

One

It is a great pleasure to speak with you this evening and I am grateful to the Master, Assistant Master and Members of the Senior Common Room for enabling me to speak with you. I would make special mention of Professor Tim Burt and congratulate him and Elizabeth for their Honorary Fellowship of the college and to thank them and Professor Anthony Bash. Without them none of us would be here tonight.

Firstly I wish to congratulate you.

You are at one of the world's finest Universities and here in this College - at its foundation too. You are the most generous, accomplished and compassionate generation of our time - and today is the greatest time on earth.

When asked what time in history he would like to live in, President Obama replied, "Today - there has never been a greater time in our history to be alive".

And as I grow older I have never been more optimistic of our nation's future. When I was younger and in your place I thought slightly differently. I felt the world could be "fixed" by me and that the older generation had broken it. But they had not and they have not today either.

Many amongst you will soon be Graduates of this fine University - but what does that mean ?

- You are generous and you have an accomplished track record in your charitable work and commitment to causes that are beyond yourselves
- You are accomplished because you are here at a leading international academic institution and your Degree is a gold and global standard - of what your mind is and can be
- You are compassionate because the vast majority of you will be a part of the great sporting, musical and dramatic life that is
 - this University and in those things you will have moved beyond yourself

Two

But whether you are a Scientist seeking to identify the fundamental laws of the Universe or an Arts Undergraduate seeking to understand the effect of the great Philosophies of the world - what makes for great scholarship – they both exist within a tight coil - is something called integrity.

Great science and great research derive from the constant quest for truth, from an awareness of the essential importance of integrity to arrive at that truth and from an understanding that few are capable of arriving at it.

You can.

And ideas are in constant need of evolution.

I have been asked to describe to you what an employer finds is the “added value” to degrees that come from Durham and from Hatfield students. Before I do that let me try to suggest to you the historical, political and social contexts in which you will find yourself as you seek to find your place in the world.

So often today I find graduates who tell me we are part of a globalised world but understand too little of who we are or that world.

Budget flights to Magaluf may “inter-connect” us but they do not make for a travelled mind.

Let me ask you to close your eyes for a moment and answer in your mind the following questions :

Three

To place this in context at any one time we have 25 undergraduates and postgraduates working with us from Durham in paid part-time positions. We recruit 5-6 of these for paid Summer Internships and 1 of them is recruited annually. Each of them undergo 7 hours of written tests and 2 hours of interviews to be selected. So here are 3 typical questions at an early stage in our selection process:

- What is the time right now in New York, Hong Kong and Bombay ?

- What is the correlation between the density of the undersea cables that enable the internet today and the great shipping routes of the 19th century ?
- What College at Cambridge has more Nobel Prizes for science than the entire nation of France ?

For your place in the world may determine mine. And if that is true then so might its reverse. We are a nation. Of all faiths, colours and yes, ages too. And when you seek employment would you prefer that I as an employer look at who you are as a graduate and who you might become in an organisation, or should I look at who you are as a human being, what your values are and what it is you bring with your mind, certified as it is by the gold standard of the degree that you hold from Durham ?

And if it is my responsibility to do that I am effectively evaluating your values as the single most important criteria. Because your mind may be assumed as one refined by the values of integrity and capable of the pursuit of truth.

And your values – from this place – are special and true ones.

And if you accept that I am doing that of you, might I not expect you to understand what part you will play in our nation ? And to understand who we are as nation, where we have come from and what our values are ? Because if we do that we will better equip ourselves with certainty as to who you are, what we might become as a country and our place in the world in the future.

So who are we and what are we as a country ?

Four

Here are some facts. We are a G5 economy, the 5th richest in the world, NATO 2, 5 I's, 2P's UK/USA, founding place of the 4 great Institutions IMF, UN, World Bank and NATO - Rules Based Order. P5 at the UN, Economy 2 in EU. Sterling one of the world's 5 Reserve Currencies. Heart of 53 Nations of Commonwealth. Largest number of embassies and high commissions overseas outside the USA. Together with the BBC, our arts, music and culture – they constitute one of the greatest concentrations of soft power available to any country. Globally focussed. Churchill said there were 3 concentric rings of influence that enables our place in the world – with the USA, with Europe & the Commonwealth. But today there is a 4th – the Rest of the World – and these 4 and our relationships with each rather than 1 of them – make for our place in the world. So this is a grand network of relationships we have as a country, just as each of you have your social networks. The great question though is what we use them for.

The moral case for the EU for instance derives from a Catholic social democratic tradition. It was borne from tragic experiences of invasion, subjugation and forced transportations. Its founding philosophy created a unity of nations to protect them against those same divisions . And it lost so much of that moral purpose as economics

and the Euro dominated its vision. So who today amongst you wishes to join in establishing the moral case for the United Kingdom, to establish our unity of values ?

For if it is true that you - the young - played such a determining role in our General Election then it is to you I thank for helping save our United Kingdom from a second Scottish Referendum or the neglect of attention that had begun to occur in Northern Ireland.

And after the Manchester tragedy it was you who showed us all how to celebrate reconciliation at the Concert the week after - though I note that whilst Oasis became an anthem for that sadness neither Liam nor Noel seemed to show much reconciliation between themselves !

We have always fought division throughout our history. In our country we found equality under the law. That is what Magna Carta was about.

Magna Carta is not some piece of paper – indeed it is one of the few pieces we have in our Unwritten Constitution.

And those laws are made in our Parliament. Which is at the centre of our nation. But the idea of equality before the law derives from Faith in the simple understanding of our equality before God. And we can therefore no more separate the role of Faith in our Constitution than we can the Monarch. For just as our Absolute Monarchy of 800 years ago decreed our laws then, it is that absolute power which now resides in our Members of Parliament. It is

the reason the Government is known as HMG and the reason the Opposition are known as HM Loyal Opposition.

When you voted last week in the General Election, how many of you know that at the moment you placed your cross on the ballot paper, you were actually touching the powers of your Sovereign that has passed through the ages to them your Member of Parliament. It is in itself a miracle. And you were part of it.

But then some say your generation determined its outcome too. That it was the very same young who did not vote in last year's EU Referendum but who did last week. If we conclude that then surely we bring division of age to our society which has at its equivalent a division of race or creed and is that not then a form of segregation that we should treat with very great care and caution and place unity of values in its stead ?

For we are nothing if we are divided. The very notion of Segregation inverts and destroys our values. For the last month I have spent considerable time in North London on the council estates there, and what you find there is the very opposite of what we seek as a nation, where our national demographic is inverted and there is hopelessness and lack of opportunity.

You are not from there now. Because you have been here. And Durham's collegiate environment develops your values and creates an awareness for you to contribute to society beyond this wonderful place – your College. This then creates that 'added value' which

enables you to take your place in a Vision-Mission-Strategy approach – which is what we seek from our Graduates in my company.

And as an employer I look to the magnificence of you and that derives from understanding who you are, where you are from and what certainty of values we share between us. For if we share those values then we can identify our Vision. And once our Vision is clear then we can identify our Mission and if we do that then the Strategy for its Implementation will be clear and we can all play our part in that. We can all do this individually. I seek that we do this as a company. And we can all work towards achieving that in our Country too. We are after all One Nation.

I wish you all success and happiness in your careers. I congratulate you in your Awards and I thank you for your time this evening.