

**ADDRESSES DELIVERED AT THE  
INAUGURATION OF THE REV. JOHN  
GORDON, D. D., AS PRESIDENT OF  
HOWARD UNIVERSITY, PP. 3-  
45(NOT COMPLETE)**

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# ADDRESSES

DELIVERED AT THE

INAUGURATION

OF

THE REV. JOHN GORDON, D. D.,

AS

President of Howard University, Washington, D.C.



WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

Wednesday, March the Thirtieth,

NINETEEN HUNDRED AND FOUR.

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## Afternoon Addresses.

The exercises of the afternoon opened in the Andrew Rankin Memorial Chapel on the University Campus at 2.30 p. m., the Rev. Teunis S. Hamlin, D. D., President of the Board of Trustees, in the Chair. After prayer by the Rev. Francis J. Grimke, D. D., the following addresses were delivered:

### Dean Isaac Clark, D. D.

Dean Isaac Clark, D. D., for the Theological Department, said: It was November 17, 1866—Monthly Concert night of the First Congregational Church in Washington, D. C. The leader of the meeting was Rev. Dr. C. B. Boynton, pastor of the church. The theme of the evening was the duty of the country and of the church to the Freedmen lately made free by the Lincoln proclamation. Mr. Henry A. Brewster spoke of a great missionary society, like the American Board, as the need of the day for the evangelization of those who had lately been freed. Rev. Benjamin F. Morris, then in Government service, told of the surprise and delight with which he had listened that afternoon to an examination in theological studies of a half dozen colored young men—students in what was then known as Wayland Institute, a school having only a single teacher. In closing his remarks he expressed the wish that the day would come when a theological school would be established by the Congregational Church in Washington, D. C. To this Rev. D. B. Nichols responded with instant interest and springing faith, "Why not now?" This was the good seed sown in good ground which sprang up, and has borne fruit an hundred fold in the multiplied departments and manifold and beneficent activities of Howard University.

On the following Thursday a conference was held and a committee was appointed to prepare a plan of action. A week later a plan was presented recommending the opening of a night school to begin with, and that three chairs of instruction be established—one on Evidences of Christianity and Biblical Interpretation, a second on Biblical History and Geography, and a third on Anatomy and Phisiology in their special relations to Hygiene. The plan

was adopted and Rev. E. W. Robinson was appointed to the first chair, Rev. D. B. Nichols to the second, and Dr. Silas Loomis to the third.

So began the school which was to be called a Theological Institute, the aim of which was the education of colored youth for the ministry. Other conferences followed and other counsellors were called in, with the result that the original plan was enlarged until it included a Theological Department, a Normal Department, a Medical Department, a Law Department, a Collegiate Department, an Agricultural Department, and a Preparatory Department. Thus enlarged in plan, and under the name of "The Howard University," the institution was incorporated by Act of Congress in March, 1867.

But the Theological Department, first in the thoughts of the founders, was last in formal organization, though as early as December, 1867, arrangement was made to give instruction to students in the academical courses who had the ministry in view, in Biblical Interpretation and Evidences of Revelation. Not till October, 1871, was a regular and full theological course provided. The Theological Department is now nearing the end of its thirty-third year of life and labor.

What has the Department stood for through these years?

First. Not for denominationalism. The students have always been of many denominations, and the faculty never all of one denomination. And yet it has not stood for disloyalty to denominations, but for the larger loyalty to Christ, which takes denominations up into a happy fellowship and a helpful co-operation.

Second. Let it be confessed that the Department has not stood for highest scholarships and this of necessity, for, as a rule, those who have come to the Department have come without the scholarship which a college course might give them—many of them without the attainments of a preparatory course. So coming in they could not go out accomplished scholars.

Third. It has not stood for scholarship alone and this of choice. Scholarship alone, however full and accurate, is no sure pledge of success in the ministry. Some fine scholars have been poor preachers, and poorer pastors. Consecration is as important as erudition. A rude sword in the hand of a determined patriot is more effective than a Damascus blade in the hand of an indifferent citizen. Still it is well to temper and sharpen the rude sword. With knowledge, consecration becomes the more effective.

Fourth. So believing, the Department has stood for opportunity and help to recognized preachers and chosen pastors, who have felt their need of a better equipment for service and have been eager to use the chance and advantage put within their



reach. Many such, after full or partial courses of study, have gone forth to be better teachers and safer leaders of their people.

Fifth. More generally the Department has stood for the practicable with a push toward the ideal. It has stood for what is practicable in that it has begun with students where they were in attainment and has kept in view the fields where they were to be in service. Education is a relative thing. Relatively, one may be well or poorly educated. It depends upon where he is and with whom he is brought into comparison. In the Black Belt one may be a well educated man; in Boston, a poorly educated man. Place and comparison make the difference. Keeping in mind the relativity of education, the Department has always stood for an educated ministry. It has stood for higher education—higher in the attainments actually made by the students, higher still in the ideals, plans, and purposes formed to be worked out in after years; always for an education higher than that of the people they were to serve and fitting them for natural and wise leadership in things moral and religious.

The Department has stood for the practicable in its special aim and method. Specialization in education is the order of the day. Not general acquisition and discipline, but special knowledge and training are sought. Not the soul's possibilities of large development and culture, but the world's demand upon the soul for effective service—that is the key to the present system of education. Men are to be taught and drilled to do something, and to do that something well. One who is not an accomplished scholar may be a good specialist. The work of the minister is a special work. Special training may fit him for it. The Department has stood for special training for special work. So doing it has stood for an ethical Christianity which holds men to the faithful doing of the duties of this life while rejoicing in the hope of a better life to come. It has stood for character as even better than learning and an element of more lasting and beneficent power. It has stood for a scriptural religion, believing that the scriptures give us an authoritative revelation of God, and that accuracy, facility, and loving eagerness in getting at, getting out and giving out the meaning of God's word are the best means to that best end—the winning of men to Christ and the training of them up in Christ. It has stood for study and drill along many lines, but all converging upon this result—power to save souls—we are not afraid of the old-time phrase—power to save souls, and to extend the Kingdom of Heaven on the earth.

Standing for the practicable, we believe that the Department has in good measure achieved the practical. It has taught and trained men, and sent them out to be the leaders of their people

—leaders of their people in that they are ahead of them, yet not so far ahead as to snap the cords of love and sympathy without which there can be no effective leadership. If conceit of knowledge and sense of superiority take the place of humility of spirit and longing to help and bless others, then the educated minister becomes the useless minister.

The Department has given impulse and direction to good natural powers and sent out men to carry forward their own education, until their ability and worth have been recognized and honored by promotion to places of responsibility and distinction. More than 200 have been graduated from the Department and have done good service in this and in other lands. A large number—how many I can not say—have received instruction for longer or shorter periods and have gone forth not taking diploma or certificate, yet themselves the better living epistles to be read of their fellow-men. At present in day and evening classes 75 are receiving instruction. The evening class of recent date was organized in response to an earnest desire of young men, engaged in work through the day, to pursue a course of study which would fit them for more effective service in and for the churches. I have said that the Department has stood for the practicable and for a push toward the ideal. It has stood for the latter, not by exclusion of all but the brightest and best taught, but by raising the conditions of eligibility to graduation and by raising still higher the conditions of actual graduation to be attested by diploma or certificate. It has sought to send out better and better young men to the churches that it might receive better and better young men from the churches. "Like people like priests." It is for the churches to set the standard of acceptable ministerial service. In church, as well as in business, demand and supply will answer to each other.

That our graduates are loyal to Howard is evidenced by an active Alumni Association maintained for a long period, and in recent years having its annual reunions and banquets, something which, I believe, is peculiar to this Department.

What are our present needs? First, closer identification with the University carrying with it duty on the one hand and provision on the other; second, larger endowment with reference to better equipment and better service in the future; third, young men who feel that the best talents and attainments are only a fitting tribute to Him who has redeemed them and who offers to them the supreme honor of being co-workers with Him in building up the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth.

What our joy and hope? With grateful memories of those who have labored here in the past, with thankfulness to Him who is above all and whose favor has been the sunshine of the institution in by-gone years, we turn with glad expectancy to our new President, whose zeal will prompt, whose wisdom will plan, and whose strength will be given for the uplift and advancement of the University in all its interests and in all its Departments.