University at Lewisburg, Union Co., Penn.

Wednesday, 18th Aug., A.D. 1852

Graduating Oration

Unity of History

There are few yet, who take the comprehensive view, that sees in all history but one history. They view the world as a stage on which many strange dramas have been enacted, but they fail to discern that these are all, but scenes in the one grand drama, planned and directed by the hand of God. They seek only for the conclusion of the single act that is passing before them, and not for its relation to the progress of the whole.

Then the affairs of the world, directed by chance, this act of history might be sufficient, but in the all-directing hand stretched out without a plan—singly to fold down one dynasty, and set up another? Is the scheme of God consistent with the aimless world of turbulent political revolutions? We are sure he has some great and worthy end in the arrangement of his Providence, and every part is handed under his direction to its accomplishment. While that end is, it might be difficult for human reason to determine.

Plan a man who had dreamed the unusual line of blue that give him round the world extreme, for the first time—show the Ocean bounding shore, point him to a shore ship bounding promptly forth open the billows—he sees him making his way right on—his fair proportions becoming and still becoming in his view, till at length she is lost—vanish'd between the Ocean and the sky. Which could be goal of his destination or the object of his voyage? All he knows is this, the ocean open and right. Just such is unbounded reason in man when he
attempts to trace the history of the world to its grand denouement, he sees a brief space in the world's progress but beyond this he may gaze till reason's eye grows dim— he cannot pierce the future, reason alone is incompetent to the task.

But man is not left uninstructed. The great Pilot has seen fit to outline to him a chart to steer by, which reveals his purposes in the world's history. This chart is the religion of the Christ, and its light every man, arranged itself in its appropriate place.

Some writers of America have seemed to feel that the world must be leading to some great and ultimate design in the political condition of nations—political liberty, or an alteration of democracy is in their opinion to be the world's grand and glorious destiny, and the progress of events seems to justify their conclusion.

But the have mistaken a striking development of the great truths for the truth itself. The gospel of Christ is the great central truth. The Cross stands forth the grand focal point in the world's history. So it, converging all the events of the Anti-Christ's world, and around it cluster all the changes and revolutions that have since figured on the page of the world's history. Storms have been against it, but he has only the more firmly entwined its roots into the earth, and it will continue expanding until it becomes conclusive with the world, and all the Nations of earth, under its general shelter, shall find rest. How could it be otherwise? Shall God himself become incarnate merely to act a subordinate part in the world's great drama? In the language of one who sought his inspiration from the Cross—"the gospel is the fulness of all philosophy, the interpretation of all revelations." By its principles of universal brotherhood it is sweeping through the world, with a silent but irresistible force, destroying thrones, laying kingdoms in abatin, and placing men as man before the throne of self-government. It establishes a great theocratic democracy, in which God is supreme and all men equal. It has government of every kind, for its own advancement, and eventually makes them all yield to its own equalizing spirit of salvation. It quietly undermines every false system, and they resemble inevitably to the dust. When the work is not only the reality, but the evidence of preparation is heard. It speaks, and a nation springs into being—its arches, and its sights, only on the tablets of history.

But let us consult facts. Not to speak of the world before the introduction of Christianity, the state at the time of Christ's incarnation was fiercely fitful. In the event the world was at peace, the systems of heathenism had lost their hold on the faith of the people, and men stood, in expectation of something which seemed to open to them the portal of the unseen world. Christ came, and henceforth the elevation of his Kingdom was the great end to which everything else tended.

That moral midnight of the world, the dark age (1200 to 1700) when the sun of liberty and of learning had set, and the light, or indeed only the high place of ecclesiastical power, may seem to form an exception. But it was a necessary consequence of the unnatural political and social condition of the world, and of the fall of views of Christianity that prevailed. It became necessary to demonstrate the great moral truths, that Christ's Kingdom is not of this world, and hence the opposite principles were allowed to produce its legitimate effects in the darkness of the tenth century.
Preliminary

The present forms one of those elevations from which the traveller passes to survey the country around him. By looking back, he may learn to correct his errors, and by looking forward, he may have his hopes excited, and his curiosities stimulated.

To the Honorable the Trustees and Officers, permitting, on behalf of my classmates, to say—though in connection with this University will soon cease, we can never cease to feel an interest in whatever may betide it. Our earnest prayers will be, that under your generous care, and the faithful effort of instructors and the smiles of our overruling Providence, it may attain to a higher prosperity and more extended usefulness.

To the President

To you, honored Sir, whose labors have contributed so largely to the advancement of our education, and to encourage us in the pursuits of literature, whose affectionate concern for our welfare, have been those of a guardian, instructor, and friend, this occasion affords a happy opportunity for shedding our expressions of sincere and heartfelt gratitude.

We shall be proud to remember our connection with President Malcolm. Well do we know there are trials and discouragements attendant on the stations you occupy so honorably and so usefully. Not our praise alone, but a higher and nobler reward is yours. Honor, and an approving conscience, do alone bear to you an adequate compensation. Time may dimly veil the rest of this past shall interfuse obscurity between memory and the scenes of truth, but we can never cease to have an ardent regard for your cherished name, and for those elevated principles of morality and religion, which your example has so strikingly enforced. The blessings of an All-wise God be ever with you.

To the Faculty

Respect of instructors. In our formative country, the business of life is to separate those whose education once closely united. Occupied with its cares, they soon are forgotten with whom we have been joined in early pursuits and studies—too often does the remembrance of the institution to which we owe our education lose the vivifying of first impressions in the practical business of life. But the past, the present, and the future, must all excite an interest. This University deserves our affectionate regard. We are her sons, and in whatever period of life, whether beginning its course, or ending its mission, or declining under weight of years, to her, and to the education she has bestowed, we owe our hope the
To the Graduating Class—

Fellow Classmates—How few of us, may be our cups of happiness—how few we recollect without feeling a mix of emotions when we look back at our time in the University. The members of our class, who have directed our studies and guided our ambition, may have been our friends, our instructors, or simply our companions. Yet, the memory of those times is etched in our minds. We must reflect on the lessons we have learned and the wisdom we have gained.

To those who remain behind, allow us to express the hope that every member of the class who took part in this University will continue to follow the path of wisdom and virtue. As we look back on the events that have shaped our lives, let us remember the lessons we have learned and the values we have acquired.

The memory of our time here will always be with us, reminding us of the lessons we have learned and the wisdom we have gained. As we look to the future, let us remember the importance of our contributions to society and the role we can play in shaping the world around us.

Let us be grateful for the opportunities we have been given and the experiences we have had. Let us be proud of the progress we have made and the impact we have had on the world around us.

We remain true to our roots, responding to the call of our passions. Let us remember the lessons we have learned and the values we have acquired, and let us continue to strive for excellence in all that we do.

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