpayers of your day - another 15 or 20 years and you young people will have the management of industry, the operation of courts of justice, the running of our schools and most of the activities of life in your hands. When that time comes we hope you will be able to successfully cope with the problems of life & social organization, better than we have your school was better than ours - You are better prepared to begin life to take on responsibility than we were - Human experience has been vastly enriched of late - it is your heritage and great things are expected of you. Our experiment with education is full of hope of & for a better world.

Now it is plain I think to you all that only a good & worthy objective in your lives can possibly produce what we so much desire. When our revolutionary forefathers had their great objective of freedom - of life, liberty & pursuit of happiness they were seeking the K. of H. - When the French revolutionists dreamed & worked for equality and fraternity they had the same objective - When our English forefathers wrested Magna Carta from King John they lived gloriously - their lives counted.

When Francis of Assisi sought peace on earth and taught his gospel of love and kindness to every created thing, he made his life a great contribution to all the world. When Jane Addams sought the redemption of criminals and ministered to the slum population of Chicago and worked so hard for world peace she made her self a monumental life - a woman whose heroisms and greatness will always be remembered - who is loved by millions. She will be a heroine & an inspiration to thousands - and many a social outcast who now lives in happy homes rise up to bless her sainted memory.

When Francois Trilland sought to stem the great tide of the liquor traffic in A. & other lands she was working for the K. of God. When Steinmetz was experimenting in the electrical laboratories of P.E. to make a machine that could distribute

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Power over wide areas - & bring conveniences of power
to housewives & farmers and factories in every hamlet & village
& city - He thought he was lifting a load of drudgery off the
shoulders of labor and he was - and he was working for the
K. ~~Story~~ Story of Mark Carleton - to whom America
owes more than to any other single man. Because he saved
our wheat crop - and ~~opened~~ because he made it hardly made
the production of it possible as far north as the ~~Rockies~~, Montana
and even in Saskatchewan. Albert B. Columbia & co. alone
will he gave his life to that achievement - Not as yet properly
honored. But when the story of America is well known and the
victories of peace are better understood & appreciated so badly
will be more honored or better appreciated than Mark Carleton.
Though I would enjoy doing it, I'd like to review the

lives thus briefly of ~~all~~ hundreds of men & women whose
stories are worth knowing. They were all valuable members
of society - made the world richer and better - because they
served. Because they sought something better.

You will not all become famous. But any one of you may.
No one could pick out the ones who will. Some of you so called
diligent scholars may make a fizzle of your life - you may
be a mere flash in the pan - and some of you hard working
plodders may yet be known to fame. But some of itself
is not a worthy aim. Criminals - Killers - Racketeers - Kidnapers
have achieved considerable notoriety. But what a tragedy
to educate boys & girls like you - make such a tremendous
investment in your personality and then have you turn
against society - its welfare, its security, its happiness.
~~For the ordinary~~ Suppose you just grow up ordinary
men & women - Suppose you establish or do your parts to
make happy homes - and perform the necessary & useful
work of the world - if you have as your very first objective
the K. of P. &c. & I mean by that righteousness - i.e. a
society of justice peace good will - friendships - liberty
fraternity - If your conduct of life makes first of all
for human security - & usefulness

society's investment in you is well made. Your parents & families will be proud of you & you will be a blessing & a happiness to us all.

Who in our midst among your acquaintances are what you call the ^{useful} members of society. Are they not invariably - our law abiding - hard working - honest & true - our most self-sacrificing - citizens? School teachers - Drs. Ministers - Good counselors of law - who strive to make peace & secure justice? Honest merchants - our industrial population who render a good days work for wages need. our employers who pay the largest wage they can & do business. Who in the home make things pleasant and happy - is it ever the selfish, self-seeking members who ask more than the others can bear? Never but those who give of their selves most freely are the ones that find the most in life - & make the most out of it.

^{from his} Success of living is impossible without worthy ends to live for. So seek first the K. of G. Ask the good things & they will be given unto you. seek them they shall be found ^{will} at the door of righteousness & it shall be opened. Be sure that the measure with which ye mete - it shall be measured to you again. To finish as I started. Remember we all desire for you that whatever you do - wherever you live in the greater compensations - the good, the height & depth breadth & fullness of life. Make a contribution to society for that which society has already made for you, and both you and society will be satisfied & glad. Seek ye first the K. of G. & His righteousness and all necessary things of which ye have need will be added unto you.