

**AN ADDRESS TO THE  
GRADUATES OF  
THE LAW SCHOOL OF  
COLUMBIA COLLEGE**

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An address to the graduates of the Law School of Columbia College by Alexander W. Bradford

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**ALEXANDER W. BRADFORD**

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AN ADDRESS

TO THE

Graduates of the Law School

OF

COLUMBIA COLLEGE,

DELIVERED BY

*W. Bradford*  
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## Address.

GENTLEMEN,—

GRADUATES OF THE LAW SCHOOL OF COLUMBIA COLLEGE :

At the request of The Trustees of this Venerable Institution of Learning, it becomes my duty to address you a few words, before your parting.

You have passed, under most favorable auspices, through the first and preparatory stage of the study of the Law ; and have reached an epoch of grave import, eventuating in a birth into a great and noble profession. To-day you are made associates not only with living Advocates, and illustrious Judges, but with a long line of Jurists, reaching back to the earliest ages, and connecting you with the science of Jurisprudence, as developed, expanded, adorned, and illustrated, through a period of two thousand years. You are now members incorporate of an ancient and honored fraternity, in whose ranks you may claim brotherhood with a throng of immortal dead,

who have won their crown, and a greater throng of the living, who are still pressing on towards the mark.

Crossing the threshold of active life, with eager feet, as the portals open before you, pause a moment with me, before entering upon your career, and let us consider together some of the characteristics of the profession you have adopted.

My theme is, The UNITY and The DIGNITY of the LAW.

The Law has an *historical* unity. In its origin, progress, growth, and maturity, it is an integral body. To its intelligent study, comprehension, and application, we shall derive great advantage from examining its history as a science, exploring the sources, tracing its progress, from remote periods, through all the mutations of society, and showing its development under every form of civilization. The subject affords scope for extended inquiry, and might readily exhaust volumes. I can now only indicate its general outlines, and point you to a course of study and investigation which, in the future, you can pursue for yourselves.

There were three chief sources from which modern civilization derived the principles of Civil, Constitutional, and International Law—Judea, Greece, and Rome.

In each of these social organizations, during a long

period of separate existence, there had been developed peculiar and strongly marked characteristics,—in Judea, the principles of true religion—duty to God and duty to man—the foundation of all law; in Greece, the philosophy of the mind, in all its various relations,—the foundation of exact thinking and reasoning; and, in Rome, the science of Government, in its practical application to the welfare of the people—the foundation of all equal, just, and impartial legislation. These three were to be brought into one. First, Greece stretched her victorious arms over the East, Alexander her standard-bearer; and next, Rome enlarged the circle of her power and overlapped the former; so that in Jerusalem, at the promulgation of Christianity, might be observed everywhere the influence of three systems, originally distinct, combining and coalescing so as ultimately to be blended harmoniously together. This union was preceded, and largely induced by the spread of the Greek tongue through the West and East, and the influence of the Hellenic literature, alike at Rome and in Jerusalem. It was promoted, also, by the dispersion of the Jews—compulsory and voluntary—not only in Babylonia, but through Greece, and Italy. They readily became naturalized, they received proselytes, their influence extended, and thus they constituted, throughout the Empire, a medium by which Rome, Greece, and Jerusalem were



brought together. What a wonderful assemblage was gathered on the day of Pentecost, when Peter spoke :—

“ THERE WERE DWELLING AT JERUSALEM, JEWS, DEVOUT MEN—OUT OF EVERY NATION UNDER HEAVEN.”—*Acts, c. II.*

“ Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians.”

The presence of these three forms of civilization, and their combination, are well illustrated in the case of St. Paul, the tent-maker of Tarsus, in Cilicia, a province where Cicero had ruled. He bore the name of the Roman patrician family, the Æmillian Pauli. He was surrounded by a Greek population governed by a Roman pro-consul; though a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and a student of Holy Scripture from early childhood, he was familiar with the poetry and the philosophy of Athens, and with the laws of Rome. A Pharisee, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, in the school of Hillel, he could dispute alike with Jewish doctors or with “philosophers of the Epicureans and of the Stoics.” He spoke Greek, Hebrew and Latin; he could plead before Agrippa and Festus at Cæsarea, or before the Areopagus on Mars Hill. Of the tribe of Benjamin, yet he was a Roman citizen,

and, as such, demanded his right of appeal, under the Roman law, from Festus to Cæsar. His writings abound with allusions to the Roman law, especially its provisions relative to heirship, testaments, adoption, the right of citizenship, and slavery.

A remarkable proof of the extent to which the influence of the jurisprudence of Rome had reached, is indicated also in the Gospel. By the laws of the Twelve Tables, the plaintiff in a suit, on meeting his adversary, might order him to go before the prætor or judge, saying, *in jus voco te*. This was the process, or summons commencing the action; if he consented to go, the defendant offered the tip of his ear, which the plaintiff touched, and then the plaintiff took him forthwith to the judge. They might, however, adjust the difference when it had reached this serious point; and, so the law provided expressly that if they made up the matter by the way, *endo via*, the process was dropped. This rule of the Twelve Tables was so familiar to the inhabitants of Judea, that it was made the subject of a figure illustrating moral truth in the discourse of our Lord, "Agree with thine adversary quickly whiles thou art in the way with him—*endo via*—lest at any time, the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison." (Matt. v: 25.)

There is an inscription upon a Christian tomb in the

catacombs, of which the name is Latin, the letters Greek, and the conclusion in Hebrew; the superscription over the cross could be read by Jews, Greeks, and Romans. These represent to us at a glance the three great peoples, whose religion, philosophy, and laws, gradually blending, and brought into convergence and ultimate unity, became the perennial fountain of Christian civilization and jurisprudence. The process of mutual transfusion and assimilation between these three systems, notwithstanding the persecution of the Church, continued through the first ages of the Christian era, until, by the adoption of Christianity by Constantine, and the transference of the Imperial Court to Byzantium, all lines of distinction were removed, and the basis was laid for the promulgation by Justinian of a system of jurisprudence which combines the clear, polished intellectuality of the Athenian, the manly sense, practical reason, and wide experience of the Roman, and the pure morality of the Christian.

In tracing the History of the Roman Law, we find little of value anterior to the Twelve Tables.

But few fragments remain of the *Leges Regiæ*, or the laws which prevailed at Rome under the monarchy.

After the expulsion of the kings, the first name that meets us is Papyrius, Pontifex Maximus—who is said by