

## Address By K. T. Raynor To 1923 Graduating Class

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In your minds today there lingers a vivid memory of some teacher or teachers you have had, who have made lasting impressions upon your hearts, for which you feel deeply grateful. Happy for you that you have such a blessing.

The third place in which your heart has been trained is in the church—that institution which has always pointed upward—that has always cheered and lifted fallen and discouraged humanity. In the Sunday School from Sunday to Sunday you have sat at the feet of teachers and received from their lips enough gospel truths to convict and convert any wayward soul. Here have you learned of the Christ and of his message, and becoming convinced have accepted the message and become one of his followers. What a blessing is yours that you had such a safe barrier to shield you from the pitfalls of the world all around you! How splendid a picture you present to us this morning! Out of sixteen boys and girls, not one remains unsaved. Overwhelming evidence are you today of the influence of the Sunday School in your lives.

So you stand today with your heart's trained in these three great institutions, and with your minds trained equally as well, you pause a moment, cut the cords that bind you and launch out. You go equipped with trained minds and hearts. That gives you your character. Now what next do you need on your journey? I can add one other—determination.

In order to reach the goal towards which you are striving, you must positively and consciously use the greater things of life, concentrating in definite action the best that lies in your nature. That concentration requires action, and there must be a large supply of determination on your part to keep that action going. It would be extremely unwise, however, were you to think from now on you will have nothing to do but work for a subsistence, to follow some useful occupation, or to spend your leisure time in amusements. It is true that a graduate of a high school should understand any given situation better than a youth, with equal ability who has not had a secondary training. But this fact should not keep you from still further enlarging your usefulness. The doors of colleges and universities are open to you. They are bidding you to enter, and drink from the fountains of knowledge and wisdom which flow so copiously there. Let nothing stop you. You need further training for life. Don't fail to get it now. If the way seems dark and gloomy for you, then you need only more determination. Should you pause here it will be to your lasting regret. But for those of you who will enter immediately upon some occupation, you can even in the busy life of the modern world find spare moments. Seize upon them, and turn your small fragments of leisure to golden account. A person who follows his calling with industry and spirit, and uses his earnings economically, will always have some portion of the day at command. But some one may say that he prefers to spend, if not all, at least a part of his spare time in relaxation. This objection is not without force. In fact there is nothing so important for a young person, as to resolve not to wear himself out nervously and physically. But, don't take a vacation until you have earned it. You have seen people whose lives are an unbroken vacation. I am happy to assume that you will not be among that number. I want you to last a long time. Far be it from me, therefore, to dry up the fountain of youth, blight the spots of verdure where you expect to refresh yourselves after the day's labor. But let me assure you that intellectual relaxation is often the greatest amusement of life, cheering us around our hearths; after cheering our work, stirring our hearts gently, acting on us like the balmy air or the bright light of heaven; so gently and continually that we hardly think of its influence.

Of course, I wish for you careers of usefulness. I do not ask of you enjoyment. If I were called to give you one rule, which above all others your situation demands, it would be this: Live a life of labor and love. Believe in God's greatest purposes toward the human race. Carry to your work a trustful spirit. Do not waste your breath in walling over the times. Strive to make them better. Do not be disheartened by evils. Don't be discouraged by failures. All great men have failed, but by grim determination have turned those failures into successes. There is no night so dark but that a star is somewhere

shining; the most angry storm only hides the sun for a brief period of time; causing his face to glow all the more radiantly when the clouds have rolled by. Be not discouraged. "Into each life some rain must fall; some day be dark and dreary." The long stormy night on the ocean always ends in a glorious morning of a new day, and the sea which had been so torn and beaten by the winds is lulled to rest by the rays of the morning sun, kissing it and healing its wounds. So on the ocean of life, when the clouds gather thick and fast, when friends forsake you, and storms roll high, yet in the distance is a ray of hope which will not down—follow it; after it; follow the gleam. By determination you can weather the gale; you can stem the tide, and the world which scoffed at you, which fought you, and all but crushed you, will, when you rise from all discouragements, like the sun rises from the bosom of the waters, fall down at your feet and worship you and laud your name to the stars. Feel through your whole soul that evil is permitted only to call forth the energy of love, wisdom, persuasion, and prayer for its removal. Nothing can come from the fiery furnace save the purest gold. All dross is consumed. If you withstand the evils that encompass you, you will stand forth more beautiful and more radiant, because you have been purified by the fiery temptations of life. Believe in the mighty power of truth and love. Believe that virtue is to become a reality in your own and others' souls. If you obey this rule, you will be truly successful, and you can truthfully say: "I press on toward the goal." Human nature is not vile except to the vile. To the mean man this is indeed a mean world; to the selfish man it turns its selfish side; the faithless and inconsistent man finds faithless and inconsistent friends. The world shows itself to every man just as he shows himself to the world. It is a mighty mirror in which every man sees his own image and calls it man. What a privilege you have today to enter such a world! What an opportunity for you! How shall you meet it? We shall watch anxiously.

A third thing you will need on your voyage is faith. This world in which you are going cares nothing about where you came from, but much about what you can do. Great things are expected; noble achievements demanded. Do not be discouraged. Ahead of you on this untrod voyage walks the greatest captain of all times and all worlds. Do you know him, whom to know is to love and worship? He is none other than the Christ. Count it as the highest of all attainments, the greatest of all ambitions to enthrone Him in your heart and soul. He will call you in the raging storm and whisper to you in the quiet hush of the twilight glow. Know Him. Meet Him often. The world's greatest leaders have been those who in the leisure moments of the day could walk and talk with the lowly man of Galilee. If you but follow such a leader, you will be truly successful, and you will not have lived in vain. Be of a spirit akin to that of William Cullen Bryant, America's great nature poet, who while a young man, crossing the field at sundown, bowed down in sorrow and encouragement, looked up at and saw far in the western skies a bird wending its way to its resting place, and his mighty soul breathed forth these immortal words: "He who from zone to zone, guides through the boundless deep thy certain flight; in the dark I must tread alone, will lead my steps aright." Faith! Faith! Without it you will fail. Faith in God; faith in others. Remember that nobody is perfect; you need not seek perfection on this earth, you will not find it in any person. All of us fall far short of that. But if we look as carefully and as critically for the good in any person as we are prone to look for the evil, we will always find some there, and usually far more than we thought. Because one's idea is different from ours, that doesn't always mean they are wrong. Both may be right. And, it is even possible that they be right and we may be wrong. Be charitable in your opinions to those who oppose you. Have faith in them, and they will, in turn, have faith in you.

To your faith in God, and in others, add one thing more—faith in yourself. Do not be afraid of making mistakes. Do not be afraid you will fail. Though millions have failed before you but never admit to yourself that you have failed. Try again. You will win next time sure. As a storm following a storm and wave succeeding wave give additional hardness to the shell that encloses the pearl, so do the storms and waves of life add force to our lives and increase our faith in ourselves. Demosthenes, the greatest orator the world has ever produced, trained himself to speak to the roaring waves with pebbles in his mouth in order to overcome an impediment in his speech. Hannibal, the greatest military strategist of the

world, learned only after the loss of many battles how to conduct an army in the field, and later all but defeated the powerful and magnificent Roman Empire. Yes, it takes much faith in one's self, much self confidence to win.

You are going out from this school with our best wishes for life. We dismiss you from our care, trusting that you will bless your home, your neighborhood, your school, your country, yea the world. We confer upon you the diploma of this high school, hoping that you will be what this institution intends you to be—noble citizens of this commonwealth that so generously supports seats of learning for its youths.

This final word: Life will not always be young for you. Some day you'll descend the hill toward the sunset. How shall it be with you then? Or you may cross the river ere you reach half the allotted years. The sentiment of my parting message to you is expressed so beautifully by Bryant that I can only copy his words: "So live that when this summons comes to join the innumerable caravan which moves to that mysterious realm where each shall take his chamber in the silent halls of death, thou go not like a quarry slave, scoured o his dungeon, but soothed and sustained by an unfaltering trust approach the grave like one who wraps the drapery of his couch about him and lies down to pleasant dreams."



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Jan. 31, 1923

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Dear Sir:

In Re: Perry W. Worrell-Deceased  
Policy No. 3703-J.

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These proofs have been approved and you will find herewith enclosed the Company's check in the sum of \$1,000, which we will thank you to have delivered to J. Henry Vaughn, administrator, Elm City, N. C.

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