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INAUGURAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

ARTHUR PENRHYN STANLEY, D.D.

DEAN OF WESTMINSTER

AT HIS

INSTALLATION AS RECTOR

OF

The University of St. Andrew's



MARCH 31, 1875

SECOND EDITION

London

MACMILLAN AND CO.

1875



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Αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι—Hind, vi. 208.
"Ὅσα σεμνὰ—Phil. iv. 8.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

WHEN, nearly twenty years ago, I first explored thoroughly the historic scenes of St. Andrew's, under the guidance of the distinguished Principal of St. Mary's College, I well remember how he brought me into this interesting Hall, and pointed out the inscription over our heads, and told the story, familiar, I doubt not, to each successive generation of this place—how Lord Campbell, when a student of St. Andrew's, was fired by its two-winged words, with the early ambition of winning in the race of life the first post in his profession, which he ultimately achieved by becoming Lord High Chancellor of England.

No doubt the Homeric line—

Αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων—

if literally rendered, as by its most recent translator—

To aim at highest honours, and surpass
My comrades all—

contains the ordinary principle of hard-headed emulation and nothing more. But it is one of the many instances in which the spirit of a great poet, and, we may add, of a great language, breathes a far wider

sense than the dry letter of a verbal translation can give.

In this impression of the whole passage I am confirmed by an interesting anecdote which I have been told of another Scotsman, yet more eminent than Lord Campbell. You will remember that pathetic epoch in the closing years of Walter Scott—which has been so well described by my dear friend Principal Shairp—when, on the eve of quitting his native air for Italy, he received at Abbotsford the renowned poet of the English Lakes, who was to immortalise those days in the finest piece of his noble lyrical trilogy—‘Yarrow Revisited.’ On that occasion William Wordsworth brought with him a youthful kinsman—then quite unconscious of his future close connexion with Scotland and St. Andrew’s,—who, with all the ardour of an Oxford scholar, attempted to draw from his illustrious host the expression of an opinion regarding a new translation of Homer, (that of Sotheby,) which had just appeared. The old bard listened with his usual gracious condescension to the young Oxonian, and replied, ‘I have not seen it. Pope’s “Iliad” is good enough for me. I am no Grecian, but I cannot conceive anything better than Pope’s rendering of the advice given to Glaucus.’ And then he repeated, with all the fervour of one who grasped, both in text and context, the full meaning at once of the ancient and the modern poet:—

To stand the first in worth as in command;
To add new honours to my native land;
Before my eyes my mighty sires to place,
And emulate the glories of our race.

That is the meaning which I propose to read in or beneath the motto of this Library. Not merely the advantage of a hot competition for the prizes of fortune, but the advantage, the wisdom, especially in education, of admiring and appreciating that which transcends the ordinary course of life—that which is intended in the Apostolic precept by the word which we imperfectly render ‘honest’—*ὄσα σεμνά*—‘whatsoever things are grand, majestic, awful, venerable.’ In all ages, but not least in this age of an equality which, together with its noble, has also its ignoble aspect; of a mediocrity which, no doubt, has its golden but also its leaden side, it is the function alike of teachers and taught to have their minds fixed not only on what is useful, sound, wise, and good, but on what is *great*, in institutions, in men, in books, in ideas, and in actions.

I. We are familiar with the inspiring force inherent in the consciousness of belonging to a great country or a great family. No doubt the smallest country, the humblest birth, can be transfigured by the character of those who adorn them. But the reverse is also true—that the least and humblest of individuals can be transfigured by the grandeur of the associations which he inherits. And if perchance the strength of the individual character and of the position which is occupied coincide, a combination is produced which at once comes up to the ideal described by Homer. In the case of national grandeur, I need hardly recall to Scotsmen the force which the best traditions of the Scottish people breathed into

characters, like those of the Cameronian regiment, who prayed as they fought, and fought as they prayed; who might be slain, never conquered; 'ready wherever their duty or their religion called them, with undaunted spirit and with great vivacity of mind, to encounter hardships, attempt great enterprises, despise dangers, and bravely rush to death or victory;' or again, like those of the settlers in Darien, whom Wesley found 'in sobriety, industry, frugality, patience, in sincerity and openness of behaviour, in justice, and mercy of all kinds, not content with exemplary kindness and friendship to one another, but extending it to the utmost of their ability to every stranger that came within their gates.'¹ Or, for the similar effects of ancestral greatness, if I turn southwards, let it be to an example familiar to many in this place. Had it been the fortune of this University to have selected my rival, if I may so call him, for the honourable office which I hold, and had any of you in consequence wandered as far as his princely domain in Hertfordshire, you would have there seen how truly the inheritor of the famous name of Cecil and of the historic halls of Hatfield has learned to 'emulate the glories of his race' and fill worthily a place in itself great. This same transforming influence, which we thus acknowledge in regard to a great country and a great family, we ought also to foster in regard to institutions. How often is an individual inspired with new motives, new powers, a new nature, by some high office which calls forth faculties of which

¹ *Lectures on the Church of Scotland*, pp. 82, 136.

those around him and he himself were ignorant! How closely are both the stability and the progress of our nation involved in the continuance of the complex elements of a constitution which once lost cannot be restored, and which in other countries have been impatiently cast away. It is this which gives to such institutions at once their conservative and their regenerative force—conservative, because they act as the bulwark, the framework of the commonwealth—regenerative because they contain within themselves sources of fresh life, which it would be vain to seek elsewhere. The due appreciation of this double aspect combines what is best in both parties in the State. It is the glory of education to inspire, on the one hand, a reverential resolve to transmit national heirlooms unimpaired to the coming age. The love for posterity, on which one of the most eminent of my predecessors in this office so forcibly dwelt in his place in Parliament, combines with the love of antiquity to cherish all 'the links of natural piety' which bind the past to the future. But the very same cultivation ought, on the other hand, to kindle the burning desire to correct, to enlarge, to complete that which can only by such constant development maintain its inherent strength. Well did the lamented Arthur Helps insist, in each province or department of the body politic, on the value of the race—he would not call them by the aspiring name of 'reformers,' but by the more modest, though equally efficacious, name of 'improvers.' And the same result is equally brought out by observing the essentially

paltry character of the reverse policy. It is equally removed from wise statesmanship, lofty patriotism, and true philosophy, to live in the presence of a great institution and be, on the one side, so little moved by it as to sit with folded hands, caring nothing for its fame or its usefulness—or, on the other side, to desire its destruction, not in the heroic frenzy of the religious Reformers of the sixteenth, or of the philosophic enthusiasts of the eighteenth century, in the hope of building something grander on its ruins, but for the mere sake of destruction, or worse still, for the sake of raising a war-cry, or rallying a broken party, or meeting any other supposed exigencies of the passing hour, whether in Church or State, whether in education or politics.

Thus much we feel instinctively on the large scale of history. But we feel it also when exemplified in more familiar instances. And here I may be excused if for a few moments I fix your attention on the elements of greatness, and the lessons supplied by them, in the most obvious example—our own University of St. Andrew's.

I have said that it is an obvious example; but in fact it is the more impressive because in some respects it is not obvious. The University of St. Andrew's is not—as some measure greatness—a great University. It is indeed the smallest of all, in numbers, in influence, and in wealth. But in some of the elements of real grandeur it stands the first of the Universities of Scotland—amongst the first of the historic localities of Great Britain. Look at its natural features, which, unlike those of the English Universities, contain from the very beginning the germ of

its subsequent fortunes. It is the eastern Land's End of Scotland, the counterpart of the romantic seat of the ancient British Primacy, the Western sanctuary of the Welsh St. David. Figure it to yourselves as we trace it in its earlier nomenclature, when Magus Moor was still a wild morass, when this promontory was still the Muck Ross—the 'headland' of the fierce 'wild boar' whose gigantic tusks were long hung over the altar of the cathedral. Look at the encircling rocks, the sandy beach, where the founders of your early civilisation stood at bay against the warriors who, hardly less fierce than the boars and wolves, came pouring down from the inland hills. Explore the caverns of the beetling cliffs, into which, according to the fine old legend, the bones of St. Andrew, first called of the Apostles, came drifting, without oar or sail, from the shores of Achaia, the type of the silent process by which Christian piety and Grecian culture were to penetrate at last into these rugged coasts and illuminate these northern skies. In the rude outline of the chapel of Our Lady of the Rock we trace the last stand which the old Culdee worship, without development, without order, made in its latest struggle against the giant after-growth of mediæval civilisation which overshadowed and overwhelmed it. In that group of antique edifices, the Cell, the sanctuary of the Royal Mount (Kil-ry-Mont), unrivalled in the British Islands, save on the Rock of Cashel, thus concentrating in one focus on this extremity of Fife the successive stages of Northern ecclesiastical polity, we see the shifting of the pole of the religious and national life of the Scottish

kingdom from the islands of the Celtic West to the shores of the Norse and German Ocean ; transferring the stone of Fate from Dunstaffnage to the mound of Destiny at Scone, diverting the regal sepulchres from the wild graveyard of Iona to the Royal Abbey of Dunfermline, and transforming the wandering mission of the Irish outlaw Columba into the settled hierarchy of the Anglo-Norman Church of Margaret and David. Then comes that thrilling scene which the victorious Scotsman must ever recall with pride, and which even the vanquished Englishman must regard with admiration, when Robert Bruce came, with all the nobles of a restored and emancipated Scotland, to the consecration of the great Cathedral as the trophy and memorial of the triumph of Bannockburn, in which the patron saint of Scotland was supposed to have borne so conspicuous a part. Inevitably out of the union of religious and national freedom thus consummated it came to pass that the Cross of St. Andrew, of which the fabulous accretions were nursed within yonder Priory with an audacity more than patriotic, took its place in the Royal banner of Scotland. Irresistibly, also, did the Primacy of St. Andrew's, at last bursting the yoke which had hitherto placed the Church of Scotland under the foreign dominion of the aspiring Prelates of Canterbury or York, become itself a pledge and badge of the independence of the nation. And then by that instinct, ineradicable amidst a thousand entanglements, alike in the darkest and the most enlightened ages, of the natural union between religion and science, between liberty and

learning, there sprang up under the shadow of the Metropolitan Cathedral, in the freed church of the freed kingdom of Scotland, the earliest of Scottish Universities. Well might the clergy of Scotland and the citizens of St. Andrew's celebrate even with boisterous mirth of pipe and dance the day on which Henry Ogilvy brought from Spain the Papal Bull which was to establish the first native home of Scottish education. The peculiar prerogative of the Roman see which in that period could alone grant this privilege, has now lost its vigour in every part of Christendom. The Pope who granted the Bull has fallen under the anathema of his own Church, and his place knows him no more. But the University which Benedict XIII. founded still lived on—and became henceforth the centre of a new life amidst the schisms of a divided Papacy and the decay of a falling hierarchy.

Nowhere in the whole of Europe was the battle between the spirit of the past and the spirit of the future, fought out in closer quarters, or with more terrible tenacity, than when the new learning entrenched itself as in a fortress in the College of St. Leonard, and the old learning in that of St. Salvator; when the Cardinal in his pride of place looked down on the suffering Reformer beneath—when stern fanaticism struck those successive blows which slew one Primate in his seagirt castle, and the other, long afterwards, on the lonely moor. Nowhere did the rulers of a University play so mighty a part in the history of their country as Buchanan, and Melville, and Rutherford, who, from their chairs as Principals and

Rectors, framed the new polity of Scotland—nowhere, out of Wittenberg, did Academic students receive more heart-stirring counsel than did those whom in his old age Knox drew to his side, and told them in language as much needed now as then, ‘to use their time well—to know God and His work in their country—to stand by the good cause, and to follow the good examples and good instructions of their masters.’

I need not follow your history downwards to our own time. It is enough to have indicated thus briefly how various and how continuous has been the course of the religious and intellectual life of Scotland in this corner of the kingdom, from St. Rule, the anchorite, in his wave-beaten cavern, to Chalmers and Ferrier, Brewster and Forbes, teaching the latest results of theological and philosophical research. Other sacred and historic localities of your country have been long ago deserted by the stream of events. The White House of Ninian lies a stranded relic on the shores of Galloway. For nearly a thousand years the holy island of Iona has ceased to be ‘the luminary of the Caledonian regions.’ But this Temple, as of another Minerva, planted as on another storm-vexed Cape of Sunium—this secluded sanctuary of ancient wisdom—with the foamflakes of the Northern Ocean driving through its streets, with the skeleton of its antique magnificence lifting up its gaunt arms into the sky—still carries on the tradition of its first beginnings. Two voices sound through it—‘One is of the sea, one of the cathedral’—‘each a mighty voice;’ two inner

corresponding voices also, which, in any institution that has endured and deserves to endure, must be heard in unison—the voice of a potent past, and the voice of an invigorating future. It is the boast on the gravestone of old John Wynram, who lies buried in the grass-grown cemetery of St. Leonard’s, that through all the storms of the Reformation, ‘*conversis rebus*,’ ‘under the ruins of a world turned upside down,’ he had remained the sub-prior of St. Andrew’s. That same boast may still, in a nobler and wider sense than those words were used of that stubborn or pliant ecclesiastic, belong to the local genius of St. Andrew’s, that through all the manifold changes of the Scottish Church—Culdee, Catholic, Protestant, Episcopalian, Presbyterian—its spiritual identity has never been altogether broken, its historical grandeur never wholly forfeited.

Doubtless this inheritance imposes on St. Andrew’s, as on all ancient establishments, a corresponding duty. Doubtless, as in old days at Oxford, the colleges were exhorted to reinforce their resources by seeking out intellectual alliances even ‘in Greece or Italy beyond the Po,’ so it is the policy and privilege of St. Andrew’s to welcome every new growth of knowledge or power, even though it comes from beyond the waters of the Tay, or of the Tweed. Doubtless numbers and wealth and activity, no less than splendid memories, are elements of academic dignity, and the swarming multitudes of a vast city are in a certain sense, as has been truly said, ‘great as with the sublimity of sea or of mountains.’ Yet still the

greatness of the greatest commercial cities is variable, transitory, and, if lost, to be regained elsewhere; but the inspiring atmosphere of a long academic past is a national treasure which cannot be abandoned and recalled at will. The hoary hairs of an institution reaching back for centuries are a crown of glory, which, amidst whatever infirmities, gives it at least one form of that pre-eminence—that exaltation above its fellows—which the Homeric verse describes.

Forgive me if I have dwelt at too great length on this example of a majestic and venerable foundation, in consideration of my grateful sense, not only of the honour you have done me in electing me as its Rector, but also of the delightful hours and days passed amidst its solemn ruins, and the roar of its winds and waves, and the stores of its ancient learning, and the genial converse of its living inmates. Forgive me, also, if I venture to say how it would be altogether without excuse if, among those who dwell amidst such influences, the taste for the poetic, historic aspect of human thought—above all for the poetry and the history of your own romantic country—should languish and pine; if I urge that in such touching and refining appeals, as are here supplied to the tragedy, the epic, of human life, is to be found perhaps the natural counterpoise to the hardening struggles and fierce competitions of this stirring and striving generation.

II. I turn from the effect of greatness as embodied in institutions to greatness as embodied in men, in ideas, in books. No one can question the import-

ance to the education of young men, or, indeed, of any men, to have before their eyes the example, to have inspired into their souls the influence, of characters or intellects that 'stand the first in worth as in command.' To have known, to have been guided by any such, is indeed one of the most precious of human opportunities; to have, for once in our lives, been penetrated by the awe, the thrill, the delight of sitting at the feet of one whom we instinctively felt to be a great man, in the historical sense of the word, is amongst the rare experiences which the ordinary daily conflicts of humanity in their constant attrition confirm rather than diminish. We know instinctively the characteristics of such pre-eminence. Wherever we recognise, singly or combined, largeness of mind, or strength of character, or firmness of will, or fire of genius, there is a born leader. Such an one we ought to be prepared to hear even before he begins to speak. It is for the most part not he, but we, who are to blame if we fail to understand him. Whenever such a superior intelligence approves, either in teacher or scholar, we have our reward, though all meaner minds turn away from us. 'I looked around my audience,' said the old Grecian orator, 'and they had dwindled away almost to nothing—one only remained. But that one was Plato, and this was enough for me.' The heroes of mankind are the mountains, the highlands of the moral world. They diversify its monotony, they furnish the watershed of its history as certainly as the Grampians, or the Alps, or the Andes tower over the lowlands and fertilise the plains and

divide the basins of the world of nature. They are the 'full-welling fountain-heads of change,' as well as the serene heights of repose. To be blind to this superiority, to be indifferent to these eminences, to think only of their defects or their angularities, is as depressing to the intellectual sense of beauty and worth as was that strange unconsciousness of physical grandeur which, in the last century, caused Oliver Goldsmith to prefer the continuous plain of Holland to the hills and rocks of which he complained as intercepting by their deformities the view of the unfortunate traveller in Scotland. To appreciate the glories of Shakspeare, or Newton, or Luther, or Wellington; to discriminate between the nobler materials of such natures as these, and the poorer stuff of which common mortals are composed, is as bracing to the moral and intellectual nerves as the newly-awakened enjoyment of Ben Nevis or of Mont Blanc is to the opening minds and active limbs of our latest born generation.

It falls to the lot only of a few to have an actual experience of living historical greatness. But it is the delight of a University, of a library, of education, of study, that we may thus be brought into direct intercourse with the great characters of the past; and it is a most useful corrective to confront the subtle speculations of our own brains with the great books which permit us to hold communion with the mighty dead, even more closely than had we been their contemporaries. 'Surely,' once exclaimed Sir John Herschel, 'if the worst of men were snatched into Paradise for

only half-an-hour, he would come back the better for it.' 'Surely,' may we not say, in a lesser degree, that if, like Thomas the Rhymer, we were snatched away,—as we are in the brighter moments of our intellectual pursuits,—into the fairyland of the poets of old, or, like Dante in his vision, into those Elysian Fields, where we behold 'the Kings of those who know,' and converse with those 'who saw life steadily and saw it whole,' we rise insensibly above ourselves, and 'prop our souls in these bad times' with an unfailing support. Be sure that the study of the most famous authors, even in minute detail—even line by line and word by word—is amongst the most nourishing of intellectual repasts. Be sure that the attempt to clothe the dry bones of philosophic theories with the flesh and blood which they wore in other days is the best mode of understanding both the difference and the likeness of ancient and of modern times. Remember the pregnant saying of Goethe—'There are many echoes in the world but few voices'—and let it be your constant effort to distinguish the voices from the echoes, and to respond accordingly. Insist on reading the great books, on marking the great events of the world, and the little books may be left to take care of themselves, and the trivial incidents of passing politics and diplomacy may perish with the using. Bear in mind that in every branch of knowledge, scientific, or literary, or artistic, the first question to be asked is, Who is it that in that branch stands confessedly at the head? What is its chief oracle? Who is the

ruling genius, head and shoulders above the rest? It is the master-works of the respective department of study which are as it were the Canonical, the Symbolical books of science and literature, established beyond appeal by their own intrinsic merits, and by the universal acceptance of mankind.

Above all, endeavour to grasp the distinction between the great primary ideas and the small secondary ideas which jostle each other in the turmoil of thought. Remember that those ideas which reach far and wide, and which can be expressed in terms plain, intelligible, persuasive, to all educated men, claim at once a superiority above the technicalities of controversial or professional circles. We do not say that this largeness of thought and of language is a necessary test of truth. It may be that fine philosophic or poetic inspirations have come into the world wrapt in the swaddling-clothes of an enigma or in the obscure corner of a sect. No doubt there is a racy flavour inherent in the words and in the ideas of each particular country—no doubt there are local institutions which cannot be transplanted to other regions without perishing. But, as a general rule, it is one of the best safeguards against narrow, impracticable, fantastic doctrines to test them by contrast and comparison with the lofty thoughts which belong to the literature of all times and all countries. There is much in the insularities of England and of Anglicanism which we do well to keep, even though we can never expect our neighbours in France or Ger-

many, or even in Scotland, to accept them. There are many Scotisms of dialect, of humour, and of argument, which (reversing the saying of Sydney Smith) it would require a surgical operation to get into the head of an Englishman. But in order for our ideas to claim the character of universal principles and to demand universal acceptance, they must have a universal significance and a universal application; and therefore to maintain for any doctrines that they cannot be appreciated outside our own communion or nation—that they are incomprehensible to the unintelligent or unregenerate natures which have their habitation, north or south of the Tweed, as the case may be, is to relinquish for such doctrines all hope of permanent triumph. Be sure that ideas which can only be expressed in the local slang or the dogmatic cant, of a province, or a party, or a school, or a sect, are ideas, perhaps of the second and third, but certainly not of the first, order of truth. Be sure that if they refuse to be conveyed except in one single form of expression, that single form of expression stands self-condemned, as well as the ideas which it represents. Be sure that the language of world-wide literature is the only fitting garb for those eternal and primary principles of which the Grecian poet has said in words which one of your own Professors has well rendered, that ‘they have their foundation on high—all-embracing like their parent Heaven—neither did mortal infirmity preside over their birth, nor shall forgetfulness

ever lay them to sleep. There is in them a great divinity that grows not old.'¹

III. There is one special sphere to which in this University, where so large a proportion of the students are destined for the sacred ministry of the Church, these remarks are specially applicable. Nowhere in education is the contemplation of greatness more fruitful of profitable lessons, more useful as a safeguard against popular errors, than in theology. It has been one of the main causes of the barrenness of Christian theology, as compared with the richness of the Christian religion, that the intellectual oracles of the Church have been too often looked for, not in those who, by God's peculiar grace, have been fitted 'to stand the first in worth as in command,' but in those who, by imperfect culture or meagre endowments, are entitled only to a very inferior place in the school of divine philosophy. Never was there sounder advice given to 'Divinity Students' than by one whose eminence, both as a theologian and as a man, enabled him to speak with a weight which time has only increased:—'I would ask the theological student never to lay aside the greatest works of human genius, of whatever age or country. They are not so numerous as to overwhelm him; and whatever be his particular studies, some of them, whether philosophers, poets, or historians, should always be on his table and daily in his hand, till his mind, catching a portion of their excellence, is able to work with tenfold power

¹ *Œdipus Tyrannus*, 865. (See Professor Campbell's edition, p. 186.)

on whatever subjects he may submit to it. And if for those great instructors he be content to leave unopened many of the volumes which are now thought so essential to theological learning, let him not be afraid of the results of the exchange. Always supposing as the foundation a constant, critical, and devout study of the Scriptures themselves, and the use of those philological and antiquarian works which are essential, and alone essential, to the understanding of them, he will find that in the comparison of human works, both spiritually and intellectually, the works of the greatest minds will be most useful to him—that he may be well content to be ignorant even of Bull and Pearson, if he is thus enabled to become more intimately familiar with Bacon and Aristotle.'¹

And when Arnold, speaking to English students, drew this contrast between the professed theologians of his own church and the universal teachers of all churches, he would not have refused to Scottish students in their lighter hours to vary the somewhat arid and thorny discussions in which at times the theology of Scotland has been absorbed by recurrence to those perennial springs of instruction which, on another occasion, I ventured to place in the first ranks of Scottish theology—the wise humour, the sagacious penetration, the tender pathos of Robert Burns; the far-seeing toleration, the profound reverence, the critical insight into the various shades of religious thought and feeling, the moderation which 'turns to scorn the

¹ Arnold's *Sermons*, vol. iii., Preface, p. xxiii. I would commend the study of the whole Essay.

falsehood of extremes,' the lofty sense of Christian honour, purity, and justice, that breathes through every volume of the romances of Walter Scott. You will not suppose that in thus commending the great works of secular genius I forget that neither in the secular nor the ecclesiastical sphere is mental power a guarantee for moral strength. I fully grant that Bacon may have been—though his latest biographer doubts it—not only 'the wisest and brightest,' but 'the meanest of mankind;' or that Burns, by his miserable weakness, was, as none knew better than himself, a beacon of melancholy warning, no less than of blazing light, to the youth of Scotland. You will not misunderstand me as if for the Christian minister, or indeed for the Christian man, I were exalting the intellectual above the spiritual and moral sphere. That has a grandeur of its own, on which, were this the time or place to speak, it would be easy to enlarge. Samuel Rutherford, who proudly said on his deathbed that 'in a few days more he should be where few kings and great folk come,' and whose bones sanctify with a new consecration the Cathedral churchyard where he lies amongst you—Thomas Erskine, of Linlathen, who rests on the opposite promontory within sight of your towers, and with whom even a brief converse was for the moment to have one's conversation in heaven—these are memories of another kind, and strains of a higher mood, on which I cannot now more than touch. You will perceive that what I am urging is the necessity, the duty, the privilege of reserving our intellectual submission and

veneration for the greater and not the lesser lights that God has placed in the intellectual firmament.

This and this only is the solution of the much-vexed question of authority. We are told, and truly told, that authority is needed for the guidance of the human spirit—for that mass of mankind that require not to lead, but to be led. But what authority? Is it the official authority of Popes, Councils, Bishops, Presbyters, Presbyteries?—is it the prescriptive authority of Fathers, or Reformers, or authors of Confessions and Catechisms, and long chains of authorised commentators? These all no doubt claim a certain deference according to their legal or historical weight. But the true, reasonable, and sufficient allegiance of the mind and intellect is due only to those far higher authorities which the world acknowledges without dispute, because their potent word carries its own conviction with it—because their 'vision and faculty divine' has seen what none others have seen—because their keen penetration and deep research have explored what none others have explored. Even in that Church which proclaims most loudly the theory of submission to official authority, this theory is often abandoned in practice almost as completely as if it had never been asserted. Not only has it of late been put forward by a famous divine of that Church that the authority of the Pope himself must be controlled by the verifying faculty of conscience and private judgment, but in the long course of its eventful history it is not the Bishops of Rome that have been the real oracles of the

Catholic or even of the Roman Church. In the whole range of the Papal succession there is not one who can find a place amongst the luminaries of all time—or to whom, however powerful in maintaining the privileges of his order, we can ascribe the solution of any of the wider and deeper problems which have occupied the attention of mankind. The guiding spirits of the early and of the middle ages were theologians of obscure sees, or students with no ecclesiastical rank; not an Innocent, or a Gregory, or a Pius, but Augustine, the pastor of a small African diocese, and Jerome, a secluded scholar in Palestine, and Thomas Aquinas, a Dominican professor of Naples, and Thomas à Kempis, an unknown canon in an almost unknown town of Germany. Even in the School of Theology, as represented in the frescoes of the Vatican, there is no single prelate or doctor whose voice reaches from pole to pole with anything like the same universal power as that of the great lay poet of the 'Divine Comedy,' whom Raphael by a touch of genius as just as it was bold has there introduced amongst them. It is indeed true that the high offices of Church and State may help to moderate the passions of their occupants, and to fill even ordinary men with a force beyond themselves. But still the voice which touches the heart and consciences of men with a really persuasive and constraining authority is not that which speaks *ex cathedrâ*, but that which speaks from the far higher inspiration of personal gifts, of an heaven-sent grace or wisdom. We are not left in ignorance where

to seek for such utterances. The concurrent voice of the civilised world has for the most part already pointed them out and been swayed by their decisions. *Securus judicat orbis terrarum.*

And this same principle of natural selection applies to the Bible itself. The whole of Christendom yields to its authority not only because it is the most sacred of all sacred oracles, but because it is the greatest of all great books. It won its way to its exalted place by no decree of Council, Pope, or Patriarch, but by the instinctive reverence for those internal claims which are set forth in the Confession of the Faith of the Church of Scotland, with a clearness surpassing by a long way any like description of the Scriptures in any other confession, Greek, Roman, or Protestant. 'Amongst the arguments whereby the Bible doth abundantly evidence itself to be the word of God are the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole.' You will observe that these 'incomparable excellences,' these signs of authority, all turn on the intrinsic evidence of moral and intellectual greatness; and amongst them one conspicuous and pervasive element is that 'majesty of style' which gives to the leading passages of the Bible a perpetuity and bloom of youth when so many of the inferior products of humanity have grown old and vanished away. It is because the study of the Scriptures cultivates in the popular mind this sense of true dignity and grace, this 'holy hope and high

humility,' that even from a purely mental point of view it is so invaluable an instrument in popular education. Where this sense exists or is formed, there the mind overlooks and is proof against those grotesque extravagances, those little trivialities of form and speech, which have often disfigured the most zealous faith. The majesty of the Bible will touch hearts which even its holiness cannot move, and will awe minds which no argument can convince. The early chapters of Genesis contain many things at which the man of Science stumbles; but none will question their unapproachable sublimity. The Book of Isaiah furnishes endless matter for the critic; but the more fastidious he is, the more freely will he acknowledge its magnificence of thought and diction. The authorship of the Four Gospels may be defended, attacked, and analysed interminably; but the whole world bows down before the grandeur of the Eight Beatitudes, and the Parable of the Prodigal Son, and the Farewell Discourses, and the story of Gethsemane and Calvary.

Such an appreciation of the magnitude of the Bible will be alike instructive, both in comparison with other books and in comparing the different parts of its own contents. We shall thus learn to treat calmly its relation to the gifted or venerated authors of other times, because we shall rest assured that whatever is truly great in them may be welcomed by us as part of the same Divine Truth which has appeared in a like, albeit a loftier, form in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. We shall thus appreciate

the importance of that doctrine of proportion which is as necessary in sacred as it is in secular studies, and shall feel that one of the main duties of those scribes who have to 'bring out of the treasure-house things new and old,' great and small, is to have an eye exercised to discern between truths which are accidental, secondary, and temporary, and truths which are essential, primary, and eternal. We shall thus distinguish statements which belong to the passing argument and external imagery of the sacred writer from statements which are, as our forefathers used to say (though it may be with a somewhat different meaning), 'the sum and substance of saving doctrine.' We shall hail without fear the keenest dissection and freest handling of the form, construction, and derivation of the letter, whether of the Scripture or of Confessions of Faith, when we are convinced that the true 'supernatural' is the inner spiritual life, which remains after criticism has done its best and its worst, and of which foes and friends may alike confess that

We do it wrong, being so majestic,
To offer it the show of violence—
For it is, as the air, invulnerable,
And our vain blows malicious mockery.

IV. It will not be thought unsuitable if from this wide survey and from these high subjects I come round again to yourselves, and speak of one more kind of greatness—the greatness of individual actions. Great institutions are not ours to make; great men are rare; great ideas are borne in upon us we know not how or whence. But great deeds

are within the reach of all, and it should be a never-ceasing aim of genuine education to encourage the admiration and appreciation, not mainly of actions that are good and wise—we all know that—but of deeds high-minded, large-minded, which embrace a sphere not narrow but wide, not mean but lofty, deeds magnificent in quality, in purpose, and in effect.

Such are those instances of unselfish munificence which were the redeeming features of the violence and the ignorance of the Middle Ages. Henry Wardlaw and James Kennedy were not above their age in character or genius. But the public spirit, the thought for posterity, which they showed in the foundation of this University and its earliest colleges, were above themselves. Such again are those displays of unshaken conviction witnessed on this classic ground of the first martyrdoms of the Scottish Reformation. Patrick Hamilton and George Wishart were not above their contemporaries in learning or in wisdom, but when Hamilton died in front of St. Salvator's College, and Wishart under the walls of Beaton's Palace, their deeds also were above their characters. 'The dead which they slew in their deaths were more than the dead which they had slain in their lives.' Such acts of splendid generosity, and of heroic sacrifice for conscience' sake, have not been unknown to modern Scotland. But still, in the face of the increasing temptation to contract munificence to the narrow limits of our own party, or neighbourhood, or family, or to ally the pilgrim Faithful with

Byends and Facing Bothways, it is well that those shining lights should remind us of what has been and what may be. And without speaking of such wider and more visible manifestations of what in old English was styled the spirit 'exceedingly magnificent,' is it not possible that some group of college friends in this University may bind themselves together by a resolution like to that of a circle of German students in the University of Göttingen, who in the year 1814, 'on a certain cheerful evening, made a vow to each other, that they would effect something great in their lives?' All of them did more or less fulfil that early vow, and one of that circle, in whose biography the incident is recorded,¹ was Bunsen, that marvellous example, in our times, of what an eager and resolute student could achieve.

None can foretell for himself or for others what great possibilities may be wrapt up in his future years. When Andrew Melville was a student in this college, John Douglas, who was Rector of the University, used to take the puny orphan youth between his knees, question him on his studies, and say, 'My silly fatherless and motherless boy, it's ill to witt what God may make of thee yet.'² I do not presume on the same familiarity; but I venture to say to the youngest, humblest student here present—'It is hard to know what God will make of thee yet.'

And let us remember that this greatness of action depends on two other kinds of greatness—on our

¹ *Bunsen's Life*, vol. i. p. 46.

² M'Crie's *Melville*, i. p. 13.

appreciation of the greatness of the manner of doing what is good—and our appreciation of the greatness of the occasion when it can be done.

The 'grand style,' the 'great manner'—that is within our grasp, however distant it may seem. It has been well said by an eminent French writer, that the true calling of a Christian is not to do extraordinary things, but to do ordinary things in an extraordinary way. The most trivial tasks can be accomplished in a noble, gentle, regal spirit, which overrides and puts aside all petty, paltry feelings, and which elevates all little things. Whatever is affected, whatever is ostentatious, whatever is taken up from mere fashion, or party cry, that is small, vulgar, contemptible. Whatever springs from our own independent thought, whatever is modest, genuine, and transparent, whatever is deliberately pursued because it tends towards a grand result—that is noble, commanding, great. When one of your most illustrious scholars, George Buchanan, in his latter days was visited by that 'motherless, fatherless boy' whom I just now named, he was found teaching his serving-lad the alphabet. And when Melville wondered that he was engaged in so humble a work—'Better this,' said the old Preceptor of Princes, 'better this than stealing sheep, or sitting idle, which is as ill.' When they asked him to alter some detail in his History about the burial of David Rizzio that might offend the King, he asked, 'Tell me, man, if I have told the truth.' 'Yes, sir, I think so.' 'Then I will bide his feud [anger] and all his kin's. Pray, pray God

for me, and He will direct me.' These were very homely matters, but the spirit in which they were touched was no less than imperial.

There is also the greatness of occasion. It sometimes happens that we can best illustrate the grandeur of an opportunity to be sought by our regret for an opportunity that is lost. One such we will give from the history of this place. Of all the names of the ancient Scottish ecclesiastical history, there is none which has a more tragic interest than that of the young Alexander Stuart who was raised to the Archbishopric of St. Andrew's at the early age of eighteen by his father James IV. He was the pupil of Erasmus, and that great man has left on record his profound admiration of the Scottish youth, who had been his companion and scholar in the stately old Italian city of Siena. Tall, dignified, graceful, with no blemish except the shortness of sight which he shared in common with so many modern students—of gentle manners, playful humour—but keen as a hound in pursuit of knowledge, in history, theology, law, above all in the new Greek learning—an accomplished musician, a delightful talker, high-spirited and high-minded without haughtiness, religious without a particle of superstition—born to command, yet born also to conciliate—such was the figure that his master¹ describes;—and already the University of St. Andrew's had felt the stimulus of his youthful energy; already the enlightened spirits of Scotland were beginning to breathe freely in the atmosphere in which he had himself been nourished. Had that

¹ Erasmus, *Opp.* ii. p. 554. (*Adagia*: Spartam nactus es, &c.)

young student of St. Andrew's (for so, although Archbishop, we may still call him)—had he lived to fulfil this wonderful promise—had he, with these rare gifts and rare opportunities, been spared to meet the impending crisis of the coming generation, instead of the worldly, intriguing, and profligate Beaton—had he been here enthroned in this venerable see, with the spirit of our own Colet in a higher post, the aspirations of our own More without his difficulties, ready to prepare the way for the first shock of the Reformation—what a chance for the ancient Church of this country! What an occasion of combining the best parts of the old with the best parts of the new! what a call, if indeed its doom had not been already fixed, to purify that corrupt Episcopacy! What a hope, if moderation in those times had been possible, of restraining the violence of the iconoclast reaction! But alas! he was slain by his father's side on the field of Flodden. Of all 'the flowers of the forest that were' there 'wede away,' surely none was more lovely, more precious than this young Marcellus of the Scottish Church. If he fell under the memorable charge of my namesake on that fatal day, may he accept thus late the lament which a kinsman of his foe would fain pour over his untimely bier.

But the opportunity which was opening before Alexander Stuart is not unlike that which is open to us—and the spirit which would have guided his course is the same as that which for us is still no less indispensable. He was, as I have said, the pupil of Erasmus, who alone of his age combined what was then

a world-wide knowledge with an insight into those ideas of Christian truth which, as I have before said, are alone destined to be permanent. What there was in Knox and Buchanan and Andrew Melville, which belonged to their own peculiar time and circumstances—the fury of their indignation, the technical form of their creed, the narrowness of their party spirit—has passed away. That which we seek to rekindle from their ashes is the spark which they derived from the higher spirits of their time, whose language and whose aspirations are even more suited to us than to them. Erasmus and those who hold with him that the vital, inexhaustible element of Christianity is its moral and spiritual, as distinct from its formal or its emotional side, are called to the front, with an audience more willing to hear than Erasmus found. The penetration of new ideas into the whole fabric of belief and of social life—the insensible formation of a wider theology which shall embrace and vivify the forms of the past—the changes, whether for good or evil, which have lately been effected in the constitution of the Church of Scotland—the changes which may possibly be impending over this ancient University itself—all give a zest, a stimulus, alike to the general and the particular career of those whom I address, of which the new and surpassing interest ought to compensate for the many perplexities and discouragements which such changes bring. The line of light which has been traced by a familiar hand in this place through the succession of blameless and lofty spirits

who, from Hooker to Butler, kept alive the 'rational theology' of England, indicates the pathway along which the faith, may we not add the philosophy, of Christendom must walk if it is to produce fruits worthy of the future. Is it too much to ask for the spirit and method of Erasmus, combined with the energy of Luther and Knox, with something of the repose of Fénelon and Leighton? Is it impossible that the enthusiasm which has hitherto been reserved for the coarser and narrower channels of doctrine may be turned into the broader, vaster currents of a more Catholic, and, therefore, a more Evangelical faith than our predecessors have known? It surely may be hoped that if there have been times, when (to use well-known words), 'our nerves were irritated by trifles,' there shall also be times when 'great events' and great thoughts 'shall make us calm.' I would not unduly exaggerate the prospects of success or underrate the fears of failure in the attempt to attain a higher and more spiritual theology—a more patriotic and generous policy. The circumstances around us may often seem dismal, small, ignoble; the dwarfing, levelling, disturbing effect of partisanship and false popularity may seem almost irresistible. The 'rocks ahead' which Cassandra foresees are too visible amongst the breakers not to fill the stoutest hearts with alarm. Even thus, those who contend for long years in vain may reflect that the greatness of the end for which they strive is worth the bitterness of the disappointment—

Victrix causa Diis placuit, sed victa Catoni.

'Tis better to have fought and lost
Than never to have fought at all.

But surely in the peculiar crisis of our age the game is still in our hands. We see clearly the enterprise before us. And when in that enterprise we consider how a few additional grains of charity would make all the difference—from how many mistakes we should be saved, by the simplest elements of common sense and self-control—how much our heat would gain by how slight an accession of light, how doubly the value of our light would be enhanced by how slight an infusion of heat, by how slight an addition of sweetness—what molehills of prejudice which a breath of truth might overturn, have been erected into what mountains of difficulty, what a fund of conciliation lies wrapped up in all larger and more truthful views of science, of literature, and of the Bible—what noble paths of practice remain to be explored, unknown to former generations—then we may well turn to those other fine lines of the same Roman poet, and take as our watchword, not the despairing words of the vanquished Cato, but the exulting words of the victorious Cæsar:—

*Spe trepido: haud unquam vidi tam magna daturos
Tam prope me Superos: camporum limite parvo
Absumus a votis.*

Or if I may venture to present them in an English paraphrase—

I tremble not with terror, but with hope,
As the great day reveals its coming scope;
Never before our anxious hearts to cheer,
Have such bright gifts of Heaven been brought so near,
Nor ever has been kept the aspiring soul
By space so narrow from so grand a goal.

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