

belongs of right to the department of voluntary action,—no matter whether it admits of being accomplished by a single individual, or demands the cooperation of millions. And, so far as we have been able to learn, the Scriptures contain not an intimation, that no effort may be made for the salvation of souls, except at the bidding of church courts.

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## ARTICLE VI.

### ELOQUENCE.

[by Herschel V. Johnson, Governor of Georgia]

The following brief, but appropriate address on Eloquence, was pronounced by his Excellency, Herschel V. Johnson, Governor of Georgia, at the recent commencement of Oglethorpe University in that State, on awarding the annual prizes for excellence in Elocution.

#### *Young Gentlemen of the Sophomore Class:*

It devolves upon me to present to the two successful competitors for distinction in elocution, these appropriate prizes. The duty is both pleasant and painful. It is pleasant to be the organ to express the unqualified approbation, with which the committee of award witnessed the performance of the entire class. Your ease of manner, your gracefulness of gesture, your distinctness of articulation, and your propriety of emphasis, won their unanimous commendation. It is painful to distinguish, where it is so difficult to detect differences in excellence. It is not designed however, by this merited compliment, to announce that you are perfect orators, but rather to encourage you to strive for that eminence of which your present attainment is the prophecy.

Eloquence is a noble art. If it is true, that all science, government and human institutions are subordinate to, the Christian system, and that their perfection consists in their conformity to its spirit and doctrines, then Eloquence is not only dignified by the sanction of Divinity, but its mission is commensurate with the interests

and necessities of mankind. The establishment and propagation of Christianity, with all the profusion of its concomitant blessings, so far as depends upon human instrumentality, is meanly a tribute to the power of Eloquence. Next to the grand test of experiment, its great author seems to have staked its success upon *preaching*. "Go ye into all the world and *preach* the Gospel," is the broad commission which honours Eloquence and designates its most exalted field of operation.

The successful competitor at the Olympic pentathlon was crowned with Olive. His return home was greeted with the hosannas of the people and he was drawn in a chariot, like a triumphant warrior. Breaches in the wall were made for his entrance into his native city, and his exploits were embalmed in the beautiful odes of Pinder. If so small a reward stimulated the highest ambition of Grecian youth, strengthened their courage and virtue, and was esteemed more valuable than unbounded treasure, what estimate should we not place upon triumph, in a contest for superiority, in the exalted art of eloquence! How sublime are its achievements, when compared with the victories of the Olympia! Paul a prisoner, charged with sedition, by the power of his eloquence, as he reasoned "of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come," made the cruel hearted Relax tremble upon his throne. Demosthenes roused the Athenians against the crafty and treacherous Macedonian; Cicero shook the Forum, at Rome, in defence of Cluentius, as he rolled his volleys of indignant thunder upon the guilty heads of Sassa and Oppianicus; Henry made the world tremble, as with the throes of an earthquake, when he denounced the tyranny of George III., and inspired his hesitating compatriots with the sublime resolve of "liberty or death."

What then, is this magic power of eloquence? Demosthenes said, it is "*delivery*,"—delivery first, second and last. Perfect delivery consists in distinctness of enunciation, gracefulness and appropriateness of gesture and correctness of emphasis, pause and tone. This description of eloquence is sufficient for mere panegyrick, for anniversaries and for all occasions, on which it is the object of the orator to please the fancy, rather thus con-

vince the judgment, or excite his auditory to action. Here he exhibits simply the skill of the artist. His Eloquence rolls in honied accent, like the melody of a choral anthem, delighting the senses and diffusing through the soul calm serenity, chastened pleasure or exhilarating joy. It may be majestic; but it is the majesty of the gentle wind, as it loiters along, gathering sweetness from every blossom of the valley and discoursing romantic minstrelsy, as it toys with the branches of the forest, or of the beautiful river that never overflows its flowery banks, and, without rapid or cataract, slides smoothly to the bosom of the ocean.

If asked what are the first, second and third requisites of true Eloquence, I would answer, *knowledge, faith and zeal*,—or perfect mastery of the theme, perfect confidence in the justice and importance of the cause, and intense earnestness in its prosecution. Art may enable the speaker to display finished gracefulness, in gesture and attitude, and faultless propriety in emphasis, pause and tone. These constitute merely the *form* of true Eloquence, but it is beauty without life,—body without soul. Power's statue of Calhoun has the size, the features and the dignity, without the intellect of the great statesman. It is but the conception of the Artist *fixed* in cold, stiff, speechless marble. The form of Eloquence must be warmed by the heart and illumined by the flashes of Prometheus fire. Then it can kindle the passion, move the sympathies, subdue the will, subvert thrones, petrify the heart, rouse the multitude to the **phrenzy** of the tempest and light up the flame of freedom and religion.

Eloquence in its loftiest exhibition contemplates practical results—the action of the audience in the execution of the speaker's purposes. Hence, to convince the judgment, familiar with his theme, the armory of his argument is history, philosophy and the boundless elements of nature. Though he stammer through a halting exordium, and seem to be weighed down by the pressure of his undertaking, yet sustained by confidence in his cause and zeal for its success, he rises with the grandeur of his theme, gathers inspiration from the array of unbidden illustrations that throngs his triumphant march, his imagination **corruscates** with sublime and majestic image-

ry, and his lip, as if touched with seraphic fire, pours forth his 'thoughts that breathe in words that burn.' As if charged with electricity, he seems the personification of living eloquence. His form erect, his eye flashing the fire of his soul, his action dignified and self-poised, his utterance grand and impressive, his mesmerized audience sympathize with his every emotion, and are bound in captivity to his potent will. Now with magic skill he touches the springs of feeling, and the flowing tear responds to the melting pathos of his overpowering persuasion. Then he turns upon his adversary with a lip of scorn, and glance of indignation, and makes him quail beneath the lash of sarcasm and comic ridicule. Now, to relieve his audience from physical fatigue or mental tension, he throws in the pointed anecdote, and convulses them with laughter. Then, returning to his work, like a giant refreshed by repose, he carries by storm the last entrenchment of his antagonist, and witnesses the evidences of his triumph in the plaudits of the transported multitude. This is not the gentle zephyr that dallies among the tendrils of the clustering ivy; it is the uplifted tempest, levelling the forest and shaking the eternal hills in its marsh. It is not the gliding rivulet that pauses to kiss every flower that blooms upon its banks. It is the raging torrent that sweeps away every barrier in its course, and plunging over towering crags to boiling depths below, agitates the wilderness with the thunder of the cataract.

But, young gentlemen, true eloquence is not the offspring of the schools. It is the child of Heaven. It has its seat in the soul. Art may cultivate, polish, and refine it; but cannot assign it a Procrustean bed,—cannot bind it by inflexible laws. It refuses restraint; it is superior to the studied attitudes and measured gestures of the schools. It respects the landmarks of instruction, but like the fire-fly, it moves in the light of its own coruscations, and it generates the heat that warms it into potential life and motion. You find it in the Senate and in the Forum, in the pulpit and at the hustings,—indeed, upon every arena where men are to be persuaded to action,—and yet every model differs from all others, and is marked by characteristic peculiarities that give it in-

dividuality and originality. Hence, whilst the rules of art are to be patiently studied, as well as the best models among the dead and the living, yet a servile adherence to the one, or imitation of the other, is fatal to true eloquence. Every man's style of oratory must be his own—it must be his natural delivery and manner, *improved* by art, but animated by native inherent passion. Earnestness is contagious; he who feels deeply will certainly arouse the feelings of his audience; and when he loses sight of himself in the inspiration of his theme, his glowing ideas give birth to language, his passion moulds the features and muscles of the face, lights up the eye, directs the attitude and gesture, and modulates the voice.

Eloquence may be employed for bad purposes. The words of the wicked man are like the arrows of Alcestis; they take fire as they fly, and pierce the heart to wither and wound. Hence, some have objected to its cultivation as an art. But its abuse is no argument against its legitimate use. Its proper end is the vindication of truth, patriotism and religion; and its prostitution by the vicious, is no reason why the good should not exert its loftiest powers to persuade men to practice these ennobling virtues. Hence, as earnestness on the part of the orator, is indispensable to the production of the highest effect, he must cherish in his own heart the excellencies which he would inculcate and enforce. A speaker can be fired with zeal for truth, patriotism and religion, only in the degree that he feels within himself a conviction of their value and importance. Then, young gentlemen, if to the artistic graces of delivery you would unite that deep passion which is the soil of true eloquence, preserve your hearts pure from vice, your minds free from error, and cultivate the noblest sentiments by the practice of the noblest virtues. Then your sensibilities will be quick, your sympathies warm and tender, and your impulses exalted and benevolent. Be good as well as eloquent; then you will be pillars in society, and benefactors of your race, and the halo that shall encircle your names will gather lustre with the lapse of time; and the verse that shall embalm them, adapted to notes of heavenly melody, will wake the harpstrings of every succeeding age.

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