

MEREDITH COLLEGE

QUARTERLY BULLETIN

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Founders' Day at Meredith College, January 27, 1910

In Memory of Meredith

(Editorial in *Biblical Recorder*, Feb. 2, 1910.)

The Founders' Day exercises at Meredith College last Thursday were altogether worthy of that splendid institution and of the fathers who planned it and laid wisely its foundations.

Faculty, students, trustees, and many friends assembled in the Chapel at 10:30 o'clock. There was appropriate music by the College choir, invocation by Rev. A. J. Moncrief, Scripture reading by the editor of the *Recorder*, and prayer by Dr. W. C. Tyree.

By request of President Vann, Mr. Josephus Daniels, editor of the *News and Observer* and a staunch friend of the College from the beginning, presided over the exercises. On assuming the chair, he made a very timely address, which we are pleased to print in another column.

In a very happy introduction, Mr. Daniels presented as the speaker of the day Dr. John E. White, pastor of the Second Baptist Church, Atlanta, Ga. Dr. White is known not only throughout his native State, but throughout the South and in many sections of the North, as a highly

gifted speaker. We dare say that in his Founders' Day address he surpassed himself. Certainly his utterance was notable, not only for the oratory displayed, but especially because it made Thomas Meredith move as a living personality before our eyes, and because it presented his conception of culture in a masterful plea for educational Christianity. We are pleased to announce that an abstract of Dr. White's address will appear soon in the *Recorder*.

After the exercises in the Chapel, the audience, led by the Senior class and the student body, proceeded to the grave of Meredith in the old City Cemetery, where an appropriate song was sung, an address delivered by President Vann (printed elsewhere in this paper), a chaplet was placed above the remains of the illustrious dead, and the benediction pronounced after singing the following "Hymn dedicated to Thomas Meredith," written especially for the occasion by Miss S. Elizabeth Davis:

"Sacred be the adopted soil
Where thou retest from thy toil;
Sacred be to us thy name,
Ours the keeping of thy fame.

With thy dreamer's vision clear,
Thou didst see this far-off year,
Sawest our Alma Mater rise,
Built in tears and sacrifice.

Thine the faith which could not fail,
Righteous prayers which must avail;
Thine the hero's rugged strength,
Wisdom justified at length.

As the years pass on to God,
Cherish we this hallowed sod;
Womanhood shall guard thy rest,
Rise and call thy memory blest."

Meredith and His Paper

(Address delivered at Meredith College by Mr. Josephus Daniels, editor of the *News and Observer*, upon assuming the chair, at President Vann's request, to preside over the exercises of Founders' Day.)

This is the day of the editor, for we are all gathered here this morning to pay tribute to one of the ablest men of the profession. Nathaniel Macon, one of the greatest men North Carolina ever produced, once said when the press was engaged in criticising the eccentricities of his devoted friend, John Randolph, "a government of editors would be a government of the hungry." I deem it proper to open this meeting to-day with this quotation from Macon for two reasons: (1) Because this institution, having been established by the Baptist church, it is fitting that I should quote from the statesman of Bute, who declared that in religion he was of "the Baptist persuasion," and (2) because, so far as I know, this is the first educational gathering ever held to do honor to an editor, and this is the first institution established that bears the name of a man whose chief distinction is that he established in North Carolina a journal that has been one of the most influential factors in the moral and educational life of the State.

"If Thomas Meredith had done nothing else but give this institution its distinguished and suitable name, that were enough to make him immortal," said a bright North Carolina woman the morning after she read that the trustees had named the college Meredith. But it was because he wrote his name large on the page of North Carolina history that the name is fitting and gives distinction to this college.

The speaker of to-day will tell the story of his life—and he will tell it with a vividness that will clothe Meredith and make him seem a living force to-day, as he was when his towering form walked these streets. It is a happy augury for its future that you have named this college for a man who gave to his Commonwealth the most priceless gift that any man can bestow—the gift of himself. We have had notable Founders' Days, when tributes have been paid to men who gave liberally of their possessions to establish colleges. It is well that we do so, for men who have money are serving their generations and posterity worthily, when they endow colleges and put education in the reach of those who otherwise could not enjoy its advantages.

But we are here to-day to do honor to a man who gave more than any rich benefactor North Carolina has known—a man richly endowed, who gave himself fully, wholly, unreservedly, to a people who needed the stimulus of a broad-gauged leader who had consecrated his all on the altar of a noble purpose. Thomas Meredith saw a great vision. "He was not disobedient to the heavenly vision," and he caused the rays of his vision to carry light to those who saw only the material things around them. He learned that the spoken word when uttered influences those who hear it, and perishes, while the written word is immortal. He preached in the churches when he first came to North Carolina, but he was not a Whitefield nor a Broadus, and his preaching made no epoch in his church. He put his pen to paper, he bought a little printing press, and began to instruct through the *Biblical Recorder*, and thereby employed the mightiest engine for spreading truth that the mind of man has conceived. It was as an editor that he

made fame and sowed the seed from which we are gathering a harvest to-day.

The *Biblical Recorder* is the fulcrum of your denomination. Tear down your colleges and orphanages and church buildings, but leave that paper to be read by the people, with the spirit breathed into it by Meredith and transmitted through the line of journalistic apostolic succession to bishop Hight C. Moore, and your colleges, church edifices and orphanages would spring from the ruins. But tear down the *Biblical Recorder*, blot out the teachings of that powerful journal, and you would struggle in vain to secure the agencies of religious and moral elevation that the State needs and your churches must have.

Meredith, in a day when journalists worked with dull tools, kept toiling because the vision he had seen on the heights was ever before him. In his little printing office he saw Wake Forest, with a score of buildings, driving out ignorance from the ranks of the voters; he saw orphanages and other eleemosynary institutions; he saw this college, called into being to educate the women who had too long been forgotten—he saw, with the eye of faith, this strong faculty and splendid body of beautiful young women preparing themselves for their high mission, and it was his vision that cheered those who came after him to bring it to its present high plane. Indeed, the glory of your institution was apparent to Thomas Meredith when President Vann was learning his letters, and the inspiration of that great editor has fallen like a mantle upon his shoulders, as he has made Meredith College worthy of the honored name it bears.

Thomas Meredith

(Abstract of Founders' Day Address by Rev. John E. White, D.D., at Meredith College, Raleigh, N. C., January 27, 1910.)

The democratic folk in this country have a warm place in their hearts for Oliver Cromwell, and yet, by appearing when he did on the scene in England he cost the cause of the colonies more than the historians have been able to calculate. From the settlement at Jamestown in 1607 to the arrival of Oliver in England, the best blow a liberty-loving Englishman could strike for freedom was to emigrate to America. And come they did, with no little resolution, about twenty-five thousand of them, the best bone and sinew, blood and bloom of English yeomanry, till Oliver came and put a stop to it. So it happened that after Oliver Cromwell appeared the man who went off looking for freedom across the seas was accounted a deserter. He gave them liberty to fight for at home.

The movement of population to the American colonies from England proper was never resumed. But when Oliver Cromwell was gone and kings began again to disport themselves about Westminster, the Irish, Scotch, and Welsh began to come over in earnest.

It was one of these movements from Wales in 1707 that brought over the great-great-grandfather of Thomas Meredith. His name was Simon, and he settled in Chester County, Pennsylvania. The family name, Meredith, is a familiar one in English history and literature. The word means "watcher (or guarder) of the sea." The traditional evidence is that the Merediths of Wales were people of

considerable social and intellectual standing. The coat of arms, carefully handed down, is now in the possession of a grandson of Thomas Meredith. It is "a gaunt lion and a shield," "a very old and high symbol of rank and bravery." Relationship is also traced to the family of the famous George Meredith, the author.

Simon, settling in Pennsylvania, begat James, and James begat Thomas, and Thomas begat John, who in turn, about the year 1794, gave us our Thomas Meredith by his Quaker wife, Charlotte Hough, who was said to have been a woman of rare intellectual accomplishments. But what a problem in temperaments we have here? A turbulent Welshman, a high-church Episcopalian, and a placid Quaker, a fighter and a saint. Something will come of that combination.

The ethnologist must regard the colonial period of America as one of the most dramatic and vivid passages in the history of humanity. From his point of view, the colonies were a sort of melting pot for the rarest experiments with the variant types of the human family. In the old countries the conditions were iron-clad, and society was thoroughly stratified and fixed in classes, either by race, rank, or religious separations. The Englishman lived and married in his own tight little island according to his class. The Scotch kept to Scotch, quite satisfied to do so, the Irish to Irish, and the Welsh to the Welsh. Dissenters married Dissenters, Quakers wedded Quakers, and everything went on a most unromantic sort of racial and class regimen. No place for Miles Standish or the gay cavalier courting everything in sight in the Old Country. But in the new country of America all things were free. There was neither rank nor royalty, neither caste nor class. Into the melting pot went all types and temperaments, old enemies

kissed and made up, and feud bloods ran together, and when it came forth a new species had been developed—the American. The human race had passed through a process of reinvigoration.

It may be safely questioned, however, if the colonial melting pot was put to any strain severer than the union of a Welshman and a Quakeress, and that Welshman an Episcopalian with a gaunt lion and a shield for his fighting crest, and that Quakeress a cultivated woman who probably spoke several tongues. We should expect something interesting to happen. In 1795, Thomas Meredith, God's best gift to North Carolina Baptists, happened.

Give me that baby's palm. I will tell you what you may look for in this first-born of John Meredith, the Welshman and Charlotte Hough, the Quaker. He will be, first, not afraid of a fight; in the second place, always on the side of education and progress; and, third, he will have a sound Quaker conscience on the subject of woman's equality in the church and in the schoolhouse. We know how the prophecy turned out.

A man who was permitted to fraternize with three generations of Baptist leaders in North Carolina has gone on record with the statement that "Thomas Meredith was, doubtless, the ablest man who has yet appeared among us." This was written in 1898. It seems certainly true that none of his contemporaries had received the same degree of academic culture. As a lad, his teacher charged that he had feasted himself on Latin instead of mince-pie. At eighteen he was at the University of Pennsylvania, where he graduated. He spoke several languages, was cultivated in music, wrote poetry and stood with his pen couchant and afterward triumphant. The great Alexander Campbell,

who it will be remembered met and vanquished the most brilliant debater in Europe, Robert Owen, was his trophy.

Thomas Meredith came first to Edenton and to the Chowan country, the best place then and now in the whole world to get the characteristics of the Baptists at their highest value. It is interesting to ask why he came, and what was the motive force that sent him, a youth of twenty-four, from Philadelphia to North Carolina. It is probable that he was sent as a missionary of the Philadelphia Association.

But I prefer to believe that his coming was something more than a casual commission of some organization. There is a driving force known as "invincible attraction." Dr. Stephen Weeks refers to it in his book on "The Quakers." It explains many men and many great movements. It is the case of a round hole that wants a round peg, a lock that wants its key, a cause that wants its captain. Martin Ross had dreamed the dream as far back as 1803, and the boy who was to take it from his dying lips was a lad eight years old in Philadelphia. A big business of God was open in North Carolina, and the man for it was in Pennsylvania, studying law at the University; the Baptists are wanting a man for a great opportunity, and the man they are needing is the unregenerate son of a Welsh Episcopalian and a Quaker woman. Now tell me how the matter can be managed? Easy, for God. The young man falls on his good mother's coffin and cries, "O my mother, my mother!" and God touches his heart and he is converted. Being converted and a scholar, he reads his Bible; reading his Bible, he rises up and says: "See, here is water. What doth hinder me to be baptized?" So he is a Baptist by the only true way known among men.

By that path Thomas Meredith was on his way to the cause that needed a captain in North Carolina. By that path he went out from his father's house to the great open door of a land he knew not, there to found and establish the *Biblical Recorder*, write the Constitution of the Convention at Greenville in 1830, issue the masterly address to the Baptists of the State that rallied them to a standard ascendant from that hour and to beat back the foes of a controversial epoch, and in 1838 to introduce a resolution into the Convention calling upon the Baptists to establish a college for women at Raleigh to be companion to the college for their brothers at Wake Forest, then in the fourth year of its glorious history, and thus to be a fixed star of the first magnitude in the galaxy of North Carolina Baptists.

The leaders of Thomas Meredith's day were not so much concerned as we are that education should be Christian, but were more concerned than we are that Christianity should be educational. We have reduced our appeal to a formula, and it is quite possible that in vigorous contention for the formula of "Christian education," we may miss both Christianity and education. Is our trouble after all a failure to get education according to the Shibboleth, like our failure to get Christianity according to its New Testament genius? Should we not be on a stronger platform if we should insist more upon a Christianity aggressively asserting its educational function? Aggression is the boldest defense. We are back at a fundamental point of view when we insist that Christianity in all its outlook and outlet is a force conquering by enlightenment, overcoming by the improvement of humanity.

Christianity engaged in education obtains its sanction

primarily in the decree of God that men are ordained for improvement. The tendency of our times is to put the problem of education outside the realm of religion altogether. From this tendency two evils are resulting: the scope of Christianity which as an enterprise is narrowed, and more evil still and profoundly impossible, the secularist proposes to build a Christian civilization on a paganized pedagogy. Christianity asserts the foundations of culture in an educational conscience, rooted in the idea of a divine law. God implanted the necessity and, therefore, the righteousness of education in all that He made. The little seed struggles to thrust itself up through the stubborn soil. "Every clod feels a stir of might, an impulse within it that reaches and towers to come to this soul in grass and flowers." An acorn throbs with an elemental yearning to fulfill itself in the oak as God had commanded it. Every oak that expands its leaves in the warm breath of heaven, every flower that paints its blossoms with the colors of the sky, is obeying a divine decree, is an expression of the upward striving of the weary spirit, for what the will and testament of God had commanded for them. So every broken flower and every stunted plant is a wrong somewhere and a wrong against more than the flower and the plant.

Christianity engaged in education proceeds upon a principle divergent at the outset from all merely utilitarian conceptions of life. Its philosophy is that the development of the human being is a matter of profound moral seriousness. A man has not the right, in the Christian conception of a man, to be willfully all that his human nature makes possible. It introduces the corrective of restraint from wrong development and of constraint in

the other direction. Its pedagogy gathers around the word duty. It challenges all that a man has a right to be developed into what God ordained him to be, and therefore what he ought to be. Its method also diverges. For its educational exemplar it takes not Froebel, but Christ. Froebel said: "Follow nature." Christ said: "Follow Me." Froebel said: "Become natural; be yourself." Christ said: "Be ye perfect according to the perfection which is in your Father in heaven." Secularism in education goes over boot and baggage to the training of man's faculties of memory, imagination and reason. Christianity in education esteems these faculties, but as the handmaids of faith, hope and love. Secularism says, make men and women capable, efficient, powerful, and you have achieved the sublime in education. Christianity goes further. It is aiming at the goal of character. It is dealing with men as souls, and it says, make men and women capable, efficient, powerful, but take pains above all things to make them capable for good, efficient for good, powerful for good. The issue is clear-cut. Between a civilization capable, efficient and growingly cynical toward the imperium of righteousness, and a civilization capable, efficient and powerful in the supreme obligation of moral character, the modern world is fast choosing.

A definition of education going the rounds declares that education is: (1) To want something; (2) to know what you want; (3) to know where to find it when you want it; and (4) to know what to do with it when you find it. That is very well for man considered as a sort of human machine for turning out results, but it is immeasurably insufficient and degrading for man considered as a soul engaged in the sublime task of becoming what is possible

for him in two worlds. The question that sometimes disheartens the conscientious secularist when he stands in the presence of an untimely bereavement, whether it is worth while to improve a man's mental faculties at great pains and expense, since he so soon and suddenly ceases their use and enjoyment, is never a question where Christianity is engaged in education. The Christian college does not calculate its compensation upon what the man may be able to accomplish in the brief space of an earthly existence. It stands by no grave lamenting the loss of love and labor which death has wrought. Its investment in the student is based upon a claim in him for a dividend that eternity alone can calculate. Its tuition starts from the gleam of faith in the eye of the teacher as he looks upon his class as a company of immortals, and it passes on and out into value, the very conception of which gives to the teacher's opportunity a divine intent and to his work nothing less than the dignity of cooperation with Almighty God in an eternal business.

A college founded upon these principles is the fit instrument of progress. It takes its place in the very middle of human life. It mediates in the transitions of a changing order. The world is passing from ignorance to knowledge. The gravest perils attend the process of transition. History warns us that the nations which have perished have been most cultivated, and that though it is true that we must educate or perish, we may educate and still perish. The world is passing from poverty to wealth. Our most serious problems are rising out of this issue. The world is also changing the forms of its faith, putting religious emphasis in new places, restating the ancient truth to the modern understanding. Most profoundly the interests of

humanity are involved. To a far greater extent than the pulpit or the press, the Christian college is in a position to influence the world safely and sanely in these issues of a changing order. It stands between the past and the future with its hands upon both. It stands between ignorance and knowledge in the two-fold allegiance to both. It stands between poverty and wealth to conserve the humble virtues of the one and to warn against the inglorious cheat of the other. It stands between the traditionalist and the progressive in religion and utters with authority the one magic name above every name which holds the charm that binds together the threatened inharmonies between the young man's religion and his father's faith.

"Subtlest thought may fail and reason falter;
Churches change, forms perish, systems go,
But our human needs they do not alter;
Christ no after age can e'er outgrow."

By the Grave of Meredith

(Address by President R. T. Vann to Meredith College students and friends, gathered at the grave of Thomas Meredith in the old City Cemetery, Raleigh, to conclude Founders' Day Exercises.)

The exercises just concluded in the Chapel were a part of a regular function—these are special and exceptional; those occurred by order of our trustees—these were prompted by our Senior class, representing their fellow-students and teachers as well. Very beautiful and womanly is the spirit that brings us together around this grave. It proclaims the highest type of humanity. Brutes give no sign that they cherish the memory of their dead, and even savage man appears to show little of such a sentiment; but as we

rise in the scale of being we erect tombstones and weave chaplets for the graves of our lost ones; not merely of our loved ones, but of all the worthy and great. Such a spirit also partakes of deity, for God often reminded His ancient people of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and David. And in doing this He not only bade His people emulate their virtues, but He also showed that He Himself cherished their names in loving memory. And so we do well to bring to such a grave as this our songs and flowers and hallowed memories, for he was worthy for whom we do this.

Coming among us as a young man and a stranger, Thomas Meredith soon showed that he came as no self-seeking adventurer, but like Abraham under a call Divine, to a land that he knew not, if not to found a race at least to uplift a people. He entered heartily into the life of this people and dedicated his mighty powers to their service. His character and ability soon set him in the front as their leader. When he established his paper, he became not only their mouth-piece, uttering their sentiments and defending their faith, but their prophet also. And when a little later he struggled for the erection of a high-grade woman's college, he laid the foundation for all that has been achieved or may be by the school that honors him to-day. And thus he wrote his shining name across the front of two great movements destined to shape the life of his people through all the after-centuries.

When at last his crown was ready and God called him up to the coronation, he laid his ashes to rest in this new land of his love, far way from the home of his birth and the graves of his sires. But his spirit has accompanied and inspired those for whom he lived through all the sixty years that have elapsed since he left us.

When Israel was leaving Egypt, 'mid all the hurry and confusion of that midnight exodus, they forgot not to take the bones of Joseph. They carried these relics through all their wanderings; carried them I know not where, but somewhere near the Ark of the Covenant, I fancy, for they, too, were holy. And when Caanan was won we read that they buried the bones of Joseph in Shechem. Thus Israel in their pilgrimages to the sacred shrine were inspired through the years by the memory of Joseph. And as we gather around this dust of Meredith, let us recall his virtues and seek to emulate his noble life. Let us here resolve highly that the school for which he toiled shall more than realize his highest ideals; that in its spirit and achievements it shall prove worthy of the great name it bears.

Happenings of the Year at Meredith

Life at Meredith College is as strenuous as even our ex-President would approve. Every hour brings its allotted duty, and sometimes several, all demanding immediate attention. When, however, the situation becomes so tense that something threatens to snap, our Committee on Entertainment comes to the rescue with some diversion.

The first break into the daily routine this year was made by the coming early in October of Victor's Italian Band. These music-loving Italians gave a concert so unique and delightful that we should be glad to have them again in our midst.

On November 11th we were most agreeably entertained by the Hinshaw Grand Opera Quartette. Seldom, even on the regular stage, does one hear anything finer than their program of song, which included two scenes from the opera "Martha."

The next interesting event was Frederick Warde's impersonation of several of Shakespeare's women. Those who have heard Mr. Warde can realize that this evening in company with the Bard of Avon was refreshing to mind and body.

We were all ready for the Thanksgiving holiday, which brought with it a genuine spirit of gratitude for the many blessings of the year. Among these we counted good health, an earnest body of students, and an efficient and harmonious faculty.

In December, Dr. Porter, Field Secretary of the Baptist Foreign Mission Board, gave us three eloquent and instructive talks on Missions and Mission Study.

The Christmas holidays passed all too quickly, but gave us the necessary rest and bracing up for mid-term examinations, which followed in quick succession. After this exhausting ordeal we were glad to have with us Mr. Sigismund Stojowski, a Russian musician, who gave a varied and pleasing program of piano music.

January 27th was Founders' Day, the day of days at Meredith. On this day, in a program of song, prayer and speech, we are wont to express our pride in the school, and our gratitude to the memory of those who builded so wisely and so well in founding it.

This year Dr. J. E. White, of Atlanta, gave us a sketch of the life of Thomas Meredith. With the story of this good man's career he interwove an eloquent and stirring appeal for the Educational Christianity for which our fathers stood, rather than for the Christian Education of which we talk so much to-day. After the exercises in the Chapel, the school, with many friends and visitors, repaired to Meredith's grave, where memorial exercises were

held. These consisted of one of the best of Dr. Vann's characteristic talks, and songs sung by the Senior class, who had charge of the service. The last song, composed for the occasion, was dedicated to Thomas Meredith. In the afternoon the faculty were "at home" to friends and patrons of the school. The parlors and halls were thronged with visitors, and our social enjoyment reached high-water mark. In the evening the students received their friends; and thus ended a day memorable in the annals of Meredith College.

On February 1st, Mr. Byron C. Piatt delivered a lecture in our Auditorium, on American Morals. This lecture impressed the listeners diversely: some regarding it as a timely warning to a society rapidly becoming cosmopolitan—in other words, corrupt; others insisting that such a subject should not be handled without gloves before a refined audience. All agreed, however, in admiration of his really wonderful power of description.

A few evenings after Mr. Piatt's lecture, Mr. Hannibal Williams gave us a reading from Shakespeare's Henry IV. His rendition of this great historical play was strikingly natural; hence, forcible.

The last of our series up to date was the lecture on Robert Browning, February 21st, by Mr. Louis U. Wilkinson, Lecturer for Oxford University, and for the Philological Societies of Leipzig and Dresden. His treatment of the subject was so charming that all regretted the end. According to his theory, Browning is not so obscure after all; and really, while listening to his earnest defense of the great poet, one was almost ashamed of ever having confessed ignorance as to whether "Sordello was a man, a woman, or a city!"

Next morning, at chapel exercises, Mr. Wilkinson reviewed for us the present crisis in English politics. His presentation of the subject was clear, witty, and comprehensive. I am sure his audience had a better grasp on the situation after his talk of thirty minutes than could be acquired by reading an indefinite number of newspaper reviews on the subject.

There are yet in store for us two numbers of the series planned by our committee: A concert by the Central Grand Concert Company, and a lecture on some problems of the day, by Dr. E. A. Steiner.

These readings, lectures and concerts vary healthfully the monotony of classroom work, and help to create an atmosphere which no girl can breathe without acquiring culture. One does not need to know it scientifically in order to appreciate good music, nor is it necessary to know an author's life to recognize the merits of his works. Appreciation of the beautiful and true is largely acquired from interpretations by artists who have thoroughly mastered their subjects.

Every pupil can not do the technical work required for a degree, but I maintain that not one can spend three or four years at Meredith College without gaining polish, and at least an amateur acquaintance with the liberal and fine arts which may materially increase her usefulness as a member of society in any condition of life.

The aim of this institution is to give girls such training that they "may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace."