

Mr. President, Mr. Chairman, and members of the Student Bar Association of Wake Forest College School of Law:

The world of tomorrow will be built not by the common man - but by the man valiant for truth. Not little men - but men great in their eternal dignity - will mold the coming days. For they will be men exercising calm dominion over their own humanity and ever conscious that in possessing patience, they will have: Justice - incapable of revenge; Charity - incapable of hate; and Meekness - incapable of anger.

As I greet you: The members of the student Bar Association, I must speak of my deep gratitude for the privilege of addressing you. You know well that I come not as a prophet, nor as a sage, but rather, as a comrade separated from you only by the years and closely united by shared experiences. Like many of you I fought in the Armed Services of my Country during a world conflict; and like you I later returned and resumed my studies to prepare for a peace-time career. Like you, I ponder the shape of things to come.

Today, standing in the shadow of the spires of Wake Forest College, I can sense your feelings, your hopes and even the questions that confront you.

I might well say - as did the Egyptian scribe who wrote more than two thousand years before the Coming of Christ:

"Would I had phrases that are not known,
utterances that are strange, a new language
that hath not been used, free from repetition."

Yet I am thankful that you and I share a common tongue, for our language is one that has been enriched by the history of the Coming of the Redeemer and that has been strengthened by the story of Christianity and Her Holy Sons.

I rejoice with you that your college days have been passed at an institution endowed with a great tradition, with the legacy of Christian learning.

The beautiful buildings of Wake Forest College rise about us on this campus to enclose an institution of learning that has written its own glorious and gracious history upon the hearts of men. You are familiar with her scholastic excellence. You have benefited by the high standards of her courses, whether they have prepared you for further study in the professions, or for the challenging sphere of public service.

Above all you are conscious that at Wake Forest you have been prepared to fulfill your vocation in society as gentlemen of learning, judgment and character. You have been trained for citizenship with the seasoned comprehension and serenity of outlook which characterizes the great tradition of Christian thought. You have been briefed in your role as citizens of earth who are "destined for eternal citizenship in Heaven."

In your wisdom, you chose Wake Forest rather than one of the many institutions of learning of which one of America's foremost columnists spoke when she deplored that:

"Our universities have been given over for years now to a philosophy of historic relativism, under which there are no absolute standards for anything."

You have been fortunate indeed in your faculty who are qualified not only in legal learning - but also as men of firm convictions about the meaning of life and with the moral character capable of conducting a course of studies - which aims at training the heart and the will as well as the intellect: They are altogether unlike the men upon whom another columnist places blame for the Modern Tragedy, "which has come about because men thought it clever to be cynical, and enlightened to be unbelieving, and sensible to be soft."

Grapple to your soul with hoops of steel the eternal criteria of judgment, the ultimate principles for action that you have gained at Wake Forest. Then the shield of your fortitude will never be pierced by the devious slanting of news practised by a materialistic press; and the armor of your perseverance will keep you inviolate from the character assassination indulged in by the reckless and the sensation-seeking.

In this Day of Decision, each one of us may well take inventory of our spiritual resources for the titanic struggle ahead. We are living in

a period of revolution; - and we can make it - we must make it - a revolution of the spiritual forces of men.

Someone has said that ours is an age where war is never declared, yet where war never ends. There is indeed war abroad in the world today, and the forces of materialism - of communism press ever westward. They seek not merely dominion over more lands, but rather - sovereignty over the souls of men. They prepare the way with a fifth column of weakness and hopelessness to betray and crumple the city from within.

The men of our generation have gradually become aware that if the lamps of democracy are quenched elsewhere in the world we cannot isolate ourselves from universal darkness. We know that our Nation still has the sacred task of tending the Vestal Fire of Freedom.

This is as true now as it was on the June day in 1872, when former Governor Zebulon Baird Vance addressed the graduating class and the literary societies of Wake Forest College. Governor Vance advised the students of that time:

"Labor incessantly to preserve bright and pure the Sacred Flame of Liberty amid all the temptations and wayward tendencies of the age."

Firmly that distinguished American counselled his hearers:

"But I say unto you, young men, and urge you this day, to study the principles of liberty

and law, and to develop in yourselves and others the knowledge and the love of them. Do this with all your might, - with all your soul. Seek first the freedom of the citizen. * * * *

Remember too - and this above all - that there is no progress, no development, no increase, worthy your efforts to attain, unless it be conceived and sought in the fear of your Creator."

His words come down to us today with an application as apt to our generation as to the one he addressed.

He observed firmly that:

"* * Educated men are no more always virtuous than ignorance is always wicked. And I believe that educated bad men, in all ages, have done more hurt to the world than all the ignorance that ever existed."

Of course one might take issue with his use of the word "educated" - unless he used it as did one of our distinguished contemporaries who defined "The Intelligentsia" so-called as those "educated beyond their intelligence."

Another concern of the speaker of that distant day is not without its echo in the present.

Stressing the balance of powers as enunciated in the Constitution, he warned of the need for vigilance in preserving that balance, and then added:

"A legislative despotism, therefore, appears to me, at this moment to be one of the greatest dangers that threaten us."

Recently - your speaker of this evening - made a remark which he hopes you will forgive him for repeating tonight.

Certainly confusion has reached into the law as into all else. Judges are legislating; legislators constitute themselves law courts; and bureaucrats act both as legislators and judges.

I regretted the necessity for that statement. Nevertheless, as one who reveres the Constitution as the Founding Fathers drafted it, and as one who has served in all three branches of the Federal Government - I deplore the threat to the balance of powers.

Perhaps you will forgive me if I qualify my service in the three branches of the federal government: it was consecutively - and not concurrently.

The burden of determining the shape of the future rests upon you who are here this evening - and your immediate contemporaries.

Certainly during every decade of our brief history - every community has been guided by its lawyers: - in government, in social advancement, in civic progress. The national scene has reflected the local scenes in

the leadership entrusted to members of the legal profession. It might almost be said that no generation has reached greater heights than its lawyers.

There could therefore be more than a grain of truth in Clarence Darrow's laconic remark:

"The trouble with law and government is lawyers."

Certainly if there is an illness in the body politic -- the fault may properly be traced to a lack in those lawyers who fail in their trust as officers of the court and leaders of their community.

"Where law ends, tyranny begins", said William Pitt; and where lawyers forget their duty of public service and keynoters of American idealism, then the tyranny of a communistic or other alien creed begins to encroach upon our American way of life.

No wonder then that our Nation's lawyers should look back to the Founding Fathers with gratitude and a new will to preserve "the glorious liberty of the sons of God". In days to come, America will hear again re-uttered the statement that God's authority is Supreme and in the phrase of St. Thomas More: A man can be his country's "good servant, but God's first."

And in your hearts will ring out the familiar words:

God bless Wake Forest dear,

Fair be her name

Ever may she hold high

Truth's sacred flame!