

Robert: Doth not wisdom, cry and understanding, put forth her voice. Now and then it has been said of a sermon that it's alleged scriptural foundation was rather more right pretext than a text. That there may be no dissembling, I warn now that such may be the case this morning. What I have in mind is to say something on the idea of a university. And I trust wisdom will cry and I trust that understanding will put forth her voice. But we may as well be frank, the scripture nowhere has any explicit word about the university. It speaks much of wisdom and true and knowledge of faith, hope and love, but neither school nor academy is anywhere noted in their special place of insemination and dissemination. To be sure the synagogue was a school of sorts and the early church, a focus of instruction. But the scripture neither knows nor heralds the academy and thus so far as scripture is concerned this morning, we will have to shift for ourselves. Suppose someone on some mid-year examination happily behind us had asked you to state the aims of the university and enlarge upon its nature and function, how would you have fared? Perhaps your ingenuity would not have been as taxed as your surprise that the question should be asked at all. So customary, is it for us to take for granted the institutions we are involved in without scrutiny of their purposes? Well then, how would it go with the faculty? If positions were reversed and you, the students had asked us, what is this enterprise called the university? What does its name imply? What are its reasons for being and how does your particular subject matter in here in it's total economy of disciplines? And with what justification? Frankly, I do not know whether the ingenuity of the students or of the faculty would be the more greatly strain under these circumstances. I suspect that the position of either would be about equally discomfiting with that of the rank and file of civil servants pressed to define the aims of politics and the purpose of government, or as uneasy as churchman required to define the church, its reason for being and their place in it. The fact is nothing is commoner for them, for all of us, to participate in institutions without defined or acknowledged consensus about their intrinsic meaning or essential purpose. In point of fact, within limited periods, institutions seem inclusive and hospitable of many aims and varying purposes and so meanings and purposes are mutually compatible. Some are incompatible, but there is no evident difficulty, nor over crisis until some aims become imperious enough to be at strife with others, or until prevailing ones are contested by new and emergent ones that seek to supplant the old. Then there will be signs of ferment and inner turmoil indicating that the institution is in transition, if it is a university consideration might properly be given to the nature of the emergent forces, the consequence and likely shape of the future, and above all to the question of what is not just the existing, but the essential idea of a university. This also would be part of long range planning and if it is not done first, then planning is either piling on more of the same or if it is subterfuge. Let us have a look then at some ideas of a university with a view to sorting them out. Webster's definition of a university has remained unchanged for decades indicating that there has been no very lively reflection about the subject. "It is," he says, "An institution organized for teaching and study and the higher branches of learning and empowered to confer degrees in special departments as theology, law, medicine and the arts." A little reflection makes it plain to see that Webster's definition is only a rough description and pretends nothing concerning the essential nature of what it describes. The historian's motion helps us a little in suggesting that the school of Paris founded in the 12th century first properly earned the name university because it was first to embrace all the arts and the sciences. This implies that the word university, deriving

from the Latin 'universitas' refers to the whole, the whole universe of studies. just as I'll use the word 'universitas' to signify the world in a sense, then the university would be a kind of microcosm or miniature world within the world and in which the outer actual world is represented in knowledge, a microcosm within the macrocosm. That perhaps is the denotation actually attaching to the word in the later middle ages. To the university, therefore, students would resort to desired something like a synoptic view of the world of man and of reality. Now, this may have been the idea of the university in the 13th century, perhaps even in the 17th century, but by the 19th, this conception was disavowed. In the 20th century it was all but eclipse. Endless specialization in the natural and social sciences foreclosed upon a synoptic view of reality so that in our time, no less Oxonian, than William Temple could declare that a university is a place where a multitude of studies are conducted with no relationship between them except those of simultaneity and juxtaposition. And Arnold Nat of a nearby chapel hill has adequately demonstrated in my opinion, that in theory, the Modern Liberal University, reject the attempt to teach a unified conception of the world. Thus the older conception of the university as the unified world of knowledge within the larger world, the microcosm within the macrocosm is gone, succeeded by a amorphous galaxy approves spawned by the several sciences in general disarray and devoid of inclusive pattern or comprehensive rationale, no longer a cosmos. The university tended to become a storehouse of truth with no shore grass upon the truth and so doth not wisdom cry and understanding put her voice. So a knew conception of the university came of age, reached maturity and something gives in its dockage. It based itself upon the announced program of the 17th century experimental sciences, which according to the experimental method, the privileged, if not be exclusive prerogative of determining truth and falsity in human judgment. Nothing was proved that was not verified by the method. Nothing that the method verified was other than a particular truth. The whole approved fractured like Humpty Dumpty, couldn't be put together again. Man, therefore, reluctantly, sometimes blindly, had to contempt themselves to await the results of the next experiment from the laboratory or the anticipated findings of the social or political statistician. Endless vault applying of data went on to burst the walls of libraries as monographs added more and more to the mounting lore of less and less. In principle, the university came to disavow responsibility for the truth men live by, whether they're moral or religious or aesthetic and when the kind of professional solemnity that accepted a kind of cultural schizophrenia, a fixed Gulf between the truths of the sciences and the truths men live by if they live at all. If anywhere to obtain the latter truth, it must deeds be from outside the university. Indeed, the situation is known to have gone so far, as that what is recognized in the outside world as turpitude and immorality is in the university now and again, innocuously styled incompetence. Doth not wisdom, cry and understanding, put forth her voice. Now, as the matter stands, there is little doubt that this second idea of the university I have mentioned, the one that enshrines the all sufficiency of scientific methodology with its endless proliferation of proofs has had its special part to play in the present failure of nerve of liberal democracy in the west. To be sure some of its devotees have contrived to content themselves with some departmental findings and inductive of dogmas envisioning reality through their particular crack, but for the most of us, this situation signifies the incomprehensible pluralism of proofs without proof, which has eroded the inherited structures of value and meaning until the intelligible fabric of life dissolves into impending meaninglessness. Wisdom cries out for a unity. The one that gives form and structure to the many and whole says Plato Newman said that dreadful slithering of thought into the infinite abyss. Without unity, there is no difference and without difference, that is intelligible structure, there is no presiding truth to be found among the many. There is only the 'nihil', the nothing. And the will of man invoked by no

compounding vision or demanding loyalty is mired increasingly and the impotence of indecision. This is our time. Thus, I find it an unaccountable anachronism that this idea of the university should be resurgent at Duke or elsewhere in this day of the world's life, when the existence of Western Hellenic Christian culture is militantly challenged by a unified world view that however be naked, bids well to capture with its partial meaningfulness, the disinherited of the earth. The third idea of the university closely allied with the second derives from the dictum of Francis Bacon, 'Knowledge is Power'. It is justified by its utility. "The true and lawful goal of the sciences," declared Bacon, "Is that human life should be endowed with new discoveries and powers. In this way," he said, "Man could become a god to man and the kingdom of man founded on the sciences might easily rival and probably outstrip the kingdom of God in significance, certainly in utility." There is no doubt that over the years, Bacon has had a hearing in the university. The ascendancy of technology and the decline of the humanities, the denaturing of philosophy and the eclipse of theology are witnesses to this. Moreover, it was through the universities that's the bomb was devised as the dreadful and consummate achievement of Bacon's problem. The kingdom of man founded upon the sciences was apparently also to be destroyed by them. Now, man could become a god to man, at least for man's annihilation. No prophesy of good was ever so well fulfilled in its reverse as Bacon's. Nemesis and frustration, thy name is man. And so the presidential address of January 20th just pass, poses the issue simply plainly, "It is destruction," he said, "Or peace. Before the dark powers of destruction unleashed by science, engulf all humanity in planned or accidental self destruction." Those were the presidents words. Do you know what dropped out of this sky near Goldsboro this past week? Almost surely, enough atomic power to have pulverized Eastern North Carolina, if it had gone off. This is the providence going on over our head. Well, from what resources then of science and technology, shall peace come? This has been the frantic question of the association of atomic scientists, who have rehearsed this peril for 15 years without an answer. Plainly the powers unleashed by science are either diabolical or beneficence depending upon the men who used them. But what is man? And what are the Springs of his motivation? And how may these be altered for good? Whence comes the will to righteousness? And what are the sources of goodness? These are questions that deserve to be asked seriously in the university. And the university that has downgraded the humanities has pigeonholed philosophy, has banished or threatens to banish religion and sniped at theology, has no answer. Doth not wisdom cry and understanding put forth her voice. There is another fourth idea of the university which gives full place to the humanities. It had classical statement in the work of John Henry Newman, that brilliant and controversial British churchman of the 19th century. Said Newman now a hundred years ago, "The university is a place of teaching universal knowledge. This implies that its object is on the one hand intellectual, not moral and on the other, that it is the diffusion and extension of knowledge, rather than the advancement." Newman could not accept the university as a place of research. He was perplexed in this connection to know how, if its purposes were mainly discovery it should bother with students? And it may be conceded that there has been too many, a university researcher, an insistent dilemma here, as well as a persistent news. But what is central in Newman's theory is his cogent plea for knowledge as its own sufficient reward and intellectual value as its own chief hand. "Such is the constitution of the human mind," thought Newman, "That knowledge is capable of being its own answer." He approved Cicero's bill that as soon as we escape the pressure of necessary chaos, forthwith we desire to see, to hear, to learn. So it seems to Newman that the end of university education is a comprehensive view of truth, in all its branches of the relations of science to science, of their mutual bearings and their respective value (coughs) This is liberal education. Any believes that in genders, the

philosophic tanker, a habit of mind of serene composure, which lasts through life of which the attributes, he says are freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation and wisdom. Newman's idyllic picture answers authentically, not alone to defending but to the aspiration of the true academation even to this day. The figure of the Sage, perhaps the Socratic himself presides over the composition and in the background we do not fail to see the 19th century English gentleman stroll past, soberly debonair from the cricket field to four o'clock tea. Perhaps it is a romantic 19th century version of Plato's academy or Aristotle's Lyceum, at least for Norman, the university retains its role as seat of universal learning. The learn cosmos within the larger cosmos in this view of the university and this is to be said in its favor, the intelligible world has a chance to remain standing. But what is this intellectualistic purism by which Newman is content to divide knowledge from virtue and finds within the former knowledge, the self-sufficient domain of university endeavor. This is also our own purism if I am not mistaken. We have been tricked by the idol of Newman's and of others into believing that Socratic moderation *sophrosyne*, was without commitment. That wisdom was without moral earnestness, that knowledge was without passion. By this 19th century idol, we have been encouraged to forget that Plato linked knowledge with *Eros* in the several blade, wisdom with devotion to justice and made all trues whatever answerable to the true good. Patron of the intellect alone, the academation can hardly credit the fact even today, but Plato explicitly said in the laws that ignorance is no great evil, but much more to be feared, as the knowledge of many things without knowledge and reverence for the good. Oh, with all his admirable exultation of intellectual values, Newman fosters the fundamental error, I think of the Liberal Democratic University, the divorce of knowledge from virtue and here responsibility toward the moral good and the spiritual structures indispensable to social existence. Small wonder that the university earned the reputation of irrelevancy among embattled men in the workaday world as an ivory tower of secure asylum from the agonizing demands of day by day decision. But Newman's idea of a university did contain a corrective ingredient. It was his own peculiar kind, he knew that his university might breed gentlemen, but gentlemen utterly disdainful of the prophets and contemptuous of the saints. So he was disposed to concede that knowledge is one thing, as he said, and virtue is another. Good sense, *sophrosyne*, is not conscience, which is not true and play those views, refinement is not humility. "Liberal education makes not the Christian," he says, "But the gentleman. It is well to be a gentleman, it is well to have a cultivated intellect, a delicate taste," he says, But still they are no guaranteed for sanctity or even for consciousness." They may attach to the man of the world to the profligate or to the heartless. Then Newman adds this, "Foray the granite rock with razors and moor the vessel with a thread of silk, then you may hope with such keen and delicate instruments as human knowledge and human reason to contend with those giants, the passion and the pride of men." Now it has been overlooked. But in these words, Newman concedes the bankruptcy of his idea of a university in so far as its purpose is to exalt alone the intellectual value in abstraction from the moral and religious. it's *paideia*, its way of salvation through education is helpless to deal remedially with the existing distortions of the human spirit. It yields nothing but the idealized Sage in a glass case who never existed. By his own admission Norman teaches that the university that takes no responsibility for the moral implications of knowledge is sterile, so far as its contribution to the actual world is concerned. Therefore, Newman explicitly looked to the church to supply to the university, what he calls it's integrity. Now we have glanced with your indulgence at the four historically controlling ideas of a university of the past 600 years. Each has its value, each has its half proof, each, save the first, has its vicious effect. Doth not wisdom cry and understanding put forth her body. Wisdom does cry and cries out if I am not mistaken that despite the university's bonded openness to proof,

it is no more really open to criticism nor capable of self criticism than the church or the political parties it criticizes. It's presage is bound by the shackles of their own unexamined presuppositions in the claim of disinterested knowledge and bound by the inherited dogmas of the schools as are the devotees of other ways of life and other endeavors. Let that be said here once. Wisdom cries out something else and understanding puts forth her voice to admonish us in our day. This, they declare that the knowledge which preserves man's existence does not, and has been pooled not to derive exclusively from the scientific men. That utility, contrary to Bacon, is a false criterion of truth, that intellectual refinement is not necessarily trustworthy. Wisdom and understanding plainly declare that unless in the idea of a university, reverence is joined with knowledge, the university is not only irrelevant to the actual human situation, but maybe a downright peril to it. Therefore, as you leave this chapel today, mark well those two figures sculpted in stone on either side of the entrance of the nave behind you now. They represent the vision of the founders of this university. They are there permanently enshrined in stone. They are reverence on the one hand, religion and learning on the other hand, there are you different. And I believe that inseparably and together they do constitute a new idea of a university suited for our day and for which wisdom cries out and understanding puts forth her voice, Amen. Let us pray.

Announcer: You have just heard the right Reverend professor Robert Cushman speaking in the Duke chapel. His title today was The Aim of the University and he spoke upon the integration of Greek philosophy into the contemporary intellectual tone of the university. Now we take you back to the studio for one hour of silent meditation.