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Arkadelphia, Ark. June 2nd 1888

Baccalaureate Address before

the first class of Ouachita

College, delivered June 13th 1888,

by J. W. Conger. Arkadelphia, Ark.

Class.

Miss Bessie Cross. Ph. B.

Miss Flora Stimmett Ph. B.

Frank P. Turner, A. B.

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1.

Baccalaureate Address.

Young Ladies & Gentlemen,

Worthy Seniors:-

As the representative of the Faculty, it becomes my duty to sever the golden thread of pleasant association which has so strongly bound us together as teachers & pupils. Sweet are the memories to be cherished. Many are the fond hopes for the future ^{living} of ~~Arkadelphia~~ ^{the} you, the first graduates of Ouachita College.

Growing out of the interest in your welfare, we present a few thoughts for your consideration. You are now at the commencement of your active manhood & womanhood.

The glory or the failure of your lives will depend not so much upon your intellectual artizanship as upon your intellectual manhood - not so much

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upon abstract truths as upon the incorporation of those truths into your every-day lives. - ~~Thus~~ making the abstract concrete - & thus developing your individuality.

+ In all high service, there are two essentials to success, viz: Self-assertion & Self-suppression. You must put your self into your work & put your work before or beyond yourself. If you would have moulding power & give impulse to lives, you must put the stamp of your own lives on your associates. Character alone begets Character. The life should confirm the belief of the heart. "Vital & pungent personality is a necessity in any effective life. The charm & force of your thoughts, words, acts will be largely due to the quickening infusion of a masterful personality." A truth must become your own before it can become another's." It must first become as-

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stimulated & enters into the "spiritual fibre & tissue", becomes a part of the higher self, before it can be given to another. It thus becomes real, & in giving the abstract truth, an element of self is imparted also. This is truth in the concrete - truth individualized & it is this alone that properly stimulates mind & spirit. Your self-hood must be reflected in all you do.

But, the other essential - self-suppression - though paradoxical - must characterize ~~all~~ ^{the} ~~you~~ ^{the} successful man.

Egotism makes a man obnoxious. As Michael Angelo wore a candle fastened to his cap that his shadow might not fall on his work, so your service should not be blurred by your own image. Self-seeking is a blot & a hindrance, but self-giving is indispensable. You must be yourself, ~~but~~ yet you must forget yourself.

You must show yourself, yet hide yourself.

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in your work. "Put all the strength of your being in what you do," yet seek something beyond & above your ~~self~~ selfish advantage. * (below)

In any sphere of life, no man can become a leader of men without self-assertion & self-suppression.

In St Paul's language; "I, yet not I." "I with the whole force of my individuality - using everything ~~every~~ I have & am in the service, yet not I, in striving for self, or in quest of my own glory." This is actualizing the highest & best possibilities, & the annihilation of the worst. "It is full-orbed self development, yet complete self-effacement."

* ("Unless above himself, he can erect himself,
How mean a thing is man.")

But, ~~my friends~~, in the attainment of these two paradoxical elements of self-assertion & self-suppression, there is a prerequisite.

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isite of obedience.

"It has become almost an educational truism that growth in knowledge can come only from obedience - that a manly independence comes only from a manly dependence. This, my friends, is as much true in the later growth in knowledge as in the earlier". "The farthest advance of thought is in the most perfect subjection of one's thinking to the Truth, for "truth is a supreme reality to which every wise person has submitted & to which every wise opinion ^{has} conformed."

You must become as little children before you can enter the Kingdom.

In so far as self-will or self-eminences our views of truth, just so far will we fail to know the truth. The humbling of pride, the willing recognition of superiors, the ready obedience to the authority of truth, are requisite to clear & full knowledge.

These reflections lead us to this

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Statement: - (which is in the language of Seelye)

"All growth is through obedience
& all success in life & perfection of
character come through submission
to authority."

1st - In the lower, physical realm,
we have power & become strong through
submission to the laws of Nature. Gravity,
heat, life, all stand ready to do our
bidding, but only upon the most absolute
subjection to their requirements.

"The astronomer reads the great laws
of planetary & stellar worlds, but the
wonderful heavens unfold to him their
secrets only as he moves in conformity to
the laws of light & vision. (Kepler had
to submit to the rigid demands of order &
law, before the revelation to him of his
three laws.) The mystery is inscrutable
until he penetrates it in the precise
manner in which the mystery itself has

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decreed. The Chemist traces the movements & combinations of molecular forces & they obey his will, but never until he has submitted to their demands. They obey him, they bear his messages of thought with the speed of lightning, they serve him with the gentleness of the sunlight & the resistlessness of the thunder bolt; but they are mute & dumb, unless he first submits to their behests. "Every so-called marvel of human skill or triumph of human ingenuity, has nothing human in it except the completeness of human obedience."

"By following nature, by submitting unflinchingly to her authority, all her power is at man's command."

2nd. Self-mastery, my friends, is greater than mastery over nature. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, & he that rules his spirit, than he that takes a city." The subjection of your self

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to the true law of yourself is necessary before there can be true sovereignty over the realm of appetites, passions & purposes.

There is a law for your highest control, not of your own making any ^{more} than the laws of Nature, and to this ^{higher} law you must submit yourself, just as to the law of nature, if you would control yourself. This inward voice sounds through the very depths of our being & constitutes personality. Through the submission of yourself to that yet higher, true self, you gain sovereignty. The controlling of appetites, the curbing of desires, the checking of unworthy ~~instincts~~ impulses, & the ~~prevalence~~ ^{with} ~~of~~ ^{that} ~~instincts~~ ^{instincts} ~~is~~ but the submission to the authority of the higher, spiritual ~~law~~ ^{law} within. This is self-control - desires truth in the inward parts - never yields to falsehood.

You find yourselves, my friends, thoroughly

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envisioned by ^{sinful} nature. It is in & around you. The desires of the flesh will carry you in the direction of the greatest happiness; the promptings of kindness & prudence will urge you to gratification; Constitutional tendency, passionate excitement, plausible claims will enter their plea to contrall you.

But there is a capacity of the Spirit over & above this nature - super-natural - which becomes a measure & a test of nature.

It limits gratification to what may be of honor to the Spirit. The sense should render obedience to the authority of the Spirit which seeks your highest excellency & truest dignity. The highest happiness should yield its claims to spiritual worthiness, and in the election of spiritual worthiness alone all happiness, do we find true character.

3rd. Not only does the power which comes from obedience, have a mastering

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over Nature & over Self, but also over
~~at~~ our fellows. If you would
 master others, you must first feel
 their mastery over you. The true
 ruler is such because he mirrors &
 reproduces in his own soul that which
 is in the souls of his hearers, though
 perhaps in an unconscious, never-before
 uttered condition. Mr Gladstone is the
 leader of England because he is the
 foremost interpreter of the English peoples'
 will - always submitting his will to
 the true will of the nation. What was, at
 first, mere instinct with the English, Mr
 Gladstone made intelligence & thus became
 their leader. He became such only
 after submitting to the unformed impulse
 of his people. The same might be
 said of Prince Bismarck of Germany.
~~But not only~~ Obedience then
 is the way to wisdom & power & character.

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The first & the last claim upon self is obedience. The bond of authority should be felt at all times.

(If you would have strong & healthy growth in character - if you would have opened in your souls a well-spring of life, you need to offer your wills in free submission to the Divine Will, "God's sovereignty" is the exhaustless fountain of life: obedience to him is the endless exercise of life. "And he showed me a pure river of water of life clear as crystal proceeding out of the Throne of God & of the Faith.")

For a few centuries past the disposition to assert the individual will above the restraints of authority has been steadily gaining in the civilized world. The strongest governments have a sense of insecurity never felt before. Never before have such large police & military

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forces been necessary to preserve from overthrow by violence the institutions of authority. The disposition to cast off authority & to make the individual ^{self} will dominant is in every issue. Men in many instances take the law into their own hands. In Europe & in our own country there is being waged a war upon property & upon the family — the two institutions upon which the very existence of society depends.

Our chief peril is in the undue exaltation of our liberty. We have set the Goddess of Liberty upon the dome of our Capital at Washington as though Liberty was the presiding genius of in all our laws. We have erected a colossal statue of Liberty at the entrance of New York harbor whose uplifted torch shall proclaim to incoming fleets of all nations that it is Liberty which is to enlighten the world.

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We boast of our freedom, but who speaks with pride of the supremacy of our law?

We are making law dependent on liberty - In other words we are determined to have such laws as we will, rather than to will such laws as we ought to have. If liberty comes first, it soon merges into a license & the license descends ~~into~~ into anarchy & anarchy issues in despotism.

The law first. The question is not what we will, but what we should obey. This is true & obiding liberty.

* History discloses the fact that every nation has pursued some lofty ideal & the degree of prosperity reached is in exact proportion to the perfection of the ideal placed before the young. The striving to reach the ideal fixes the character of the individual. Just as a mirror receives & reflects an image, so every divine radiation & inflowing

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should be retained in the heart & mind of the individual, then these individuals should reflect their entire self-hood & thus become assimilated & incorporated into the ^{Character} ~~body~~ of Society. #

The onward march of the faculties, as they go in pursuit of the ideal is a glorious spectacle. To the rhythm of their tread the soul pours out its divinest strains.

But, My friends, what is your ideal of perfect Character? What or whom have you chosen as a model? The Greek would be beautiful, the Roman strong, the Monk pure, the Knight Chivalrous. What words or words describe your aim?

What is the Standard of excellence towards which you press? What are the Constituent elements of true Character? Decide this question & strive with all the devotion of the Greek, the fire of the Roman & the heroism of the Monk & Knight to reach it. Do

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you strive as did the Greek for beauty, both physical & mental? Then add thereto, the higher moral & spiritual beauty, the lack of which marked the decay of Greece.

Is the obedience of the Roman admirable? Then imitate the stern virtue of the Roman soldier, but be sure that your law is perfect & your leader divine. Do you love the purity & self-abnegation of the Monk? Then add to this, a pure gospel & a pure faith. Are you admirers of the Chivalry of the Mediaeval Knight? Then adorn your ideal of Knighthood with the courage to ~~ack~~ acknowledge the ^{noble} ~~fact~~ & the true, even where there are no "slows & garters."

The great ideals which enchanted the nations of the past bore the sanction of Divinity in so far as the fundamental purpose was to make men perfect. But, in so far as they misunderstood the means to reach this perfection, they all failed.

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A new ideal has shown out of the mists,
The ultimate of thought has been reached.

The Divorce in the human - Jesus Christ -
The actualized Spirit was born. With Him
perfection has its center & its key is love,
which becomes the law of a perfect leader.

This ideal of holiness, of participation in
the Divorce nature, gives the deepest ground
for individuality, sought by Greeks, Romans,
& Teutonic peoples. The aesthetic, the
philosophical & the political ideals, are
all found in the universal nature of
the Christian ideal. The brotherhood of
all men & the ^{the} common heritage of an
infinite destiny make
the attainment of all kinds of perfection
possible.

In all the vast plexus of laws
which run with the human faculties, connecting
man by his body to the earth, connecting him
by his social elements to society, connecting
him by his intellect to the universe & connecting

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him by his spirituality to angels & to arch-
angels, even to God himself - man must
render willing obedience before he can
realize his ideal - before he can
lift the veil which conceals otherwise
hidden felicities & grandeur. By such
obedience he is elevated to the true
sphere of freedom.

The strength of your courage
& the success of your ~~courage~~ endeavors
will come from the strength of your
obedience & the success with which you
lead others to obey. Enjoy all the growth
in wisdom & power & character which
you have gained & are still to gain through
your obedience, in the effort to make more
evident the supremacy of law, the authority
of righteousness, the unequalled sovereignty
of the family & the State, & finally the
headship & lordship, over all, of the Son
of God, who has the authority to execute

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judgement. See that you have of good
is not too precious to be laid upon this
alter.

I join the joy of what you have
been to us in your College life with the hope
of what you are to be, & I find in the
devotion which has characterized you as
a class in your course here, in the
vigilance of your moral purpose & the
strength of your faith, the promise of
your continued increase in wisdom,
power & character & in favor with
God & man. Knowledge is no
blessing, unless it is used well & wisely.
With it alone, life is not complete. In
dealing with things you see, you must
walk hand in hand with faith in the
unseen, thus only making life beautiful
& blessed:

"God gives thee youth but see, Keep thou the
Childlike heart, that will this Kingdom be."

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Polycarp & Marcus Aurelius
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In conclusion, my friends, lift high your ideal, where no foulness or sordid interests shall stain its purity. "Let it gleam like the face of an angel down upon the mad struggle for wealth & self-aggrandizement, till men shall learn that there is something higher than wealth, loftier than station & grander than success.

And when ^{others shall} ~~the ages~~ go to present themselves together in the temple of the Past, among all the gifts they bring, there shall be none equal to the offering of ~~this century~~ ^{which you present}, when, you standing, proudly, ~~among her sister centuries~~, she shall say: "I bring as the result of my work that grandest product of all time - a perfect Christian Character."

All of us have heard, with Bryant, from the deep caverns of thought, a voice & a song:

"Build thee more stably mansions Oh! my soul,
As the swift seasons roll

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Leave thy low, vaulted porch!
 Let each new new temple more noble than the last
 Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
 Lift thee, at length, and free,
 Leaving their outgrown shell by life's unweaving
 sea."

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Accedite.

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Omnibus et singulis has literas lecturis
 plurimum salutem. Nos hujus Collegii
 Quachitae Baptistae Curatores et Professores
 certiorum facimus hos adolescentes
 ingenio^{is} moribusque egregio^{is} ad
 literarum ac scientiarum studia et ad
 omnia hujus Academiae cetera officia
 diligentibus feliciterque incubuisse
 Quam obrem pro auctoritate nobis
 commissa Primum in Artibus
 Gradum necnon omnia jura
 privilegia et honores ubique gentium
 ad eundem^{um} pertinentia ei contulimus
 Longius Rei hac membranae cum Sigillo
 Academiae Chirographisque nostris
 Testimonio sint.

Accipe hoc diploma.

Ad tua subsellia.