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HARVARD UNIVERSITY COMMENCE-
MENT

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No college man who has ever glanced at the Constitution of Massachusetts is likely to miss or forget the generous references there made to Harvard University. It may need a closer study of that instrument, which is older than the American Constitution, to realize the full significance of those most enduring of guaranties that could then be imposed in behalf of Massachusetts institutions.

The convention which framed our Constitution has as its president James Bowdoin, a son of Harvard. He was a man of great strength of character and cast an influence for good upon the deliberations of his day worthy of a place in history more conspicuous than is generally accorded to

him. He had as his colleague on the floor no less a person than John Adams. It is not necessary in this presence to designate his alma mater. There were others of importance, but these represented the type of thought that prevailed.

In that noble Declaration of Rights the principles of freedom and equality were first declared. Following this is set forth the right of religious liberty and the duty of citizens to support places of religious worship and instruction; and in the Frame of Government, after establishing the University, there is given to legislators and magistrates a mandate forever to cherish and support the cause of education and institutions of learning. These were the declaration of broad and liberal policies. They are capable of being combined, for in fact they declare that teaching, whether it be by clergy or laity, is of an importance that requires it to be surrounded with the same safeguards and guaranties as freedom and

equality. In fact the Constitution declares that "wisdom and knowledge, as well as virtue, diffused generally among the body of the people, are necessary for the preservation of their rights and liberties." John Adams and James Bowdoin knew that freedom was the fruit of knowledge. Their conclusions were drawn from the directions of Holy Writ — "Come, know the truth, and it shall make you free."

These principles there laid down with so much solemnity have now the same binding force as in those revolutionary days when they were recognized and proclaimed. I am not unaware that they are old. Whatever is, is old. It is but our own poor apprehension of it that is new. It would be well if they were re-apprehended. It is not well if the great diversity of modern learning has made the truth so little of a novelty that it lacks all reverence.

The days of the Revolution were days of reverence and of applied reverence. Teach-

ing was to a considerable extent in the hands of the clergy. Institutions of learning were presided over by clergymen. The teacher spoke with the voice of authority. He was treated with deference. He held a place in the community that was not only secure but high. The rewards of his services were comparatively large. He was a leader of the people. From him came the inspiration of liberty. It was in the meeting-houses that the Revolution was framed.

This dual character little exists now, but the principle is the same. Teaching is the same high calling, but how lacking now in comparative appreciation. The compensation of many teachers and clergymen is far less than the pay of unskilled labor. The salaries of college professors are much less than like training and ability would command in the commercial world. We pay a good price to bank men to guard our money. We compensate liberally the manufacturer and the merchant; but we fail to appre-

ciate those who guard the minds of our youth or those who preside over our congregations. We have lost our reverence for the profession of teaching and bestowed it upon the profession of acquiring.

This will have such a reaction as might be expected. Some of the clergy, seeing their own rewards are disproportionate, will draw the conclusion that all rewards are disproportionate, that the whole distribution of wealth is unsound; and turn to a belief in and an advocacy of some kind of a socialistic state. Some of our teachers, out of a like discontent, will listen too willingly to revolutionary doctrines which have not originated in meeting-houses but are the importations of those who lack nothing but the power to destroy all that our civilization holds dear. Unless these conditions are changed, these professions will not attract to their services young men of the same comparative quality of ability and character that in the past they commanded.

In our pursuit of prosperity we have forgotten and neglected its foundations. It is true that many of our institutions of learning are well endowed and have spacious buildings, but the plant is not enough. Many modern schoolhouses put to shame any public buildings that were erected in the Colonies. I am directing attention to the comparative position of the great mass of teachers and clergymen. They are not properly appreciated or properly paid. They have provided the foundations of our liberties. The importance of their position cannot be overestimated. They have been faithful though neglected; but a state which neglects or refuses to support any class will soon find that such class neglects and refuses to support it. The remedy lies in part with private charity, in part with government action; but it lies wholly with public opinion. Private charity must worthily support its clergymen and the faculty and instructors of our higher institutions of

learning; and the Government must adequately reward the teachers in its schools. In the great bound forward which has been taken in a material way, these two noble professions, the pillars of liberty and equality, have been neglected and left behind. They must be reëstablished. They must be restored to the place of reverence they formerly held.

The profession of teaching has come down to us with a sanction of antiquity greater than all else. So far back as we can peer into human history there has stood a priesthood that has led its people intellectually and morally. Teaching is leading. The fundamental needs of humanity do not change. They are constant. These influences so potent in the development of Massachusetts cannot be exchanged for a leadership that is bred of the market-place, to her advantage. We must turn our eyes from what is to what ought to be. The men of the day of John Adams and James Bow-

doin had a vision that looked into the heart of things. They led a revolution that swept on to a successful conclusion. They established a nation that has endured until its flag is the ancient among the banners of the earth. Their counsel will not be mocked. The men of that day almost alone in history brought a Revolution to its objective. Not only that, they reached it in such a condition that it there remained. The counter-attack of disorder failed entirely to dislodge it. Their success lay entirely in the convictions they had. No nation can reject these convictions and remain a republic. Anarchy or despotism will overwhelm it.

Massachusetts established Harvard College to be a defender of righteous convictions, of reverence for truth and for the heralds of truth. The purpose set forth in the Constitution is clear and plain. It recognizes with the clear conviction of men not thinking of themselves that the cause of America is the cause of education, but of

education with a soul, a trained intellect but guided ever by an enlightened conscience. We of our day need to recognize with the same vision that when these fail, America has failed.