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UNITY WITH DIVERSITY IN THE

Works and Word of God,

The Baccalaureate Sermon,

PREACHED BEFORE THE

COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY,

JUNE 25, 1871,

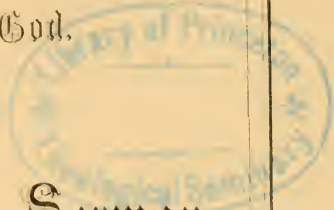
By *JAMES McCOSH, D.D., LL.D.*

PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE.

PRINCETON :

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PRINCETON COLLEGE, 29 JUNE, 1871.

REV. JAMES McCOSH, D.D., LL.D.,

DEAR SIR :—

The undersigned, in behalf of the Class of '71, wishing to express our appreciation of your Baccalaureate Discourse delivered last Sabbath, would respectfully request a copy of the same for publication.

Respectfully, &c.,

R. RANDALL HOES,
JOHN G. WEIR,
OLIVER A. KERR,

Committee.

PRINCETON, SEPT., 1871.

GENTLEMEN :—

I have great pleasure in complying with your request, believing that the printed discourse may be an interesting memorial of your College life, and your intercourse with

Yours, &c.,

JAMES McCOSH.

S E R M O N .

“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.”—I. COR. XII., 4-6.

“And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.”—REV. XV., 3.

“Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.” But while Jehovah is, and must be, one, there are indications from the beginning of there being distinctions in the divine nature: in the Old Testament he is called Elohim, plural noun joined to singular verb; and in the New Testament he is spoken of as Father, Son and Holy Ghost,—so that God never dwelt in loneliness, but ever in the atmosphere, ever in the warmth of love, and was thus ever in a position to exercise his highest perfection. Again, the moral law, the noblest embodiment and expression of the divine nature, is also one, summed up like the divine character in love; but having a diversity of applications, to the agent himself, to the creatures and the Creator, that one law requiring us to live soberly, righteously and godly. The profoundest investigations of philosophers and artists have shown that beauty, so far as its delicate form can be caught by the subtlety of the human intellect, embraces unity with variety: as it has been expressed, the unity where it is found being

beautiful in proportion to the variety, and the variety where it exists in proportion to the unity. I hope to show in this discourse that in the Works of God and in the Word of God viewed separately, and in the Works and Word of God in combination, there is sameness with difference, after the model of the divine nature, and in correspondence with the good and the lovely. In other words in the true, as well as in the good and beautiful, as in God himself, there is oneness with diversity constituting a universal harmony.

I. THERE IS UNITY WITH VARIETY IN THE WORKS OF GOD.

We see this in the Matter of the Universe. That Matter is one and the same in all time and in all space. As far back as history goes, as geology goes, we discover the same natural agents in the world as we do now, in fire and water, in sea and land, in rivers and mountains. Chemistry tells us that provisionally the elementary substances are a little above sixty, and now we know that they are found in the heavenly bodies. Of late years the spectroscope, which promises to reveal more wonders than the telescope or microscope has done, shows that the same bodies with which we are familiar on earth, are found in the sun and those distant stars: the rays of light are so affected as to show that they have come through sodium, or hydrogen, or some other substance found on our globe. But in what a diversity of modes do the bodies appear: in earth, water, air and fire—as the ancient Greeks classified them; in solid, in fluid, in vapory, in elastic forms; in floating ether, in buoyant air, in yielding liquid, in compact stones and metal; in gems, crystals and stars; in plants, satellites and suns; in the trunks, branches, foliage, flowers and fruit of plants: in the bones, the muscles, the blood, the nerves, the brain, the senses of animals; and in that goodly house in which we dwell, and which is so “fearfully and wonderfully made.”

We see it in the Forces of the Universe. It is the grand discovery of the science of our day, that the sum of Force, actual and potential, in the universe is always one and the same. The will of man cannot add to it; no human effort can diminish it. If you consume it in one form it appears in another. A large portion of it coming from the sun, is taken up by the plant, which is eaten by the animal, and becomes in us the power which we feel in our frame as we breathe, and walk, and run, and labor. We may use it to serve our purposes of good or also of evil; but we can use it only by means of itself, we can evoke it in one form only by means of the same force in another form. And after we have used it, it continues the same in amount as it was before. After running it may be the round of the universe, the force may come back to the spot and take the form in which we first noticed it. Just as the vapors which the sun's heat exhales from the sea, rise into the atmosphere and descend in rain on the earth, to form rills and rivers which flow back into the ocean; so the forces which operate in the earth, in air and sea, in plant and animal, after running their circuits, ever fall back into that great ocean of power, which is just one manifestation of divine power. But in what a diversity of modes does this force appear: in matter attracting matter, and holding atoms and worlds together; in elements combining according to their friendships and strifes—as Empedocles of old expressed it, according to their affinities as chemists now say; driving our steam engines, heating our homes, quivering in the magnetic needle, riding in the storms of earth and in the storms in the sun's atmosphere, blowing in the breeze, smiling in the sunshine, striking in the lightning, and living in every organ of the body. Like the ocean ever changing and yet never changing; ever the same and yet never at rest; moving in every molecule, every planet and every star; imparting unceasing activity and yet securing an undisturbed stability.

We see it in the orderly Arrangement of the Matter and Forces of the Universe. For the material of the world might have been what it is, and the forces of the world might have been what they are, and the result, not order but confusion, spreading misery and dismay instead of happiness and comfort. It is clear that He who created the elements and their properties, has imparted to them such a disposition and distribution, that they fall into order each in its appropriate place, like the stones in a building, like soldiers arranged into companies every one with a duty to discharge. The world is built up, as was fabled of the walls of ancient Thebes, by some sort of music or harmonizing power.

The issue is first beneficent laws such as the revolution of the seasons, of the times of budding and bearing seed by plants, and of the birth, youth and maturity of animals. Such laws as distinguished from the forces of the universe, are not simple, as many suppose, but highly complex; the result of construction, quite as much as a house is or a watch is. What a number of agencies, for example, are involved in the periodical return of spring: there are the movements and the relative position of the earth and sun; there are the laws of light and heat, and the constitution of the animal and vegetable kingdoms. The co-operation of these does not proceed from the mere rude matter of the world, nor from its blind forces, but from an arrangement made to accomplish an evidently intended end, the prevalence of order in the form of a law, which is to be regarded as an expression of the will of God, and enabling the intelligent creatures to gather knowledge. Without such a system of general laws, man as at present constituted could not gather wisdom from experience, could not foresee coming events, could not avoid the threatened evil, or lay hold of the promised good. It is by there being a uniformity established whereby the future so far resembles the past, that we

are enabled to anticipate what is before us and lay our plans accordingly.

But along with the system of general laws, there is an adaptation of law to law, and of every one thing to every other, so as to bring about individual events. Thus by a series of very complex arrangements among the matters and forces of the universe, we have a series of joints in the animal frame, and the joints differing according to their positions: a ball and socket joint for instance, turning all round at the shoulders, where it is a convenience, but not in the fingers, where it would be a weakness and an incumbrance. By these arrangements God can accomplish not only his general designs but his specific purposes. This it is which constitutes Providence: that *πρόνοια* which Socrates defended against an ignorant mob, that could not discover the one God amid the multiplicity of his purposes, and against the self conceited sophists, who were not able to distinguish between truth and error. This providence is a general one reaching over the whole; but it does so because it is a particular providence providing for every being, and for all wants. So delicately constituted is this whole system, that it moves sympathetically with our position, our needs, our feelings. It is so ordered that "the very hairs of our head are all numbered," and "a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without him." At the close of life, or as he contemplates the scene from heaven, the good man will see that he has been led by a way far better than he could have chosen, and that throughout his steps "have been ordered by the Lord."

They tell us that all this order with adaptation proceeds from the physical agents of the world. All true, but the wonder is to find mechanical forces working through ages, producing such wise, and beneficent, and harmonious results. The forces of the universe are distributed into numbered companies, which march in measured step to the sound

of music. Pythagoras declared that it is because men are dull of hearing, that they do not hear the music of the spheres. Certain it is, that it is only because we have failed to train as we ought our intellectual organs, that we do not perceive a wider ranging harmony in the universe, than in the most skilfully arranged musical concert.

We see it in our Mental Talents and Tastes. The mind is suited to the position in which it is placed in the world, and the world is adapted to the minds which are to observe and use it. There is order in the world, and man is so constituted as to discover and admire it. There is reason in the works of God, and reason in man's mind to appreciate it. "If the laws of our reason," says Oersted, "did not exist in nature, we would vainly attempt to force them upon her; if the laws of nature did not exist in our reason, we should not be able to comprehend them." The forms which minerals assume when they crystallize; the elliptic orbits of the planets; the hyperbolic curves of the comets; the spiral conformations of the nebular groups of the heavens, of the appendages of plants around their axis, and of the whorls of the shells of molluses; the conical shape of the fruit of pines and firs with the rhomboids on their surface, are all constructed according to mathematical laws which have their seat in the intelligence and can be evolved by pure thought. When we ascend to the higher manifestations of life, in particular, when we rise to the human form, we do not find the same rigid lines as in crystals, nor are the invariable curves of the nebulae and plants so observable; but I believe they are still there blended in innumerable ways, so as to give an infinite sweep and variety to the graceful forms on which the eye ever delights to rest, and which the mind never wearies to contemplate, and the mind unconsciously follows now the one and now the other till it is lost in a perfect wilderness of beauty.

There is a point here at which the laws of thought and the laws of things, at which physics and metaphysics meet

and become one. There is beauty in God's works and man has a taste for it. Man's intellect formed after the image of God delights in unity with variety, and nature presents these every where: in starry sky and gilded cloud, in mountain and romantic glen, in field and river, in flower and forest. And above even beauty, as much higher as the sky is above the earth, we have a sublimity in the massive rock, in the rolling thunder, in the boundless ocean, in the star bespangled expanse of heaven, all fitted, all intended to call forth the idea of the infinite, which the mind of man is ever striving to lay hold of and yet cannot grasp. Man has faculties of a high and varied order, and he has means of gratifying, cultivating and refining them in the study of the works of God; and I may add in the study of the works, which man is able to fashion by his heaven endowed gifts, in music, in painting, in statuary, in architecture and most fully—in what is the noblest of the fine arts—in literature, in which the highest wisdom as disclosed by philosophy, history, science—mental, social and physical—is embodied in the well proportioned expressions of prose, and the infinite modulations of poetry—lyric, didactic, tragic, comic and epic. All these are thrown open to us in ungrudging profusion, that we may form acquaintance with them, and converse with them, that we may drink in their spirit and be moulded after their example. Here we have a fund of wealth which can never be exhausted, things suited to all, things adapted to each, to every talent, every taste, and every pursuit and destination of life. It is clear that the intellect, and the sensibilities of our nature are adapted in every way to our position; and that the same God made the world within and the world without. It is evident that the God who made the eye also made the light that falls on it; and it is equally certain that He who made matter also made mind, and these in beautiful correspon-

dence the one to the other, the one to be used, the other to use it, the one to be contemplated, the other to contemplate it.

“ From harmony, from heavenly harmony
 This universal frame began.
 From harmony to harmony,
 Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
 The diapason closing full in man.”

II. THERE IS UNITY WITH DIVERSITY IN THE WORD OF GOD.

That word was written at very different times and by writers of very different characters, tastes, talents and temperaments. Some of the authors write in a clear and simple, others in an ornate, a sharp, or apothegmatic, in a bold, or a sublime style. Some of the books have upon them the hoar of antiquity, and introduce us to the fathers of the race and the beginnings of the stream of history. Others are evidently composed when thought is matured and culture has reached a high perfection. One preserves a valuable piece of history, another opens to our view the human heart in biography, a third enjoins practical precept, a fourth expounds doctrine in systematic order. One takes up his parable, another pours forth a song, a third utters a warning, a fourth cheers the dark days of the people of God with the prospect of better times. The greatest of all the teachers touches the tenderest cords, and moves the lowest depths of the heart, by simple statement, by vivid illustration, derived from the works of nature and the experience of human life, by truth which recommends itself intuitively, by sentiment issuing directly from a tender heart, and by pure precept descending from heaven to purify the earth. “ God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.” But in the midst of all this diversity there is unity from beginning to end. There is one stream, rising in a pure fountain in Eden; be-

coming defiled in the terrible fall into the abyss of sin; often troubled and interrupted and having to burst through chasms; now widening, and now narrowed, but flowing on towards the ocean of eternity. The events occur after a model; the dispensations are after a pattern, the men are after a type who are looking towards an archetype, first seen in the dim distance and then appearing in the fulness of time. It is one progressive march of prophecy through the ages, culminating ever and anon in a fulfillment. It is one creed in regard to God and Christ and man, in regard to this world and the world to come, and this underlying—like the deeper rocks of our earth—the whole history, the song, the dispensations and the precepts.

The unity arises mainly from the circumstance that there is one God inspiring the writers, and bringing them all to a consistency. Even as “the Lord our God is one Lord,” so the Word which he hath inspired is also one. This is the grand central sun which binds, which illumines all the parts, securing a continuity in the history and a congruity in the doctrine and practical injunction. While “all scripture is given by inspiration of God,” it is profitable for a variety of purposes “for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

It arises from the whole being a development of the one plan of redemption. We have seen that there is a universal harmony in nature. But it is evident that somehow a discordant element has been introduced. The one of these is as clear and as certain as the other. If the one be a fact so is the other. Our business is as observers to notice both, as lovers of truth to receive both. Looking within we find natural conscience clearly indicating that man is alienated from God; he is afraid of God, he turns away from God. But not only is man not at peace with God, he is not at peace with himself. First there is an accusing conscience, and then there are lusts which war against each other and

war against the soul. Looking without we see feuds, and wars, and bloodshed; we see disease, disappointment and death, scarcely less prevalent than health and happiness. All these things can be traced directly or indirectly to sin as their source. Now the Word of God reveals a way by which this discordance is removed, by a reconciler and a redemption paid by him. In its evolution the plan assumes various forms, the Patriarchal, the Jewish, the Christian, and there may be a new modification in the millennium. But it is substantially the same along the whole line. God appears everywhere as a holy God, saving sinners through the sufferings of his Son. It is under this aspect that he is presented every where throughout the scriptures. In the first promise to fallen man the seed of the woman is represented as having his heel bruised by the power of the serpent, which has its head crushed in the act. In the first worship in Adam's household there is the offering of a bleeding sacrifice. In a later age, the first act of Noah landed on a new earth was the presenting of sacrifices unto the Lord. You might have followed the wandering path of the patriarchs by the altars which they built, and the smoke of the sacrifices which they offered. Under the law almost all things were purified by blood. The grand object presented in the New Testament is a bleeding Saviour suspended on the cross. It is thus the same view that is presented under the Patriarchal, the Jewish and the Christian dispensations. Except in the degree of development there is no difference between God as revealed in Eden, as revealed in Sinai, and revealed on Calvary; between God as described in the Books of Moses, and God as described so many centuries later in the writings of Paul and of John. In the garden of Eden we have the lawgiver, and we have indications of the Saviour as the seed of the woman. On Mount Sinai there is the same combination of awful justice and condescending mercy; the same law written on stone, but

with a provision for offering sacrifices as an atonement for sin. In the mysterious transactions on Calvary there is an awful forsaking and a fearful darkness emblematic of the righteousness and indignation of God, as well as a melting tenderness in the words of our Lord, breathing forgiveness, and telling of an opened paradise. The first book of scripture discloses to us a worshipper offering a lamb in sacrifice, and the last book shows a lamb as it had been slain in the midst of the throne of God; "I beheld and lo, in the midst of the throne stood a lamb as it had been slain." In heaven they "sing the song of Moses the servant of God and of the Lamb."

Again, it arises from the unity with variety in the experience of believers. In essential points the experience of all is alike, and has been so from the beginning. It is that of beings formed at first in the image of God, from which they have fallen, but now struggling with sin amid fears and hopes, defeats and triumphs, and aspiring after communion with God and conformity to his will. There is a remarkable correspondence in this respect between the state and feelings of the people of God in all ages. In particular we see and feel that there is a curious correspondence between their situation, and that of the children of Israel as ransomed from Egypt. It was evidently ordained at the constitution of the kingdom of Israel that these events should take place, not only as a means of training ancient Israel, but for the nurture and instruction of the people of God in every age, who sing on earth, and shall sing in heaven "the song of Moses the servant of God." Were the Israelites delivered from a degraded and cruel bondage? So are we, but from a greater and more fearful slavery. Did the Lord raise up for his ancient people a deliverer in Moses? For his people in these times he has provided a yet greater deliverer, for "a greater than Moses is here." Did he conduct ancient Israel through a desert, supplying them with

all needful blessings, with manna to feed them, and water to quench their thirst, raising a pillar of cloud to guide them by day, and ever kindling this into a pillar of fire by night? He still leads his people through the wilderness of this world, supplying their temporal and spiritual wants, giving them bread to eat of which the world knoweth not, and living water from the smitten rock which is Christ, and he will at last conduct to the rest which remaineth for the people of God. Being placed in circumstances so similar we feel as if every appeal addressed to them should also come home to us. Thus when the commandments are pre-faced with the declaration "I am the Lord thy God which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage," we feel as if the motive were one which should also operate upon us, and that we should obey all the commandments, because we have been redeemed by the blood of Christ. That Old Testament narrative is all true history, and yet it reads as if it were a parable, written by some man of God for our instruction, so adapted is it to our feelings and circumstances.

We have a like experience in the Book of Psalms. The song of Moses is also the song of the sweet Psalmist. What mean these wrestlings so frequently and affectingly described, these conflicts with an enemy, these humiliations, these successes? The christian has ever felt that these experiences come home to his case, and he sings the songs of Zion, giving a deeper meaning to them than even the author of them was conscious of. Coming to the New Testament we find One who was without sin, but who because he stood in the room of sinners was obliged to say, "my soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death," "my God, my God why hast thou forsaken me." We see that the song of Moses is also the song of the Lamb. The Apostle Paul describes as a universal characteristic of christian experience, "The flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against

the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other," and he had to exclaim, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death." Now wherever we have a faithful account of the feelings of the believer, we find his experience corresponding to that of Paul. Look at the confessions of Augustine, the letters and lives of the Reformers, and the diaries of later Christians, and we find all of them mourning over a remainder of sin, with which they are earnestly contending, and which they hope finally to conquer. It is extremely interesting, and instructive withal, to observe this unity of feeling, and to discover believers separated from each other by so many ages, and living in such different states of society passing through very much the same experience. It is an evidence that our religion is the same in all ages, the same grace of God acting on the same human nature. The people of every age, those who come from the north and the south, from the east and the west, will be able to join in the song of Moses and the Lamb.

But while there is the same spirit there are diversities of operation. Because the spirit works in a certain way in the breast of one believer, this is no reason why he should work in the same way in the heart of every other believer, or any other believer. He finds different individuals with different natural temperaments and beset by different sins and temptations, and he suits his manifestations to the difference of their state and character. Let no christian then insist that the work of the spirit must be precisely the same in the heart of every other as in his own. Nor should any humble child of God permit himself to doubt of the reality of a work of grace in his own heart, merely because his experience has not been the same with that of some others of whom he has read, with whom he has taken sweet counsel, or who has opened up his heart to him. Just as there is diversity in the works of nature, in the color and size of the plants

and animals, that people the air, earth and ocean, just as there is a variety in the countenance and shape of the bodily frames of human beings, just as one star differeth from another; so christians, while all after one high model, are made to take different forms and hues of beauty on earth, and shall thus be transplanted to heaven, to adorn the garden of God and shine as stars, each with his own glory in the firmament above. As in heaven the foundations of the wall of the city are garnished with "all manner of precious stones," and the tree of life in the midst of the street bears "twelve manner of fruits," so the people of God will there as here have each his own characteristics, and the song which ascends will be a concert of diverse voices, each melodious, and each in its diversity joining with the others to make the harmony. Each in his own way will join in singing "the song of Moses the servant of God and of the Lamb."

III. THERE IS AN ACCORDANCE BETWEEN THE WORKS AND WORD OF GOD AND YET THERE IS A DIFFERENCE. Both come from God and therefore reflect the character of God. But they exhibit it in somewhat different light. Nature teaches us by potent forces, by arrangements, by laws, and shows order and beneficence. The Word instructs by flexible language, by clear enunciations, by arguments, by appeals, by threatenings, by promises, and tells of a sin hating God who yet pardons iniquity. The works manifest his power and his wisdom. The Word displays more fully his holiness on the one hand and his mercy on the other. When Moses desired to behold the glory of God, the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty."

It must be acknowledged that there are times when science and scripture seem as if they contradicted each other, with no means of reconciling them. But it is only as one branch of science may seem to be inconsistent with another. There are times when astronomy seems to run counter to geology: geology requires very long ages to explain its phenomena, to account for the successive strata and races of animals on the earth's surface, whereas astronomy seems to say that so long time has not elapsed since the earth was formed by the rotation of nebulous matter. Nobody thinks that there can be any absolute contradiction between the two sciences; every one believes that sooner or later the seeming inconsistencies will be cleared up. I say the same of the apparent incongruities between Genesis and geology. Account for it as we may there is a general correspondence between the two, the record in stone and the record in scripture. There is an order with a progression which is very much the same in both. In both there is light before the sun appears. In Genesis the fiat, "Let there be light and there was light" goes forth the first day, and the sun comes out the fourth day, in accordance with science, which tells us that the earth was thrown off ages before the sun had become condensed into the centre of the planetary system. In both the inanimate comes before the animate; in both the plant is supposed to come before the animal; and in both fishes and fowl before creeping things and cattle. In both we have as the last of the train, man, standing upright and facing the sky, made of the dust of the ground and yet filled with the inspiration of the Almighty. It is clear that there must be great truth in that opening chapter of Genesis which has anticipated geology by three thousand years. With such correspondences we may leave the apparent irreconcilabilities to be explained by future investigation. "He that believeth will not make haste." At times it is not easy to reconcile pro-

fane history with scripture; but ever and anon there cast up such things as the monuments of Egypt, the palaces of Nineveh, and the stone of Moab to tell us that the Old Testament gives us a correct picture of the state of the nations in ancient times. We who dwell in a world "where day and night alternate," we who go everywhere accompanied with our own shadow, cannot expect to be delivered from the darkness, but we have enough of light to show the path which will lead us through the perplexities.

I might dwell on the numerous analogies between nature and revelation. Both give the same expanded views of the greatness of God; the one by showing his workmanship, the other by its descriptions. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge." Both show that there is only one God; the works, which are bound in one concatenated system, and the Word when it declares that "the Lord our God is one Lord." But instead of launching forth on this wide but obvious and common place subject I must confine myself to two points brought into prominence by recent science.

One is the operation of development or evolution. We see it everywhere both in the natural and supernatural dispensations of God. "The sun ariseth and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place whence he arose." "The wind returneth again according to his circuits." "Unto the place from whence the rivers arise they return again." But while all things go in their circuits, yet in doing so they leave their abiding results: the sun calleth forth vegetation and giveth heat and light; the winds give breath to every living thing; and the rivers leave their deposit which when raised up may become fertile land. We see it in the earth bringing forth grass, "the herb yielding seed and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in it-

self." All this does not prove as some would aver, that there is nothing but development. The extent of the process has not yet been settled; but it is certain that it has limits. For there cannot be development without some previous material, without some seed out of which the thing developed has come, and the most advanced science cannot show whence or how the original matter and germ have come. And then development is a very complex operation in which there is a vast variety of agents known and unknown, and these evidently combined by a power above them to accomplish a purpose. As evolution from a germ according to a general law is a common process in nature, so we see a like operation in the kingdom of grace. The Jewish economy is developed out of the Patriarchal, the Christian out of the Jewish according to a law in the Divine Mind and by agencies appointed by Divine Wisdom; and the seed planted eighteen hundred years in the world has become a wide spread tree; all implying an original germ and a formative process, rising into higher and ever higher forms of spiritual life, and about to effloresce into a period, in which the Spirit of the Lord shall be poured on all flesh.

Another point is, that experience, history and science all concur with the Word of God in the view which they present of the state of things in which we are placed. The vain and frivolous may feel as if the Scriptures have drawn too dark a picture of our world, when they describe it as a scene of sin and suffering, with terrible conflicts within and without. But all who have had large experience of human life will be ready to acknowledge that the account is a correct one. The faithful representation of human character is to many the most satisfactory evidence of the truthfulness of the Word of God. The young and inexperienced may imagine, that in that distant spot on the landscape on which the sun is shining, there must be a

paradise still lingering on our earth: but when they actually go to it they find it to be very much like the other parts of the earth's surface. Often in sailing on the rough ocean have I imagined that away in the horizon there is an unbroken calm, but on the vessel reaching the spot it turned out to be agitated and distracted like the place from which I surveyed it. History tells the same story. How much of it is occupied with the narrative of battles and this from the earliest to the latest times—in which we have had two terribly desolating wars. We boast of our splendid cities; but in every one of them you will find sinks of iniquity, with crime and misery festering and fermenting, and into which are poured the filth engendered by the vices of the wealthy. And in our rural districts there are feuds and rivalries, bred of selfishness and passion, raging in scenes in which all may seem so calm and peaceful to the superficial observer. There are warring elements in every human bosom, and in every society composed of human beings. Any one seeking to remove the causes of discord will be sure to irritate and to meet with determined opposition, and He who has done most to assuage the storm had to say “I am come to send fire on the earth.” “Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth. I tell you nay, but rather division.” The greatest men in our world have been martyrs who in order to pull down the evil have had themselves to perish. And is not the science of our day giving us the very same picture? When we read the older treatises of natural theology, founded on scientific observation, the impression is apt to be left that our world is all fertile and smiling landscape with no desert and no troubled sea, is basking in the full sunshine of heaven with no darkness and no night. But of late years science has been obliged to speak of terrible conflicts. What mean these discoveries of worlds being formed out of warring elements? What mean these “struggles for existence” of which

naturalists are forever speaking? It is clear that suffering and death were on our earth since life appeared on it, and reigned "over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." Does not science as well as Scripture shew that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now?" The two are thus seen to be in curious correspondence; but they differ in this that while both speak of a troubled day the later and more comforting revelation of God assures us that "at evening time there shall be light."

GENTLEMEN OF THE GRADUATING CLASS. You have been studying for years past at a College which aims at keeping together what the Creator has combined, while it makes provision for the diversity of tastes which the same All-Wise God has implanted in our natures. There is a disposition in some of our American Colleges, and these claiming to be the most advanced, to allow too great a liberty—I call it a license—in study to those who are seeking the Bachelor's Degree. I do not object to a full freedom of study to every one; this cannot be denied, should not be denied. But I am speaking of what our higher educational institutions should encourage; and I hold that a College endowed by the friends of education should foster, not the common branches, which may be supplied by the State or left to be cared for on the principle of demand and supply, but the highest departments of study, and reward those who master them by granting a Degree, which for centuries past has had a meaning all over the civilized world. It is not for the benefit of education that the inducements to higher learning should be withdrawn, and that temptations should be held out to a dissipation of study, or a one-sided learning which tends to rear angular minds, which are

not only ignorant but affect to despise all that is beyond their own narrow circle. In this College we mean, not to fall in with, but to resist this tendency, and to insist on all who claim our Degree being grounded in certain fundamental branches such as Languages, Literature, Science and Philosophy, which discipline the mind and open the way to all kinds of knowledge. In the present day many are allured to devote themselves exclusively to such branches as modern languages and certain departments of physical science in the idea that they are likely to be practically useful. Two evils follow. They neglect to master, when young, certain important branches, and find, when they have reached that age at which it is irksome to begin a new study, that they are without the key which opens the richer treasure-houses of knowledge. How often, for example, have young men to regret that they have given up Classics, when they find that in consequence the whole of ancient history, with its stirring incidents and exhibitions of human character, and of social manners and institutions, is placed beyond their range of vision and contemplation. Another consequence follows. After all, they have acquired a contracted and not a liberal education, and are apt to come under the influence of a sectarian and bigoted, rather than a catholic spirit, and to fall into positive error on the one side or the other, especially in such all important subjects as philosophy and religion, by not being in a position to perceive that one truth is limited by another. I hope that the graduates of Princeton will exercise their influence to secure that in ages to come as in ages past, we shall believe in the trinity of literature, science and philosophy.

But our minds are not formed originally alike, any more than our bodily frames are. All are so far alike that they are able to acquire the elements of the more essential branches, and if any feel that they have an aversion to any particular branch of high study, it is a sign that there is a

weakness in their constitution, and instead of yielding to it they should seek by the proper gymnastic to strengthen it, and give a robustness and a full rounded development to their whole frame. But it is wrong, it is vain to try to stretch all on the same Procrustes' bed. There is surely room in a four years' course for a diversity with the unity of study. We may allow advanced students who have mastered the elements of the fundamental studies to make a selection among other useful branches, to gratify their heaven implanted tastes and prepare themselves for the professional pursuits before them. I admit that this power of choice may be abused. It is certain to be so by too young students who might avoid some of the most important branches, as being utterly ignorant of their utility and feeling the initiatory steps to be irksome. Even advanced students may pervert it, especially the idle and lazy by selecting the studies supposed to be easiest, or in which the instructor lets off his pupils with the least amount of work. But this evil may be lessened by proper college regulations securing a uniformity of standard; and with its few incidental disadvantages, the system which allows election within certain limits is to be preferred to one which excludes all new branches of knowledge, because there is not time to study them, or forces every one of them on all the students, who in seeking to acquire all the branches end in mastering none. In nature every tree, every animal, every branch, every leaf, every flower, every limb differs from every other, while all are after a type which gives a unity to the structure. So it should be with the students trained at our College. Let them retain, let them cherish their distinctions, their individualities, their very peculiarities; their taste for poetry, their taste for languages, their taste for physical science, their taste for mathematics, their taste for philosophy, while all are rooted and grounded in certain fundamental principles which keep them from deviating into extremes—

save them in fact from becoming monsters—and fashion them all after the same high model of educated gentlemen.

While we aim to have all trained in the useful branches of secular knowledge, bearing on the improvement of the intellect, the refinement of the taste, and the preparation for the anxious pursuits of life, we cannot forget in this College, that man is an immortal being. The students here are most of them separated from their parents and guardians; and standing as we do *in loco parentis*, it is expected of us and it is our bounden duty, to provide religious instruction for them. Even as it is God who gives a unity to his works, so it is the fear and love of God that impart a unity to all our intellectual energies, and a consistency to the character and life. I conduct the Biblical Instruction by means of a lecture on Sabbath followed by a recitation on a week day on the part of each class. My course of instruction runs over four years. The first year I took up the four Gospels and the Life of our Lord; the second year the Book of Acts and the planting of the Christian Church; this last year a simple statement and defence of Christian Doctrine, with an exposition of the Epistle to the Romans; and next year I take up the Old Testament. My recitations have enabled me once a week to meet face with face with every student in the College. At these meetings, beside becoming acquainted with the students, and I trust depositing some seeds of truth in their minds, I have been enabled by moral suasion to put an end, I trust forever, to some of the old evil practices of the College, and to crush in the bud some new evils as they threatened to break out.

It is to be recorded to the credit of the Class now graduating that they have assisted the authorities in rooting out some of the low and vicious habits of the College. They early pledged themselves to discountenance the mean attacks on students at the dead of night, and the issuing of vile publications, and at a later date they bound

themselves to avoid and discourage intemperance. It will be written in the history of this College, and will go down to all future generations, that the Class of 1871 was the first to bind itself to stop these evils, and was the means of breaking the descent from one year to another.

The members of this Class have endeared themselves to me personally, as we met together from week to week now for nearly three academic years. I do not at this moment remember a single unpleasant incident in our intercourse with one another. You would have a right to charge me with a cold heart—and this infirmity I am not willing to confess—if I did not feel moved now in parting with you, and if I did not promise to look forward with deep and lively interest to the future career of the Class as a whole, and of the individual members. I feel that I will ever rejoice when I hear of you prospering, and grieve when I learn of any evil befalling you.

We send you forth from our walls furnished with a solid liberal education. Different lots we may conceive are before you. You are to betake yourselves to different professions, walks and pursuits. Very diverse may be your destinations in life. The coldest heart cannot look on a company of young men, such as that now before me, without emotion. One would like to have a horoscope to forecast the future, and see therein where you are to be, and what you are to be doing, at some defined time in the future, say five or ten years hence. Some we might find still near us; some prospering in the journey, some meeting with one disappointment after another; a number in this world, some gone to the world beyond the grave. But wherever you are and wherever you go in this world, I trust to hear of you, in low position or in high, in sunshine or in storm, cultivating an academic spirit and diffusing an elevated taste around you; cherishing a manly independence, and following the path of integrity and honor; holding firmly by the

truth of God, feeling your dependence on Him, and clinging to the hope of dwelling in his presence in heaven.

It is doubtful whether after our separation a few days hence we will all meet again in this world. Whether we meet again on earth let us cherish the hope of all meeting—no wanderer lost—in heaven, there to sing the song of the redeemed. But let us inquire this day whether we are prepared to join in that song. “No man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth.” The kingdom of heaven is a choir in which every one has to take his part, and the soul unprepared would feel itself to be a discordant note. The universe we have seen is a harmony, a harmony with God, a harmony in itself—the only discordance arising from sin. But suppose that you are out of this harmony being still in your sins, that you are at war with God, and with war raging in your souls. Put the supposition, that in this state you are taken to heaven. Would you feel *that* to be the place for you? Would not the holiness that shines there be as painful to look upon, as to gaze forever with unveiled eyes on the full radiance of the noonday sun? Would not the brightness of the light only shew your blackness in darker and more hideous colors? The happiness that reigns there would only make you the more to feel your own misery. I believe that if you were to carry an unconverted sinner to heaven, he would flee out of it as of all places to him the most intolerable.

The song is sung in heaven, but it is learned on earth. It is a new song, different from the old songs which you first learned, of earthly war, or love, or fame; it is a song coming from a soul which has fought with sin and overcome it, and filled with affection to Him who has enabled it to gain the victory. “He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise to our God.” The saints must learn it on earth, if they are to sing it in heaven. We live and

walk in the midst of harmonies, and we must strive to bring ourselves into accord with them: as the Stoics sternly expressed it, "living according to nature," according to the eternal *Fatum*, or word spoken by the all wise God; or as the scriptures would have us, living and breathing in love. All the lessons of Providence, all the trials we come through, are so ordered as to foster this spirit, and to bring our minds into accord with the mind and will of God. In the concert in the temple above are many toned voices, each singing in its own way but all in unison. The plaintive notes show that there are souls there which have been sorely wounded in the battle; the more triumphant show that they have gained the victory. The song is sung in broken tones on earth, it is sung in exultant strains in heaven. Nor do the saints become weary in this service. Their hearts are in unison with their song, and as they behold more of God and of the Lamb they find new themes of praise, new matter for wonder and for thankfulness.

I believe that in their resurrection bodies, the saints will be literally engaged in singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. But we may understand the language in a wider sense. It may be regarded as pointing to a music in the soul, to a harmony in the thoughts, the words and the employments. Every being in glory will be engaged in a work suited to his gifts, his tastes and attainments. Here a seraph, which signifies fire, will be engaged in a work of perfect love; here a cherub, which signifies mind, will be absorbed in a work of perfect intellect. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be;" but this I believe, that every faculty, every acquisition gained at school or college, or in the training of Providence, will be employed—not idle or running waste, but employed in the service of God:—of a wise God, who will allot to every one his suitable work, the work for which he is fitted, for which indeed he has been

prepared, by his original talents, his acquired accomplishments, and all the training through which he has been put in life and at death; of a good God, who employs his creatures in doing good, and makes them happy in the doing of it, so that all their work is doubly blessed, blessed to the doer and blessed also to those for whom it is done.