

SERMON PREACHED IN KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL, WINDSOR,
On Sunday Afternoon, October 11, 1885, by the Rev. ISAAC BROCK, M. A.,
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Joshua 1: 9—"Be strong and of a good courage."

Three times over in the course of four verses are these words of Jehovah addressed to Joshua. An arduous work lay before Joshua and Israel—the conquest of Canaan. In entering on this work they needed not to be faint-hearted, they needed above all things to "be strong and of a good courage." God gives them a solid reason why they might be strong and of a good courage: His presence was to go with them. God says, "be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed." Why? "For the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." As long as Israel was faithful to her God, Jehovah's presence was with them; and that presence was the pledge of progress and of victory, ultimately, of safety and of peace.

"Be strong and of a good courage." Surely these are not unsuitable words for us to-day. We have begun in this University another collegiate year. We have begun our work of higher education in this College under new auspices, in some respects under new conditions. Difficulties have beset this College in the past; those difficulties are by no means surmounted as yet. Certainly we shall not overcome them by being faint-hearted; no, we need to "be strong and of a good courage." We need to realize the presence with us of Him whose latest promise to his people was, "I am with you all the days, even unto the consummation of the age."

The Past, the Present, and the Future, are to engage our thoughts for a few minutes this afternoon.

I.—THE PAST.

When I think of your late President who has returned to work in England, and his illustrious predecessors, specially of one whose portrait adorns your Convocation Hall; when I think of several of your able and honored Professors in the past; when I think of your numerous benefactors; and when finally I think of the many sons of King's who have gone forth to different professions, and various spheres of duty, who have been, or who are a credit to this University, surely we have cause for devout thanksgiving to God in this retrospect of the past. Surely we cannot but feel, especially those of us who have only recently become connected with this University, that we are entering on an inheritance rich in honored names.

Sons of King's who have been a credit to this University,—I cannot allow this occasion to pass without a brief reference to one whose early death, since the close of your last collegiate year, has caused profound grief to all who knew him, and the worth of his services to our beloved Church. Among the most faithful, devoted, earnest, scholarly, and eloquent priests of the Anglican Church in this land stood the Rev. George Wright Hodgson, Master of Arts of this University. During the term of his residence here Professors and Students alike were conscious of the blessed and potent influences for good that radiated from his rooms. Few of us can hope to imitate his learned and fervid eloquence as he pleaded the claims of his Master and his Master's Church, or as he urged upon our acceptance the cause of the Church of England Temperance Society, as it was my privilege to hear him last year in Halifax. But oh! let us one and all, teachers and taught, seek to follow him as he followed Jesus. May we like him be filled with intense love to our dear Lord; and like him with a fearless, because intelligent love to our spiritual mother, the English branch of the Holy Catholic Church. May the memory of his holy and pure, devout and earnest life, long be cherished by the sons of King's. I rejoice to know that a movement has been initiated in Halifax to perpetuate amongst us the memory of George Hodgson's all too brief life of service here on earth for Christ and His Church. In his last will and testament our departed brother remembered his Alma Mater. The munificent gift of his own carefully selected and therefore most valuable library to our College Library, and other benefactions that are to follow, will enroll his name amongst the most honored benefactors to our University.

The Past.—We belong to an ancient University, ancient for this new land. In three years King's College will celebrate her centenary. This is the oldest University in the Maritime Provinces, and the oldest Church of England University in the whole Dominion. But we belong, most of us at least, to a far more ancient Church, a Church whose history reaches back to Parker and Cranmer of Reformation days; back to Osmund of Salisbury and Lanfranc of Canterbury of Norman days; back to King Alfred, and the venerable Bede, to St. Chad of Lichfield, and St. Aidan of Lindisfarne, and St. Augustine of Kent, of Saxon days; back to St. Columba of Iona, and St. Patrick of Ireland, and St. Alban of Verulam, of Celtic days; and back to those devoted missionaries of the Churches of Gaul, who, probably early in the second century, planted the Church of God in Britain. One continuous unbroken life marks the history of our Church, and identifies the Anglican Church of to-day—a great tree that covers all lands—with the tiny seed which was sown some eighteen centuries ago in the unpropitious soil of the Britain of the Druids, and the Roman legions.

Amongst other studies here, we are specially called to study the history and the principles of our ancient Church. I trust one result of this study will be a deepening of our intelligent love for our Church; and I trust that another result will be that hereafter in our appointed spheres of duty and influence, whether as ordained ministers or as laymen, we may be so well instructed in the history and principles of our beloved Church, that we may "be strong and of a good courage" in defence of our spiritual mother, when people fail to appreciate her, or when they misrepresent her, or when they assail her.

II.—THE PRESENT.

It needs not that I recount here the arrangements which the Board of

Governors of this University have made for carrying on the work of this College for the present collegiate year. Our newspapers have acquainted you with those arrangements. A great work is before us; professors and students alike. It is not a work of reconstruction; this has already been done for us by the Board of Governors who have partially reconstructed this College on its former lines. Nevertheless, a great work is before us all, to infuse into our reconstructed University, with God's help and blessing, some portion of its pristine vigour and life; and to maintain, and in some cases to restore throughout the Maritime Provinces confidence in their only Church of England College. This can only be done by earnest and thorough work on the part of professors and students, and by the most cordial unity amongst ourselves. It needs no words of mine to convince you that if our College is to do a good work, if it is to retain, or to win back confidence, it must above all things be at unity in itself.

My brother professors, (I think I may venture to answer for them) and myself will try with God's help to do our part in this great work; and you, my dear friends and younger brothers, who are here preparing for your life-work, whether in the sacred ministry of our Church, or in other professions, must with God's help try to do yours; by cheerful compliance with the rules which govern our collegiate life—by earnest and faithful diligence in your various studies—by the devout and regular use of all the means of grace afforded you here—and the older residents by seeking by word and example to exert an influence for good over those who have more lately come amongst us. Well I know the blessing of this influence to a young student. I can look back to the perils of the first year at Oxford, and can recall with thankfulness the blessing of the wise counsel and guidance of an older and more experienced undergraduate.

I am very thankful that as to numbers we have opened this new collegiate year with fairer prospects than some of our friends anticipated. Some twenty-seven students at least, including graduates come for the special study of Divinity or other portions of our course, will be prosecuting their studies under the auspices of King's College during this term. This is an increase over last year: and if greater publicity is given (as ought to be) to our College and its advantages, we may look, I trust, for a still further increase in the not distant future.

In carrying on the work before us we must all, professors and students, strive to "be strong and of a good courage." And our source of strength and courage is that of God's Israel, thirty-three centuries ago—Jehovah's Presence. Only, a nearer Presence is ours, and one more full of sweet human sympathy since the Holy Incarnation. Jesus, the Son of God, and the Son of St. Mary the Virgin, is with us: our God, and yet our Brother. Let us diligently and reverently use all the helps we possess here to make real in our hearts and lives this blessed, sustaining, restful Presence: private prayer and meditation on God's Holy Word—the daily morning and evening prayer in this Sanctuary—and above all our weekly Eucharist, to which coming "with a true penitent heart, and lively faith," the real Presence of Jesus is assured to us—for thus teaches our Church when we receive that holy Sacrament, "we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink His blood; then we dwell in Christ and Christ in us; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us."

III.—THE FUTURE.

It is, or it ought to be, well known, that though this is a Church of England University, it is open to all. No articles of faith have to be signed, no creeds accepted before our degrees in Arts can be taken. But though our University is rightly open to all, without distinction of creed, yet its support falls mainly on the members of our Church in the Provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The future of this University therefore turns mainly on the question whether the Churchmen of both the Maritime Provinces will rally round it, and accord it their generous support. The statements in reference to the finances of this College which have recently been sent forth, together with the earnest appeal of the Bishop of this Diocese, supply the Churchmen of Nova Scotia with the information they need in regard to the present position of King's College. I am glad to learn that a similar appeal, with the sanction of the Metropolitan of Canada, will very shortly be sent to the Churchmen of New Brunswick. The financial statement shows that the present outlook of the College is not very encouraging. I trust however, that the appeals from the venerable Bishops of our Church in these Provinces will stir Churchmen to united action in this matter: this is absolutely necessary if our University is to retain that independent life which it has hitherto maintained through the vicissitudes of ninety-seven years. If the Church-people not only of Nova Scotia but also of New Brunswick rally round their ancient University; if at this crisis of its history they accord it their generous support, then with the blessing of God Old King's will live and not die, and declare to succeeding generations the works of the Lord.

In the prosecution of the arduous work before us we shall have the heartiest sympathy, I am sure, of the many warm friends of this College in Windsor, several of whom are with us to-day; and the heartiest sympathy also of the Head Master of our Collegiate School (now one of the governors of this University) and of the boys under his care, many of whom we hope to welcome in due season to take their course in this College, and some of whom, I hope, are even now looking forward to entering the ranks of the ministry of the Church of God in these Provinces.

Let us all then, whatever our sphere of duty may be, enter upon, and carry out our allotted work in the spirit of humble dependence on God's blessing. Let us aim at following Jesus Christ, and being made more and more like unto Him. Let us strive to realize His Presence with us in our daily work, and then though conscious of much weakness in ourselves, and many shortcomings and imperfections, we shall "be strong, and of a good courage," knowing that He is with us who has said, "I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS."