PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TO THE FACULTY

of

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY.

(Delivered at the opening of the Annual Session, October 3, 1922.)

By

S. P. Brooks.

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Ladies and Gentlemen:-

You and I have a common purpose in life as Christians with that of our fellow Baptists. It is not without wisdom that we come together now and then to discuss and to take stock about ourselves and the things common to us all. As leaders in the great work of Christian education, we desire to have a correct and ever-growing outlook on our duties. In this spirit I invited you to meet me here tonight.

During the life of an institution like this one, many mistakes are made, mistakes of policy, or mistakes of fact. Baylor University has not been free from errors, being conducted by those with human frailties. It has been the policy of the University to conduct its affairs in the light of the best knowledge available in Christian schools of this character. To this end we shall toil unceasingly, anxious for help from within or without.

As Baptists we are members of churches whose confessions of faith, as taught and as practiced by the fathers, have their source and authority in God's word. These confessions of faith, to which I refer, have not only stressed the truth of God's word, but also the individual responsibility thereto of each of us. This is our creed and to it we have dedicated our lives.

In the prosecution of our tasks we have been sometimes misunderstood by good men. This is shown in the criticism made against the University particularly during the early part of the past two years.

It has been freely said that for years infidelity had been taught in this institution. This was said notwithstanding that it was a gross reflection upon the honor and intelligence of the President. This was said, even though it not only cast a wicked aspersion upon the supposed guilty members of the Faculty, but it graded the other members as weak or wicked, that they should be willing to remain the associates of such so-called heretics.

As your Christian brother and working associate, aware of his personal responsibility to God, aware of his responsibility to the Baptists of Texas for his own conduct, and also for the conduct and teaching of each of you, I did not plead guilty for myself or for you to any of the charges then, nor now, except in regard to a few indefensible statements of Professor Dow's book.
I have been President of Baylor University for twenty years.

During all that time I have believed implicitly in the honor and integrity of the faculty members, as to their personal characters and as to what they taught. I believe in you each tonight. I believe you are carrying out in remarkable fidelity the traditions and policies and examples set for us by the great and good men and women who preceded us, whose policies and examples had them, and have now, their source in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

When the Baptist General Convention of Texas met in Dallas last year, I made the motion which resulted in the appointment of the Investigating Committee that visited us last session. The members of that Committee have accomplished their task. The Baptists of Texas have their report. I am grateful to them for the painstaking manner in which they went about their work and the fact that they diligently sought to find whether the charges made against the University were true or not.

In asking that you come together tonight I did so for the purpose of reading to you a paper that I have prepared. It is not a certain lecture. I have sought to express on paper the policies and kind of teaching pursued by you as individuals and as a faculty, as also that pursued by your predecessors from the day the old school was founded. I have felt by this paper I might reinforce our good intentions to God and to our constituents and that if this paper ever sees the light, the public might come to know us better and to trust us without reservations.

You and I are teachers. We are Christian teachers. We are employed by Christian people who believe a body of well-known doctrine. None of us ought to be in our positions if we cannot heartily and joyfully subscribe to the fundamentals of this body of doctrine. On the contrary, none of us ought to remain if we cannot teach other known or newly discovered truth in the realm of science, material or speculative, without discounting the truth of the revealed will of God. None of us ought to remain if we manifest impatience at the crude and immature enquiries of young students as they come face to face for the first time with the shocks that new knowledge gives, shocks found more frequently in colleges and universities than elsewhere.
The Bible is the source of authority of the doctrines held sacred by the people who employ us. I joyfully express my confidence in the fact that those who employ us do not hold more implicitly to the truths of the Bible than do we. To us it is the Book of Faith. In its precepts we were reared. In its gospel truth we live now. In the glorious hope of a life eternal we shall some day lay the burdens of life down.

As your presiding officer, holding each of you in high fraternal esteem, I express the high hope that you each will never fail to popularize the Bible, its truths, its applications to the heart and life's experiences, to the end that it may always be the chief joy of every student who may come under the influence of Baylor University.

I express the hope that you will never be so busy in research in your library or laboratory but that you will be able and willing and ready to show the way to immortal life to any soul ignorant of an experimental knowledge of Jesus and His saving power. I do not ask this of you in order that critics may cease their criticism, but rather because it is right and because it has been continuously the policy here and was the policy of Baylor before any living critic was born.

The truth here stated is followed by another, that when a people, as Baptists, believe a certain body of doctrine, they should unite in its propagation. Hence Baptist churches. Hence Baptist schools. Baptist schools are supported by Baptist contributors. Baptist contributors are usually found in Baptist churches. Teachers in Baptist schools cannot avoid their joint responsibility in support of the schools in which they teach. Baptist teachers cannot in honor avoid the obligations of church membership.

No Christian teacher can count his church obligations performed in any different way to that of a merchant or professional man. If a Christian merchant ought to go to church regularly so ought a Christian teacher. If a Christian citizen of any calling ought to take his denominational paper, contribute to the support of the local church, missions, orphanages and other philanthropies, then ought the Christian teacher. The Christian teacher, though he may wisely never anchor his life or family in the city or school community, can never in Christian grace and honor shirk his denominational obligations.
As a church or denomination can never be built by a group of peripatetic tramps, so may we never expect to be able to do our church and denominational duties unless we work and pay and pray like other folks. To this end, I as President, representing the Board of Trustees, frankly state that little interest on our part attaches to any teacher's remaining in the school who lives in quiet indifference as to how the school is supported, how the neighboring churches get on, or whether Baylor's students shall learn the way of life eternal.

Strange as it may seem preachers and teachers do not always understand each other. This is even true in a state like Texas or in a school like Baylor, whose origin was primarily for the education of the ministry, and one of whose duties and glories, yet, is their education. Such differences as exist are the outgrowth of different points of view. Of this there is no doubt. Each is often right, even when neither understands the other.

Let us approach this problem or fact: It is difficult to tell where a teacher's task ends and a preacher's begins. Their work certainly runs parallel in much and laps over each other in much.

In the pulpit the primary task of the preacher is to instruct the people in the revealed and unchanging will of God. The chief source of the preacher's authority is the Bible, a Book of Faith. He sometimes overlooks the fact that the Bible is not an encyclopedia of knowledge, and he will claim for the Bible what the Bible does not claim for itself. It does not pretend to be a source book of science or modern history. When the preacher sets forth his confident belief in the things of the spirit, the things of salvation, he rightly does so, relying that the same spirit and the same salvation exist today as existed in the days of Jesus. By this I do not mean that he may not know of other fields of knowledge. I only mean that he goes to no other Book than the Bible for light on the things of eternal life.

Now as to the things of the spirit, the teacher likewise finds no other source than the Bible. He knows that his microscopes and telescopes and test tubes will not match the Bible for the way of the Cross. The preacher takes a text in confidence that it is today what it was centuries ago. The teacher has no such fixed rule for the general class room, where alone human knowledge is studied. He must hunt for truth. The teacher sets up a fact, or a supposed
fact, and he is quite well aware that some other teacher may next day explode his theory. He is not dismayed by the fact. He is encouraged to be more careful, to look further, to enlarge his laboratory to the end that final facts of science, or history, or philosophy, or astronomy, or discovery may be found out.

If a preacher confines his studies wholly to the Bible he becomes dogmatic and impatient with all empirical human knowledge. On the teacher experimenting in a laboratory this righteous impatience is likely to fail. If the preacher carries his studies not less in the Bible, but also in the field of empiricism, he may come to be more tolerant of new truth, or supposed truth, confident all the time that it cannot and will not contradict the Bible.

The teacher should study in his library, in his laboratory and in the field of speculation, but he ought never to fail to give more abiding attention to the things of the Bible, and the mystical truth of experimental religion. If he will do this, he will find his life mellowed and enriched, strengthened and ennobled for the tasks of the school room and the proper teaching of college students.

There has grown up a sort of notion in some quarters that the work of the teacher and the preacher contradicts each other. What an absurdity! We all know, when we think, that the Bible is a Book of Faith and the laboratories of science a book of fact. Both are true. Neither contradicts the other when rightly taught. How the teacher and the preacher ought to be reverent in both fields! God is the author of both, the Bible and the facts of all nature.

You and I do not work in any narrow field. We know that all truth is God's truth and that God's truth is not set up in air-tight compartments, as secular and sacred, as religious and irreligious. It is just as much a truth to show forth the components of water, hydrogen and oxygen, as it is the plan of salvation. However, setting up each fact as a truth in no respect counts them as equal in importance, nor yet does it pit them against each other.

Some of our text books were written by non-Christian men. They are the best we can get, though mixed with error. They often set up and interpret scientific facts in wonderful fashion. These non-Christian scientists, sometimes by error, suppose that what they
teach contradicts the Bible. The scientific teacher versed in the Bible, strengthened by an experimental faith in Jesus, knows that his unbelieving fellow scientists are wrong, very wrong. How we wish that some scientists who know God's Book could get at the unbelieving writers and show them the truth as it is in the Bible, as also in general the proven facts of the laboratory. Thus many non-christians, who now feel themselves thrown on the human scapegoat by christians, good men who spurn them, might reverently learn the way of life eternal.

I plead that we make all our teaching more religious. Is it music, then is not God the author of harmonies? Is it physics, then is not God the creator of all material things? Is it biology, then is not God the maker of all life?

If we regard the demand for religion fundamentally inborn in man, it is all important that we see to it that the right sort of religion be nourished in the students who come to us. It is not enough that they be religious. They should be experimentally christians, the highest expression of religion.

It cannot be rightly said that any education is complete that is not harmonic, that is not religious, which is here interpreted to be christian, whose source is the Christ.

We are not to teach as if our religion was a thing to put on in a church house, but never to be carried in to a class room, as if it were apart from our daily lives. We are to teach consciously that God is the author of all knowledge, of all facts, all universal laws, that He deals directly with each person and is in return constantly approachable by His humblest servants.

State education is limited by the constitution. Her noblest teachers cannot always throw their hearts onto the screen before their students in the class room. They do seek knowledge in relation to material facts. Christian education likewise seeks knowledge in relation to material facts, but it delights also to go into the things of the spirit, up to the grave and beyond it. It exults in every new discovery or experiment, whether found in sea or air, in earth or sky, in rocks or flowers, in bugs or people, in library or laboratory, in the Bible or mystical human experiences. Upon the christian teacher there is no weight set to hinder the flights of his most ardent hopes in any field of human knowledge.
With this in mind surely no teacher thereabouts would willingly live out of harmony with the most practical devotion to and respect and child-like love for God and His cause. Surely he will teach each subject to each student as unto God. Surely he will never practice irreverence in the laboratory any more than in a Sunday School class.

Of course I do not mean that pious tones of voice will measure the sincerity of the heart, but I do mean that the life of the teacher will be read and known by every student. I mean that the life of a sincere christian teacher will help to mold the minds of the new, cross and untutored students who come to college with fixed ideas. They come to college to learn new things. They must learn to acquire new knowledge without discounting the truth of the old. Yet they must learn to discard the old that is found to be false, without discarding the old that is known to be true.

Education gives power. Education does not reduce genuine emotion, but allows it to follow choice. Education releases the wings of imagination, but holds the eyes of the soul on the main things. Education represents the difference between a "holy roller" and Dr. Geo. W. Truett. Christian teachers are to help find the Truettas, John Marshalls, Lees, Spurgeons, Wilsons and Lincolns.

When a teacher looks a class in the face he knows that each one has certain native human instincts. For example, he knows that every human being loves wealth. Therefore, the teacher must direct the love of wealth to the right use of it. He knows that every one loves society, therefore he must train the student how to help one's fellow-men and not how to fleece them. He knows that every person is more or less a religious being, that every one will worship a god made with human hands or he will love the God Jehovah. The student must be helped. The parent may have done it. The good pastor may have done it, but the teacher's help is need perhaps most of all at a time the student in college is face to face with new facts that seem to contradict old truth. The teacher cannot neglect what is elemental in human nature. Nor must he leave the student stranded without hope.

Once more I proclaim a well-known fact that science is not opposed to religion, the religion of the Baptists, nor is religion opposed to science. Scientists discovered that the earth is round;
With this in mind surely no teacher hereabout would willingly live out of harmony with the most practical devotion to and respect and child-like love for God and His cause. Surely he will teach each subject to each student as unto God. Surely he will never practice irreverence in the laboratory any more than in a Sunday School class.

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religionists, among others, properly appropriated the knowledge. Scientists opened new vistas in inventions and discoveries; religionists very properly have mutually proclaimed the facts.

You, ladies and gentlemen, know that religion is personal, experimental, spiritual, a thing not to be measured by a rod, or by a stethoscope. You know that man's consciousness responds to it, however, as truly as if it could be seen by the eye, or felt by the hand. This is God's plan as taught in His Book. As I see it, no matter what subject you teach your life and your subject will be as taught unless you objectify the Christ, and no matter what subject you teach when you do objectify the life of the Christ you will make your subject shine as a thing of beauty in the hearts of all who come under your influence.