

Speech

"What concerns us most is that this fanatical philosophy daily becomes more and more threatening as the huge rearmament program of the Soviet orbit continues to grow. It is designed--even before it is necessarily set to move--to strike terror into the world, and bring on devastating confusion, if not capitulation itself."

Pointing out that there is "no prescription for a quick and easy cure" to the world situation, Mr. Matthews declared:

"We must have national security. The cost will be great. With everyone else, youth must pay. Military duty, heavy cost of government, delayed personal advantage, will be the aggravating experience to endure. Only a crystal clear sense of patriotic duty, fortified by a basic and fundamental realization of the necessity of preserving the Divinely-established dignity of man, will compensate for the price exacted for survival....."

"It is our task, as well as the obligation of the graduates before us, to make certain that the lamp of our Western philosophy is not smothered by the stagnant fumes of a revived Eastern despotism. Our survival as a free people is the issue."

Bishop Pursley, in his Baccalaureate Sermon, described to the graduating seniors the values of a Christian education.

"Students can get out of school without getting much out of their schooling" Bishop Pursley declared in his sermon. "They can leave with the same little bundle of bad habits with which they started. They can be graduated without any notable change in character or personality, without a keen interest in their own progress, without a stimulating desire for greater knowledge, without a consuming love for truth and virtue, without a deep understanding of the value of what they have received, without a clear idea of what they ought to be as a result of their education....."

Notre Dame Commencement....4

"Advancement must continue to advance, Graduation marks a point of departure from the routine of organized study to active participation in organized life on a much wider and more varied scale.....There is still much truth to be known and God has given you a mind to know it. There is still much good to be sought and God has given you a will to seek it. There is still much beauty to be appreciated and God has given you the faculties to appreciate it. All these powers of mind and heart and soul are capable of ever increasing development by more and more continuous exercise. If true education is the process of making us all that we can become it can never be completed on this earth and must never be stopped. Even the most promising student may fail to realize this, and thus fail to reap the full harvest of his talents and the full benefits of his education."

Bishop Pursley reminded the Notre Dame men that "Christian education regards and reverences the body as a work of God, the habitation of His spirit, the agent of His will, the partner of the soul in working out their common destiny."

"That is why we must avoid every excess, every abuse, that weakens the body and renders it to be unfit to be a strong, able and willing servant," the Baccalaureate speaker said. "Even in this matter we can learn from the growing Christ. His life in Nazareth, plain and peaceful, filled with wholesome work and play and prayer, is still the best way to acquire the rugged strength, the balance and poise of interacting powers, with which to meet the test of later years. No man nurtured in the soft lap of luxury, pampered and spoiled by indolence and self-indulgence, could have lived and died as He did.

"Jesus advanced also in wisdom. Although youth is poetically represented as the carefree springtime of life, it is really the time for serious thought and critical decision. There is no substitute for wisdom in the practical affairs of life. The opposite of wisdom is folly, and folly is the surest and shortest road to disaster, a road that is crowded with traffic every day and night of the year. If our great democracy would ever go to pieces it will do so for only one basic reason: because we did not have the wisdom to govern ourselves.

"If education were only a matter of telling us more and more things about more and more things without showing us what they are worth and what they are for; if it were only a matter of teaching us to know something without inspiring us to be something, then it would be in no sense a preparation for life. A student who knows the difference between the cells in his blood stream but not the difference between his soul and his body, not the difference between his duties and his desires, has acquired some knowledge but has gained no wisdom. A student who knows the difference between the true and false answer to a problem in mathematics but not the difference between the right and wrong answer to a problem in human conduct, has grown in knowledge but he has not advanced in wisdom.

"If, in a word, our purpose in educating the student were merely to enlarge the capacity of his mind to know but also to deepen the power of his mind to think and to understand, but not also to urge the powers of his soul to aspire and to strive, then, we would have conferred upon him a very doubtful favor, a very dangerous gift. For we would have sent him into battle untrained and unskilled, with weapons he does not know how to use. Is it any wonder in our day that the outcome of this unequal struggle is so often surrender and defeat?.....

"In taking this ideal view of the purpose of education and this long-range view of its effects, we do not overlook its more immediate ends. We know that every man must be prepared to earn his living, usually by some trade or profession. We know that he must be trained to take his place in society as a loyal and useful citizen. But we know, also, that his chance of success in his chosen field will not be endangered, but enhanced, if he has learned to be an obedient child of God....."

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Dist. 3 and 7

Mailed: June 1, 1951

*From advanced
in wisdom, age, grace
by God's men*