

- Stay. We must know what the founders wanted the stones to say, what the university was meant to be. To understand the origin of the university in such a way is to understand the depths of the human heart. For rooted within all of us, there is the inextricable urge as basic as the drive to be, the urge to ask why and to seek an answer. No burden is heavy enough to crush that spirit or to thwart that question. No life, however carefree, escapes the maggot that bores in every mind, ever waiting patiently for the opportunity to ask, if only once, "How can I know that this good life "is blessed in every way?" Our lives bear the indelible stamp of the quester, and the dream of discovery. So, there is a measure in which the entire charming complex of the buildings which surround us, are but symbols, objectifications of that urge continually prodding us to seek that we may know. The lofted towers reaching for the sky seem to have risen out of the earth, pushed up by the force, lying at the heart of life. The urge to know that we may be. These supporting and surrounding stones are the founders' letters to the world. And, asking after the intention of the founders of the university is finally asking after the essence of humanity. Asking what we think we are meant to be, and what in the end will make us happy. The human experience leveled by death and taxes, and elevated by common aspirations, in which we all partake, often appear singular in it's idiom. We are all different. Who can understand another? Not I. Yet, nature, however careless of the individual is exceedingly careful of the type. At bottom, we are similar. We are like each other. All of us yearn, all of us die. We are big, we are little. We are thick, thin, black, brown, white, wise or cunning, generous, or miserly, but with all, human. It is characteristic of us all, that the works of our hands, reflect not simply our abilities, not even our mind alone, but our very souls, what we are, and we are individuals. And so, we're the founders. Specific universities therefore, founded by specific individuals, bear specific marks of their individual founders. Every university must be distinctive, and certainly Duke is. That distinction arises from the singular character of the individual expression, which the founders gave to a common urge. The idiom is protean, but the desire is constant. On this day we remember and honor, not simply what the founders did, but what they dreamed. We recall the particular visions that summoned them to a task. What then, did the founders have in mind? The question has been asked many times, it must be asked again, for sadly the question has worn smooth. The answer has been forgotten, or has become too familiar, and you know the thankless dividend that familiarity breeds. So, perhaps our understanding may be assisted, by thinking in terms of another perspective than our own. Can you imagine the year 2984, 1000 years from now? What will life be like on our cooling sender, in this immediate are that we call Duke? Will there be any life here? We are constantly alerted of extinction by nuclear explosion, but we do not believe it, not really. We are too well-schooled in comic strip continuity of the 11th hour rescue. We are too hypnotized by scientific fiction's last minute reprieve through recondite knowledge. We are too little mindful of the lesson, which history plainly teaches, that so far, so far, the mortality of nations has been 100%. If, God forbid, the annihilation should come by nuclear destruction or by other terrible means that we dare not envision, and Duke should be destroyed, or merely deserted, and then in 1000 years, visitors from another planet, or another universe, showed alight here in expiration or adventure, in the deserted ossified remnants of our beloved Duke, overgrown with fantastic vegetation, sprung from the reconstructed chemistry of day after Earth, what would they find? Imagine, try to imagine. What would the visitors find, and more pointedly, what would they make of what

they did find? What would these stones say about what the university attempted, and what they had accomplished? There is, of course, the temptation to be facetious, to speculate about what strangers would make of the fragments, that had once been a university. Was this large oval-shaped depression, just west and south of the center of the campus, the site where religious ceremonies were held? Was it here, that the community gathered to worship their gods? What of the honeycomb structures where the inhabitants lived? Surely, these folk, it might be concluded, cared very little for creature comforts. For they crowded into such small quarters. Two, three, to a tiny room. Skeletal remains show that most of them were young. Who then, were the older ones, who's bones are scattered here? Were they the servants or overlords, or prisoners? No matter, but mischievous speculation aside, inevitably, the thoughtful observer sees clearly something of the character of the university in the ruins that remain. There were, so the extraterrestrial visitors might report to their superiors, two foci of the university, which defined the purpose of the school, and described the dream of the founders. Two imposing buildings, impressive by reason of intention and use. Measuring by radiation, the mass, which once occupied the space that is now destroyed. The report will continue, we have recaptured the size and the shape of many buildings, especially the two significant structures. One was a great rambling several-story building, with wings and basements, large rooms and small, built at different times, of different materials, and of different styles, distinguished only by miles and miles of empty shelves. Empty that is, expect for the acres of dust lying on them, dust that was once books. The other structure, originally cruciform, with noble arches and great windows, is long since reduced to a puzzling, if fascinating heap of polished stone scraps, of delicately carved, and miraculously preserved bits of wood. And, of innumerable places of glass, so brilliantly covered, that though layered with centuries elemental deposit, still seem on fire when they catch the light of a setting sun. There were as well, a few enormous bells, and some small ones, which still speak when they are struck. So might end the report of a future supervisor of a research project, of one who had discovered the ruin of a university, and rightly identified the significant foci of Duke, the chapel and the library. The incident recorded in the Book of Joshua, and read in your hearing, took place centuries ago. The Israelites had been delivered from bondage, but there had followed long years of weary wondering. Now, finally, with God's permission, they were to begin a conquest. They came streaming out the desert, ready to claw a foothold into the land of Canaan. But, between them and promise land, ran the swiftly flowing Jordan, but miraculously, these waters were held back, and they crossed over safely. Joshua commanded the leaders of the tribe to take every man, a stone, and to build a memorial with him on the farther bank, so that in years to come when their children and their children's children should ask, "What is the meaning of these stones?" They would be reminded of the presence and the glory of God. Now, here we repeat the experience, not because we are delivered from slavery, but because we remind ourselves by these stones, of our proper orientation, and our opportunity and responsibility to enjoy and obey God. Our encounter with the spirit that broods over us all, as we seek to conform our lives to knowledge of The Ultimate. What do these stones mean? Look about you, they manifest faith, that this life, your life, all life, has purpose and promise. They recall the consequent intention of their founders, to ensure the union of erudition and religion, not simply in coexistence, but in creative sympathy. 200 years before Duke was breaking out of the chrysalis of adolescence, Charles Wesley wrote a hymn, especially for the Kingsworth School in England. It contained the line, "Unite the pair, so longed is joined. "Knowledge and vital piety, the words are hard to sing, "but easy to understand." Here, is a natural union enjoined. To return to the point at which we began, here, the articulation of a concept, which lay at the heart of what the founders of Duke envisioned in establishing the university. They were practical folk,

the founders. James B. Duke, was described by one of his associates as a man who looked always to the future, and advised others to do the same. Although he was careful to choose the masonry that would longest endure, he must have known that the time comes when even the pyramids are reduced to dust. But the idea of uniting learning and faith, that was ultimate realism. When James B. Duke walked through the March woods that day in Spring and said, "Let the chapel be here, "and the library hard by." He acknowledged the validity of the marriage of religion and learning. His sensitivity to the need that each has for the other. His was a dream essentially at one at the insight, and essentially one with the insight of his brother Benjamin, who already supported Trinity College, and of his father Washington, who's philanthropy had not waited upon relocation. What do these stones say? They speak an unshakable faith in the fruitful union of religion and irradiation, of the library and the chapel, of laboratory and chancel, of man's search of God's revelations. Say it as you will, the meaning remains. Palaces and hobos alike, finally come to decay, but this union is neither eroded by time, nor destroyed by history. The treasures of the library finally are not her books, but the idea is to which her books bring us. The valid questers are like the traveler's and pilgrim's progress, who say to the vendors, "Sirs, we would buy the truth." But, unlike the frustrated pilgrims at vanity fair, in the library they find truth, for the books point beyond themselves. It is so with the chapel, waiting with open doors to invite us in, and then to direct us far beyond. In itself, the chapel says little. Consider the windows. Noah's expression hardly differs from that of the archangel, and the likenesses of Judas and Jesus are disturbingly similar. Yet, here we break the barrier to mystery. Stone walls do not make a sanctuary any more than they make a prison. But, when we are opened to that, which these stones symbolize, then we comprehend Goethe meant, when he said that, "True happiness lies in plumbing the depth of the knowable, "and quietly revering that which is unknowable." That is accepting both the treasures of the library and the chapel. The two buildings speak what a university can be, and what Duke must be, a community of knowledge and faith, eruditio et religio. As the founders' proclaim on the monument in the main quadrangle, for knowledge and piety endure. Continually reborn in the lives of every generation. The library may be reduced to rubble, but the ideas will live. The chapel may fall, but faith, like the phoenix rises always from the destruction of the past. The founders have simply provided for us, a setting in which it is easier to catch the vision, and harder to ignore the challenge to build a world, where plowshares replace spears, and where myrtles overcome the brambles. What endless possibilities await? The cold currents of arctic air are yet to be diverted to the deserts, that they may be once may blossoming meadows. But the possibilities are here, in knowledge waiting to be discovered, in challenge, waiting to be accepted. Cardinal Newman in his idea of a university, advises us that the university treasure is not only good, but reproductive of good, and the fact which is excellent, beautiful, perfect, desirable, overflows. "It not only attracts us", he continues, It communicates itself, it excites, first, our admiration and love, then our desires, our gratitude. It is a blessing, a gift, a power, a treasure. First, to the owner, and then through that owner, to the world. Is it not so? Look about you in this university community. Does not the hospital cherish and enrich life? Do not the lame walk? Are not the doomed reprieved from the grave? Does not the library ennoble the mind, and look within? Does not that to which the chapel points bring us to quite reverence, which issues unhappiness? How appropriately do we honor the founders on this their Memorial Day, by remembering them gratefully, by accepting their invitation to seek the truth, and to follow it in faith. The glorious company of the founders, praise Thee, O God, By the their gifts, their vision, and their admonition, the goodly fellowship of students and teachers praise Thee, O God. By dedicated life in diligent search for the truth that sets us free. The noble of seekers praise thee, who in this university accept the challenge to discover self, and to blaze new trails. As

a university community, we bless Thee. In the name of Jesus the Christ, who was himself in carnation of all truth and all goodness. Amen and amen. (church organ music) ♪ Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart ♪ Naught be all else to me, save that thou art ♪ Thou my best thought by day or by night ♪ Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light ♪ Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word ♪ I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord ♪ Thou my great Father, I thy true son ♪ Thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one ♪

- Let us affirm our faith together. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into hell. The third day, He arose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father almighty, from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen. The Lord be with you.

- And also you.

(people murmuring) Lets us pray. Most kind and gracious God, high above all yet deep within us. We turn our hearts to Thee. Our thoughts glimpse, but the surface of Thy mysteries, our imaginations only reveal partial pictures of Thy truth. Infinite, Almighty, ever-loving. How are unsearchable are thy ways, oh Lord? Yet into Thy sanctuary, we have come with grateful and expected hearts, this advent season, knowing that, while we by searching, cannot Thee out, though by Thy searching canst find us out. We praise thee oh God, for Thy never-ending presence, which in finding us out, surrounds us with Thy love, which strengths us in our weakness, and which guides us in our perplexity. We beseech Thee, creating God this Founders' day. Grant us a sense of purposefulness. Forgive us for our aimless living, for the tendency to fret about matters of little consequence. Grant us renewed enthusiasm for the exploration of new frontiers of knowledge, for it's application in the development of more wholistic models of community, and in the creation and appreciation of art and beauty in our world. Help us to sustain a vision, which calls us to greatness, not through glorification of ourselves, but in service to others. Grant us a sense of purpose. We beseech Thee, redeeming God. Grant us faith, a faith so compelling that our lives will be empowered to attain new levels of commitment. Save us from cynicism, from skepticism, from constant criticism. Heal the wounds which we inflict upon one another. Strengthen us with the courage, which enables us to take new risks for the good of all Thy children, that we may never fail to trust in Thy eternal goodness. Grant us faith, oh God. We beseech Thee, sustaining God. Grant us love. May this university be a place, where not only minds are expanded, but hearts as well. Bestow upon us the gifts of kindness, of humility and of compassion for all the world's people. Teach us the self-giving spirit of Christ, that as we remember the plight of the hungry, the impoverished, the oppressed, the forgotten, we might be empowered to respond to their needs and the living of our own lives. Especially, we pray Thee, for those forces that unite our world, for every cause that works for goodwill and peace, for freedom and justice, for sound minds and bodies. Against all that divides us, we beseech Thee, oh God, that Thy benediction may rest upon us all, granting us the peace which is found only when our souls rest in Thee. These things we pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, who came to us as we are, that we might become as He is. Amen. Now, let us offer our gifts and ourselves to God. (church organ music) ♪ Be Thy glory of Thy hand ♪ Let's rejoice ♪ Let's rejoice ♪ Let's rejoice ♪ Ruling in the fear of God ♪ Ruling in the fear of God ♪ The fear of God ♪ Ah ♪ And He shall be as the light of the

