

(choir singing in foreign language)

- The Lord be with you.

- And with your spirit.

- Let us pray. Here oh God, this prayer of Thanksgiving which we offer unto thee for the homes from which we came for parents and guardians and sponsors who believed in education and made it possible for us to be at Duke and to leave this university as its sons and daughters, we give thee thanks and praise. For the interplay of the colleges and schools, undergraduate, graduate and professional which widened our horizon, and deepened our understanding and stretched our imagination. We give thee thanks and praise. For people, all kinds of people. For classmates who grew with us and shared us and accepted us as friends. For teachers who realized that a good instructor teaches a person as well as the subject. For administrators whose eyes twinkled even when the chin was firm. For janitors, maids, secretaries, kitchen help, maintenance crews, known and unknown who worked for our benefit. We give thee thanks and praise. For memories which will challenge us, the colors in the fall, the indoor stadium after Thanksgiving, the gardens in the spring, the library, the lab, the chapel, the unions, Branson, Page, newspapers, flyers, placards, for all memories, we give thee thanks and praise. For the fact that this university, still pays more than lip service to Eruditio et Religio, to knowledge which is linked with reverence, to insight that has a place for piety, to an awe before the universe which may be the beginning of wisdom, we give thee thanks and praise. For thy self, thy prophets, psalmists and law givers, for Jesus of Nazareth and for thy Holy Spirit, glory be to thee oh God, amen. Our heavenly father, while we express our thanks for blessings already received, we are mindful of our need for new blessings. And so we now offer petitions for others and ourselves. We approach your throne of grace asking your that you would help us to be relevant in a time of deep human trouble. While men, women, and little children are needlessly dying, save us from the immoral luxury of merely being comfortable. Help us to get involved and to stay involved in the things which make for peace, for freedom and for justice. May we not be so afraid of being proven wrong or failing or of looking foolish that we never decide to risk anything or to take a costly stand. God save us from being Monday morning quarterbacks, second guessers, aloof, uncommitted, safe, utterly useless. Oh God on this day, when so many are preparing to leave the sheltered womb of the campus and plunge into the real world, give them courage to remain faithful to their best insights. Give them a tough determination to keep knowledge and piety joined together in their own souls as it is in the charter of their university. We pray oh God, that our graduates shall link learning to their business, shall join wisdom to politics. Shall build religious family life. Shall demonstrate the meaning of idealistic citizenship. We pray now for our university that its faculty and administration may advance truth and right and not reject those who stand for a Christian conscience. We pray for our nation that it may have vital unity, creative brotherhood, and peaceful relations with other peoples. Deliver it from demagogues and save it from the schemes of those who put self-interest above the good of the whole. These things we ask in the name of the teacher of Nazareth, our Lord and savior Jesus Christ, amen. And

now as our savior Christ has taught us, we sincerely pray together saying. Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. First off the graduating class, wish on this occasion to make a meaningful contribution to the American Friends Service Committee for use in their hospitals and clinics in Vietnam which are binding up the wounds of those who were injured in the war. And they have asked me to announce that boxes will be available, outside each of the exits immediately following this service in which those who wish to do so, may place their contributions. (bright piano music) (choir singing in foreign language)

- Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in thy sight. Oh Lord our strength and our redeemer, amen. Members of the graduation classes, I salute you and your families and friends. You have gathered in the chapel for your second last university assembly at Duke. Before you enter the real world as the Chronicle regularly calls it. You've consciously prepared yourself to some extent for positions in that world. You have more than a smattering of Eruditio, learning one half of the Duke motto. What of the other half? Religio, reverence. The university still bows to this Latin word. The proof is a baccalaureate service for how much more longer? I wonder. But what do we make of that passage from the gospel according to Luke which was read as the morning lesson. Let's think of this incident in the life of Jesus, no matter how low our Christology is. That is our estimate of the prophet from Nazareth. Jesus was a distinguished enough nuisance as a teacher to have church and state unite to execute him. To get rid of him legally. Perhaps because of that, he shooting triggers and still be what adhering. A man approach Jesus with a request. Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me. Jesus answered, "Man, who made me a judge or divider over you." Then he added, "Your problem is covetousness. The desire for possessions." Let me tell you a story. About a man who had so much and so many of this worlds goods that he decided to rebuild the barns, the storage spaces on his farm. Then he said to his soul, take it easy. You're provided for. Eat, drink, be merry. And God said to him, "You fool, you're gonna die tonight. What about your possessions then?" And this anecdote is followed by the most extravagant statements about being not anxious. God feeds the birds, won't he feed you? Lilies are better dressed than Solomon in all his glory. You will have enough to wear. Why don't you make up your mind about what is really important. What is it that's really important? The reign of God? Your relation to God? Get that right. Other things will fall into place. Now what are you gonna do with this? You who have trained to be teachers and engineers and preachers and psychologists and doctors and nurses and foresters and researchers of all types. Jesus advice is for the birds. The birds God feeds and the lilies God clothes. Now some New Testament scholars, good ones, tell us that Jesus expected the end of the world in his lifetime. Therefore, this kind of teaching was part of an interim method. An interim method before the world came to an end. Probably with a bang rather than with a whimper. Well, it has been an elongated interim. 19 and a half centuries. So what do we do in the real world? Good old Chronicle. In the meantime, in the real world where nations prepare for war and races are at enmity and you and I get ulcers. Other New Testament scholars also good ones. Tell us that what Jesus is offering here is the absolute ethic which will have its full validity only in the Kingdom of God, only in the Kingdom of God. Now there's a how do you do. What about us who claim to some degree to be followers of Jesus but who recognize that we are citizens of two kingdoms. The Kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world. And the two are hardly in harmony with any regularity. What do we do then? We might like to do what

a Scottish minister did in the reign of the Stuarts. He reminded the king of something the king had forgotten. "Your Majesty, there are, (speaks in foreign language) two Kings in Scotland. Jesus Christ and yourself. And one is superior. Maybe that's what some students have been saying to Washington but a possible consequence of this double loyalty, maybe a split personality as one tries to serve God and mammon. Is there no other way to understand the passage? Oh yes. Remember that Jesus was a Jew an unofficial rabbi. Now a Jew is practical. For example the law. And a Jew is picturesque. For example, the Psalms and the parables. Jesus was a story teller with the intensity and vocabulary of a poet. Therefore, he must not be taken literally, just seriously. A man who talks of hunting for a speck of sawdust in your brother's eye, where it was a plank sticking out of your own, he's got much more affinity with Ogden Nash and P.G. Wodehouse than he does with Aquinas and Calvin. At least stylistically. He would enjoy "Fiddler on the Roof", much more than the shorter catechism of the Presbyterian church. (congregation laughs) A poetic storyteller should be taken seriously. So what is Jesus still trying to seed to us 19 centuries later through this passage from Luke? Jesus is not declining the needs for judges and dividers but he's asking that there be more to life than the anxiety which makes material possessions and financial success the end of life. They are means to an end but not the end. For Jesus, God and the things of God, his centrality, his majesty, his kingdom, his grace and love, were central. Moreover, they gave meaning to food and clothing and work and family. Jesus brought a message of relaxation. A primary ingredient of faith. This look and passage taken literally, is a piece of extravagant romanticism. Millions of birds die every year. Lilies fade, grass is thrown into the oven. But taken seriously, wouldn't it be wise to have a spiritual point of view, a confidence that come hell or high water, all maybe well that even death is a door not a blank wall. A man who knows that sits lightly to life. He's not the lazy, but he's at ease. He may be strenuous, but he isn't tense. He knows how to laugh and when to laugh. And there are chuckles at the heart of him. A man like Abraham Lincoln. You know it's a hundred years since we had a man in the White House who was intentionally humorous. (congregation laughs) And it doesn't look as if there'd be much change in the fall. (congregation laughs) And like Jesus, Lincoln was gotten rid off too. It's wise, that words, ideas should become flesh. That's how a word, an idea is best understood and appreciated by ordinary folk like us. So let me share with you an almost contemporary incarnation of our texts. I made him the central figure of the first bacculaureate sermon, which I preached at Duke back in 1949. And here he is again in the last bacculaureate sermon which I shall preach at Duke. He's been my constant mentor since I heard him lecture at Glasgow University way back when I was a freshmen in high school. He was a world authority on the civil war in America. Though we'd never been in the United States. He was a son of the Scottish man. Born in 1875, almost a hundred years ago, John Buchan by name. He died as Governor General of Canada. In 1940 titled Lord Tweedsmuir. I met his widow, the dowager Lady Tweedsmuir at Oxford back in 1960. We write each other regularly. She knows that today, I am again sharing her husband with a Duke University congregation. I'll touch only on the high spots of his life. John Buchan entered Glasgow University in 1892. And while an undergraduate, edited the essays of Francis, Lord Bacon, Lord Chancellor of England, philosopher and scientist, the first of the 68 books which Buchan wrote. He graduated and moved on to Oxford University, graduating there in 1899 as a second year student, a sophomore. He was chosen by the authorities of his college, Brasenose, to write the volume on Brasenose in the series of Oxford College histories. No other author was less than the rank of Fellow. He also made "Who's Who" 1898 edition, age 23 because of the editorials he was writing, not for the local Chronicle, but for the London newspapers. He listed his occupation as undergraduate. The fathers of many of his classmates were listed in that volume of "Who's Who". He was a barrister and a journalist from 1899 to 19,

one hundreds. One of Lord Milner's young men in the rehabilitation of South Africa after the Boer War 1903. He returned to London married, joined the publishing firm of Thomas Nelson, as editor, literary advisor, and author in 1907 and stayed with the firm for 20 years, resigning as a director. He failed, you may be relieved to hear this, in his first attempt to become a member of parliament in 1911, though all the poachers in the Scottish Border district voted for him as he had actually been arrested for poaching salmon.

(congregation laughs) When the First World War broke out, he had a variety of jobs. He began a history of the world war which he completed in 24 parts. Later reedited in eight volumes. He was the liaison officer between the British and American armies in France. As a change of pace, he began to write thrillers. Like the "Thirty-Nine Steps", "Greenmantle", "Mr Standfast". After the war, he was a country gentleman in Oxford but he kept open house for everybody and anybody on Sunday afternoons. He published a volume, fiction or biography or essays or poetry, every year from 1922 to 1936. He was Member of Parliament for the Scottish Universities, 1927 to 35 and in his first speech in the House of Commons, attacked the conservative party of which he was a member. Punch the so-called, humorous English weekly, commented that Mr. Bacon in his maiden speech, in most un-maidenly fashion bit the hand that fed him. In 1935, he was appointed Governor General of Canada, where the title Lord Tweedsmuir of Elfield. He was the most beloved Governor General Canada has had. Canadians, British and French, all kinds of folk respected, trusted, and loved him. He died in 1940 of cerebral thrombosis and one of our own duke surgeons then a senior resident at McGill scrubbed for the operation. If John Buchan had lived, he might have become ambassador to the United States. He loved this country. Would you like to know more about him? You may thanks to Professor Francis Brown of our chemistry department, there are eight shelves of Buchan in the Rare Book Room of the Perkins Library. But you said to me, sir, hold your horses. What you've told us about John Buchan is a sound example of one who was a successful referee. An arbiter in law, business, government. He was just what Jesus refused to be. A judge and divider. What about the seeking of God's kingdom and the discarding of anxiety? Good question. Here's the answer. Despite the busyness and the success of his variegated career, John Buchan sat lightly to life. To the things of this world. Now, why? His life in writing has reveal two reasons. First, he was a Scott, an honest Scott. There's a difference.

(congregation laughs) He told one of his aids that Scotland had produce more, very good second class people than any other country. But very few of the first class. John Buchan had aspired to something higher than Governor General of Canada. Perhaps a seat in the cabinet. Had enjoyed his public service but there was always a but. So he refused to let the world affairs, the real world be too much with him, late and soon, he cultivated the other side of his nature which was his inheritance as a son of a Scottish man. He was a man of God. He never wore his heart on his sleeve though he was particular about the duties demanded and the responsibilities expected of such a person. Here are his comments on two of the most distinguished men whom he admired most in British politics. One Lord Holden, enjoyed the various comforts, vouchsafe to us in this melancholy veil. Good food, good wine, good talk. He was devoted to his friends and happy in their society but he always seemed to sit loose to the things of time. When friends failed him, he had no reproaches. He bore unjust attacks and popular distrust with a noble magnanimity. He lived his life as one who had a continuing vision of the unseen. And of the other, Lord Grey, he wrote, more than any man I know, he possessed his soul. That was said of a man who sources of happiness had vanished one by one. He lost a beloved wife. He saw his work as a peacemaker close in the bloodiest of wars, World War I. His eyesight and his general health failed. His country home was burned down. His intimate friends died before their time. A second marriage gave him only short life comfort for it soon ended with his wife's death. It

seems that all he did possess was his soul but it was enough. John Buchan too possess this soul. Sat loose to the things of time. The things of time were important but not ultimate. He was a Calvinist though a reformed one, thank God to the end. If you would asked him what single word described him. He might well have chosen Pilgrim. One who journeys in an alien land. A wayfarer, a sojourner. In the inner circle of his special books was, Bunyan's Pilgrim Progress. The American title of Buchan's autobiography is appropriately "Pilgrim's Way". He might well have said words he ascribed to a contemporary whom he admired, hope and dream. But if you're wise, do not look for too much. This world is a bridge to Passover not to build upon. He had a great love of neighbor, all kinds of neighbors, especially the young and the old, in politics and out of it. He told a financially strapped young student who needed a typewriter, meet me at Paddington Station in London tomorrow at such and such a time. I'll have a typewriter for you. The student was there. So was Buchan. In court dress, on route to a levy at Buckingham Palace with a typewriter tucked underneath his arm. His chauffeur Amos Webb is buried next to him in Elsfield, near Oxford and the inscription in his tombstone is, Amos Webb, the friend of Lord Tweedsmuir for 20 years. His servant was his friend. A pilgrim, man of many friends, man who kept God at the center of his life. Do you know how John Buchan defined an atheist? A man with no invisible means of support. Man with no invisible means of support. He needed that support. He found it. His son said that only twice in Canada, did he see the light go out to his father's eyes. Once when endorsing a death warrant and when signing Canada's declaration of war in 1939. Gentlemen of the graduating classes, wouldn't you like to be somewhat Buchanish? Ladies of the graduating classes each of you, wouldn't you enjoy having someone like John Buchan as a husband? What would it really be like? Well, perhaps he pictured himself in a poem, which he named "Fisher Jamie". I would read it to you except that you wouldn't understand it. It's written in a braid Scots dialect as thick as Robert Burns. So let me just give you a paraphrase. Jamie is dead, killed in the war. He's in heaven and quite unhappy sitting on the edge of a cloud, playing a harp. He had no ear for music. (congregation laughs) He finally summons up enough nerve to approach Saint Peter and the other apostles and offers to swap his harp and his crown for a rod and some fishing tackle. They understand, they'd been fishermen themselves. (congregation laughs) But Jamie doesn't want to fish legally. He always had a poaching whim and the last verses of the poem, pictured him sneaking down a woody lane in heaven with the celestial FBI on his track because he had caught a salmon probably from God's private preserves with a fly made from the feathers on the wings of the cherubin. Now Jesus would understand that and chuckle. Jaime like Buchan would have been a man after his own heart. For Jamie was sitting lightly to other Orthodox heaven. Maybe as lightly as his author did to the Orthodox world. John Buchan is a man for both places. He is for me. A man for all seasons. I commend him to you. Put a closing prayer. Let me just wish for you out loud that the good Lord will hold you close in the hollow of his hands, amen. (machine whirring) (bright piano music) (choir singing in foreign language)

- And God's gracious mercy and protection I commit you and the blessing of God Almighty the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be upon you and remain with you always, amen. (machine whirring) (choir singing in foreign language) (machine whirring) (bright piano music)