

The Barnwell Bulletin

PRINTED FOR STUDENTS AND ALUMNI OF THE CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL
OF PHILADELPHIA BY THE MARY GASTON BARNWELL FOUNDATION,
THE PHILADELPHIA TRUST COMPANY, TRUSTEE

VOL. 2

FEBRUARY, 1925

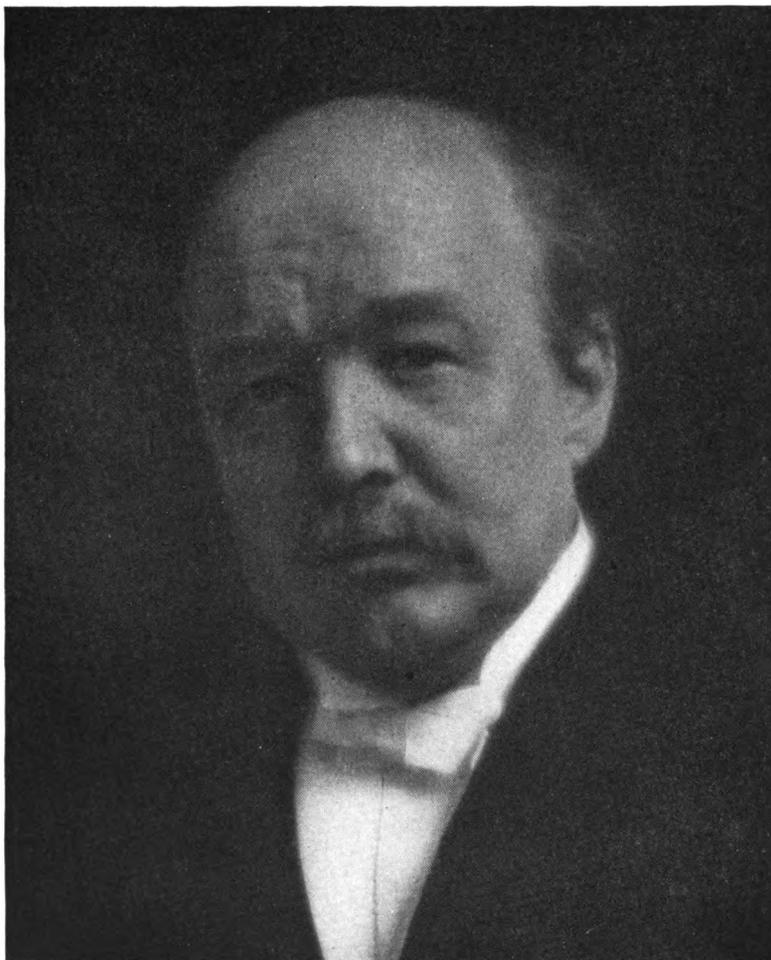
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MEMORIAL MEETING
IN HONOR OF
ROBERT ELLIS THOMPSON

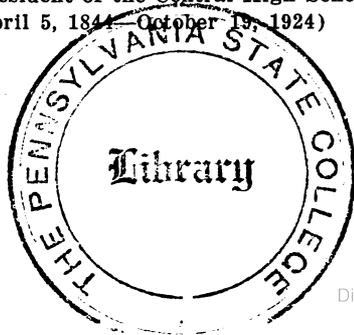


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DR. ROBERT ELLIS THOMPSON
Late President of the Central High School
(April 5, 1844—October 19, 1924)



MEMORIAL MEETING

IN HONOR OF

ROBERT ELLIS THOMPSON

The Memorial Meeting in honor of ROBERT ELLIS THOMPSON, late President of the Central High School, was held in the Assembly Hall of the School on Wednesday evening, December 17, 1924. The meeting was called to order by the Hon. Jacob Singer, President of the Associated Alumni.

ADDRESS BY THE TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN

HON. JACOB SINGER (69th Class)

Ladies and Gentlemen: I deem it a great privilege in the name of the Associated Alumni to welcome your presence here tonight at this assembly of tribute conceived in tender memory of one who stood in such relations of intimacy with those whose habits of life brought them within the halls of this institution.

It is my privilege only tonight to present to you the member of our Associated Alumni selected to preside, and in presenting him I wish to say that it has long been known to us all that to have merited Dr. Thompson's friendship was a rare distinction, and among those of us who enjoyed his friendship, his trust, and his confidence, was the gentleman whom I am about to introduce. Not only had he won Dr. Thompson's friendship, but he evinced for him during his whole life, during his activities, that friendship in many substantial ways.

The gentleman whom I am about to present not only spent his boyhood days at this school, but his activities in life were also centered in this particular neighborhood as a close neighbor of the school, and he was able, in his career, to be at the side of Dr. Thompson, and honored him in a way that has been of lasting benefit to this school and to the community, for it was in honor of Dr. Thompson that he presented to this school and to the community the magnificent organ which we shall hear tonight.

I therefore have the pleasure of introducing to you as the presiding officer, Mr. William L. Austin, an alumnus of this School.

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDING OFFICER

MR. WILLIAM L. AUSTIN (55th Class)

Mr. President of the Associated Alumni, Ladies and Gentlemen: As a few of the many friends of the late Dr. Thompson, we have met here this evening to do honor to one to whom in an eminent degree honor is due, for Dr. Thompson devoted his entire life to the supreme calling of education. He spent his whole time and effort in teaching and preaching. All that he did was for the uplift of mankind, constantly inspiring the rising generation to the highest ideals. He always used his great talents for the good of others.

Dr. Thompson's success was due to the fact that he was sound in fundamental principles. In his lectures on the "Divine Order of Human Society," he states that "the spiritual lies deeper than the economic, and the first need of modern society, the right relation of man to God is the greatest fact of human environment." And then, too, Dr. Thompson knew the proper relation of things. As I once heard it expressed, as between mind and matter, Dr. Thompson was one of those who believed that "the things of the mind are the things that matter."

And now Dr. Thompson has gone; yes, but his influence for good continues, and will continue, on and on.

During his lifetime many thousands came under his influence, and each one was the better for it, for unlike some educated people, he was always on the side of truth and right. We are all his debtors, for by him were we constantly inspired to a nobler life.

My friends, we are here this evening not to mourn the loss of Dr. Thompson, serious as such a loss has been, but rather to rejoice that for so many years we had the advantage of his friendship, his counsel, his teaching, his preaching, and in fact the inspiration of his whole life.

We sometimes talk of the Wise Men of the past, almost intimating that wise men now are out of fashion and gone; but Dr. Thompson, so to speak, was one of the wise men of the present in our very midst. And as we think of him now do we not realize how our hearts burned within us as we sat at his feet and listened to his words of wisdom and his faithful teachings? So that now we begin to realize that he was really a wise man in our very midst.

We are here this evening to put ourselves in remembrance of these things. I am glad to say that we have here a number of speakers who were pupils of Dr. Thompson and who are all well able to sound his praise and do him honor.

Mr. Smith, our organist of the evening, and Mr. Vichnin, the pianist, were also his pupils, and they, like the speakers, have become eminent in their chosen profession.

My own task is easy, for all the speakers are well and widely known, so that they need no introduction to this audience; and I therefore think the less I say the better, and it will be simply necessary for me to announce them.

In the first place, we shall listen now to "In Memoriam," by George Balch Nevin, played on the organ by Mr. Uselma Clarke Smith. (Mr. Uselma Clarke Smith of the 103rd Class rendered the selection.)

Chairman Austin—We shall next have the "Requiem" of Robert Louis Stevenson, rendered by the students of this School, and it is the desire that during the singing of this we all stand up.

REQUIEM *Robert Louis Stevenson*—*Sidney Homer*

Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie;
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

Chairman Austin—The next number on our program was to have been an address by the Honorable George Wharton Pepper, but, unfortunately, a few minutes ago we received a telegram from Washington, and I will ask Mr. Singer to read the telegram.

(The telegram was read by Mr. Singer, as follows:

"Public business prevents me from attending tonight's meeting. It would have given me deep satisfaction to testify to my affectionate regard for Robert Ellis Thompson. The hours spent in his class room when I was a student were amongst the great educational experiences of my life. My personal contacts with him were stimulating and delightful. He was wise, white, and warm-hearted. My memory is full with what he taught us. He gave us tastes in literature that awakened in us a search for learning. He made history live by reviving for us the great men of the past. He was a unique figure among the friends of a lifetime. We shall not look upon his like again. (Signed) George Wharton Pepper."

Mr. Singer—I want to say that Senator Pepper had expected and desired to be here. He was one of Dr. Thompson's most ardent admirers, and loved him throughout his whole life, and has fre-

quently expressed that much of the inspiration which has made of him the public servant that he is came from the precepts and the example set for him by Dr. Thompson.

Chairman Austin—In the absence of Senator Pepper, I am very glad to be able to say that the Reverend Dr. Richard Montgomery has consented to make an address in his place. Dr. Montgomery was also one of Dr. Thompson's students.

ADDRESS BY REVEREND DR. RICHARD MONTGOMERY

I trust, friends, you all heard the announcement and heard it correctly. I would not care to have you later on report that you heard Senator Pepper tonight. I regret quite as much as you do, and possibly as much as you will when I am through, that Senator Pepper is not here tonight.

As Mr. Singer has just said, and I know from frequent conversations with my friend of many years and dear teacher, that George Wharton Pepper was one of his most valued friends, that he spoke of him very frequently as "my friend and former pupil, George Wharton Pepper."

I cannot refuse, as far inferior as what I have to say will be to what the Senator would have said, yet I cannot refuse a request particularly coming from Dr. Haney, to say a few words to you.

I have spoken several times and I have written about Dr. Thompson since he went away from us, and I could hardly say anything to you tonight without repeating some of what I have said or written.

Two years after I graduated in the old brick school across Broad Street, I went out to the University in the hope of being able to make the sophomore class. I think our friend, Provost Penniman, would for awhile at least each year be very much relieved if the registration at the University was as simple a matter as it was in those days. All told, I think not over 160 applied for admission, and two professors went around that big room in the basement in the rear of College Hall, facing what is now Houston Hall, and took our names and our ages, and where we prepared, and I think that was about all the registration there was.

I was struck with the appearance of one of these two professors, and I said to the boy next to me, "Who is that?" He replied, "That is Professor Thompson. He is tremendously popular out

here at the University." That was my first experience, my first sight of a friend of all the rest of my life.

In Junior year I began to attend his classes, and what the Senator has just said in his telegram was true. In those days of '78 and '79, when we were Juniors and Seniors, nobody cut Dr. Thompson's classes. We all wanted to go to them.

In looking back over the student days now far past, I can easily recall three great teachers, and I always put Professor Thompson among them; one of the great triumvirate. I think he had the most remarkable ability to awaken, as the Senator has said, the love of learning.

Ian MacLaren in his stories of the Bonnie Brier Bush, and the Days of Auld Lang Syne, tells us of the teacher of Drumtochty who was always alert and looking for a "lad of pairts" and when he saw the slightest sign, it awakened in the old dominie the greatest delight. When Dr. Watson, better known as Ian MacLaren, was here twenty years ago, Dr. Thompson said to me, "Have you read or heard him read the stories about the Doctor of Drumtochty?" And he said, "I know just such a doctor in Philadelphia." And I felt like saying to him, "I know such a dominie here in Philadelphia as the schoolmaster of Drumtochty."

I remember, and oh how pleasant the memory is, when that professor used to join us, and I was glad when I happened to be one of the "us," and talked with us on the way from 34th and Darby Road—they were only beginning to call it Woodland Avenue in those days—down Chestnut Street, or sometimes to his own home, and tell us about this book or that book, until we could hardly remember the names of all he told us; but if we went to his house, he always sent us away with some of the books to read which he had been talking about.

It was one of the great pleasures of my life when student days were ended and I entered upon the charge of a church in the suburbs of Philadelphia, that Dr. Thompson was a nearby neighbor; and one of the great delights of the past to me are those Saturday afternoons when, whether the sermons were quite ready or not, my sermons, I mean, I tried to go up to his house as frequently as possible,—if not every Saturday afternoon; and my little boy used to look in the back of my carriage and see how many books the doctor had given me to bring home to read. So all through life he has touched my life, and always for good. Such a man cannot die; he does not die.

A distinguished graduate of Williams College said to me some years ago, "Wherever you find a Williams College man, you will find a man with the stamp of Mark Hopkins on him." And wherever you find a University of Pennsylvania man in the twenty-five years that Dr. Thompson was there, and I am sure Central High School boys of his entire time here, you will find the Thompson touch on him.

A prominent member of my church, a graduate of fifteen or twenty years ago of this school, said to me, "The one outstanding thing that I remember about Dr. Thompson—I will admit his wonderful erudition, his knowledge, his remarkable memory of that which he had read, and he seemed to have read everything—but the one thing that I recall is the great value of those morning talks in the chapel of the Central High School. And I didn't know what to call it in those days, but as I look back now it was the deep spirituality of the man that impressed itself upon everything that he said, no matter what the subject was that he was talking about." And that showed all the way through in his books. Oh, if I could get the ear of some publisher, I would see to it that his books were all reprinted, especially the one that the chairman alluded to—the Stone lecture at Princeton Seminary.

And his influence will continue. The country, the school, that is crowned with the ability to raise up men such as he is, that country is blessed, and that educational system will be only for the good of humanity.

Chairman Austin—Some of the finest poetry of all literature we find in some hymns that have come down to us from the past. Among them is that grand old hymn, written over two centuries ago, "Oh God, our Help in Ages Past,"—a beautiful expression of eternal truth. That hymn was a great favorite of Dr. Thompson, and we will now have it sung by the Faculty Glee Club.

MOTET—"O God Our Help in Ages Past."

(Hymn by Isaac Watts, 1719. Melody by A. Perilhou. Arranged for male voices by Thaddeus Gorecki.)

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home!

A thousand ages in thy sight,
Are like an evening gone;
Short as the watch that ends the night,
Before the rising sun.

Time like an ever-rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly forgotten as a dream
Dies at the opening day.

O God, our help in ages past,
Our help for years to come!

AMEN.

Chairman Austin—We shall now have the pleasure of listening to an address by Dr. Josiah H. Penniman, President and Provost of the University of Pennsylvania.

ADDRESS BY DR. JOSIAH H. PENNIMAN

President and Provost, University of Pennsylvania

Mr. Chairman and Friends of Dr. Thompson, and Former Students of Dr. Thompson: I esteem it one of the greatest privileges of my life to be permitted to stand on this platform this evening and pay my word of tribute to one of the greatest, whitest, purest souled men with whom I have ever had the opportunity to be associated.

Had Dr. Thompson been taken from us at any time during the last forty years, he still would have made a great contribution to the intellectual and spiritual life of the world and especially of those persons who were so fortunate, as many of us were, to have been his pupils.

“That life is long which answers life’s great end,” and Dr. Thompson’s life was devoted to spiritual things during a score of years in which he graced and distinguished the presidency of this School—(I hope it may some day be the City College of Philadelphia)—and also during the period of equal length during which he taught those older youths, of college years, who came thronging to his classes at the University of Pennsylvania.

A year or two ago, when it was my privilege to speak in the Barnwell Foundation, I felt that I could do nothing that would be more appropriate than to pay a tribute to my old teacher before beginning my address. I am glad now that I had that privilege, for he was here on earth in the flesh.

Today we are met to pay, each one his tribute of praise to one, who, having toiled faithfully, has passed on into the Great Beyond to what must be a glorious reward.

I have been associated with Dr. Thompson for nearly forty years in various relations, beginning as a Freshman in College in 1886, and continuing through my college course. Later, though the contact was not so frequent as I greatly desired, I nevertheless met him from time to time and always received from him something that made me think, that made me see things that were worth while, as a great scholar and one of Nature’s great souls saw them.

No teacher with whom I have ever come in contact was more stimulating in what he said to his classes.

There is an anecdote for the truth of which I can vouch, which I told several years ago on this platform, and which I think as illustrative of the nature of the relation of Robert Ellis Thompson to his students, may bear repetition.

He is one of the few teachers whose classes have in any way come into my life whom the students did not desire occasionally to miss. The story is this: Not infrequently students were then as they are now, afflicted by what might be called diplomatic illness. You know when an important question is up, a question on which it is necessary for the diplomat to consult his home office before giving his answer, he suddenly becomes indisposed, and it is not possible for the conference to be carried on without him. Not until he has heard from the home office does he recover. Students are not unknown to have this diplomatic illness from time to time when things get as the English say "a bit thick" for them. They stay away, but there is at least one boy—I must call him boy, although he is now a middle-aged man—who loved to hear Professor Thompson talk, and loved to be stimulated by what he said. Although "officially" absent on a "diplomatic illness," he crept into the class one day on hands and knees through a back door of the room, and gave his classmates the sign of silence. He did that simply because he did not want to miss a single lecture that Robert Ellis Thompson gave to his class. That story has its amusing aspect, but also its serious aspect. Any man who could hold the attention of college students so that they respect his learning, admire his ability, and have down deep in their hearts not the feeling that boys often have for a popular teacher, but a profound affection for a white soul—such a man is a great man, and such was Robert Ellis Thompson.

I shall not detain you by speaking at any length, for there are other speakers to follow me, each of whom has his own message. I have many times asked myself the question, "What factors go to the making of a great teacher?" The first factor is a love of life. He must love life as Browning did as he sang in his immortal verse, "How Good is our Living." He must love his pupils, because they are a part of the life that he loves. He must love to impart knowledge, because by so doing he stimulates his soul and develops his own personality. He must love the subject that he teaches. He must love learning for learning's sake, and, above all, as a result of that love of learning he must possess a vast store of learning concerning a multiplicity of subjects.

I have heard of a great many people who are versatile—that is, they can speak acceptably on any one of a number of different subjects; but I found usually that many of those versatile people, while schooled and learned in some one or two subjects about which they talked, were superficial in regard to many others. But I never heard Robert Ellis Thompson make an address (and I have heard him make many addresses since some six years before I entered college, when I first saw him walking along the street with his little daughter by the hand, he impressed me then, boy as I was,) that was not filled to overflowing with authentic information on the subject about which he was speaking. It seemed that he possessed stores of knowledge not on one subject or two or three or four. I thought his knowledge was almost inexhaustible. He was a man who, like Francis Bacon, seemed to have taken all knowledge for his province, and he seemed to have conquered a larger portion of that province, the title to which he had assumed, than almost any man of whom I have ever known personally.

Great as a teacher, great as a friend, great as a scholar, the life of Robert Ellis Thompson is a permanent influence, not only upon those of us who were his students in the University of Pennsylvania and in the Central High School, but also upon all who knew him. The influence of Robert Ellis Thompson will continue through the memory of his many friends and through his effect upon their lives.

Chairman Austin—We shall now be favored by a piano solo, *Fantasia in C Major*, by Robert Schumann, played by Mr. Israel Vichnin. (Mr. Israel Vichnin of the 135th Class then played the Last Movement of the *Fantasia in C Major* by Robert Schumann.)

Chairman Austin—We shall now have the pleasure of an address by the Honorable Harry S. McDevitt, Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

ADDRESS BY HONORABLE HARRY S. McDEVITT

Judge, Court of Common Pleas, Philadelphia

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: The biography of the late Robert Ellis Thompson would be incomplete did not someone acquainted with him reduce to writing and preserve for future generations the countless anecdotes connected with his life in this institution.

Unfortunately time does not permit my recounting some of them, but as I entered this room tonight the thought occurred to me that the only change that has taken place since it was first used some twenty-two years ago is the passing of him whose familiar figure we saw so often at this desk.

As the Chairman has so properly said, we have gathered on this occasion not to mourn, but to give expression to our appreciation of a man whom we respected in life and whose memory we revere in death. And, in the spirit of the great life which we commemorate, this hour should be dedicated to the utterance of a lesson. It is a time set apart in which to contemplate a grand example, a rich inheritance and a noble life worthily ended.

Even though we pay the highest tribute to our departed friend, our richest heritage is to remember the splendid lesson of his career, to commune with each other and emphasize what that life teaches, especially for the benefit of those who did not know as intimately as we, a marvelous character.

As the friends of Robert Ellis Thompson, preacher, scholar and teacher, we welcome this opportunity to voice his praises.

Those of us who knew him intimately, who witnessed the secret springs of his action, his consistent inward and outward life, should eulogize him, for the greatest contribution that can be made by a single man's life to the knowledge of the workings of our institutions will be the everlasting picture of his career.

Robert Ellis Thompson sounded the depths of the weakness and proved the ultimate strength of the American institutions that typify democracy. He gave us to know the perils that confront us, and he taught us to rally hidden and latent strengths. Esteemed as a preacher, he excelled as a teacher.

The most valuable part of every biography is the unwritten part which lies hidden behind and beneath a man's words and actions, in the central and controlling idea of the man himself, his personality. Personality—that vague, indefinable something that singles out one from the many, establishes distinction, is assertive yet attractive. Such a quality radiated from the brilliance of the man whose memory we honor tonight.

Dr. Thompson possessed personality, a force within himself compelling and virile, moving more from within than without, daring to think his own thoughts and repose upon his own convictions. And outstanding in bold relief were his modesty, his humility, his simplicity, his practical wisdom, his hatred of cant and hypocrisy.

His common sense, his common honesty and his resolute courage stamped his every act, public and private.

Dr. Thompson was a giant even among his intellectual contemporaries. He possessed a mind of sufficient capacity to comprehend any subject and seemed versed in every subject. He not only had decided opinions, but the courage of his own convictions and a willingness to defend them. Principle was his only guide and the banner of expediency the first to be forsaken. He had the vision of a statesman, the temperament of a philosopher, and the intellect which marks the profound student, the finished scholar and the magnetic teacher.

He had a horror of those who drift with the tide, shift with the wind and keep their ears acutely attuned to the ever-changing whim of faddists. He strove for something permanent, something lasting, and something that might be of benefit to his fellow men. No man was less given to mere idle speculation by speech or pen, or used more telling words to tangible effects than Dr. Thompson.

His was a career of honest purpose and beneficent tendencies—such a career as vindicates itself under all transient misconception. Differences of opinion and of creed melt away in the broad spirit of brotherhood that brings us together on such an occasion to testify to the true worth of a real man's life and arches over a good man's grave.

It was not his mere intellectual ability, large and indefinable as it was; it was not his official station in the community; but the magnetism of his simple goodness that drew to him the thousands who pay homage as former pupils who drank learning at his inexhaustible fountain of knowledge.

To men of different powers, different kinds of work are assigned. Some are discoverers of truth, some are vehicles of inspiration, some are inventors of instruments and others builders of character. To the latter class belonged the departed and beloved Robert Ellis Thompson. The minds that he has instructed with practical wisdom rather than false doctrines and passing fancies have impressed upon them indelible teachings that even time cannot erase. The lives that he has stimulated to wholesome knowledge, we cannot count. The leaders of men in all walks of life, who honor him as teacher and guide, are legion. His life's record is founded upon a rock against which the waves of time and the winds of passing fashions may beat and blow in vain. He was a strong man, a human man, a cheerful man. He enjoyed a sense of humor, but was

ever thoughtful of others' feelings. However, he had his hours of sorrow and darkness and, no doubt, when the hour came for him to lay down his burdens and go calmly and resignedly to his heavenly reward, he dwelt upon the simple verse:

"Life is the torrid day
Burned by the wind and sun;
And death the calm, cool evening hour
When the weary day is done."

Robert Ellis Thompson has passed to the Great Beyond, but his spirit liveth, and it will continue to live until this institution upon which he had such a wonderful influence shall have perished.

Chairman Austin—Next on the program is an anthem. This is a hymn written by Gregory the Great, and is therefore over thirteen centuries old. It will now be sung by the Faculty Glee Club.

ANTHEM—"Ecce Iam Noctis."

(Hymn by Gregory the Great. Music by George W. Chadwick.
Translation by Arthur W. Howes.)

Ecce Iam Noctis tenuatur umbra,	Ut Deus noster miseratus omnem
Lucis aurora rutilans coruscet,	Pellat angorem, tribuat salutem,
Nisibus totis rogitemus omnes	Donet et nobis pietate patris
Omnipotentem.	Regna polorum.

Praestat hoc nobis Deitas beata
Patris ac Nati pariterque Sancti
Spiritus, cuius resonat per omnem
Gloria Mundum.

Lo, the shades of night fade away before us,
Dawn with roseate rays gilds the heaven o'er us,
We, with contrite hearts, pray in humble chorus,
Lord of all power.

That our God, pitying our tribulation,
Drive away all grief, grant us His salvation,
Give to us to see and to all our nation
Heaven's bright splendor.

Grant us this wish, blessed God ne'er ceasing,
Father, Son, Holy Spirit, guilt releasing,
Whom enthroned above, with deep love increasing,
Praise we forever.

Chairman Austin—We shall now have the pleasure of listening to an address by one who is following the footsteps of Dr. Thompson in that he too is a minister of God. I have the pleasure of introducing the Reverend Frank M. Gray, Pastor of St. Stephen's Methodist Episcopal Church of Philadelphia.

ADDRESS BY REVEREND FRANK M. GRAY

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: I do not know whether my voice will carry tonight, as I am suffering from a cold in my vocal cords, for which I am not responsible, and which I have secured from some place. But I assure you that I could not stay away without being probably misinterpreted.

When the invitation came to me to have the honor of speaking a few words of personal tribute to a great man, I considered it was a great honor; but it is even a greater privilege to have this opportunity to stand here and pay a few words of tribute to a good man.

Greatness is not always combined with goodness, but Dr. Robert Ellis Thompson was not only a great man intellectually, but he was a good man in character. No one could meet with this strong man without being impressed that he combined in a wonderful measure character and intellectuality.

When I had the privilege of entering the Central High School, moving into the city of Philadelphia from another city, I had the great responsibility of going into Dr. Thompson's office in the old red school building across the street. I came in with fear and trembling, but I found a most gracious personality. A man of commanding appearance, but a man of gentle heart. A man who explained in great kindness to me the problem of changing from one school to another, and therefore the problem of being put down to the grade that the majority of subjects would compel. But he did it in such a gracious way that I felt that, what I had lost in my school life in years, I had gained in the influence of being in a school under a great professor and a great president.

I remember those assemblies in the old red brick building. How the personality of Robert Ellis Thompson impressed me as it did everyone, and even the frivolous and superficial student sat still when Dr. Thompson spoke. We felt that there was something being said of which we should not miss a single word.

When we moved over to this building, I was in the first class that graduated from it. We did not have this assembly room, for it was not completed until after I had graduated, but I had the privilege of being in some of Dr. Thompson's classes, and I felt, as the other speakers have expressed, the sense of awe of a great intellectual giant.

His very appearance suggested study. His expression of language showed great thinking, and as we copied the notes down we realized we were getting a great educational training.

I knew that he had come from the University of Pennsylvania, to which I looked forward to going as a student, realizing he had been there as a professor; and I felt here as an under-graduate in a high school I should have some of that intellectual stimulus which would come from him through the years. When I had an interview with Dr. Thompson in his office I always found that he was not only interested in the educational development of the student, but in his moral character; that he had a sort of father's influence and interest in the student, and I felt that though a great man intellectually, he was genuine in his thoughts of the interest of the boys.

So I say, when I heard the invitation over the 'phone to come here, that I thought it would be a great honor just to stand up and speak a good word for Dr. Robert Ellis Thompson. I knew I could not say it eloquently, I could not say it in a great way, like the Provost of the University and others, but I felt I could say it from my heart, and I thank God I met this man, as a Christian minister, as a great teacher, as an influential president of the Central High School; and his personality, his intellectuality, his dignity, his simplicity, have made that impression upon me that has made me, as it has made all other students who knew him, crave the highest and the best in life.

Chairman Austin—Next on the program is the Recessional, which will be sung by the students of the Central High School.

RECESSIONAL *Rudyard Kipling*—*Reginald de Koven*

God of our fathers, known of old—
 Lord of our far-flung battle-line—
 Beneath Whose awful Hand we hold
 Dominion over the palm and pine—
 Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
 Lest we forget—lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies—
 The captains and the kings depart,
 Still stands Thine ancient Sacrifice,
 An humble and a contrite heart.
 Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
 Lest we forget—lest we forget!

Far-called our navies melt away—
 On dune and headland sinks the fire—
 Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
 Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
 Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
 Lest we forget—lest we forget!

If drunk with sight of power, we loose
 Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe,
 Such boasting as the Gentiles use
 Or lesser breeds without the Law—
 Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
 Lest we forget—lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
 In reeking tube and iron shard—
 All valiant dust that builds on dust,
 And guarding calls not Thee to guard—
 For frantic boast and foolish word,
 Thy mercy on Thy People, Lord! Amen.

Chairman Austin—We shall now have the pleasure of hearing the worthy successor of Dr. Thompson, Dr. John L. Haney, now president of this school.

ADDRESS BY DR. JOHN L. HANEY

President of the Central High School

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: I believe it was the plan of those who arranged the program for this evening that there should be two speakers who had the privilege of sitting in Dr. Thompson's classes at the University, that there should be two speakers who had the same privilege at the Central High School, and that the closing speaker should be the President of the School. I cannot refrain from calling attention to the fact that it was likewise my privilege to be a student of Dr. Thompson's in the Central High School.

The boys of my group were in the Junior class when Dr. Thompson came to take charge. It was on the morning of February 26th, 1894, an outstanding day in our lives, and one of the red-letter days in Dr. Thompson's life.

I recall the morning very well. The President of the Board of Public Education, Mr. Isaac A. Sheppard, the Chairman of the High School Committee, Mr. Samuel B. Huey, the Hon. John Wanamaker, the Rev. Dr. Ozi W. Whitaker, Bishop of the diocese of Pennsylvania, and other notable citizens of Philadelphia were present. We boys who sat in the audience, curious to know what our new President was like, realized that a new chapter in the history of Central High School was beginning on that notable occasion.

As the Provost of the University has said, Dr. Thompson might have been taken from us at any time during a number of years, and his career would have been a distinguished one. Yet he was spared not merely to duplicate in years the service that he had rendered to the University of Pennsylvania, but even to the extent of some years beyond he served as our inspiring leader, the seventh President of the Central High School.

You have heard of Dr. Thompson's wonderful attributes, his personal character, his erudition. I cannot refrain from mentioning some things that are familiar to most of my colleagues, but possibly of interest to others in this audience.

When I became associated with the Faculty, I learned that Dr. Thompson was regarded not merely as a capable executive, but as a good companion. He had not only cheerful words of encouragement for us, but a fund of information on such a variety of topics that it was a pleasure to linger in the faculty room, whenever the Doctor was there. Sometimes there was a pleasant exchange of thoughts; at other times he engaged in debate with those who differed from him,—and there was nothing he enjoyed more. Swinging his spectacles in his hand, he would cleverly advance argument after argument; slowly but surely those who opposed him went down in defeat.

Occasionally when we would venture into his office we would find him reading a volume of the Dictionary of National Biography—a work in sixty-nine volumes, double column, small type,—and I believe Dr. Thompson read the best part of it. Every now and then he would go to the faculty room for a new volume, and devour that as he had gone through the others. One day he told me he was reading the biography of a notable prize-fighter. I was very much surprised and I told him so. He replied with a smile that he felt it was a fine thing that the learned editors of the Dictionary of National Biography had not confined themselves to statesmen, to lawyers, to authors, and similar folk, but that they had also put in, by way of making the work more entertaining, the biographies of prize-fighters and the more famous pirates. Then, closing the book, he told me about the great English prize-fighters—he knew them all. He next proceeded to talk about the pirates. I will confess I had frequently consulted that learned work of reference, but I had never ascertained that it dealt with pirates.

Dr. Montgomery referred to the memorable walks from the University down Chestnut Street to Dr. Thompson's home. Dr. Thompson brought that same trait to the Central High School. Those of us who were favored with his company walking down Broad Street had the same pleasure of listening, perhaps asking an occasional question, but taking care not to interrupt too much a flow of talk that was always worth while, friendly, and stimulating.

I want to speak briefly of certain days that must have been outstanding occasions in Dr. Thompson's life. I have referred to the day of his induction as President of the School. The next occasion coming within my knowledge was the day when he took charge of this building in September, 1900; not a completed building, but one that consisted mainly of class-rooms and laboratories. We had

to wait two years for the opportunity to use this Assembly Hall, and the other large rooms in this portion of the structure.

What was missed most by the students, as was indicated by Mr. Gray, were the inspiring talks in chapel and the opportunity to hear Dr. Thompson deliver those "sermonettes," as we liked to call them. My great regret today is that no one took down the text of those addresses, that we are not able to present to his friends and former students at this time a volume made up of the stimulating talks that Dr. Thompson gave again and again from the platform in the old school, and, after an interval of two years, from the platform in this Assembly Hall.

The next occasion that occurs to me as an outstanding day in Dr. Thompson's career was when he welcomed Theodore Roosevelt, President of the United States, to this platform to dedicate the building—a historic occasion for Central High School, a notable event in the annals of education in Pennsylvania.

There are other days I might refer to, but I am going to mention just one—an evening this time,—the evening of a Barnwell address. Dr. Thompson was not well enough to attend on the evening when Dr. Penniman spoke and paid his beautiful tribute to his former teacher, but Dr. Thompson was here on the evening when Senator Pepper delivered his address. I believe it was the last occasion on which Dr. Thompson entered this hall.

I can recall how he was led down the center aisle to a seat on the front row. The Senator saw Dr. Thompson come in. There was the same fine feeling on the part of Senator Pepper for his former teacher that there was on the part of Dr. Thompson for his distinguished pupil. Senator Pepper, like Provost Penniman on an earlier occasion, likewise paid his tribute to the teacher whose influence he had never forgotten. Those of you who have a copy of the Barnwell Bulletin in which Senator Pepper's address is printed will take pleasure in turning to that first page and seeing what the Senator from Pennsylvania said that evening.

After Dr. Thompson's retirement from the presidency of the Central High School he prepared a manuscript history of this institution, at the request of the Associated Alumni. It was my pleasure to examine that manuscript not long ago, and I noticed in it one thing that I accepted as unquestionable evidence of the fact that Dr. Thompson was first and last, a teacher, not an administrator; it emphasized him as a man who took particular interest in his boys, and as one who moulded the lives of those that came under

his influence with far greater enthusiasm than he sought to conduct the school as an institution, or to achieve reputation as an executive.

This is what Dr. Thompson set forth in describing his acceptance of the presidency of the Central High School: He said that when the opportunity had come to him to take the presidency of Lake Forest University in the Middle West, he had declined the offer, but when the invitation came to take the presidency of the Central High School he accepted, but he made the significant stipulation that if he found the executive work irksome or uninteresting, the High School Committee should give him a Chair in the faculty of the School. I think nothing could illustrate better the fact that Dr. Thompson's desire was to teach, not to occupy a position of executive character. He kept up that personal relationship with the students as long as he could, and thousands who were in his classes were fortunate because he continued to give his lectures to the very end. It gave us great pleasure, under the auspices of the Barnwell Foundation, to establish a lectureship in ethics in which Dr. Thompson was active until he was finally stricken.

I am sure there is only one thought in the minds of the faculty,—that Robert Ellis Thompson must go down in history as one of the most notable leaders, and as one of the greatest teachers ever associated with this school. His name must be mentioned with that of Alexander Dallas Bache, the great-grandson of Franklin, our first President, who linked our institution with the University of Pennsylvania, founded by Franklin; with that of John S. Hart and the rest of the men who gave the stamp of individuality to the Central High School as we know it today. Ever notable among them, as the records of this great school will be written from time to time, will be the name of the man who over the longest period, more than a quarter of a century, directed its affairs, and inspired alike the teachers and the pupils who had the privilege of serving under him.

Chairman Austin—In the University of Edinburgh there is an inscription stating that the greatest thing in the world is man, and we have heard this evening of one of the great leaders of men. Mankind is prevented from reverting back to barbarism by just such leaders as Dr. Thompson, and we have had ample proof in recent years how easy it is to revert back to barbarism. Walter H. Page, in his letters, says that during the war barbarism was out-

ADDRESS BY DR. JOHN L. HANEY

barbarized, and the salvation of the world, my friends, is through just such leaders as Dr. Thompson, who are ever pointing men onward and upward.

The closing number of the exercises is the "March of Joan of Arc," which will be played by Mr. Uselma Clarke Smith. (After Mr. Smith played the final number the meeting was declared adjourned.)

COMMITTEE

MR. WILLIAM L. AUSTIN, *Chairman*

HON. JACOB SINGER, *ex-officio*

MR. A. RAYMOND BISHOP

MR. JOSEPH FALTERMAYER

MR. ELLIS A. GIMBEL

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THE BARNWELL BULLETIN

Robert Ellis Thompson, A.M., Ph.D., S.T.D., LL.D.

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
BY DR. JOSEPH S. HEPBURN
Historian of the Associated Alumni

Robert Ellis Thompson was born April 5, 1844, near Lurgan, Ireland, the son of Samuel and Catherine Ellis Thompson. He was admitted to the Central High School from the Harrison School as a member of the 41st Class in February, 1859, but withdrew to attend the Classical Academy conducted by Dr. John W. Faires.

His college education was obtained in the University of Pennsylvania; he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1865, that of Master of Arts in 1868, and the honorary degree of Doctor of Sacred Theology in 1887. His theological education was obtained in the seminary of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Hamilton College conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1870, and Muhlenberg College honored him with the degree of Doctor of Laws in 1909.

From 1868 to 1892, Dr. Thompson was a member of the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania, serving as instructor in Latin and mathematics from 1868 to 1870, instructor in history during the academic year 1870-1871, professor of social science from 1871 to 1883, and John Welsh Centennial Professor of History and English Literature from 1883 to 1892.

Beginning in 1892, he was, for a decade, professor of history, literature, and economics in the Wagner Free Institute of Science. Dr. Thompson also was special lecturer at various institutions of higher education, including Harvard (lecturer on Protective Tariff, in 1885), Yale (lecturer on Protection to Home Industry 1886-1887), Princeton Theological Seminary (Stone lecturer, 1881), and Cornell.

On February 26, 1894, he was formally inaugurated as seventh president of the Central High School. The School then had a faculty of twenty-eight members and a student body of 676. During the twenty-six years of Dr. Thompson's presidency, the faculty grew to 113 members, the student body to 2974 pupils. This administration—the longest in the history of the School—was characterized by advances in many directions.

Prior to 1894 but one department, that of English, had been organized in the faculty. The organization of the entire faculty into departments was speedily completed. The corner stone of the new buildings was laid on October 20, 1894, ground having been

broken on the seventh of May. The new building proper was occupied September 8, 1900; the assembly hall portion was completed in the autumn of 1902, and the entire group was formally dedicated on November 22 of that year in the presence of Theodore Roosevelt, President of the United States, who addressed both the audience of invited guests in the assembly hall and the student body in the north yard.

In 1920, the state retirement law compelled the retirement of Dr. Thompson from the presidency, and the professorship of ethical and political science. He received an emeritus appointment, and in 1922 was appointed Barnwell Lecturer on ethics and political science by the Barnwell Foundation. The students, therefore, were granted the privilege of attending lectures by the great master until he was attacked by his last illness.

Dr. Thompson was noted not only as an educator, but also as author, editor, theologian, political economist, man of letters, publicist. Among his books may be mentioned "The Hand of God in American History," "The Divine Order of Human Society," and "The History of the Dwelling House and its Future." His editorial work was done on the *Penn Monthly*, *The American*, *The Irish World*, and the *Sunday School Times*. Licensed to preach in 1867, and ordained in 1870, he frequently filled the pulpits of churches in Philadelphia and its environs. In political economy, he was an ardent protectionist. Although a Protestant, he nevertheless was a firm advocate of home-rule for Ireland.

Although trained in the humanities, Dr. Thompson had a broad vision. He had considerable knowledge of the sciences and their applications. He always exhibited a friendly attitude toward science and scientists. On more than one occasion the author discussed with him the achievements in science of the alumni, especially those graduated during his administration.

Dr. Thompson entered into eternal rest on Sunday, October 19, 1924. His influence will continue to be exerted upon the School and upon the thousands of students who have listened to his words of wisdom in the assemblies and in the class room during the formative period of their lives.