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**“The True Aims of
Education”**

Frank Lincoln Goodspeed



MILLS COLLEGE FOUNDERS' DAY
MAY 4, 1910

25/10/1911

“The True Aims of Education”

Sign
FRANK LINCOLN GOODSPEED, D. D.

Address delivered at Mills College on Founders' Day, May 4, 1910.



IT IS FITTING for an institution, as well as for an individual, to stop occasionally and go back to the sources of its life, to pay homage to its founders and renew the visions and ideals which at the beginning led onward into the future. This, as I understand it, is the first institution founded on this Western Coast for the higher education of women. Its founders were educational pioneers. They were not originators of the movement, but they threw themselves into the currents of the movement which has resulted in the establishment of Christian colleges for women the world over. It is the high honor of Mrs. Mills that she was a pupil of Mary Lyon and later a co-teacher with her in Mt. Holyoke, and that the ideals of that great woman became the inspiring force in the building of this school. The disciple has been worthy of the teacher. The life of Mary Lyon was a life wonderful in its simplicity and unostentatious beauty. Obscure in parentage, but endowed with marvelous gifts and mighty in

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her holy purpose, she will ever rank as one of the greatest of women, in native talent, in untiring industry and in far-sighted and prophetic genius. The founders of this College are therefore in the direct line of this holy succession. We are here today to acknowledge our debt to a faith in the founders that rose triumphant over every obstacle, to rejoice in the realization of their aspirations and in the victories which are the fruit of their high constancy and their trustful courage.

THIS IS A WONDERFUL AGE.

There has never been an age in history more interesting, heroic and poetic, than this. So far from being dull and prosaic, so far from our civilization today being "effete," it is the most engaging era in the career of man. Think of the great Arctic and Antarctic explorations calling forth endurance and resource unsurpassed even by Columbus. On the table-lands of Central Asia, England and Russia stand face to face. Persia and Turkey and China are coming to self-government and freedom. Nations, long asleep, are awaking. In America we see a marvelous assembling and commingling of strange peoples, men of every nation meeting here to be moulded into one new race which we trust will be the ideal of all races. The pen is proving mightier than the sword and the arbitrament of

reason is superceding the appeal to arms. The Parliament of man and the federation of the world is now seen to be no ideal poetic dream, but a practical possibility to international comity. No less brilliant are the victories of natural science. The imaginative pictures of former days are becoming the realities of this. Edison is our poet laureate. We shall soon achieve even the conquest of the air.

Chivalry was tame compared with that higher chivalry which finds expression in criminals reformed, disease cured, ignorance enlightened, vice banished, continents evangelized—the dream of universal education and Christian civilization. The historic Crusades were tame in comparison with this high crusade. The old feudalism of a Charlemagne pales before the possibility of a nation of equals who are also brothers. Let no young person think that there is nothing romantic in the world today. In fact the world is as fresh and fair as it was the morning God set it spinning. And no generation since then has had an opportunity at all comparable with that which is vouchsafed to us, the latest sons of God.

THE PERFECTING OF ONE'S POWERS.

The first aim of education is to cultivate and enlarge one's own powers. The educated man possesses the constant delight of acquisition.

He sees more. Life for him will be forever larger and fuller and more blessed. The lights that flame in his intellectual horizon will never go out. Narrowness, which shows itself in various forms—in religious bigotry, in partisan politics, in the dogmatism of science, in the pitiable pride of an illiberal and irreverent culture—all such intolerance is alien to the ideal and spirit of true education. And fortunately such natures are an exception. For a generous training exerts a broadening influence and tends to make even the narrow and intolerant mind mellow, receptive, and expansive. The study of other ages, civilizations and literatures, the deeper understanding of human life and the natural universe, the companionship with the master spirits of the race, all tends to rid one of the narrowness and uncharitableness which often mark the non-educated or half-educated man.

But this toleration must not become indifference. This liberalism must not degenerate into a lazy acquiescence in all opinions. The educated man is equipped to form his own opinions. The highest tolerance is not that which cares no whit as to what is truth, but that which holds firmly its own convictions and yet is hospitable to all truth from whatever source it springs. Opinions are worthless until they have been tried and have stood the test. But how you meet opposition and conflict discloses whether

you possess the spirit of the well-bred student or not. The quack depends upon deceit or the loudness of his protestations. The real scholar depends upon the might of his naked truth. Strength, patience and generosity are marks of the cultivated mind. The scholar has convictions, but is always open to conviction. He is hospitable to all well-grounded opinions; but he never sinks into flimsy indifference or a tolerance which lacks fibre and settled and profound persuasion of the truth.

The method of education in vogue today tends to develop the whole man. The old sponge method, where the mind simply gathers up facts and dates and information as the sponge soaks up water is now happily a thing of the past. We have found that it is not what we stuff and cram into the mind that develops it, but what we draw out of the mind in the healthful exercise of all its faculties. The very word education, which means to draw out or lead out, gives us the key to the right method. In "Paracelsus" Browning tells us that

"to know,

Rather consists in opening out a way,
Whence the imprisoned spirit may escape,
Than in effecting entry for a light
Supposed to be without."

And Ruskin says, "Education is leading human souls to what is best, and making what is best

of them." It is the awakening of the heart, the arousing of the spirit. It is not the amassing of truths, but the deep realization of truth. Education arouses, develops and directs the powers of the whole man. It does not create those powers. It cannot make a fool into a wise man—it can only make him a greater fool. Education, without ability and conscience, makes the charlatan. As Pope long ago expresses it,

"So by false learning is good sense defaced;
Some are bewildered in the maze of schools,
And some are quacks whom nature meant for
fools."

The correct method of education develops and trains all the powers for use toward a worthy end. It is the tilling of the whole intellectual, moral and spiritual acreage of life. It is the man coming to himself and taking possession of himself. According to the sponge method, the teacher imparts knowledge as a manufactured article. According to the modern method,—which is only the revival of the Socratic method,—he furnishes the raw material and inspires the pupil to take it and manufacture for himself. In the former, the student is wholly dependent. In the latter, he acquires something of originality and facility, and is learning to be able by and by to take the capital of the world's wisdom and knowledge and do business for himself.

The true and false method of study and research has been aptly compared by an illustration taken from the spider, the ant, and the bee. Some, like the spider, spin out of themselves their web. Some, like the ant, only heap up and use, as need requires, their gathered store. But others, like the bee, extract sweet matter from the flowers of garden and field, but like the bee, add to it of their own life and fashion and elaborate it by their own efforts to suit their highest purpose. That is the true method. It gathers, not to lay up in memory raw and unassimilated facts; but to remodel the material and add personality to the process of making beautiful and useful.

If this is true, then it will be evident that the man or the woman who stands up before the young mind as its teacher is of infinitely more importance than the tools, the architecture, the apparatus or the course of study. Says President King of Oberlin in his volume on "Personal and Ideal Elements in Education," "We are in danger of forgetting that in education, in ethics, and in religion, and in all true living the most important facts are persons." The teacher is the maker of motive. We have long heard that a liberal education is a boy on one end of a log and President Mark Hopkins on the other end, which is only a picturesque way of expressing the absolute necessity of character in the

teacher. In writing to his daughter about her choice of studies, Emerson said, "It matters not so much what you study as with whom you study." "Education," says Matthew Arnold, "is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life." The richer the nature, the nobler the spirit, the finer the instincts and training of a teacher, the more he becomes the incarnation of all desirable qualities. In his own personality truth must first be embodied and vitalized. It is the teacher that makes the school, the generous, wise, magnanimous teacher who admires rightly, whose soul-life is lived with masterpieces, whose intellectual being is fed by the best food, whose presence creates an atmosphere where young souls' tendrils, reaching out, are fed and satisfied. When mind confronts mind and character grapples with character, the vital human element in the teacher is the well-nigh all-important question. Give me a bare room, if you give me also an Arnold of Rugby. Give me a plain and severe Puritan house, if only Milton, the vigorous and high-souled young scholar presides there. They will inspire thinking and they will lead the life on to being and doing. At the old tumbledown schoolhouse near Stratford where Shakespeare taught school they may have learned "small Latin and less Greek;" but I venture they got something more and infinitely better from that myriad-mind. Education is not much more nor

less than this—what the mind of the teacher can do for the mind of the pupil. Compared with that all else is accessory and unimportant. True teaching is inspirational. The best teacher does not teach for mere financial reward, else his entrance to a school-room profanes the sacred name of teacher and the more sacred name of youth. Training is good, but impulse is better,—that power which cannot be defined, but which lifts the student up into great enthusiasms and works in him as commanding personality, which does for him something of what Paul did for Timothy, what Aristotle did for Plato, and Goethe and Cromwell did for Carlyle, and Dante did for Longfellow, and Thomas Arnold did for multitudes of English youth, and Mark Hopkins did for those who came in contact with his imperial character. It is the crowning of knowledge with wisdom, the imparting of skill so that the pupil shall know not merely how to get a living but how to live,—and the difference is the whole distance between the animal and the archangel. The true teacher thinks only of his opportunity to lead living souls to the largest and richest intellectual life, to the highest expansion of thought, to a loving communion with the great forces and ideals of the world, to citizenship in the republic of truth and beauty, to the full exercise of all those gifts that shall most enhance the glory of God and the good of men.

CULTIVATION OF SELF MASTERY.

The next aim of true education is to make the student master of himself. We talk much of culture. What is culture? Is it not this, the perfect mastery of all one's powers, the perfect control and use of all one's faculties? Culture is you taking possession of yourself. Our accomplishments must grow into us and become part and parcel of us. Education is reality. It is a call to life. It is a summons to virtue and conscience. It makes a man so rich that it makes him willing to be poor and patient, because more noble souls have perished from luxury than from hunger. True education has power to breed better thoughts, to lift us above ourselves, power to help us control ourselves and master our circumstances. It excites and expands, chastens and nourishes, produces an intellectual climate, makes one a citizen of the commonwealth of intelligence. Learning is not a staff by which a man climbs above his fellows, but a torch by which he lights the way for his less fortunate fellows. It is not a negative thing or a critical thing at all; but positive, constructive, helpful. The royal souls are the generous souls.

“Thyself and thy belongings
Are not thine own so proper, as to waste
Thyself upon thy virtues, them on thee.
Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,

Not light them for ourselves, for if our virtues
Do not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely
touched,
But to fine issues."

Possession is opportunity. Noblesse oblige! Trusts must either be defaulted or executed. If this age is to be true to its vast chance, if the shadows are to flee away, if falsehood is to die, then our young men and women must hear the challenge of the times and bear on helmet and on brow and deep within the heart, the motto of the German Emperors, "Ich dien",—I serve. God can never use a cynic who snarls, or a pessimist who hopes for the worst, or a sardonic soul who sneers in bitter irony. Leaders are always great believers. Doubt palsies. Faith is the victory for those who would help their generation and would work constructively toward that far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves. This is the difference between the prophet and the clown, between the hero and the coward. It is the difference of outlook. The greatest of earth are seers. They take time to think. Even Sir Galahad must have some shaded nook where he may rest and pray, or he will not have strength out "where the foul foe hovers and the battle waits." Not otherwise is the Holy Grail recovered. Not otherwise are men fitted for their tasks and for their victories.

The fine ministry of education is to make men masters of themselves and this fair earth, to help them see and enjoy and do. It is to give the soul self-expression, making it free and strong and true and rich and loving and complete.

EDUCATION IS FOR CHARACTER.

Character, then, is the real and high aim of the educational process. "The true aim of the highest education," says Mark Hopkins, "is to give character rather than knowledge, to train men to be rather than to know."

Ideals change as one goes on in life. Youth seeks happiness, midlife strives for success and power, and old age is cheered by the vision of peace. Prof. Blaike, in his autobiography, tells us how in the days of youth he wrote to the young lady who was to be his life companion that they would together find in future years supreme good in united lives, their union making, as he believed, unalloyed happiness. Later on he found that happiness was not the highest aim of life. Experience and observation had taught him that the things to be coveted were three,—a great goal, a great struggle, and a great victory. And then he adds what seems to be an afterthought, that there should be a third quality. And what he seems to put last I would put first, namely, a great inspiration. Here is the life that leads to the heights of being: a

great inspiration, a worthy goal, a manly struggle, and victory crowning all. Happiness will come, but it is not a primary consideration, nor is it to be sought directly. Happiness is life's by-product. We meet it in the way of duty, never by direct search, or selfish pursuit; but only as the companion of service, the reward of well-doing. "Duty done is the soul's fireside." Set yourself, therefore, upon some worthy goal, espouse some high cause, hitch your wagon to a star, get an inspiration and an ambition noble enough to swallow up all other ambitions, or to include them all, and then life will be rich and rewarding and victorious. To whomever wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews the controlling, steadying inspiration was this, "Looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith."

With our New England forefathers education and religion went hand in hand. They did not wait until the building of a college was an easy task. Within sixteen years after the landing at Plymouth Rock, in the midst of bitter poverty and privation, they founded Harvard College, as her motto declares, "Pro Christo et ecclesia,"—for Christ and the Church, each freeholder of the infant colony being taxed one shilling or a peck of corn. The impulse that founded Yale College was a religious one, and the oldest college in Virginia was chartered, as the record declares, "That the youth of Virginia might be

piously educated." Heroism, faith and sacrifice went into the foundation stones of all our early colleges. If you seek for the brain and conscience of New England in the early days, you will find them in the colleges which assumed the intellectual and moral leadership of the new nation. They shaped our institutions and moulded our civilization. One historian declares that "a failure to plant and endow Harvard college for twenty-five years would have so stunted and paralyzed the social progress of Massachusetts as to have altered essentially the whole course of events bearing on our national history in which Massachusetts had any part."

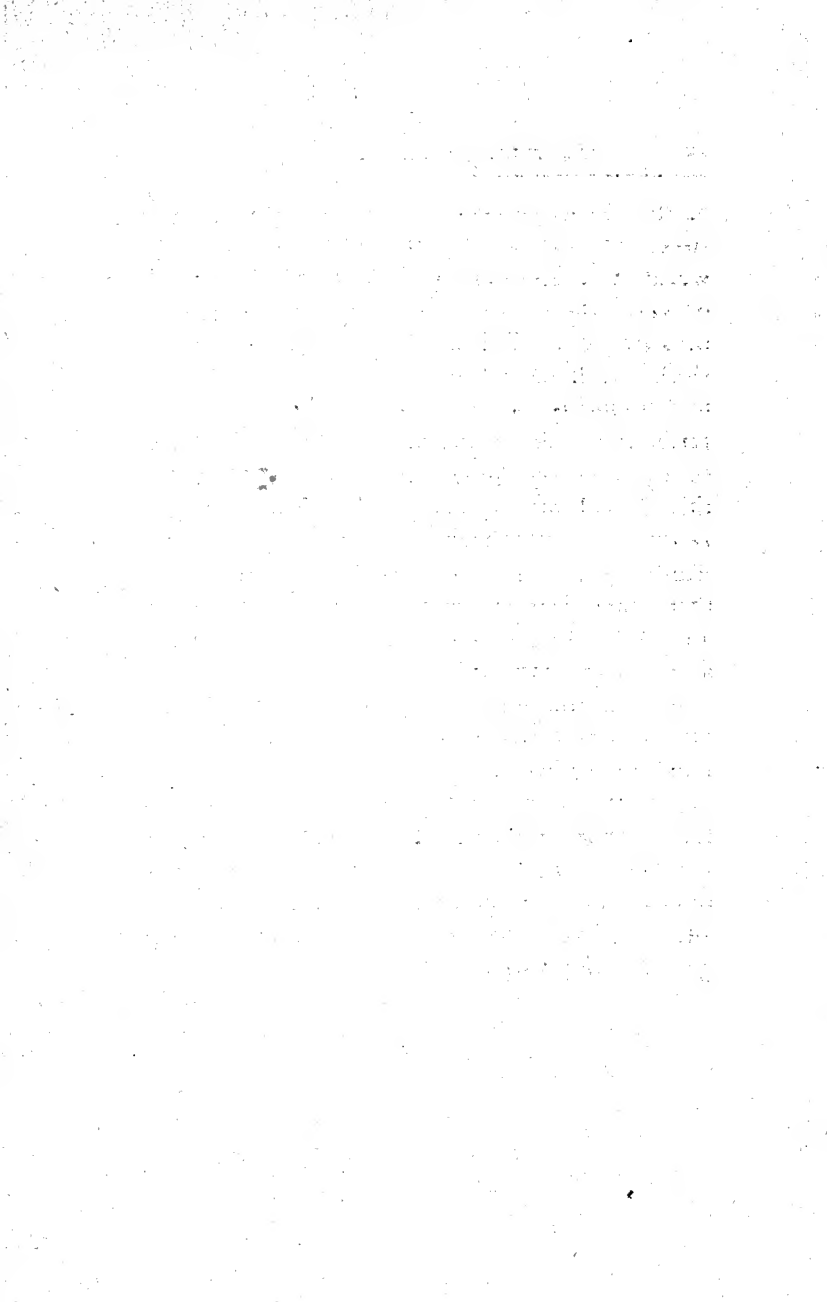
The secret of all this lies in the fact that the strength of a man's mind is measured by the strength of the purpose that controls it. A strong, pure purpose means character, and character clarifies the mental vision. Selfishness clogs the faculties and obstructs the vision. Unselfishness alone is able to see things in their right relations. It imparts clarity to the mental faculties and gives to the life a splendid poise. Once the earth was supposed to be the center of the universe, and as a consequence astronomy was full of error and confusion. So a self-centered, self-seeking life is never at rest, never at peace. Nor can it be a truly efficient life. Only as life finds its center in God does its

confusion vanish and its activities issue in order and nobleness. Then the great volume of nature is illumined; it reveals its hidden beauties; familiar things take on new value; the soul becomes both telescopic and microscopic, and finds

“Tongues in trees, books in the running
brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.”

These, then, are some of the things for which this School stands. It is well that the purpose and the toil of its founders should from time to time be recalled and their high aims rehearsed in the presence of those who here drink at the fountain of learning. It was their wish that this College should ever stand for Christian character, the highest type of culture and of faith. At the close of “Tom Brown at Rugby,” you will remember how Tom is pictured as coming back to the old school and sitting in the old seat in the chapel. How it brings up the image of his sainted teacher! And how he longs to see that teacher again and tell him the measure of his love and reverence and how he would be the man the teacher wanted him to be through life and death! And the sun glints in through the window and rests upon the grave beneath the altar there and the place is transfigured. And somehow the memory of that earthly teacher becomes mingled with the feeling of the presence

of the Great Teacher who spake as never man spake, and the brave heart goes out into the world in the spirit and knowledge of Him who is on earth the embodiment of purity and tenderness and love. It is indeed a divine business, a work which cannot be measured by human measurements or computed by any human arithmetic. As it was the wish of the founders, so let it be our prayer and our endeavor that this School may always lead and point to the Divine Teacher of men. Thus far it has grown like the trees, planted hereabouts by the founders, that draw their sustenance from the earth and air. I boldly prophesy that the years to come, as the years past, will find it sending out blessings into the world as many as the leaves and blossoms on these trees, the blessings of trained intellects, of womanly lives, of Christian ideals, of unselfish ministry to a needy world, all of these being leaves of that divine tree which is for the healing of the nations. Thus and only thus will the purpose of the founders be realized, and their lives reappear in the enrichment of the generations yet to be.





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