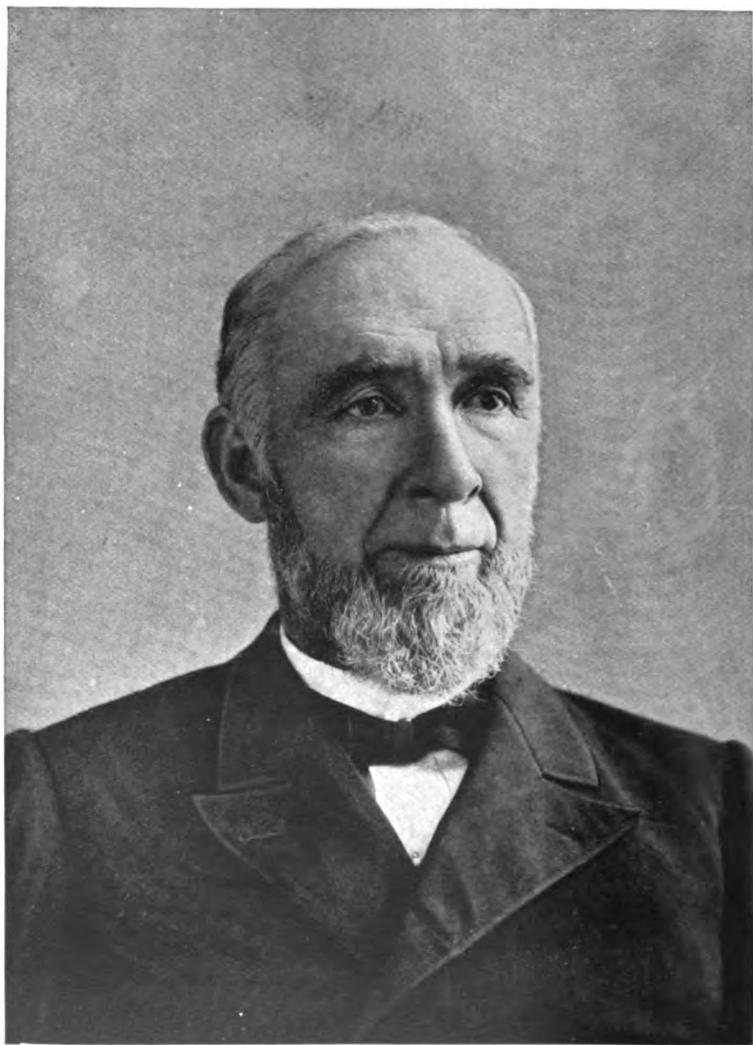




*Your sincerely,
Jas. Black*

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—AND—

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THE PERMANENT ELEMENTS OF RELIGION.

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A Graduating Thesis; Course A, Mental and Moral Philosophy.

It is now practically everywhere recognized, that religion is a universal factor in race development. This being conceded, the next problem for solution is to discover what the permanent elements in religion are, as distinguished from the transient ones. First, it can be said that the time of religious awakening is the same in psychical experience, the world around, and is the moment one begins to reflect on personal destiny "beyond this flood of years." Again, it is noticed that the thought called forth at this time is also practically the same everywhere, and may be expressed in the well known words, "What must I do to be saved?"—more scientifically stated, What must I do to attain unto my ideal? The thoughts and acts arising from an attempt to answer this question satisfactorily to oneself constitute the content of the religious life. It is the object of the present paper to indicate briefly the universality of the two above named facts, in the religious awakening of human life, and to draw the inference therefrom, that since they are the universal elements in religious awakening, they are necessarily the *permanent* elements in the growth of the human soul.

IN MEMORIAM—REV. JAMES BLACK, D. D., LL. D.

[Sabbath afternoon, March 15, 1891, was observed by the University of Wooster with special services in memory of Rev. James Black, D. D., LL. D., for fifteen years an honored Professor in the University. The services were held in Kanke Chapel. We present here the four brief addresses delivered on that occasion.]

I. LESSONS FROM DR. BLACK'S LIFE.

An Address by REV. S. F. SCovel, President of the University.

1. We may learn always to put first in our judgment of men, that which he always put first, and which all men instinctively put first in estimating him—sincere piety. He thought more of it, and we think more of it in him than of any other trait or of all others combined. We could not have had, nor can we yet have, a Dr. Black, except as we honor reverent faith in God and devoutness of spirit. This we wish him always to stand for in Wooster's Pantheon. It will be long before any figure therein will be more truly representative, and only his sainted friend, Dr. John Robinson, the first president of the Board of Trustees, stands beside him as yet. May God grant some who succeed to grow like them. The pre-eminently good can be least spared from the Faculty and government of a Christian college.

2. Let us learn something of the satisfaction which comes to an earnest man in the later part of a good life, and to others after the life is completed. For all the years I have known Dr. Black, now more than a quarter of a century, he has been accustomed to receive the thankful acknowledgments of former pupils and parishioners.

He loved to have them come, though he never sought them. I remember his meeting some in Pittsburgh. The sons of his former pupils began to be sent to be under his instruction here. When he went to the General Assembly, a few years ago, he met a whole company of them,—I think he said twenty-five or thirty in that body, attending its sessions. What a blessing!

And since his death how multiform the testimonies of those who knew and admired him. One writes: "On next Sabbath, memorial services are to be held for good Dr. Black, and I wish it were possible for me to be present. It has

always seemed to me as though no better man than he has ever lived, and his loss must be deeply felt at Wooster." Another, a well-known and most useful minister, writes more at length, in grateful memory of the earlier years of Dr. Black's life. And you will be impressed by the extracts I read from his letter, with the fact that the unfailing good cheer which ever characterized our lamented Professor was an attribute of his youth and earlier manhood. And you cannot fail to note, too, that the high purpose of life toward which he struggled for many years did not interfere with his natural enjoyment of the sports of youth. By nature, also, he became, through the most wonderful kindness of heart, as nearly "all things to all men" as loyalty to principle would permit.

"I first met him" says this writer "when he came, a country boy, to our pastor, Rev. Samuel J. Wilson, D. D., at Dunlap's Creek, Pa., to prepare for college. He soon became acquainted with our young people, and was the life of all our social gatherings. At our farm home he first saw and took part with enthusiasm in the primitive game of quoits, as we played it with old horse-shoes. * * * * Having completed his college course, he came back to us as the Principal of the newly-founded Dunlap's Creek Academy. He already had the hearts of the young people, who had known him as a student. He entered on the work with great enthusiasm and had no dull pupils, because he was never dull himself. * * * * He governed in his school without effort. I do not remember a harsh word spoken by him in three years. He was one of us in all our sports. No game of foot or alley ball could be played without him, either on one side or as umpire. Having dislocated his knee-cap in a game of alley ball, the boys loyally hauled him for several days to and from school. * * * Other teachers taught, he inspired: others made and enforced rules; he was himself our rule, our unconscious law, at work or play. How many country boys and girls received from him the formative impulse of a better, more unselfish life, eternity alone will reveal. That genial and radiant face will never fade from the memory of those who knew and felt the power of his uplifting life, in the day of his fresh, manly vigor and strength."

3. We may learn how the natural expression of courtesy and kindly feeling is attractive to all. Dr. Black loved all children and they loved him in return. Touching instances could be given, and I know the grateful memories they awaken will be cherished lifelong in some hearts. He was chivalrously attentive to ladies. Never was he too busy to be accessible to any who needed him. And he was easy to interest in anything that promised to contribute to the welfare of another. The need of this type of men is evident. It should be characteristic of a Christian college

community. There is incessant change: many must be strangers. But we meet on a basis of mutual confidence, and we should use all its opportunities and privileges. Woe to him who abuses them!

4. We must learn to love our work. Dr. Black was pre-eminent here. He had enthusiasm as a teacher, in the small beginnings. I remember how he spoke of it and of the assurance of his having been useful then.

He loved his books as the tools of his work. Bibliophile he was, only in a true sense. He used his books. Nothing was dry for him in what he called "methods of exact and critical work." He loved the material in which his work was placed. The Greeks,—all they were and said and did, he enjoyed. Each separate author's beauties he glowed over. "The aroma of the language" was his own peculiar phrase.

Anglo Saxon and Old English he delighted in, alleging that no man could claim to be well educated who neglected them. In history he was equally in earnest.

He loved even the place where his work was done. He desired the old room as long as he could possibly climb the stairs. All fruits of genuine enthusiasm clustered in his life's work.

5. We must learn to love those we work for. This was Dr. Black's universal characteristic. He could not touch any one but he became interested in that one to an extent that few suspected he did outside work to help those who needed it. He was farthest possible removed from a perfunctory worker. Who that was present will ever forget—I never can—the touching scene in chapel, in 1884, as he varied from the usual rule to call the roll of the graduating class for the last time? So during the last week of illness he had his chair moved to the window, that he might see the students passing to and fro. His intercession in cases of discipline went up to the heavenly Father from a heart full almost to breaking. How patient he was in Faculty with cases repeatedly called! Thus all great teachers have lived and wrought. They were helpers of their kind. All were stirred to their souls' depth with wonder at the human mind, with reverence for the possibilities of character and with a sense of responsibility for the future influence of those they taught. This love for pupils demands the highest traits of character and the grace of God as well. We need more and more of it. No college can be Christian without stores of it.

6. We may learn to believe and respect, to admire and enjoy the word of God. Dr. Black was an Ezra. "He prepared his heart"—yes, both head and heart—"to seek out the law of the Lord, and to do and teach it." How near to the fountains of their thought and feeling who

wrote the word, his studies and devotional reading brought him! How firm his faith in the divine promises! How extensive his knowledge of the various books and their special order and value in the Sacred Canon. His very accent in reading Scripture was clear comprehension and devout reverence, and both were conveyed to every hearer. He loved to illustrate Scripture by Scripture: and he illuminated what he illustrated.

7. We may learn that great powers and large studies are consistent with thorough devotion to the old faith in the old forms. Dr. Black found the old forms to be true statements, and they became to him the more sacred by association and long familiarity. Any need of revision which he acknowledged was not for himself, but for others, who stumbled at little things. The great outlines of faith, the fixed and intelligible order of salvation by faith in a divine Savior, were always too noble and massive things to be doubted. He knew words and roots and interpretations and interpreters, but they never touched nor changed, they only illustrated and glorified, his earliest and deepest convictions. We need more of such men and ministers and teachers in our own day. There is perpetual need of them on account of the nature of mind and the nature of progress. Many minds are restless just because they are superficial and insecurely anchored. Some suppose that progress is not in the old truth, but away from it; forgetting that truth has "the eternal years of God" for her own, and has depths inside able to drown them with their short sounding-lines. Such men as Dr. Black are needed now in our own beloved church. The breath of neology can find its way into the sails of the revision movement. Men may turn revision into reversion, and the smoothing-knife may be used to cut to the core. I think this will not be the case. If not, it will be because many have been taught by such men as Dr. Black, who have learned to think like him, intelligently and soundly.

8. We may learn humility. Dr. Black was "clothed with humility." How gently he put away even the assurances that his work was pleasing and profitable to others. During his last days on earth, he seemed drawn more and more to a reliance wholly upon the mercy of God. He was like that goily minister early in this century, who was reminded by some one of his good deeds and teachings, and replied, "I am gathering together all these things to burn them and go into heaven upon free grace alone." Ah! what a lesson for us who are often so self-complacent and yet must have need of mercy thrice multiplied, as compared with him. God teach us through him to say to the end of our days, "Lord have mercy."

9. We must learn to expect to die in the midst of our unfinished work. The plans of Dr. Black were large. Two years in advance were already finished for the English Elective Course. A book sent for arrived but a few days before his death, so constant was his purpose.

This is characteristic of such a largely planned life as his. Earnestness must ever outstrip time. The long art will find the time short.

How many cases to warn us! The martyrs died in the midst of their usefulness. Stephen, Paul, Peter, were followed by some of the reformers, by Gustavus Adolphus and the rest in such a death. Bancroft lets fall the pen: Bryant was so stricken, and the heroes of our war are going so. We must work contentedly and as rapidly as possible, but never feverishly; and we must expect that He who holds the life plan, and who is above all our plans, alone will and can know when the end should come.

10. Finally, let us learn the lesson of having Christ as our "only hope." How clearly he taught it! How devoutly and with what heart-warming confidence he prayed it, here in our daily chapel service, and often elsewhere. How lovingly he pointed the bereaved to it. Let us think of him as saying them, when we read the words of the scholar he admired, and whose experience in leaning upon Christ, he fully shared:

"My bark is wafted to the strand
By breath divine:
And on the helm there rests a hand
Other than mine.

One who has known in storms to sail,
I have on board:
Above the raging of the gale
I hear my Lord

He holds me: when billows smite
I shall not fall:
If sharp, 'tis short; if long, 'tis light:
He tempers all.

Safe to the land! safe to the land!
The end is this:
And then with him go hand in hand,
Far into bliss."—DEAN ALFORD.

II. DR. BLACK AS A COLLEAGUE.

An Address by PROF. S. J. KIRKWOOD, LL. D., Vice-Pres. of the Univ.

Having been associated with Dr. Black in the Faculty of the University during the entire period of his connection with the institution, it has been assigned to me to speak of him as