

THE ELON COLLEGE WEEKLY.

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IMPORTANT.

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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1912.

The greatest year in the history of Elon College has opened—greatest in every respect: greatest in numbers, greatest in ambition, greatest in spirit, and we believe it will prove greatest in truth.

On Wednesday morning just one week after opening President Harper bore the glad news to the student body at chapel service that the enrollment had reached and passed two hundred seventy-five. This brought forth a burst of applause such as is seldom heard in the chapel here.

Systematic advertising, coupled with the most hearty cooperation and manifest spirit of loyalty throughout the constituency on the part of both alumnae, students, and friends, directed by brains of the most modern sort, did it. Elon has at last struck her stride, and is now marching onward to take the place in the eyes of the world that she has so long held in the hearts of those who knew her and had learned to love her for what she was.

The spirit of the student body is thoroughly progressive. Everyone is aroused in the interests of the institution and we would say to all who care to do so, join the ranks and take a hand in the great work, or if he be a mere casual observer, stand aside and watch us grow.

THE USE OF TALENT.

Address by W. A. Harper, LL. D.,
President of Elon College at the opening of the College Sunday September 8.

1 Timothy 4:14: Neglect not the gift that is in thee.

A message to young people on the threshold of life is always interesting. Such a message the great Apostle to the Gentiles gave in the words of our text. The young man to receive them was Timothy, brought up in a devout family and dedicated to a great work. You have come from similar home surroundings and are embarking upon what forbodes to be what ought to be, a great work. The Apostle's injunction is therefore apropos to you this mornisg as well as to Timothy in the first century of our era.

"Neglect not the gift that is in thee"—words easily spoken, but words requiring

great effort to fulfill. The Bible fails to record a single injunction to laziness, to slothfulness. We are commanded to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, but we are also enjoined to work six days and in them do all our work. It is as much a sin to waste the six days of the week as it is to break the Sabbath. Experience seems undoubtedly to show that those who do faithful work for six days will not need to use the seventh for any unchristian end. The men in College who cannot find time on Sunday to serve God, but must violate God's law by studying his lessons for Monday is almost without exception the man who idles away most of his six days for legitimate work. There has been very little Sabbath study in this Christian College and we trust that enlightened Christian sentiment will dispel it entirely this year.

"Neglect not the gift that is in thee"—but how? There are two ways of not neglecting your gift. The first is the simpler and the easier—and the one most often resorted to. It consists in mere use, mere employment of our gift. A man inherits from his father a certain tract of land. He uses it to support himself and family—a far more commendable thing this than to allow it to grow up in weeds and briars. A man has a natural gift in mechanics. He gets a place and goes to work, securing a livelihood. Another man's gift lies in public speech. He accordingly preaches and does some good, but not all he is capable of. There are gifts as various as there are men in number, and most men are inclined to use their individual gift—a most laudable inclination—but I declare unto you a more excellent way.

That more excellent way is to develop and use. No matter in what line your gift may lie. You should develop it and use it. I commend the man who uses his gift, but I commend him more who develops and uses his talent. That man who is incapable of developing his talent has his life cast in a small mould and deserves our sympathy, and we should rejoice that his kind are rapidly decreasing. I do not know but that there need not ever be any more of his kind, in view of the vast opportunities of education in the reach of even the poorest. The door of opportunity, of development, is closed to no man today who is willing to pay the price of development. An increasing number of young people are knocking at the doors of our Colleges, anxious to contribute in any honorable way possible toward defraying their expenses, and this is a hopeful sign of the times. May their kind multiply! But worthy of all condemnation of the man who will not avail himself of the opportunity within his grasp for development. Develop your gift—then use it—that is the proper meaning of Paul's injunction.

When we have developed our gift, we are much more capable of rendering efficient service in our vocation. The most successful men are those who develop their gift before using it practically. Statistics show that nine-tenths of the most successful men of this age are College graduates and practically all the remaining tenth had some College training. Does education pay? Does development pay? Facts are eloquent in forcing an affirmative response. A man's earning capacity

is multiplied many times by his developed talent and his chances of enduring success are immeasurably increased. The recognition accorded him—a goal that can be reached only through development—is an unearned increment that gives an ineffable flavor to living and renders life worth while. His developed talent, properly used, will make a man a leader who would otherwise have been a follower all his days. How do the leaders of men differ from their fellows? Not so much in talent nor in its mere employment, but in the use of developed gifts. Energy is good, but it is better to use some of that energy to develop your talent for larger, more effective use.

But there are two methods of development—narrow and broad, short-sighted and far-sighted. Narrow development produces a narrow man. A narrow man is incapable of a broad vision, of sympathy with life in the large, and what the world needs is intelligent sympathy along with most competent judgment. There is a tendency in our time to observe the infant from its birth to discover, if possible, the peculiar bent of its makeup and to turn every particle of its training in that direction. This tendency I deplore—it is making us deplorably and crassly materialistic and rendering us increasingly more incapable of producing anything great in the intellectual and spiritual sense. A nation's contribution to noumenal and spiritual conceptions constitutes its fund of greatness, not its wealth, not its pyramids, not its roads, not its sky-scrapers, not its navies. The builders of the pyramids of Egypt and the road engineers of Rome are forgotten, but the discoverers of new ideas of life and thought and conduct, their contemporaries, are household words in every land today.

Do not understand that I am condemning wealth. A country in which there is no wealth has never been able to leave a definite impress on the world. I believe in wealth. I believe it is the duty of some men to make money, to become rich. I have no doubt that I now speak to some who will one day be millionaires, or who will miss their calling. I believe it is as much a sin for some people to be poor as for some others, who achieved their end by dishonest means, to be rich. Some are called to be rich, their gift lies that way, and they will be sinners against God's purpose for them, if they fail to become rich. But God has not called all to riches. I am inclined to think He likes poor folks best, since He made so many of them. And those who have the gift to make money need, not the narrow, but the broad, development, if they are to enjoy the fruits of their industry in life's eventide. Pity the rich man whose narrow application to money-making has made him a pauper in every other respect.

Nor would I be understood as opposing specialization. We need specialists, but we do not need narrow specialists. A successful physician said to me recently that he believed that medical specialists did a great deal of good, but often a great deal of harm. "But how do you explain that?" I asked. "Very easily," came the prompt response: "The specialist views every organ of the body from the standpoint of his specialty. He frequently treats symptoms, and in getting his spe-

DR. J. H. BROOKS,

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cial organ in good shape will derange the system in many other parts. Frequently a deranged special organ has a deep-seated cause, which when removed will set the special organ all right again. In these cases specialism does harm." The harm is not in specialism, but in its narrowness. A man who knows only one thing cannot know it perfectly, because perfect knowledge takes the particular element's relations to other things into consideration. The narrow specialist cannot see the rose for its petals, the forest for its trees, the heavens for its stars. He is incapable of perspective and no life, just as no picture, can be complete without perspective. The picture of the man with the muck-rake in Pilgrim's Progress is an apt portraiture of the man who can do only one thing, who knows only one thing. Know your specialty; be the best informed man in your lines; be second to none in definite accurate mastery of your vocation—but do not stop there, rather do not begin there.

The man who makes his specialty count for most is the man who arrives at the station of thorough mastery in his vocation through the road that touches life and knowledge in all its phases. He does not take the underground tunnel, but God's open country. Such a man is sympathetic, broad-minded, sees things in proportion, and is destined by conscientious performance and strict adherence to duty to rise to highest attainment in his special line. This brings us to the consideration of one of the most vital questions of life—what is the proper time to make special preparation for one's special work? Many think as soon as they can read and write, they should begin at once to specialize,