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COMMENCEMENT AT JOHNSON C. SMITH UNIVERSITY.

Splendid Exercises Mark Closing of Most Notable Year in School's History—Many Alumni Return After Long Absence and Are Astonished at Great Improvements.

By Rev. L. B. West.

Dr. L. B. Ellerson, of Newark, N. J., pronounced the benediction, and thus came to a close one of the best, if not the best commencement in the history of Johnson C. Smith University. The commencement exercises began on Friday night, May 29, with the High School graduating class receiving their certificates, and ended on Wednesday afternoon, June 3, with the College and Theological classes receiving their diplomas, and the institution conferring honorary degrees and giving prizes to successful students.

Good weather prevailed throughout. The crowds were large and enthusiastic. The fact that a new auditorium is needed was forcefully illustrated by the very large audiences that were packed into the University chapel.

The music was up to the usual high standard. The Quintette brought down the house more than once, and the orchestra was in fine shape. Dr. Long was the directing genius.

The orations by the students were thoughtful and well delivered. Several of the speakers ascended to great flights of oratory.

The outstanding feature of the commencement was the large number of alumni and former students of the University who attended for the grand reunion sponsored by Dr. Joe S. Williams, of Seneca, S. C. The men lived over their school days as they met and mingled with each other. A re-union meeting was held in the chapel, when the men in a reminiscent and witty mood made effective speeches.

The Alumni meetings were the most largely attended, and were effective and far-reaching in the history of the institution. Several items of business bearing upon the development and advancement of the school were attended to. Among other things the Association presented the school with a gift of \$400 to be used on the Chime Clock Fund. The banquet was well attended. Dr. J. L. Hollowell was the orator and made a notable speech. Other speakers enjoyed the occasion.

The Association appointed a commission to select a graduate athletic manager in co-operation with the athletic manager of the school.

The Association also took the matter of building an athletic field under advisement.

The officers of the Association are as follows: President, Dr. W. L. Metz, Edisto Island, S. C.; Vice-Presidents, Rev. S. Q. Mitchell, Brunswick, Ga., and Dr. J. A. Fethel, Charlotte; Sec., Dr. C. H. Shute, Assistant Recording Secretary, Dr. Field S. Russell; Corresponding Secretary, Rev. L. B. West, and Treasurer, Dr. J. D. Martin, all of Charlotte.

The Association heard with regret the accident of Mrs. Johnson C. Smith, in which she sustained a broken arm, and telegraphed its sympathy and a bouquet of flowers.

The Association adopted resolutions thanking Mrs. Johnson C. Smith and Mr. J. B. Duke for their generous gifts and expressed their appreciation of the work and worth of President H. L. McCrorey.

The High School closing took place on Friday night. Prof. S. D. Williams, principal, presided. The program follows: Processional.

WHAT IS LIFE TO YOU?

Address Delivered by Mr. John Edgar Smith, of Washington, D. C., before the High School Department of Johnson C. Smith University, Friday, May 29.

In the history of the world, business has been a time of pause and take note of the supplies on hand and their value, audit the books of the concern and definitely determine the status of affairs. This period of reckoning, first of all, brings those concerned face to face with the mistakes of the past. In the light of the experience these mistakes have brought, one is enabled more clearly to analyze the causes that contributed to those mistakes. Thus fortified, a new goal is set, with errors of the past eliminated, and the business goes forward.

With this thought in mind we may aptly compare the work of this university with a big business organization, and these commencement exercises enable us to check up the mistakes of the past and then go forward. The development of human character is the highest type of business in which any organization can engage, and that is the God-given privilege in which this grand old institution has been engaged for nearly 60 years—fitting men for service, equipping them for life work.

What is life? you ask. That depends upon the point of view. In the words of another—
"To the preacher life's a sermon,
To the joker it's a jest,
To the miser life is money,
To the loafer life is rest,
To the lawyer life's a trial,
To the poet life's a song,
To the doctor life's a patient,
Who needs treatment right along.

"To the soldier life's a battle,
To the teacher life's a school,
Life's a good thing to the grafter,
It's a failure to the fool;
To the man upon the engine
Life's the making of a grade;
Life's a gamble to the gambler,
To the merchant life is trade.

"Life is but a long vacation,
To the man who loves his work;
Life's an everlasting effort
To shun duty t' other shirk.
To the earnest Christian worker,
Life's a story ever new;
Brother, what is life to you?"

I shall attempt this evening to outline a process of reasoning that will enable each one present to answer that question for himself, especially as it applies to our own racial group.

In 1907 the late Andrew Carnegie, the great iron master and lover of education, in an address before the Philosophical Institute of Edinburgh, Scotland, on "The Negro in America," began his address by saying: "No racial movement in the world today is more interesting; few, if any, more important." He then propounded to himself and proceeded to answer the three questions that to him were the determinants as to whether or not our particular group could hope to attain full-fledged citizenship. His first question was, "Has the Negro proved himself able to live in contact with civilization as a freeman, or does he die slowly out, like the American Indian?" This question was asked because prophets of evil had predicted the extinction of the Negro between the meeting flames of shiftlessness and immorality.

Mr. Carnegie was able to point out that from 1899 to 1900 the Negro had increased from 6 1/2 millions to 8 1/2 millions, or 24.3 per cent. Today, with the Negro's increase from 8 millions at the close of the civil war to more than 12 millions, it can no longer

North Carolina surpasses all other States in the Union, North or South, in the education of the Negro.

Thus in this splendid manner does North Carolina rise equal to that which Mr. Carnegie described as the Negro's "passion for education."

Mr. Carnegie's words are: "Has the Negro shown the ambition and the ability to save, and in own his own home or his farm?"

In 1890 we owned nothing. Forty years later we had 173,252 farms. In 1910 we owned 240,000 farms, a gain of more than \$7,000 in 10 years, to say nothing of our half million homes, or our 45,000 business enterprises.

These are some of the things research has developed that we as a race have done. Mr. Carnegie speaks with convincing logic for the old iron master was always sure of his facts before giving expression to a thought. This then is the splendid heritage, my young men, that the record of the past lays at your feet tonight. This is what life has meant to your forefathers. What is life to you?

Thus far we have wrought well, but what of the future? Inquiries about the point to a spirit of restlessness in the student body of our group that demands serious attention. As an illustration, permit me to refer to an outdoor athletic meet upon the campus of one of our big schools which I witnessed last spring. Not being specially interested in any number on the program, I began to study the conduct of those assembled. Participating in the various events were the best athletes from our schools all over the country. These men had been so trained, had so brought their passions under subjection, that each in his sphere clearly showed the benefits to be derived from self-discipline, from mastery of one's self. A wonderful exhibition from the individual viewpoint, thought!

Then I turned from the competitors to the spectators. Hundreds of undergraduates, young men and young women, the flower of the race and strong in their school pride, met the eye. From such as these our future leaders must come.

Suddenly my attention was again drawn to the athletes. There were the starters, the timers, the scorers, the judges—all graduates of our schools and fully qualified to conduct such a meet. But what met the eye? Those on the side lines had broken past the stakes and ropes set to keep the field clear and were swarming over the field. In protest against some unfair decision? you ask. No, no, not at all. Instead this disregard of the rules of the school occurred just because in their unrestrained enthusiasm every one wished to congratulate a favorite winner. The officials plead in vain for order. Not until the police reserves were called would these undergraduates clear the field.

Life to them meant disregard of constituted authority of their own race—rebellion against necessary restraint. Therefore it was but a short step from rebellion on the athletic field to rebellion and strike against all college authority. For just a few weeks ago from that same student body came a demand that they be permitted to be absent more than 20 times from classes without penalty, and other unreasonable demands. Life to them meant rebellion against constituted authority. What does life mean to you, undergraduates of Johnson C. Smith University?

What does life mean to you, my brother? Life in its largest, fullest sense? H. W. D. Smith

The analytical mind would ask, "What is life? One can not state what life means, you say."

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