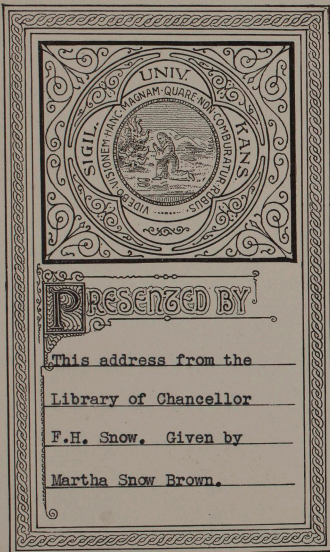


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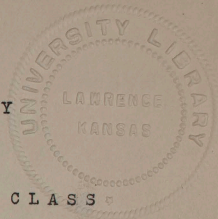
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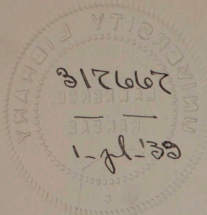


ADDRESS TO THE FIRST CLASS  
GRADUATING FROM K. U.

1873

Lawrence, Kansas





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REV. MR. COMBURY'S ADDRESS.

Grant that these, my two sons, may sit, the one on thy right-hand and the other on thy left, in thy Kingdom.—Matt. xx, 21.

The mother of Zebedee's children here asks in favor of Jesus. It is that her two sons may have the two best places in the Kingdom to which they supposed He was coming. For all the Jews expected a temporal kingdom which should supplant the hated Roman authority and exalt them to the chief place among the nations of earth. The twelve chosen followers of Jesus very naturally hoped for high places in this Kingdom, and often asked questions of Him with the view of finding out what their destiny was. Peter, for instance, once said "Behold, we have left all." Then once, at least, disputed rank high among them, as they traveled, as to who should be the greatest.

The mother of Zebedee's children, like any prudent mother, was looking out for the interest of her boys. The boys had probably requested her to do this service for them, hoping that a woman's intercession might be more effective than their own. The other disciples evidently attributed the movement to James and John, rather than to their mother, for they were very indignant at the two brethren for what, to them, had all the significance of a political intrigue.

The reply of Jesus contains a principle of natural wisdom, as well as a principle of the Kingdom of God: "Ye know not what ye ask." Some suppose he here alludes to the decision of the judgment when the righteous and the wicked should part to the right hand and to the left, and that this mother had unwittingly asked for one of her sons the doom of the wicked. But this would make a mere quibble of the reply. He undoubtedly took their request as they intended it. Of course they did not ask merely for those two seats on any particular occasion, or on all occasions; but they asked for what those seats meant in the customs of the times. They wanted to speak for the two chief places in His Kingdom, and Christ's reply meets that request. You evidently do not know what my kingdom is, or the conditions of its rewards and promotions; ~~and~~ that Kingdom promotion will not be a matter of personal favoritism, or of patronage, nor will it be given to the first applicants; ~~the~~ this matter the first will very likely be last; ~~and~~ will not be he who is best born, or best connected, or best looking, or best endowed even in ~~the~~ will not be he that has the most friends, or the most money, or the most ambition; ~~and~~ early asking will not keep it; the influence and pleading of your mother will not keep it; ~~and~~ does not depend even on my word; ~~and~~ is not mine to give, in the sense that I may give it on personal preferences; ~~and~~ is not for me even to say that you, or any one else, shall have the highest place. But I will tell you the way to that place: Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? can you meet all the conditions of your consecration? can you bear all its trials and burdens and persecutions and sad rebuffs? are you prepared for thorough fidelity in every place and duty to which you may be called? can you follow truth and duty wherever they may lead you, and whatever the result may be? This is the way to honor in my Kingdom. He that serves the best, suf-

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fers the most, and stoops the lowest to do his duty—he shall be the greatest. To sit on my right hand and on my left, to occupy the highest places in my Kingdom is not mine to give; I cannot say in advance that this or that man shall have it; but it shall be given to the best, to him for whom it was prepared of my Father, to him that brings the best and humblest and most unwavering service to him who strives least for place and most for fidelity. Plotting and planning and pleading and striving will accomplish nothing, for there will be no supplanting one another in my Kingdom; no man there can go by another in place, except by passing him in desert; in my Kingdom honor and desert shall always and forever exactly correspond.

What a glorious thing it would be if this same principle could be introduced into our worldly affairs. What a revolution it would create in public life. The *best* should rise the highest. You could say then of most of our Congressmen, "the places that now know them shall know them no more forever." The children of Washington could sing a new song then:

*Other men our lands now fill,  
And other men our streets now fill,  
—And other birds now sing us wail—  
—As those that lately possessed glory.*

It would be refreshing to see *worth* and *worthiness* lifting men to place, instead of brass and cunning and push, patronage and cash. We cannot accurately apply such principles in society, for we have no sure measure of worthiness. We have no rule for selecting the best. We have competitive examinations now, it is true. This is better than the old method of appointment by favoritism, or for party service, and too often for party trickery. At least it would be better if it were carried out, and not used to throw dust in the eyes of the people, while party trickery is rewarded by party promotion, just as before. But we are told that even when this plan is faithfully carried out, the worthiest and best and noblest men do not always pass the best examination. We have a system of marking in our colleges by which the quality of every lesson is noted and honors are distributed according to the average excellence of these records. Yet every college student knows, and every college faculty knows, whether they confess it or not, that this plan does not always give honor to whom honor is due. Every college student, except the valedictorian, will agree with me, that even by this plan the best men, the hardest students, and even the best scholars do not always get the highest honors. The men of *pois*, in spite of every precaution, will ride by the honest, hard-working plodders on foot. J. G. Saxe, in his *College Retrospect*, says, among other things:

"I recollect the prizes paid  
For lessons fathomed to the bottom;  
(Ais that pencil marks should fade!)  
I recollect the chaps that got 'em—  
The light equestrians who soared  
O'er every passage reckoned stony,  
And took the chalks, but never scored  
A single honor to the pony."

Thus the honors and promotions and rewards of men, even when best arranged, are not the measure of desert or service. Favoritism and patronage, cunning, hardness of face and cheek, persistence, impertunity and self-assurance will break through the best arranged hit

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man schemes, and take the choicest prizes away from honest and true service.

But Christ says it shall not be so in His Kingdom, and in the real rewards of life it is not so ~~measured, as in the kingdoms of men, where the rewards are measured by the measure of the man.~~ The rewards of God, which really make or unmake life, always find fidelity and fitness, and measure them. The shrewd villain who evades the laws of men does not therefore go unwhipped of justice, but a thousand self-acting scorions will follow him through life. Mevit will not be overlooked in the providence of God because it is modest, nor will vice be crowned because it is brazen. But the rewards of God will be self-adjusting, and as sure as that the lighter weight in the balance will strike the beam. In the ocean you determine the weight of a substance by the depth to which it sinks. So in the Kingdom of God worthiness rises to its own fit place. If this could be applied in the forms of our society, the fittest would always rise the highest. The politician with the cleanest hands would reach the highest place, while those whose hands were loaded with salary steal and back pay grabs would sink as though a millstone were hanged about their necks, and donations of stolen funds to hospitals and public charities would be lighter than straws on the ocean's surface to delay their doom.

The mistake of these disciples was, in applying to the Kingdom of God the principles that obtain in the kingdoms of men. They supposed that there would not only be places of honor in that Kingdom, but that these places would be gained in the same way as among men. Patronage, favoritism and persistence would secure the prize. They did as men do—desired a position and took the means to obtain it, instead of desiring fidelity and accepting what came of it. They made a similar mistake to that of Simon Magus, who supposed that "the gift of God could be bought with money,"—another mistake which modern improvement has not altogether corrected. They thought they were the favorite disciples of Christ, and that He had a special personal attachment to them because He readily chose them for any special service He required. They thought to turn this personal attachment to good and permanent account, and secure for themselves places of high trust in the glorious time they supposed was coming.

His reply indicates that they had mistaken the nature of true promotion and the true road to it. It was not by personal favoritism nor by planning and plotting, but by service. "Follow me in my humiliation and trials, and you shall follow me in my glory. He shall not be greatest among you who usurps authority and asks to be served, but he shall be greatest who serves his brethren the best. Greatness shall be a quality of the heart and soul and life, and not the assumption of titles or position. A man cannot be lifted to it by favoritism, purchase it by money, or compass it by cunning. It comes as the result of appropriate service and discipline.

The lesson involved in this incident, it seems to me, is, that every good is reached by an appropriate path. The things that men call good are not always good, and things which



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they despise and hater away are often among the choice things of life. That is only really good which does a man good. The only real promotion is enlargement of soul. The desire to be great is not met by securing a great man's place. The boy may long to become a man, but he does not fulfill his longing by standing on stilts. Among men, position passes for worth, and is often accepted for the figures on the face. But when the day of settlement comes, there will be found to be a very heavy discount upon it. Position is like a bank-note. It is valuable just in proportion as it represents something genuine in the man himself.

Solomon speaks of the peril of being in haste to be rich. His words have not outgrown of their wisdom. The world has not outgrown them, but is continually giving new illustrations of their profoundness and truth. Haste to be rich is only a specific form of a general fault. The general error may be stated as an eagerness to gain any result quicker than the appropriate means will bring it. The specification of Solomon is an eagerness to gain wealth faster than industry and honest dealing will accumulate it. A true man would not want a dollar unless it was measured by some effort or worth of his own. A true man would be embarrassed and mortified to receive honors which did not belong to him—which did not represent some equivalent rendered or some quality possessed.

But men are in haste and cannot wait for industry to draw its pay or worth to find its level. One man jinxes by the wayside and robs the lonely traveler as he passes by. A second, whose name will not pass at the bank's sign, another man's name that will, and draws the money on it. A third buys a stock of goods under large pretenses, goes to a distant city, such as Omaha or Denver, and commences business. He pushes his goods on the market at low prices, makes large and rapid sales, and is soon one of the rising merchants of the West. This goes on till the proper time comes, when he coolly sits down in his office and writes his creditors to come and take what is left of the stock and divide it among themselves for what he owes them. He himself pockets the proceeds, and upon these commences business on a cash basis and with a good solid capital to fall back upon. The first two we send to State's prison, while the last rents a pew in the most fashionable church and becomes a respectable citizen. If justice was done, the whole three would occupy adjoining cells. This haste to be rich fills our prisons and our asylums, and I might almost say our poor-houses. For many who might have gained an honest competence, have sacrificed even that in the strife for sudden wealth. Society is filled with heart-burnings and bitterness, and individual life is shrivelled and marred by this same spirit. But this is only one form of the malady. Men are eager for pleasure, too. They are not satisfied with the natural joys of a regular active life. They must crowd life by stimulants and excitements, by wild and protracted revels. Thus many men exhaust in a few years the force and vitality of a lifetime, and idleness, debauchery and ruin fill out the rest of their days. They make haste to enjoy themselves. They crowd life with excitement and pleasure more



than nature can give or bear. The most pitiable sight the world knows is an exhausted pleasure-seeker.

Then they are in haste for place and power. Men are not satisfied with the honor which comes to service and desert, but they must appropriate both. They cannot wait until they are called to place and power on account of fitness, but they must plot and struggle for them without regard to fitness. Instead of waiting till their qualities and services commend them and the people call them to places of power, they put themselves forward, suborn the press, pack conventions, forestall public judgment, and force themselves into office. I know we are told that unless a man does press his own way, he will never obtain office. Then he is better off without it. It is better to be fitted for a place and not obtain it, than to obtain a place without being fitted for it. I can conceive of no more glorious sentence than that which history will pass on the late Chief Justice Chase, for instance—that though he never was called to the Presidency, he was eminently qualified for that place. And I can hardly conceive of a more damning sentence than that which history will pass on many other men, that although they were chosen to the Presidency through the influence of party machinery, and on the principle of availability, they failed to display in office those qualities which the country needed in that position. Solomon says "he that is diligent in his business shall stand before kings." And there are thousands of men who have been true to their place and work who have never been recognized by office, but who, in the grand review of history, will stand before kings and presidents in another and a higher sense. They will stand in advance of kings. Webster and Clay were never presidents, but they tower above a generation of presidents. Who now thinks of Webster as Secretary of State? Who thinks of Clay as Speaker of the House? Who thinks of Milton for the office he held? And who would think of the official life of Bacon had he not stained it by crime? The Department of State has been rendered for all time more glorious by the fact that Webster once held its portfolio. The Speakership of the House has an additional honor by the fact that the silver-tongued orator of Kentucky once held the gavel. I do not wish you to infer that place and power and office are not desirable. But they are good for what they mean and what you can do through them. If a man obtains a place—some he deserves it, it is only giving publicity to the stamp that is already on him. But if he works his way into an office for which he has no fitness, it is only putting the stamp of the gold on the base metal, which makes you despise it all the more.

This haste to be rich—this impatience for promotion—this eagerness to hasten results—is the peril of the age. The present age has had a great many epithets applied to it, but none more appropriately perhaps than that of "fast." It is a fast age. We hurry every thing. We not only ride by steam and talk by lightning, but we are continually trying to hurry up the steps of nature. And, as nature always loves to take her time, there is trouble always to be had. We have steam ripened fruit, steam dried lumber and steam tanned leather. Short



processes are the race. We cannot wait for natural operations. And we carry this into our life. Boys are hurried into manhood and then into business and office, when they ought to be waiting in Jerusalem for their beards to grow. This is why there are so many who so sadly disappoint the promise of their youth.

"A bud that bursts before its time  
Will fade before it's full!"

A boy who is thrust forward before his nature, is almost sure to be like fruit that ripens before it is grown. This haste for half-grown ripeness, this eagerness to clutch results by reaching over the antecedents, shows itself in everything—in education as well as elsewhere. It appears in all the short cuts to science. We have Latin in six short lessons, and mathematics made easy. Our Commercial Colleges promise to furnish young men complete with all needful learning and set them up in business, in three months—men ask, in all seriousness, why our college course remains the same, when all else quickens? If we can cross the ocean now, in ten days, when it formerly took six weeks, why cannot the seven years of our college course be equally shortened? Where is the need of spending days in working out the problem of the snail's distance, when you can read it in any newspaper in two minutes. Why work wearily for hours to solve a problem when the result could be read from the book. Why walk wearily up the hill of science when you can have a pony and ride. Why toil so hard for results when you can reach them at once by a bound.

Every result that is worth anything to you, grows in your experience. He that climbeth up some way is a thief and a robber. The good old way of the past, is the good old way still. The old hymn says:

"We are traveling home to God  
By the paths our fathers trod!"

There are no new paths for the essential experiences of life. What gave culture to Aristotle, gives culture to us now. There is no royal road to learning—in short-cut. Do not understand me as pleading for any particular study. You may take German or Latin—algebra or conic sections—natural science, or metaphysics. You may study in school or Academy or College, in office shop or home, by the light of the forge, like Elisha Burcott, or standing by your case in the printing office, like Horace Greeley. But whatever the subject or place or method, there must be this essential thing—steady, persistent long continued application and hard work. You can get a great many things without these, but you cannot get intellectual culture. You may get a reputation for scholarship, you may get through college, you may get a diploma. But what these things represent you can never get, for nature will not be cheated and will never yield higher results except on certain conditions. Names may change—courses of study may change—school books may change, but no patient method of pedagogy or priest can give learning or religion except on the established conditions of God. Or both it may be said:

"It is the oft told tale  
Of work and weariness—  
No wider is the gate  
No broader is the way  
No smoother is the ancient path  
That leads to life and day."

When I am speaking to you who now go out from this institute, I know I am speaking to



those who have in part at least resisted this spirit and pressure of the age—this urgency to haste. You have not been drawn aside to short cuts and easy methods, but have taken the full through course. As you go out into the world the temptation will be exceedingly strong to grasp after speedy results, without looking to the conditions on which they rest. Remember, that cultivated manhood is worth more than any price that may be offered for it.

"The merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold."

"She is more precious than rubies; and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her."

"Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honor."

"Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

Despise then, a stolen honor, as you would blush to wear a stolen coat. Be willing to wait for results till they come in the proper way. They may seem to come slowly sometimes, but all good things come slowly. That which grows quickly, decays quickly.

"The mills of God grind slow  
But they grind exceedingly fine."

There is a divine road to every worthy success. Some may reach success sooner by taking a shorter course. But the crown thus gathered will be a golden crown, and will prove a crown of thorns upon their head. If you want some higher work than that you are doing, do well the work you are now engaged on. If you want a better place than that which you now occupy, be faithful in the place where you now stand. Do not be anxious to obtain a better position than your neighbor, but rather be anxious to do the work of your position better than he.

When Paul was called to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, he tells us he did not confer with flesh and blood. He did not ask what influence it would have on his prospects for life. He did not ask what effect it would have on his standing in society, his political ambition or his hopes of wealth. He only asked what he ought to do. And this same Paul, who refused the crown the world offered to him, pressed upon him, and was called a mad man by those who conferred with flesh and blood—this same Paul has been the crowned of all the ages since.

When a man takes "counsel of the flesh," his degradation has begun. Many a business man has taken counsel of his avarices, who would, to-day, gladly give all he has gained, if he could recover the honest integrity and clear conscience which he has lost. Many a man has taken counsel of his ambition, who would give the best place the world has ever had to offer, if he could be restored to the pure motives and simple aspirations of his earlier years. Many a man has taken counsel of his fears, who would gladly endure a hundred times over, all his fears ever threatened, if he could be allowed to choose again. An engineer leaped off his engine and saved his life, while the train went thundering down the abyss without breaks or reversal of the wheels. He left his post, but saved his life and may sing:

He that fights and runs away  
May live to fight another day.



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But who would not rather choose the fate of that engineer of the Richmond disaster, who with the very flesh scalded from his body, was found with the bare bones of his arms in position, as though he had just put on the breaks and turned the lever, and thus saved scores of lives. "Faithful unto death" might be inscribed on his monument. Thus the world always judges when it gets the facts and gives its honest judgment. Fidelity is better than success, better than wealth, better than position, better than life.

Go forth, then, ladies and gentlemen, into the world, determined that whatever else may fail, your fidelity shall not fail. Then, though wealth may not wait upon your steps, and honor may refuse to crown you, you will hear a voice more sweet and inspiring than all the

voices of ambition or avarice, saying: "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life."

You who go out from this University of Kansas as the first class it sends out from its walls, go out to add to the volume of educated life that is impressing and ought to be blessing the world. You may feel that you are few and feeble as you read of the multitude of children of which other colleges boast. But year after year other classes will follow you in constantly increasing numbers, and the day is not far distant when you will count it among the honors of your life to have been the first on the growing list of those who claim the University of Kansas as their Alma Mater. May you be so true and so faithful that she, too, may count you one of her honors to have you first on the catalogue of her alumni.



Mr. John Morse

The Standard printed my address  
and with the exception of one passage  
which was uncorrectly punctuated - it is  
a very fair copy. Please send me the  
proof to Perkins, Livingston  
Michigan - if you print before  
my return on Sept 1<sup>st</sup>.

R. Cordley

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