

ALMIGHTY GOD, we come before Thee

this day so rich in patriotic memories and in future promise, to express our dependence upon Thee; our thanksgiving to Thee; our petition of Thee.

May our spiritual dependence upon Thee be a bulwark never failing as we believe that Thou art the Creator of the universe, the Bond of unity in the whole realm of Nature, the Eternal Father of all mankind--in whom we live and move and have our being. May we be ever mindful that Thou hast revealed and will reveal Thyself to us as the Spirit of Love and Truth in manifold ways, but especially in the character, the teaching and the undying personality of the Christ. May our dependence upon Thee make us now and ever conscious of Thy Divine Presence.

May our thanksgiving be heartfelt for the growth in recent times of a broader knowledge and a more scientific spirit, of a greater toleration of opinion, of a larger passion for social righteousness, that the Kingdom of God may break through all obstacles due to human selfishness, prejudice and ignorance, and make peace, justice and good-will mightily to prevail throughout the world. We would offer our thanksgiving also for the tradition of plain living, high thinking and public service which has marked this community for one hundred and seventy years; thanksgiving for those who have caught a vision of what this historic New England town may do for women's education in a new age; thanksgiving for all the friends who have given of their time, substance and prayers that their dream might now be realized.

May our petition be for the resources, material and spiritual, to build this institution of the Arts, the Sciences,

and the Humanities, and for the vision to guide it to the highest usefulness for this Commonwealth and this Nation. May it adapt its work to meet the needs of successive generations, helping each student to make full use of individual aptitudes, emotions and talents through her thinking, her studies and her activities here, and through close contact with fellow students and teachers--all in an atmosphere charged with Christian thoughtfulness, with culture, and with the passion for finding and realizing Truth. May "Freedom and Unity"--the motto of this State--mark the life on this College Campus. May sound learning here be brought into harmony with gracious living that our homes may be blessed and that high ideals of devotion to family and community may be nurtured.

Thus may Bennington College grow from strength to strength through the centuries that youth may here dream new dreams of service and fit themselves morally, intellectually, and spiritually to fulfill them effectively in the life of a free and ordered state.

And may the God of our fathers--revealed to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit--bless you and keep you, and give you the courage and the wisdom to carry through this great adventure in the spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.