BACCALAUREATE SERMONS.

Rev. Dr. McCosh on the "Royal Law of Love."

President Porter, of Yale, on "Christianity and Its Life."

Exhortation of President Cattell to the Students of Lafayette College.

COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY.

THE BACCALAUREATE SERMON BY THE REV. DR. M'COSH—"THE ROYAL LAW OF LOVE."

The following is the baccalaureate sermon preached yesterday before the College of New Jersey by President McCosh on "The Royal Law of Love." Great interest had been excited in anticipation of the discourse, as it had been believed Dr. McCosh would handle Mr. Beecher roughly. These anticipations, however, as will be seen, were entirely disappointed:—

THE SERMON.

Love is the fulfilling of the law.—Romans, xiii., 10.

If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well.—James, ii., 8.

In these passages there is a reference to three things—to love, to law and a king. I see before me an arch set up on earth and spanning the heavens; the one side is law, the other side is love, and the keystone binding and crowning the whole is God. Our theme is the royal law of love. Let us contemplate love and law first separately and then in their combination in God.

I. LOVE.

It may manifest itself in two forms, which should be carefully distinguished.

The love of complacency.—We delight in the object or person beloved. It is thus that the mother clasps her infant to her bosom; thus that the sister interests herself in every movement of her little brother and is proud of his feats; thus that the father, saying little, but feeling much, follows the bright career of his son in the competitions of the college and the still more trying rivalries of the world; thus that the student seeks the society of his classmates, is grieved when he has to separate from them and casts a fond look toward their coming career; thus that throughout our lives our hearts, if we have hearts, cling round the tried friends of our youth; thus that the wife would leave this world with her last look on her husband; thus that the father would depart with his sons and his daughters around his couch. There is a "last look which love remembers"—that given, for instance, when the ship moves away with the dear friend in it or when the soul leaves the earth to wing its way to heaven. Love looks out for the persons beloved. The mother soon discovers her son in that crowd; the blacksmith

Hears his daughter's voice
Singing in the village choir.

The believer will steal away in fancy from the busy scenes of life to meet with his Saviour, and I am persuaded that when he reaches heaven he will recognize, without requiring to be told, the One whom he has so loved. In a higher sphere and in an older age, even from the beginning, the love of God, of God who is love, was exercised in the fellowship of Father, Son and Holy Ghost; for the eternal Logos says, "I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him," and "my delights were with the sons of men (Prov. viii., 30, 31). It has always appeared to me to be a very beautiful expression of that love that is given by the Prophet Zephaniah (iii., 17)—"He will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing." "Likewise I say unto you there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." There were music and dancing in the house of the father when the prodigal returned. But Zephaniah, by a bolder representation than could have been employed by any but a Hebrew prophet, speaks of our Heavenly Father as so rejoicing over the return of a sinner—"I will joy over you with singing."

The Love of Benevolence.—This is a higher form of love. In this we not only delight in the contemplation and society of the persons beloved; we wish well to them, we wish them all that is good. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets." We will oblige them if we can; we will serve them if in our power; we will watch for opportunities of promoting their welfare; we will make sacrifices for their good. This love is ready to flow forth toward relatives and friends, toward neighbors and companions, toward all with whom we come in contact; it will go out toward the whole family of mankind. We are ready to increase their happiness, and in the highest exercises of love to raise them in the scale of being, and to exalt them morally and spiritually. The love of God thus manifests itself in multiplying happiness, in spreading holiness. He is not only Light, but the Fountain of Lights; and the light that is in Him, like that of the sun, shines on all around. God is known by His works. He made us and not we ourselves. He provides for our wants; He cares for us, and is ready to guide and to comfort us. Higher than all, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Abraham saw all this in the mount which he called Jehovah-jireh, as it is said to this day, "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen." He had been commanded to offer his son in sacrifice; he had travelled with him three whole days, exposed to such questions:—"Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" He had bound him on the altar, and taken up the knife to slay him; but now, to his inexpressible relief, he heard the voice, "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son." Abraham must then have comprehended, and we, him by paying a visit to that Mount of the Lord, can conceive how great the love of God, who spared Isaac, but spared not His own Son, but gave Him freely to the death in our room and stead. "Herein indeed is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." This second is the higher aspect of love. The other belongs in man to a lower department of his nature. It is an exercise merely of emotional attachment and may contain nothing virtuous or holy—it may be merely like the attachment of a dog to its master. The love of benevolence is of a higher sort. We wish to do good; we strive to do good to those whom we love. The one is like a genial heat in a closed apartment; the other is like a fire radiating on all around. The one is a lake reflecting heaven on its bosom; the other is a fountain welling up and carrying with it a refreshing influence. "If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit?" It is this love of benevolence that is "the fulfilling of the law." It flows out in a great number and variety of forms—in compassion, in pity, in tenderness, in long suffering, in patience. The high priest in old time wore a breastplate with twelve precious stones; but every true Christian is a priest and carries on his breast a more ornamental tablet, thus inscribed:—"Charity suffereth long and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

II. LAW.

Law was in the nature of God from all eternity, and is the instrument of His government; it was inscribed on the nature of man when he was created; it was graven by God's own finger on the granite blocks of Sinai; it was spoken in gentle and attractive tones by our Lord, in the sermon on the Mount, and it is written by God's own Spirit as a new commandment on the hearts of God's people. It goes with man wherever he goes, to tell him, if he is prepared to listen to it, what is right and what is wrong, and in the end to punish him if he refuses to obey. It is so essential a part of his nature, that it will follow him into the regions below, to torment him more than the worm that never dies, than the fire that is not quenched. That law has been broken, but is still binding. When Moses came down from the mount with the two tables, he threw them from him, and broke them, when he witnessed the wickedness of the children of Israel. But he had just to reascend to the mount and have them written again by God's own finger. Which thing may be unto us for an allegory. Man has broken God's law; but that law retains all its claims, and ever renews them. The law is embodied in the Gospel. All this was instructively represented in the ark of the covenant, laid up in the holiest of all, and typifying the new covenant. On the lid of it were the cherubim, overshadowing the blood-sprinkled mercy seat; and the promise was given, "There will I meet with thee, and commune with thee on the mercy seat from between the cherubim." But within the ark were the two tables of stone. Christ came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil. The Gospel, wherever it goes, carries within it the law fulfilled by Christ, the law still binding on His followers. There is a sense in which believers are free from the law; they are free from its curse; but in another sense they are still under it; they are not free from the obligation to obey it. When sinners come to Christ He welcomes them; He says, Your sins be forgiven you; but He does not give them liberty to go back to their sins, but, "go and sin no more." Just as the father, after rejoicing over the return of his prodigal son, took him in to his house to keep him in safety, so our heavenly Father takes us into His family to train us to obedience. When the sinner comes to Christ Christ pays his debts, but it is only to send him to pay his dues, not in the oldness of the letter, but the newness of the spirit. In heaven itself the soul, brought into unison with the law of love, will be fulfilling it to perfection, and the music of heaven will consist essentially in attuned hearts, each breathing its own melody, and all in harmony; hearts in accord with the heart of God, and in accord with one another, and fulfilling the pleasure of God forever and ever. The law has two marked features.

It is imperative. It speaks as one having authority—it speaks in the name of God. It says, "Thou shalt do this, thou shalt not do that." "The categorical imperative" was the designation given it by the great German metaphysician. Its function is not to tell us what is, but what ought to be. All its affirmations are commands, all its negations are prohibitions. It has rewards rich and numerous for those who obey it. It has penalties, certain and terrible, for those who transgress it. God has a vicegerent to sustain it, in the conscience, "which shows the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another." There is a witness within which constrains us to acknowledge its right to obedience.

It is determinative. It is categorical; it has its definite requirements which it cannot forego and will not lower. "Guilty or not guilty" are the alternatives it proposes. It admits of no middle course or compromise; it accepts of no excuse; it will not listen to any plea or extenuation. In this respect the order, the regularities of the physical world resemble it. Hence for the last two hundred years they have been called laws, laws of nature, as supposed to have been enacted by a lawgiver. It is interesting to notice that they are called "ordinances" in Scripture (Psalms, cxix., 91). "They continue this day according to thine ordinances, for all are thy servants." We hear much in these times of the laws of nature, of their being so fixed and immutable. Those who speak in this way are apt to forget that there is another law which is still more unchangeable, and shall outlive when the heavens are rolled up like a scroll. It is by these two kinds of law, the one moral, the "greater light," and the other natural, "the lesser light," that God rules our world—by the one moral agents, by the other physical agents—making them at command and conspire toward our good and grand end. In one respect the two are alike: both are inflexible. But they differ. The laws of nature admit of no exceptions. They cannot be changed except by Him who appointed them. The will of man cannot arrest them. Gravitation is as ready to bring down an unsupported stone to crush us as it is to keep the earth moving on beneficently in its sphere. The winds which drive on the vessel one day may sink it in the deep the next. The chemical affinities which prepare food to nourish us are ready to mix poison to kill us. On the other hand moral laws may be broken. We are now in the region of the will. In order to be a moral agent man must be a free agent. Love that is constrained is not love. Morality compelled is not true morality. So moral law may be broken, while physical law cannot. But moral law, properly understood, is quite as inflexible, as unrelenting, as natural law. If we neglect the laws of health the consequences may be disease or death. But if we violate the laws of morality the consequences may be, must be, much more fatal in a concealing conscience or in judgments to descend in this life or the life to come. Natural law, which moves on so regularly, so irresistibly, so beneficently, is the fittest outward type and emblem of that moral law which rules the heaven and controls the earth.

III. RELATION OF LOVE AND LAW IN GOD.

The planet is held in its sphere by two influences; one impelling, the other staying it. So it is with moral beings. They are drawn by love, but it is love regulated by law. It is well that the earth should have an attraction toward the sun, without which it would wander into an outer region of coldness, darkness and destruction. But were there no restraining power it would be drawn into the sun's atmosphere and be consumed by his heat. In like manner moral excellence implies of necessity these two things, love and law; the one to attract, the other to guide in the right path. It is not easy to embody in human conceptions and to express in human language the relation of law and love. We know that the two are closely connected. Their connection is in God, the source of both. Even as God is the origin of all other things, of nature, of force, of matter, of mind, so is He also the origin of love and law. All these streams, if we follow them up sufficiently far, carry us to the fountain. Love is the refreshing water; the law is the channel for it to flow in; and the spring is in the bosom of God. "Let us love one another, for love is of God." Charity is the highest of all the graces: "There abideth these three, faith, hope and charity, but the greatest of these is charity." But then charity never tries to set itself above law; if it did so, it might work only mischief. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Love takes the form of a commandment. When asked by the lawyer, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said unto him, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind;" this is the first and great commandment, and the second is like unto it, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Thus indissolubly are charity and commandment joined in Scripture. It is love that makes us like unto God, who is love; but the love of God is a love regulated by eternal justice. We cannot by any process of analysis get rid of either of these elements. Defective systems of ethics arise from omitting one or other, or not giving each its due place. A stoic, a pharisaic morality leaves out love and presents only the expressionless form of law. Utilitarianism leaves out eternal and unchangeable obligation, and offers a flexible morality, suiting itself to supposed results. My illustrious predecessor, Jonathan Edwards, the greatest thinker that this country has produced, in whose dazzling beams the others of us appear merely as the smaller planets passing over the disk of the sun, has made a bold attempt to resolve all virtue into love. But then he has to make it love to being as being. The very statement shows that there is another element as well as love. There is love to being as being, showing that being has claims, and that there must be some means of determining the claims of being as being. We ought to love God and our neighbor. Yes, but whence this word "ought," so full of meaning? Why should I love any one but myself? Our deepest nature gives the response, and will continue to do so whether we attend to it or no. All this implies that alongside of love there is law, commanding and demanding. Far as the eye can reach the two are seen to run parallel. I do not say that they never meet, for they meet in the nature of God and of all holy beings. And, though often dissevered here, they will meet at last in the character of saints in heaven, with whom love will be law and law will be love. "What, therefore, God hath joined together let not man put asunder." There is no propriety in drawing invidious comparisons as to the relative importance of the two. It might be argued that law is the higher, for it commands love, says when it is to flow, and where it is to stay. But then love is the very end for which the law exists: the end of the commandment is charity. Law without love is a mere form without life; love without law is a life without a body in which to reside. Law without love is a channel without a stream; love without law may be a stream, bursting forth and spreading destruction. Let the two revolve round each other like binary stars, each with its own color, the one the complement of the other. Let Righteousness stand forever on the pedestal on which he has been set up, with his high look and unbending mien, the master and the guardian, and ever beside him, beneath him, and leaning upon him, yet beautiful and graceful as he, let there be seen Love, with smiles upon her face and gifts in her hands. I believe they were never separated till sin appeared. Alas, that seducer and corrupter has severed them! There has arisen a stern doctrine, which has no tenderness; whose gaze is as unmoved and immovable as that of the Egyptian sphinx, looking out from its desert of sand. If there be theologians still dwelling in a cold palace of ice, I recommend them to let the beams of the sun of righteousness shine upon it and thaw it. I look upon the Shorter Catechism as the best compend of Scripture truth which we have in any language; but I have sometimes felt that there is less of love in it than there is in the Scriptures, and that it serves a good end when the teacher puts a smile upon its countenance to attract the youth who has to learn it. It was rather an empty ark which they had to look into in Solomon's time, when they found nothing there but the tables of stone, and not their accompaniments—Aaron's rod that budded, signifying life from the dead; nor the pot of manna, typifying food for the weak. But the defect I am now speaking of belongs rather to the seventeenth than the nineteenth century. We are now more in danger of a sentimental and a simpering faith, acting the part of a Delilah, professing love to the man who boasts that he is strong, only in the end to show how weak he is, and to consign him to blindness and darkness. Let us have charity, they say; but charity without principle to guide it may distribute its gifts very indiscriminately and injuriously. A law has been set forth and enforced which is not the law of love, and has driven men away from God, who is love, and from the Gospel, which is essentially a message of reconciliation from God to sinful man. The terrors of the law have been used, not as by Paul, to persuade men, but to tempt or drive them to rebellion or resistance. In ages past law has been used lawlessly by monarchs and by masters. But in the present day the tendency seems all the other way. If there were tyrannies in Old-World monarchies which we in these times are not slow to condemn, there is peculiousness in New-World republics, which it might be as useful and important for us to expose and condemn. People were rather astonished when not long ago the preacher of a great university took as his text on a public occasion, "Thou shalt not steal." But he was speaking the truth for the time now present, which needs the commandments to be proclaimed as awfully as they were at Sinai, to arrest the corruptions of individuals and of rings. Some think that preachers in these times might profitably take as their text, "Honor thy father and thy mother." If fathers erred two centuries ago in being somewhat too rigid with their children, it is possible that in these times they may not be sufficiently faithful in restraining self-indulgence and in training to habits of self-sacrifice. If some preachers in ages gone by preached hell and damnation instead of Christ, it is possible that some in these times are so relaxed by a weak charity that they have not the courage or faithfulness to bid men flee from the wrath to come. If there have been preachers in certain ages who insisted on nothing but stern duty, there are not a few in our day who recommend love without the due restraints of law, who are tampering with the marriage relation, lowering the sacredness of wedlock and allowing such liberty of divorce as is fitted to break up the family, which, I may remark, is the only means of securing proper moral culture and training the rising generation to virtue. More evil may arise from lawless love, which is fascinating, than from hatred, which is repulsive. So we have no intention here in Princeton of changing the truths of God's Word on the miserable pretence of making them softer and more lovable than God has made them in His Word. There is a teaching in our day antagonistic to the Princeton theology. It can scarcely be called a theology. It does not take, it cannot be made to take, any scientific form. It would let down doctrine and exalt charity, and would thereby make religion easier and more attractive, as they suppose. It is "Broad Church" in England, delivering itself from all creed. It is the "Religion of Humanity" in this country instead of the "Religion of Divinity for Humanity." It would free humanity from certain restraints and sacrifices with the view of exalting it. It is not just the same, but it is analogous to the attempt in the last century to do away with doctrine on the pretence of exalting morality, and which led to dry High Churchism in England, to Moderatism in Scotland and Ulster, to Rationalism on the Continent of Europe and to Unitarianism in this country, and ended in all in the decay of religion and the lowering of morality. The new gospel which has appeared among us is evidently running a like career. Doctrine is discarded first; duty goes next, in the next man or the next age. It is a profound saying of one of the brothers Hare, "To form a correct judgment concerning the tendency of any doctrine we should rather look at the forms it bears in the disciples than in the teacher. For he only made it; they are made by it." We may now see the kind of characters that are made in this school of love and humanity. There was first a turning away from the old doctrine, and this has been followed by a turning away from the old morality. I beg that it may be understood that I have no reference to any one individual, and that I enter on no doubtful or disputed points. I proceed on what is visible to all, on what, indeed, has been forced offensively on the attention of all. The feeling of many of us is, "O my soul, come not thou into their secret; into their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united." Notwithstanding all the efforts to suppress the "secret," awful disclosures have been made. We see now the milk of human kindness, when not restrained by law, is apt to be soured into hatred, how humanity sinks into selfishness. We see now perilous it is to begin to tamper with the most sacred of all earthly relations. It looks as if the generation now springing up needed to know what sort of "assembly" or society has been formed among us, and what the practical consequences of the sentiment passing current in the circle. The young needed to know what kind of men are seeking to guide opinion in the public press, even the so-called religious press—men who keep no Sabbath, but work on it as on other days; who go to no place of worship, who are supposed to be capable of teaching others, while they have abandoned the religion which is the basis of ethics, and ridicule the holy doctrine which they know condemns them. The watchmen who are set on thy walls, O Jerusalem, need to proclaim, as loud as when seven thunders uttered their voices, that love is to be guided by law, that love cannot excuse lying, whether to shelter the persons themselves or others; that in contradictory statements there must be lying, and that in contradictory oaths there must be perjury of the deepest dye, offensive in the highest degree to God and to be denounced with terrible reprobation by man. Our general subject leads me to remark that in Princeton College we seek to combine affection with discipline. In not a few of our larger colleges the authorities have virtually abandoned all attempts to exercise any oversight except in the way of securing order in the recitation rooms, and students may and often do fall into vicious habits without their instructors having any knowledge of it, or the parents having any hint of it till it is too late. But surely it is a very serious matter to separate hundreds of young men from the restraints of home and then take no charge of them, religiously and morally. It is a very difficult task, I acknowledge, to combine these two things, love and faithfulness. I do not venture to affirm that we have perfectly succeeded; that, on the one hand, we have always shown as much sympathy and tenderness as we should; or that, on the other hand, we have been firm enough in repressing evil. But I can say for the authorities of this college that we have been anxious to do what is right. So far from discouraging innocent amusement and manly sports, we provide them, and keep them under proper regulations as to hours. We frown on studious insubordination and vice, on every form of equivocation or lying, and on practices which degrade those who engage in them. It will be admitted by all who know our state that we have now got rid of nearly all the old practices that have disgraced American colleges, and that no professor remembers a year in which we have had so much quietness and propriety of conduct and so much mutual confidence on the part of the faculty and students. In teaching other high branches we aim to impart religious instruction. I feel this to be a difficult work in a large college with young men of such varied character, some of them with as yet no taste for spiritual things. But we hold that the mind is not furnished as it ought, if, on opening to our students the riches of literature, science and philosophy, we do not make them acquainted with the character and will of God. But this can be done only by the Scriptures; I know of no other religious instruction which can be of any value practically. So I labor to take the students through the Bible in a general way in our collegiate course of four years. This last year I have been expounding the doctrines of the Word, with the Epistle to the Romans as our text book. Here we have a full and perfect combination of doctrine and precept, of law and love. Those versed in this portion of Scripture should be in a position to form a correct judgment on all subjects, religious and moral, and are in possession of a body of principles fitted to stimulate them to what is good, and to hold them back from what is evil. We believe that by imparting such instruction not only do we best serve the cause of our great Master, but are taking the most effective means to train for work and usefulness the young committed to our care by anxious parents and guardians.

Gentlemen of the graduating class, I have been associated with most of you very closely for the last four years. During this time, besides praying with you from day to day in the chapel, and lecturing to you and occasionally preaching to you on the Sabbath, I have met with you as a class once a week for Bible instruction. During one year I had a meeting with you once a week for the study of the human mind, and with a portion of you during another for the study of the history of philosophy. These meetings were pleasant at the time, and the remembrance of them will be precious. I realize it as a very serious thought that I have now to part with you. I have this day to inquire whether I have done my duty as I ought toward you; whether I have been sufficiently faithful on the one hand and sufficiently tender on the other. I feel more deeply than I can express that I have lost opportunities of doing good which I should have embraced and that I have not been so sympathetic as I ought in my expositions and in my counsels. But I bless God because He has given me a glorious opportunity of bringing before you great truths, both in religion and philosophy; and my prayer to God and to you is that you now take them with you and use and apply them in your beliefs and your actings in the varied scenes of life, overlooking any imperfections that may have mingled with my exposition of them. I feel as if I had left much unsaid which I should have said; but the omission cannot be rectified by trying to say it now. All I can now do is to pray that "what is sown in weakness may be raised in power." Perhaps some of the things I have said may come up before you once and again to animate and establish you; some of the sparks may kindle a fire; some of the seeds scattered may strike root. You have certainly received valuable instruction from the able, the faithful and laborious teacher under whom you have sat in this college; and we cherish the hope that the knowledge gained, the habits formed, the principles instilled, the virtues acquired, may be so wrought into your nature and incorporated into your being that they shall come out in your general aims and purposes, in your character and professional work. I would send you forth from these walls with these two words, "love" and "law," written as a motto on your hearts. The one will be a well of living waters within you, ever springing up and refreshing you, and ready to flow out. Most of you have now to set out on a hard struggle, in which you have to provide for your temporal wants. But I will be greatly disappointed if I hear of you living for mere personal and selfish ends. I knew a young man who devoted his first hard-won earnings to purchase a gift for his mother; he had his mother's prayers, and he rose to eminence. I knew another youth who consecrated his first money to a missionary cause. He lived to be one of the great missionaries of our age. There is a beautiful incident told of the greatest benefactor which our college has had in this century. The young man in his first business transaction had earned some $3,000. What is he to do with it—to spend it on pleasures or lay it up as a fund for establishing a business? There is a kind family that had befriended him, but is now in circumstances of privation. He offers it all to them. It required strong faith to do this. But, after all, he made a wise disposition of his money. He lent to the Lord and so had the best security. The boy did all this from principle, and with no idea of gaining a reputation; but he established a character of far more value than gold even for the purpose of gaining gold. To the individual who thus began life we owe these magnificent buildings and these professors' chairs, which will be the means of shedding light for untold generations. We send you forth from these walls, where you have received benefit from the bounty of benefactors, to spread light and love, to diffuse around you a happy and hallowed influence, to relore with them that rejoice and weep with them that weep. You will seek in your spheres to advance education, to promote refinement and to lead in all movements which further literature and science. Your Alma Mater expects more; she expects you to promote the highest good, which is spiritual good. A number, I know, are to devote themselves to what they believe to be the highest work a converted man can engage in, and as ministers and as missionaries are to scatter everywhere the unsearchable riches of Christ. But while love gives the steam and the sails in the voyage, you will always take with you moral principle as the anchor and the rudder. You will shrink from the temptation to evil, from the appearance of evil; you will turn back when you come near the border country that divides vice from virtue. "By reason of use you will have your senses exercised to discern both good and evil." In the end, duty as a whole will be felt to be pleasant as being wrought into your very nature. On certain occasions a strong effort will require to be made; but you will gird yourselves for the battle, wax valiant in the fight, and be stronger for the victory. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue and if there be any praise," you will think on these things and do them. This time of graduation constitutes an epoch in your history. You have come to an eminence whence you can look back on the past and forward to the future. In surveying the past you may have to rejoice over successes, but beware of trusting in them. You gained these by application, and you will need the like application in the more arduous career on which you have now to enter. Quite as possibly you may have to look on failures, perhaps great failures; time and opportunities of improvement lost. Surely your purpose this day will be to let nothing more be lost; you will gather lessons from your very disappointments. You have also to look forward to the future which you see stretching out before you; and you make this a profitable Sabbath in forming resolutions and laying out plans. See that they include plans of doing good, and that they all be undertaken in a sense of dependence on divine wisdom. We will follow you in this career on which you are entering with some anxiety, but with greater hope. We pray for your happiness, but we pray more earnestly for your higher good, for the blessings of heaven to water the fruits of earth. While we remember you, we expect you to remember us; to visit us from time to time; to pray for us, and help us to promote the great ends which this college lives to accomplish. Thus while scattered, it may be widely, you shall all be one in the family relation to your Alma Mater. The last tie that binds you to this institution is soon to be loosed, and you have to set out on a voyage on which there may be more or fewer tossings. But two things abide and are stronger than the wind or the steam that drive you along, and firmer than the compass or the anchor. One is love in the heart, love more enduring than life, and which will not die when the body dies; the other is law, which, like the arms of the Omnipotent, will guard you forever. Met as we are this day for the last time as a band of brothers in the house of God, let us arrange, ere we part, another meeting place to which we may all come. Let us pledge ourselves, in the presence of God and of one another, that, whatever our separations, that wherever else we meet, or whether we meet again on earth or no, we will all meet, no wanderer lost, in the presence of God in heaven.

YALE COLLEGE.

BACCALAUREATE SERMON OF PRESIDENT PORTER ON CHRISTIANITY AND ITS LIFE—PROGRAMME OF THE COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES.

NEW HAVEN, June 27, 1875.

President Porter delivered his baccalaureate sermon this morning in the college chapel, in presence of the senior class. The text was from Philippians, i., 9, 10—"And this I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, that ye may approve things that are excellent."

These words of prayer express the best wishes of the apostle for the pupils who had been under his training. They bring out in contrasted relief the two elements of the Christain life—love and knowledge. Love, the animating force, is kindled and sustained by Christ and his promises. Knowledge enlightens and directs man in his judgments, concerning the arts and illustrations of duty, and is capable of an indefinite refinement and culture. What is true of the individual is true of the race. If Christianity is permanent and divine it must be equal to all the possible wants of man in these two sides of man's nature. It must go on to the end of time, kindling a new life of feeling and spiritual force, and adapting itself to every condition of human progress in the most advanced development of science and art. If Christianity cannot do both these things it is neither permanent nor divine. If man or humanity shall ever outgrow the need or the capacity for it in either or both these applications Christianity must take its place among the religions of the past. It is no secret that Christianity at the present time is assailed at all points, and that to all the assaults which are made upon it men of education and culture are especially sensitive. It is assailed as a history and as a speculation. It is assailed on the side of positive science. It is also assailed as unequal to the new places of our private and public life. Of all these forms of assault the subtlest and the most dangerous is that which is made upon it as a practical system. As long as Christianity can show itself to be the best and strongest of all existing moral forces and to be equal to the new demands of individual and social life, so long will it stand. But so sure as the faith of men shall be shaken in it as the best inspiration and guide of human life it must suffer a temporary or final eclipse. I propose to speak of Christianity as an ethical force in relation to modern questionings and objections.

RELIGION OF SENTIMENT.

It is charged that Christianity is a religion of sentiment, and that sentiment is inconsistent with or hostile to science. Human life must hereafter be regulated by strictly scientific principles, and very soon no place will be left for Christian impulses and maxims. Science now rules the world, and sentiment must give way. To this we answer—Christianity is not a religion of sentiment alone, but of sentiment directed and enlightened by knowledge. It calls itself the truth, and therein implies that its disciples should accept whatever is approved as true. The light and knowledge which Christianity recognizes are limited to few objects and relations. Christianity professes to despise the present life. Many obvious virtues it does not even recognize, much less does it enforce them. Stuart Mill asserts, "While in the morality of the best pagan nations duty to the State holds even a disproportionate place, in purely Christian ethics that grand department of duty is scarcely noticed or acknowledged." The new science of humanity tells us that the widows and children of parents who have not insured their lives ought to suffer as a lesson and a warning against improvidence. Everywhere the science of living is organized on solid principles, the logical deductions from which are enforced with unsparing rigor. It would seem that when the new science of life shall have reached its perfection marriage will be no longer a matter of affection but of the coolest calculation, based upon data and grounds that ally us with the brutes in respect to our earthly life. Education will be a rigid and impersonal drill process, making machines by means of the most improved educational machinery. Weak and unpromising infants will be disposed of as burdens to society. Feeble invalids and unprofitable old men and women will be scientifically and painlessly relieved of the life of which they and their friends are wearying. Last of all, the body which offends the earth to which it is allied is to be transfigured by fire, the most etherial of agencies, that science may triumph over death in its special version of the song, "O, death where is thy sting! Oh, grave where is thy victory."

WHAT IS THE TRUTH?

But what is the truth? Simply this—Christianity does not profess to be in any sense a perfected science of human conduct or a science at will. The New Testament is in no sense a rounded code of morals, neither rude nor scientific. It kindles a new spirit, it wakens a living energy which is subtle enough to penetrate all possible human relations, expansive enough to animate every possible relation of human life and strong enough to subdue to itself the most refined and artificial structure of human society. If we are to know we must learn, and as soon as we begin to learn in the school of life we begin to study the science of human living and acting. As each generation makes new advances in the science of what living Christianity takes up the results into its practical creed and enforces them by a code of duty which is ever making progress. The brief maxims of barter and exchange, which held good between Abraham and the sons of Heth, are in due time expanded into the refined and complicated principles of political economy. But, as there is no point in this progress where common sense ceases and science begins, so there is no point at which Christianity can be dispensed with. No science of human life and duty can rush so rapidly into being as to outrun Christianity; none can expand so widely as not to be filled on the instant with the subtle element of Christian love.

THE CHRISTIAN IDEAL.

It is urged that the Christian ideal of character will be displaced in the progress of modern culture. The Caristian ideal is love to man that is disinterested, sincere and self-sacrificing. That this love need not and ought not to be narrow or unintelligent has already been shown, but that it must be fervent, constant and supreme is self-evident. Socrates had some longings for, and dim foreshadowings of, what it might do for the heart of man, but of its moral pathos he had no adequate conception, rather no conception at all. Marcus Aurelius sympathized with its justice and its considerateness and had some presentiments of its pity for human frailty and sorrow; but it never entered his thoughts that a human being could soberly propose to himself and successfully realize the ideal of which Paul sketched the salient features. The great tragedy opened to man a momentary look into the human love that is stronger than death; but the fervent and patient and long-suffering moral affection that at this moment blesses ten thousand Christian homes and watches by thousands of sick beds, was strange to the purest and loftiest records of its imagination.

A ROYAL LAW.

There is no imaginable condition of spiritual being where the law of love is not a royal law. It is recorded of one of the most honest and sweetest writers of the present generation, who seemed to grope after Christian truth to the end of his life without finding it, after standing long in silence, gazing at the silent stars, would turn from their oppressive magnificence with such words as these, "Love must be better than hate in all worlds." Culture, whether in science or art, is necessarily self-absorbed; it tends to self-occupation. It may easily become selfish even when prosecuted in the name of love and duty, as life becomes more artificial and the demands of culture are more exacting. Even moral culture sometimes degenerates into artificial sentimentalism. Culture requires special self-occupation. It brings many dangers peculiar to itself. It creates new tastes which are over refined by gratification to a sinful excess. By and by the Christian community, which owes to the self-sacrificing love of Christ, like men, all its well ordered libraries, its schools, its colleges, its galleries and its hospitals, is so occupied with the fruits of the tree that it forgets the root from which it is nourished.

SCIENCE AND CULTURE.

It is charged that the special notions of Christianity are being displaced by the progress of science and of culture. We claim that they are as much needed and are as powerful as ever. Christianity enforces upon man's attention, not the natural order of the universe, not the conception of self-sacrificing love, but the living God and the pitying and loving Christ. Christianity is not a system of ethics, albeit with the loftiest ideal and unexhausted adaptations. Christianity is more than love to man, it is love to God and a love to man for God. It is a religion that brings each living man into personal relations with a personal God, with his individual conscience and his own future life. An age of culture is an age of abstraction and of generalization. It concerns itself with principles and laws. It constructs theories of the universe and theories of religion. It strives to find thought in everything, from the development of the universe to the crystallized snowflake which melts as it falls. It personifies its abstractions and then worships the work of its own hands. Each one of the chosen tribes of culture brings its separate piece of gold which he has wrought to some eminent high priest at the altar of intellectual idolatry, and when many are cast into the fire there comes out one or many golden calves and the shout goes up for the monarch. "These be thy gods, O Israel." Force, a mere abstraction, than enough to be mysterious and prismatic enough to reflect the parti-colored hues of a lively fancy, is worshipped as the unknown and unknowable God, which is capable of indefinite transformations of matter and spirit, but of no creation of either. The method after which the divine thinker acts is exalted into a personified, but not a personal, energy called evolution. Law is substituted for the lawgiving and law-abiding God. The abstractions of ethics are lifted higher than the one great moral Person, to be sufficient without Him. The astronomer no sooner discovers a new thought of God than he thinks that he or his theory made and controls the universe, and that it is the glory of his system which the heavens declare, and his handiwork which the starry firmament shows forth. The political philosopher, the historical theorist, the critic in literature and art, each loses sight of the living God in some favorite theory of law or principle. When Christianity comes into question it is the Christian temple and character which are recognized, and not the personal Christ. The only worthy position which a wise-minded man can take, is not to care for it, but to be above all concern in respect to it. Indeed, he may even question whether a continued existence would be worth accepting even if it were offered. It is, perhaps, better when the time of our departure is at hand to say, "I have fought a good fight; I will pass into a dreamless sleep. Henceforth my existence shall be in the thoughts which I have evolved and the impulses which I have imparted and the imaginative creations which I have given to the coming generations." This is the so-called religion of humanity, the only religion deemed worthy of a scholar, the very designation of which reveals its emptiness.

RELIGION AND REASON.

We know that religion, without a personal force, cannot satisfy, because we know that man cannot be or make a God to himself without being in the end a self-worshipper, and the worship of self is the most unsatisfying and often the most degrading of all worships. The worship of abstraction of speculation by the scientist and of the personification of the imagination by the literary critic is, in the last analysis, a kind of fetishism. It cannot last, because it neither satisfies the intellect nor fills the heart. Science, if true to itself, must come back to a personal God as the best solution of a universe in which there is thought. Literature must acknowledge that Christ and an immortal life furnish the noblest and the most sustained inspiration.

THE LIVES OF MEN.

It follows that Christianity can demonstrate its practical power by being applied in the lives of living men. As the Gospel acts by means of personal agencies, so it requires living believers through whom it may manifest its power. It calls upon the Church at this time, and especially on educated men, to see that love should abound in knowledge and in all judgment. If Christianity is from God, all these things should be known and approved and mastered by every believer. What might not happen if with the reviving sense of spiritual realities for which we pray there came a revival of Christian morality?

EDUCATED MEN.

These considerations appeal with special force to the minds of educated men, especially to educated young men. They are forced to know something of modern doubt and unbelief to confer with those questionings which disturb so many minds and darken so many hearts. They are familiar with the achievements and promises of science in all its forms, and are sensitively alive to the refinements of culture, literature and art. They know how blessed and exalted a condition it is to believe in God and in Christ, for they can best measure the greatness of God and the condescension of Christ by the vastness of the universe and the insignificance of man. They go forth to occupy places of influence and power at a time when ideas earnestly and eloquently, or falsely and plausibly set forth, rule the world.

AN APPEAL TO THE GRADUATES.

I commend these considerations to you, young men of the graduating class, as you go forth to the responsibilities of public life. Most of these principles are familiar to your minds. They have been inculcated in your class room and from this pulpit. You have been taught that the truths of Christianity are so far from being inconsistent with scientific truth that they confirm it and are confirmed by it, and that the practical principles of Christianity are broad and stable enough to support any superstructure of individual or public life, however elaborate and stately, while its refining influences cannot fail to clothe that edifice with ever-growing grace and beauty. You have learned by precept, at least, if not by example, that ardent devotion to the kingdom of God rather favors than represses a generous culture and refined tastes, and that the consistent and fervent Christian scholar is in no way disqualified for the most fearless allegiance to science nor the most successful culture of letters. You have felt that the controlling spirit of this zeal of science and culture, in theory at least, is the spirit of Christian faith and love and progressive enlightenment. Standing where you now stand for a moment view your college life in its relations to God and duty and the immortal life, and, casting one inquiring and tender look upon its opportunities now gone by, it may be that you regret that your own faith in God and devotion to duty have not been more fervent and progressive. Similar regrets and wishes will often come to you. You go forth in life at a time when the current of modern life threatens to take every man from his feet whose feet do not stand upon duty and whose hands are not stretched forth toward God. To one ambition there is a certain prize—the ambition to follow Christ in unselfish love, and manifest that love in an enlightened and c