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WEST VIRGINIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ADDRESS OF

*Governor Howard M. Gore*

*at Dedication of*

The Baptist Temple

Charleston, West Virginia

October 16, 1925







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## ADDRESS

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To our mothers, yours and mine, the dedication of a church was an event of supreme importance. To them, it meant a dedication to the highest type of service, for in their conception the consecrated pulpit transcended all other agencies in its possibilities for the greatest good.

In order that these institutions might be provided, most of you have distinct recollections of the sacrificial spirit displayed on many an occasion. Frequently, you recall having heard the pound of the loom, or the hum of the spinning wheel long after tired bodies and aching limbs justly claimed repose, as our mothers sought to produce something extra of value in order that they might not be remiss in contributing to the cause so near and dear to them. To each of us these will be precious memories—and sanctified—and will nestle in our hearts long years after their dear, dear faces, marked with patient suffering and loving care, rest under the snow and the daisies.

Religion in its broadest and best sense is the greatest asset of this rich commonwealth. Frequently, your public officials are called upon to list wealth of our state as expressed by the balance in the treasury, the thousands of farms, the minerals, the forests, the factories, and the other larger items of tangible values. While these may be listed in long columns and added with great totals, they are without real value unless stamped by the sovereign imprint of true character, and made common currency in the realm of service.

It is well in these days to take stock of our true values—the invisible wealth in noble thinking, in aspiring hopes and in proper living. Our material accumulations are as useless as tools without workers unless by willing hands guided by wise heads and true hearts. Like musical instruments silent when untouched by skill and love, the raw materials of our state and country are a silent mockery unless they are wrought upon by our finer natures.

Take this community for example. Transport every human being temporarily from this great city—then bring, if you please, any intelligent person who is absolutely uninformed about its life and customs; let him go into the homes, the schools, the churches, the factories, the shops, the stores and the offices—let him examine your highways, your public buildings and your great utilities—let him decipher the inscriptions on the monuments to your dead. From these mute evidences he will correctly appraise your culture and attainments.



Much time and treasure have been given and spent in a program of road building. If these roads should provide arteries for the easy flow of the poison of vice and crime throughout our state, then our well-meant efforts may rise to haunt us. Otherwise, if they offer, as we believe they will, broader avenues for the dissemination of knowledge and true culture; if they bring a new reward for honest toil; if they expose hidden wrongs to an awakened state conscience, and if they bring us into one great modern neighborhood bound together by the bonds of mutual helpfulness, then only will our efforts in this direction have been well invested.

The world-famed road system of the Roman Empire aided the movement of the commerce and learning of the East to the Imperial City, and made it easier for Paul and his companions to carry a new Gospel westward with the course of empire. But we must not forget that the hordes from the North thundered over these same good roads to destroy Rome among her seven hills.

These new avenues of transportation and communication challenge the religious forces. Can the church make quick adaptations and expand its spirit and zeal to meet this phenomenal change in our social order, and thus insure to ourselves and our posterity enduring blessings commensurate with the sacrifices necessary to the completion of the project?

The measure of success in connection with public developments of this character is not the time and the extent of the enterprise, but rather the nature of the result when measured by its contribution to the sum total of uplifting human happiness.

Our religious organizations should not be satisfied to point to a record made under conditions present and past, but should be possessed with a zeal for a new program that will bring the old-time satisfactions of a truly religious life to new peoples under new conditions. It is not sufficient to have great centers like this in charge of trained leaders to administer in spiritual things to those fortunate enough to come within this favored radius. The religious forces must throw many points of their program out into the scattered industrial centers to leaven the life there, and to the sparsely populated sections needing the instructions, good cheer, and spiritual contact of the wide-awake church, to enrich the natural blessings which are vouchsafed to them in the rugged hills of our mountain state.

Through several score of institutions West Virginia is attempting to express herself in the higher training of our youth for strategic positions, and to extend the arm of support and the hand of sympathy to an equal number of unfortunates in our penal and eleemosynary institutions. "Knowledge is power," is an old and true adage. It is equally true that the power of knowledge may be destructive as well as constructive. While the genius of the American form of government wisely separates the functions of the state and the church, it is true that the very foundations of our govern-



ment were made secure by the character, devotion, and sacrifices of patriots impelled by the driving force of deep religious convictions and expression. With all of our learning and skill, we cannot erect and maintain a worthy super-structure upon this sure foundation unless we use the materials of character, and the binding forces of spiritual living.

The religious forces are clearly challenged to move within our educational institutions in a way that will grip the hearts of our future leaders, and inculcate in their growing lives the real substance of the church, thereby giving to knowledge its proper directive force.

Our fair state has its full share of those permanently marked by physical, mental, and moral disease. From the time the Man of Galilee commended the good Samaritan for pouring oil upon the wounds of his neighbor down to the present moment, the church has ministered in a special way to the unfortunate. As I observe the thousands of this class being cared for in our institutions, I am moved to suggest at least two opportunities; First, the reduction of the number of inmates by the better application of spiritual activities, to the end that disease and crime be reduced at its source. Second; that the institutions charged with spiritual matters make a more effective effort for the training of teachers and leaders, who will mix skill and healing sympathy in the instruction and care of those who fall below the normal level of society.

It is fitting that something be said in this presence relative to that undertaking in the nation and state that has peculiar common interest for you as Christian citizens, and for your authorities who are charged with enforcing the laws. I refer to the prohibition measures. To the strict and unflinching enforcement of these laws and all others, we are committed by a devotion to our constitution and all laws based thereon, and by moral conditions that must be respected. Permit me to urge you to be steadfast in this matter. Impatience and ridicule tend to confuse rather than to contribute to the effectiveness of the work. Laws founded upon moral principles, for the most part, depend upon moral force for their effective execution. We must not be content to measure our success in this undertaking by the number of arrests made, and the gallons of beverages poured into the gutters; but rather by a greater certainty of purpose on the part of the forces committed to temperance and sobriety in this state and nation.

My friends, may I remind you that the most efficient enforcing organization that can be formed under a limited state appropriation, is small in its power as compared with the accumulated impact of universal public opinion operating at all times with unremitting force against the law breaker. In this undertaking, as in similar ones, the officer and the policeman, whether local or state, are to be highly appreciated, for they must bear the brunt and incur the danger. But, in the main, their effectiveness is no greater



than the reserve force of the character and spirit of the citizens who support and uphold them.

Plant a live, devout church, an appealing Sunday School, and a properly modernized public school well equipped and well taught within easy reach of every home in our land, and we are safe in the assurance that they will have the effect of drying up the source from which lawbreaking feeds, through the slow but certain process of training a new and a better generation.

Down through the dark ages, while empires crashed, and the curse of intolerance and superstition were upon the world, the Church was a dependable agency in preserving for humanity's benefit the germ of the best that the ages offered in art, literature, education and religion.

And at last, under more propitious skies, to burst the incrustations of bigotry, cruelty and tyranny, thereby giving substance to the hope of every father and mother that the heritage of each succeeding generation will be richer than the last.

Our state and our country are pulsing with possibilities and perils by reason of our rapid advance in commerce, in science, in government, and the speeding up in the training and liberties of our children. Naturally, in the fevered discussions of these matters, frequently, persons, either consciously or otherwise, destroy the confidence of the public in the soundness of their proposed program. It is the unmistakable duty of the church to give such encouragement as will hold steadfast, and where need be, recommit our people to a constant faith in the rightful public enterprises that they have undertaken. To my mind, therein lies the most promising and fruitful opportunity for the members of this great church and their friends to serve their state and nation.

And, above all, let us ever be mindful that the supreme purpose of the church is to teach in all it implies, Jesus Crucified.











