
THE
CLEMSON AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE
OF
SOUTH CAROLINA



ADDRESS TO THE ALUMNI

BY

B. R. TILLMAN

CLASS OF 1896

MAY 18, 1946

A D D R E S S

by

B. R. T I L L M A N , ' 9 6

to the

Clemson Alumni

May 18, 1946

Mr. President, gentlemen of the Clemson Alumni and honored guests; It is a real pleasure to be here tonight; The class of 1896, the first to graduate from this institution is having its fiftieth anniversary and reunion. I take my invitation to appear here as a tribute to that class, as well as myself. Personally I am grateful and

"Breathes there a man with soul so dead;

Who never to himself hath said,

This is my own, my native land."

For many reasons I am happy to return to Clemson after fifty years, and the greatest one is I LOVE THE PLACE AND ALL IT HAS DONE AND MAY DO. In utter frankness I want to say I do not feel as smart as I felt when I left the chapel with my diploma. Some of you may have heard of the young man, whose father was delivering diplomas to a graduating class and when he reached the name of his son and called it out, the boy in accepting the sheepskin spoke in a low voice to his dad saying, "educated by heck."

So many of my classmates have passed to the great beyond. Gone, gone are the old familiar faces. Four years of intimate companionship in College, enriching life with some of the finest friendships one ever has, enduring and understanding friendships' affection and love, and then to return and find that just a few are left, one naturally yearns

"for the touch of a vanished hand

and the sound of a voice that is still."

In recalling traits of character, fidelity, and integrity, I believe that group of men had as much to give, and gave as freely, as earnestly and as generously to life, as any group it was ever my privilege to know. I hold fond memories of the faculty in those early days of this institution. Colonel Hardin, Dr. Brackett, Professors Furman, Clinkscales, Morrison and others. The beloved Dr. Paul Sloan. The dynamic Riggs; ALL HAVE GONE TO THAT BOURNE FROM WHICH NO TRAVELLER RETURNS. We cherish and love their memories; Peace to their ashes.

My greeting to you fellow members of the Alumni is an affectionate one. The mother college in which we were nurtured did her best and "the fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves," if Clemson did not make of each a shining mark.

After the commencement fifty years ago, several of my class remained here to teach. I too taught here for a few months. I am indeed happy to find Rudolph Lee, Will Klugh, Joe Hunter, and Carter Newman on the campus now. These men have influenced many Clemson men for good during fifty years of service and we pay high tribute to them.

However, my greatest source of happiness is, we have a Clemson graduate as president of the College. I have learned, too, the new commandant, Col. A. J. Thackston, is also a Clemson graduate.

When the class of 1896 went out into the big world to conquer it and win a place in life, we found it so different from the present time. There were no automobiles or paved highways; no radios; no flying machines; no farm tractors or power-driven agricultural tools, harvesters, etc. Just the horse and buggy age! The ladies wore their dresses below their shoe tops, and all gentlemen gave their seats to the ladies on street cars. South Carolina was planting 2,000,000 acres in cotton, instead of about 1,000,000 as at present. We received 6 cents a pound for it in 1896. You could buy a good shirt for a dollar, and have it delivered.

During the fifty years just past, inventive genius, science has all but revolutionized the world industrially, and it has been an era of the greatest progress mankind has ever known in industry.

We had never heard of vitamins; nylons were unheard of; and bobbysoxers as a group had not appeared.

Our class left Clemson, the first to graduate, when the College was indeed young. There were four hundred students, and a comparatively small College, which has grown to the present magnificent institution. Knowing as much as I do about the fight for an Agricultural College begun in 1886 by my father, the organization of the farmers of the state, called at the time the Farmers Movement, and the subsequent political battles in behalf of the building of Clemson and Winthrop, I would be false to myself if I did not pay tribute to the leaders of that movement, and to the first board of trustees, named in part by Mr. Clemson in his will and selected in part by the Legislature. Mr. Clemson gave the Fort Hill plantation and \$60,000 in money and gave this at a time when the fight being made by the farmers needed so badly a heartening influence. The gift inspired them to greater efforts. They had a nucleus around which to build. They had his generous and noble example to follow. However, it took the political

campaign of 1890 to insure subsequent and additional funds for the completion of this institution. Having as a boy gone through that campaign, with my father as its candidate for Governor, I will tell you it was the most exciting and revolutionary political upheaval in the history of South Carolina.

The trustees worked insistently, persistently, patriotically, and with unbounded zeal and loyalty. Not until 1891 was all opposition to the College cleared away, and work begun on building the institution, which we see here today. Mr. Clemson named as trustees R. W. Simpson, D. K. Norris, R. E. Bowen, B. R. Tillman, J. E. Wannamaker, and J. E. Bradley, while the Legislature elected B. W. Edwards, J. L. Orr, J. E. Tindal, E. T. Stackhouse, and Colonel Alan Johnstone.

In paying tribute to the high purpose, the vision, the courage, and the work done by these, I quote Kipling—

"I was a king and a mason, a master proven
and skilled

I said I would build me a palace, such as a
King should build."

All hail to these named builders. Keep their memories green. To Dr. Poole and his collaborators may I say I pray God's blessings upon all of your efforts and accomplishments.

Clemson has graduated 6,725 men. To World War I she sent 765 men, 24 of whom were killed in action. To World War II she sent 6,233 men. They ranked from major general to private and from admiral to seaman, but only 730 of them, due to the military training gotten here, served as privates.

I doubt if there is another institution in America, except West Point and Annapolis with so good a record, and certainly none can surpass it.

In the Department of Justice where I work, one does not take himself too seriously. We must give honest service,—must make a sincere effort with all the strength of mind and heart each has to do the job in hand. I love the people I work with, and after all life is largely a matter of dealing with people. We are urged to have a deep sincere honest interest in all the people who come to us. There are some who need us and some we need. There are good people; difficult people; cranky people; wise and foolish people; but I have never yet failed to learn something from individuals I contact. Learning to love people as a whole, trying sympathetically to understand their problems, has increased my own life, I want to tell you, GIVE ENOUGH LOVE to mankind, and

there will surely be in our heart some DIVINE GRACE.

I have lived through three wars—The Spanish American, World War I, and World War II. There is always patriotism and willingness to sacrifice, even unto death, while the war lasts. After the close of each, and we have been Victors in all of them, there has come a period of greedy ruthlessness; selfishness; money madness. Men seem to lose love of country and patriotism and become absorbed in selfishly trying to get more and more money. We have to know ETERNAL VIGILANCE IS THE PRICE OF LIBERTY. I hope to see returning veterans who are equipped take over in National affairs. They have fought to save the nation, fully aware of many of the problems abroad, as well as those at home, and have not only knowledge gained during the war, but the discipline gained by service in it. With the beginning of World War II a new age began and with the ending of World War II problems and issues have arisen which touch every phase of society the world over, and they are so grave that unless we master them, they will master us.

The challenge to mankind is the greatest in all history. Truly are we living in a grand and awful time. With knowledge gained during the war of machines, of physics, chemistry, of war weapons, of "know-how" in all phases of production; we have to learn not only to handle and utilize this knowledge for good, but have to know how to prevent its being used for sinister or evil purposes.

Recently I came across a quotation from Nicholas Murray Butler, former President of Columbia University, I want to read it to you.

"The first world war cost 30,000,000 lives and four hundred billion dollars, and with that amount of money we could have placed a \$2500 home with a thousand dollars worth of furniture on five acres of land for every family in the United States, Canada, Australia, England, Wales, Ireland, Scotland, France, Belgium, Germany, and Russia, with enough left over to give to every city of twenty thousand inhabitants or more, in all of those countries, a five million dollar library, and a ten million dollar University."

We have not yet completed the total cost of World War II, except in anguish and sorrow endured,—blood, sweat and tears—; but it will be appallingly higher, and the terrible tragic truth is, it came less than 30 years after the end of the first one.

With its ending, climaxing an age, the story of mankind can begin anew, and we can possibly have

"The war drums throb no longer,
The battle flags furled,
In the parliament of man
The Federation of the world."

We should pray for this; we should work for this, and, with all the sternness of which we are capable, demand that mankind shall never again attempt to settle any problems by WAR. No really decent man has ever been willing to wantonly provoke war to settle disputes international or otherwise.

I do not want to recount any of the story of the world being saved from Fascism, Hitler, Mussolini, etc. Our heroes in the struggle were many and we thank them for service, from the bottom of our hearts express gratitude; and for those who did not come back, our tribute is "greater love than this hath no man, that a man lay down his life for his friend."

I am deeply interested in the future and the problems we have to face, the greatest responsibilities we have ever known. I have a conviction about that future, and that conviction is best illustrated by this story.

During the War Between the States President Lincoln was approached with the query, "Mr. President, do you think God is on our side?" His answer is profound. He said, "My friend, my great concern is to know whether we are on God's side."

Following the deep sorrows of Dunkirk, Winston Churchill, a great and a good man, exclaimed in his anguish, "It is Christ or chaos." Mr. Churchill gave voice to an eternal truth, a fundamental truth, and now that we have peace let us resolve to go more often to the Prince of Peace for wisdom and knowledge, to learn how to keep peace.

In this new age, which the historian can well call the Atomic Age, we are going to have to lose the old life, and in doing so find the new; find a sane, a reasoning just attitude, not only in individual dealings one with another but in Nations dealing with one another. There is temptation to go back to the same philosophies, and do business in the same ways, as before the War. We know the old ways. Stakes are high. World commerce is at stake. Billions of dollars are to be made. The sea lanes are involved. There are spheres of influence to be controlled. The thrifty British are loyal to the empire. Russia glories in new strength found in her Communism. Political philosophies, self-interest and the very human selfishness everywhere! And one can but wonder, is it possible, for a tremendous blood bath and the greatest war in all history to awaken men to the efficacy of

the Golden rule; not simply to know it but to use it and

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

You and I often read of The American Way of life: At its best, the American Way of Life means hurry, restlessness, enthusiasm, thoroughness, chance and change, nothing ventured nothing gained. It means work and homes; schools and colleges; churches and social life; it means good will and fine friendships; it means freedom of speech and a free press; it means law and courts of justice, with a fair trial guaranteed to offenders. But it also means gangs and hoodlums, juvenile delinquency, crime waves, lynchings, strikes and walk-outs. In it we have organized labor; we have the business tycoon and the economic royalist. But the American Way of Life is the greatest way yet found by mankind for producing things. We are concerned with the spiritual, the ethical, the noble, the unselfish in contrast.

Our America has outstripped the world in the production of planes for air travel; we have the greatest system of railroads in the world; the largest number of automobiles and the best highways in the world; our electrical equipment in homes and on the streets is the best in the world; our farm machinery surpasses that of any other nation, and there is available the machinery to cultivate the soil of this continent, or it can be produced, if we can stop the strikes, and then we can take care of the starving and the destitute in other lands. This is a glorious realization in these after-the-war years when there are 20,000,000 underfed children between the English channel and the Russian boundary.

Unfortunately since the war closed, we have had strikes in the coal mines; strikes in the steel industry; strikes in the farm machinery plants; strikes on the buses and street cars; strikes in the automobile industry; and there is a threatened strike on the railroads. The rule of reason for arbitration of differences is not the appeal being made, but a cold ruthless attitude that reminds one of "stand and deliver."

Henry Ford can turn off his assembly line an automobile every five minutes. There is a great number of assembly lines for making needed and useful things. We of America control 4/5ths of the world's known coal deposits, if we can get it mined.

I did not come here to give you a pessimistic picture, but I would like to have you face with me some of the facts I have gathered, with a view of appealing to your patriotism and loyalty to this

nation, and have you in turn exert your best efforts to find the answers and the remedies, which we must find as time goes on.

Think this over in the future: 35,000 families of the very wealthy class have a greater combined annual income than 11,000,000 families of the the poorer group. In this there is a challenge to the economy under which we operate.

There are 100 large corporations in the United States, and at least 30 of these have greater financial resources or wealth than the 26 poorer states of the union.

Wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few, and this of course means great power in the hands of a few.

In World War II, the great corporations of America produced war material in defense of this country in astounding quantities. In cooperation with labor and the Government, they turned out guns and tanks and planes and ships in quantities and quality far beyond the dreams of the most optimistic. And yet, since peace came most of the greater manufacturing plants have been closed more days than they have been open and at work. Cooperating, labor and capital can do miracles!

I do not pretend to say which is right and which is wrong, but I do say organized labor and the capitalistic groups, or economic royalists, or business men of the wealthier class, can and must become reconciled to cooperation and mutual help, or we are throwing away the fruits of the sacrifices made by the millions who won the war.

You can not give veterans jobs, nor can you build them homes, or permit them to build their own homes, if wealthy business men refuse to arbitrate with labor, and labor refuses to arbitrate and settle their differences with the great corporations.

American expressed ideals are exquisite. Over the Tenth Street entrance to the Department of Justice is this legend—"Justice in the life and conduct of the State is possible only as first it resides in the heart and souls of its citizens."

Over the Ninth Street entrance is this—"Justice is founded in the rights bestowed by nature upon man. Liberty is maintained in security of justice." Here we have expressed the hopes; the ideals; the longings of your average American. Not long ago, but during the war, President Roosevelt said, "The state of this nation is good; the heart of this nation is sound; the spirit of this nation is strong; the faith of this nation is eternal."

My friends, it is your duty and mine to try to keep it that way.

Here are two statements I am submitting to you without comment. **They speak very loudly for themselves.**

In the last three years juvenile delinquency has increased 60 percent.

In the last four years the average per capita consumption of alcoholic drink has increased 80 percent.

In closing I will say,

It is not difficult to see that our democracy is being interpreted as giving rights but not requiring duties, and it seems to have lost loyalty to justice, fair play, brotherhood and concern for the welfare of all. These are fundamental and the things our armies fought for.

It would seem that both capital and labor are organized not for what they can contribute to the nation and the world—in its dire distress—but for what they can obtain from it.

John Adams wrote in his latter years, "Posterity, you will never know how much it cost the present generation to preserve your freedom. I hope you will make good use of it. If you do not, I shall repent in heaven that I ever took half the pains to preserve it."

We do know what it cost us in World War II.

John Ruskin has left us this definition of EDUCATION.

"Education does not mean teaching people what they do not know; it means teaching them to behave as they do not behave. It is not teaching youth the tricks of numbers and then leaving them to turn arithmetic to roguery and their literature to lust. It means, on the contrary, training them into the perfect exercise and kingly continence of their bodies and souls. It is a painful, continual, and difficult work to be done by kindness, by watching, by warning, by precept, and by praise, but, above all, by example."

I believe this definition can be studied with profit by every grown American. There is fundamental truth in it.

I hope, in closing, that you will permit me, an old man now, to urge you to have a greater loyalty and devotion to country and to the teachings of the Master; for, I prize above all other things in this life the supreme knowledge that **CHRIST IS KING.**

He has sounded the trumpet, that shall never call retreat,

He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgement seat,

Oh be swift, my soul, to answer him, be jubilant, my feet.

Let's unite for a better America. A free America! Pay up in full the obligation to those who served and help them retrieve from selfish groups the land they fought and died for.

The Clemson Agricultural College Record

Published quarterly by The Clemson Agricultural College, Clemson, South Carolina. Entered as second class matter April 25, 1905, at the Post Office at Clemson, South Carolina, under the Act of July 16, 1894, now superseded by the Act of August 24, 1912.

New Series, Volume XXI, July 1946, Number 3
