

PRINCETON ALUMNI WEEKLY



THE NEW STATUE OF DR. JAMES McCOSH, LONG-TIME PRESIDENT OF PRINCETON
*Replica of the original St. Gaudens figure, it was placed in the University Chapel
at Commencement by the Class of 1879.*

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Safeguarding Life's Hid Treasures

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IN the parable the man who selleth all that he hath in order to secure the treasure hid in the field, illustrates a universal trait of human nature. Man is ready and eager everywhere and at all times to sacrifice a thing of lesser value for one of greater value. But value is a relative term, for no one's scale of values corresponds precisely with that of any other. A man finds his hid treasure in various fields of endeavor; for one the hid treasure is sought for in the chemist's tube; for another it is hid in the nature of the atom or in the germs of a dread disease; or out there in the swinging stars; or amidst the dust of books in the deep recesses of the old world libraries; or there again in the fame and honor and power which crowns success in the various callings of life.

With these obviously various judgments concerning the values which appeal to mankind there is a question which suggests itself,—is it possible to agree upon something which has supreme value? Supreme value I would define as that which we are unwilling to sacrifice in order to gain any other thing, however valuable it may appear to be. There is something of this nature which I am sure all of us here would be willing to admit possesses for us a supreme value, something we will hold to at all costs, and never loosen our grasp of it in order to seize upon that which we are constrained to confess has lesser value. That which bears the stamp of supreme value is the integrity of our personality. It is our hid treasure, known only to ourselves, that may never be sacrificed, or bartered, or compromised. There is nothing of comparable value, for one to possess if it is necessary to sacrifice self-respect, our honor, or our word. To feel self-abased in our own eyes, that is too great a price to pay for wealth or position or any other advantage that may be gained in the strenuous activities of business or professional competition.

There is the limit of concession, beyond which we dare not go.

TWO POSSIBLE DEFECTS

IF such is the supreme value, the first consideration in our lives must be the safeguarding of this treasure. There are two ways by which the integrity of our personality, the wholeness of our being, may be impaired,—either through structural weakness or through the arresting of the development of our potential powers. To insure structural strength "the arch must stand the thrust." The breaking point often occurs through the weakness of the minor rather than the major members of the structure. In the late afternoon of August 29, 1907, the great cantilever bridge across the St. Lawrence River at Quebec gave way of its own weight. In the official report of engineering experts the mystery of the fall of this bridge was made clear. No parts were at all defective, they were equal to the load they were calculated to bear; their combined strength, however, was wanting because the parts did not hold tightly together. What are known as the secondary strains to which the structure was exposed had so loosened the several parts of the central chord that it gave way under the pressure of the primary strains, that is, those strains due to the actual load which a structure must support. This tragedy of engineering enterprise may well be taken by us as a parable of human nature.

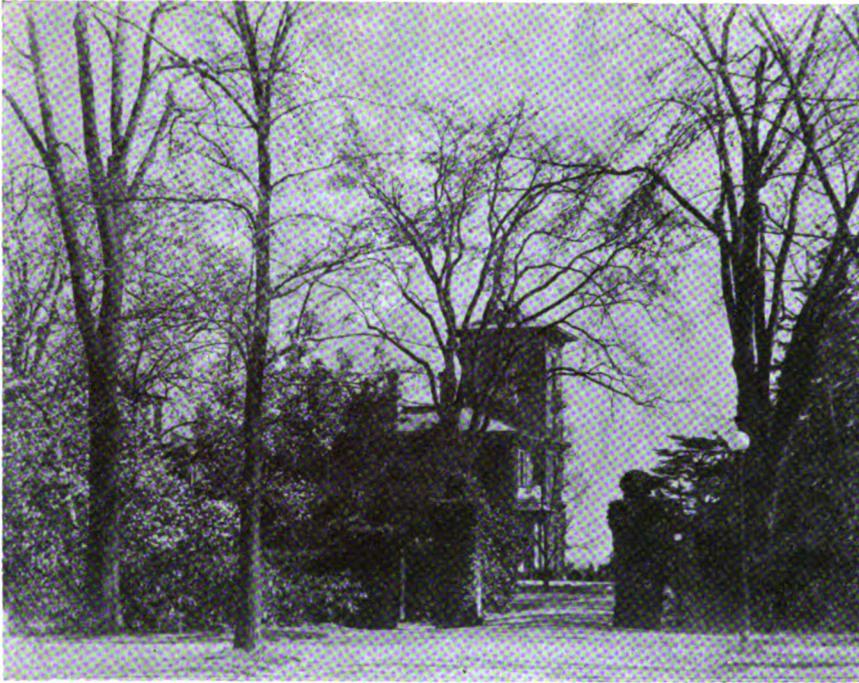
The second defect that mars the integrity of personality is due to frustrated possibilities. Here I would leave the mechanical figure and turn to that of vital

growth. Where there is no completeness of development, that too is a tragedy. The integrity of personality depends upon continuous growth and where that is arrested the man fails to attain the full stature of his possibilities. What is it that brings about insidiously the deterioration of character and arrested growth? It seems to me it is due to the habit of sacrificing higher values to lower. We will all confess that in our composite nature, part man, part animal, the claims of man are of much higher value than those of the animal; but where we begin to compromise and to yield and to sacrifice the man within us for the animal, we are left defenseless. Where there is the habit of allowing one's activities to be stimulated through the senses rather than to be determined by conscience, reason and will, we are in the way of danger. That, however, which most seriously of all, in my opinion, militates against the full development of the powers within us, is an inveterate inertia, common to us all. There is within us a native tendency to yield to the luxury of indolence, to drift with the current of the daily happenings of chance, and to shrink from paying the price of sustained effort. Thus not only are the great opportunities of life missed, but also there is a failure to realize to the full the possibilities buried deep in our lives. It has been said that "we are all meant to fulfil something in our lives," and if we fail of this fulfilment it is largely because we have allowed ourselves to fall into the habit of yielding to the inertia of our weaker self.

INTEGRITY OF PERSONALITY RELIGION'S ESSENCE

IF the integrity of personality, the fullness of life, represents supreme value, we should recognize the further fact that this ideal forms the very heart and essence of religion. This is implied in Christ's familiar words, "What doth it profit a

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field: the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.—MATTHEW xiii:44



Students' Photo Service

THE HOME OF PRINCETON'S PRESIDENTS

Delightful "Prospect," the campus residence of President John Grier Hibben '82

man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" The end of religion is the attainment of the complete development of the inner life and in this regard places a supreme emphasis upon two fundamental considerations. The first is the recognition of the setting in which our life is lived—what kind of a world do we live in? There is certainly something more than the mere physical environment in which the whole of life's processes are determined by the action and reaction mechanistically between the individual and the physical world in which to a great extent he lives and moves and has his being.

But our life is lived also in the midst of a moral and spiritual order. As in the physical worlds about us scientists today do not confine their researches to visible phenomena merely but direct their penetrating thought to the unseen world of the sources of all energy, so also the springs of life lie deeper than the things that are seen and heard and felt. There is a whole world within us of another order and we can discover it only through the deep soundings of our own nature.

In a recent article by Philip Kerr, secretary to Lloyd George when he was Prime Minister of England during the World War, the author states, "The founder of Anglo-America, if one may use the expression, was Moses, for the main dynamic of English-speaking civilization has always been the moral law,—the Ten Commandments and the character they produced. The well-spring of its history has been that moral independence which enabled Moses to lead the Israelites to escape from the tyranny of Egypt and found the first commonwealth ever based upon moral ideas; which strengthened the British in their determination to resist the pretensions of despotism, political and religious, for the sake of freedom; and which, after taking the early Puritans across the Atlantic, served Colonial America to claim and vindicate its independence

from Great Britain, and found the first true democracy in the world."

ALL MUST PLAY PARTS

THE second fact which religion reveals is that no complete life can be a detached life, "No man liveth unto himself, and no man dieth unto himself." No self-centric orbit brings enduring satisfaction or normal growth. One must identify himself with the human mass, take his part in the common lot, ready to minister to the needs of the human organism of which he is a vital element and endeavor to solve its problems and alleviate its distress. The sole question of values in life is not merely what you can get out of life that will prove most valuable, but also, what is to be the value of life not to yourself alone but to the world of your day and generation. And in this connection, let us not fail to recognize that the characteristic feature of religion is its fundamental law of service and of sacrifice for the common good.

Imagine a line drawn which will represent the direction towards the objective which religion seeks to attain in the life of man, and if you think also of a second line similarly drawn, representing the direction towards the realization of that which you regard as the highest good in your life you may judge that the two lines fall far apart, but sufficiently extend them and they will meet at a common point. If the concern therefore of religion is the fullness of life and if the fullness of life is its supreme value, then it becomes the hid treasure for which you may well give all that you have in order that you may possess it.

MAN WITHOUT RELIGION AN EXILE

MEMBERS of the Class of 1929: You as a Class have been for four years completely a part of this place and have so thoroughly identified yourselves with the highest interests and welfare of the University that it is with deep regret that I realize your course is finished and that you are in a few days

to leave us to take your place in the new world which is opening before you. We follow you with our hopes and good wishes for your success in life, but more than that, with a genuine expectation that you will "fulfil something" that is within each one of you. Our expectation is not a vague sentiment but it is founded upon your attainment here, and more than that upon the promise which your record suggests. There is a potential power within you which if it can be brought to actual realization will prove a mighty force in the communities where you are to find your life's work. My wish for you is that you may have not only length of days and breadth of experience, but also that there may be depth to your lives. These years of preparation are not merely to fit you for living upon the surface of life, but to enable you to release also the hidden sources of power within the profounder center of your being. I would wish also that you may come to consider religion as something not apart from your life and with whose influences you can easily dispense. If any of you may be inclined to ignore or repudiate the claims of religion, pause for a moment to realize that in the complete elimination of religion from your lives you will also inevitably remove that which in your more serious moments you will be constrained to regard of supreme value. If religion is to mean nothing to you then all that is implied in the concept of religion itself should be repudiated also, if you are honest with yourselves, and willing to follow the logic of your convictions.

The man without God is an exile in the world which he fashions for himself.

Prize Essay "Remarkable"

JOSEPH RAMSEY ULLMAN of New York City has been awarded the Class of 1909 Prize for the best Senior essay submitted this year in the University's Departments of Art and Archaeology, English, Modern Languages and Philosophy. The prize, donated by a member of the Class of 1909, consists of \$250 in cash and the publication of the essay by the Princeton University Press.

Ullman's 30,000-word thesis, the unanimous selection of the judges, was called "a remarkable piece of work" by Dr. John H. Finley of the *New York Times*, Chairman of the Committee of Award. The other judges were Henry Goddard Leach '03, Editor of *The Forum*, and Edmund Wilson '16 of *The New Republic*.

Ullman's thesis was entitled "Mad Shelley" and was handed in to the English Department as his regular departmental essay. Honorable mention was accorded to "A Baedecker for the Enchanted Woods" by James Herbert Case, Jr., of Plainfield, N.J., also an English Department essay, and to "Elemental" by Louis Peale Elliott of Philadelphia. Elliott's essay was part of his work in the Department of Art and Archaeology.

According to the terms of the gift of the prize, "the winning essay must bear the marks of diligent study and accurate scholarship, but it must also reveal a humanistic attitude, not lacking in grace and originality toward the subject which it treats and toward life in general."

Eight essays in all were submitted for the prize competition, each department concerned choosing the two senior theses which it considered to be the best turned in to it as part of the work of senior year.