

Earl of Balfour.

Mr. Chairman, Your Excellency,
My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen:

"Allow me to thank you in the first place for the kind reception you have just given me. I would that I could speak to you in Hebrew, but you will have to be content with the language more familiar to me and I hope not wholly unfamiliar to many of those whom I have the great honour of addressing. Now, ladies and gentlemen, what is it that has brought together this vast concourse drawn from every quarter of the world, speaking as their mother tongue languages far separated in human speech and all collected here as on a great and unique historic occasion in a land in which historic associations crowd upon the memory at every step you take from North to South or East to West. Ladies and Gentlemen, it is not the magnificent view that is

stretched before you, it is the consciousness, that this occasion marks a great epoch in the history of the people who have made this little land of Palestine the seed ground of great religions, and whose intellectual and moral destiny is again from a national point of view reviving, and who will look back to this day which we are celebrating as one of the great milestones in their future career. A few moments ago I was reminded by one friend that from where you are sitting you can see the very spot where the children of Israel first entered the Promised Land. I mentioned this to another friend, and he pointed out to me in his turn that it was from this Mount Scopus, it was from this hill that the Roman destroyer of Jerusalem conducted the siege which brought to an end that great chapter of the Jewish people. Could there be a more historic spot? From it you can see the beginning, from it you can see the end, or what appeared to be the end, of the Jewish Community, of the connections of the Jewish Community with the land which they have made illustrious. Well, a new epoch has begun. The great cultural effort which came to an end so many hundreds of years ago is going to be resumed in the ancient home of your people. It is not that I would suggest for a moment that the Jewish culture, in the interval between the destruction of Jerusalem and the expulsion of the Turk had ceased. Far from it. It has been uninterrupted but it has been scattered. It has not been the culture of the Jewish people living within the traditional limits of the country which they have rendered so famous. It was the separate effort of separate communities, separate individuals, separate men of science, separate theologians, separate philosophers, scattered. They have borne their share in the progress of civilisation. It is a profound mistake, as I think, to suppose that men of Jewish birth have not borne their share, their full share, their very full share in the progress of knowledge, in the growth of human civilisation all the world over.

They have done so; they have done it as it were, however, united in consciousness still scattered in fact, and unable to concentrate. I hope they now will concentrate their peculiar national genius — every nation has its national genius —

in the common task which they have indeed aided in the past, in which I confidently hope they will in the future be able to give even more important aid. It is from this peculiar circumstance that the uniqueness of the present situation takes its rise. It is from this peculiar circumstance that we are now engaged in adapting a Western form of University to an Asiatic site and to an education which is to be carried on in an Eastern language. This is a new experiment. It has never been tried before in any circumstances at all parallel to those in which I speak to you. Ladies and Gentlemen, unless I misunderstand the signs of the times, unless I have profoundly mistaken the genius of the Jewish people, the experiment is predestined to an inevitable success. Not only men of Jewish birth, but those who share the common civilisation of the world, will have reason to congratulate themselves.

Ladies and gentlemen, because I speak in these tones of sanguine confidence, do not for a moment suppose that I underrate the difficulties which will be unquestionably met by Dr. Weizmann and His Excellency or Dr. Weizmann's successor or His Excellency's successor in the task which lies before them. Do not suppose I underrate the difficulties which must necessarily beset every great enterprise, and certainly the great enterprise in which you all feel a common interest. I am not going into details of the difficulties, the practical difficulties, which the founders and the guides of this University will have to deal with. One, which would naturally strike every person first facing this problem is the problem of language. It is true that Hebrew has never been a dead language, but it has not been a language until recently adapted to many phases of modern development. It is a great language. I say so with boldness though I do not know any Hebrew, and I say so for this reason, that the English speaking peoples have been brought up on a translation into English of the Hebrew Scriptures, and that translation is one of the great literary treasures of all who speak the English tongue, it matters not what their view of the historic value of the Hebrew Bible may be. If they know anything of the great language of which they are the

heirs, they will all tell you, all without exception, that the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into English had a profound literary effect upon the whole development of what I am not prepared to say is inferior to any language in any age in its literary output. Now, if a translation from Hebrew has had that profound literary effect upon the English language, surely I am justified in saying that the language from which the translation is made must be superior to the translation to which it gave birth. Clearly, therefore, the Jewish people have been and are the heirs of a great instrument of literary thought, an instrument capable of dealing with all the higher aspects of literary and imaginative literature. But does it follow that Hebrew is fit for modern uses?

There is a great difference between Isaiah and microbiology. Is the language of poetry, is the poetical imagination of Isaiah fit to deal with all the laboratory work that is going to render that building illustrious? I myself would have anticipated that a doubtful answer could be given to that question, were it not that all the competent authorities have assured me that by genius largely, I am told, of one man, it has been developed and has been placed upon lines of development which make it as flexible, as rich, as capable of adaptation to every new use, to every growth within the realm of knowledge as any language in which human thought can be expressed. Therefore, that difficulty at least has been happily and adequately surmounted.

Another difficulty which I have been somewhat afraid of, no, I do not think I ever was afraid of it, but some people were afraid of it, was the difficulty that there would not be adequate teachers found to deal with the whole circuit, the growing spreading circuit of human knowledge. Well, I think if those who entertain that particular form of scepticism will only look upon what men of Hebrew birth have done and are doing in the very realms of work to which your University is to be specially devoted all their fears will melt away and they will share the confidence which most of you, and I certainly share in the future in this respect. In recent years (what I am going to say is merely an illustration of the competence of men of Hebrew birth

in these special scientific lines) in the last few years there have been three theories, all relating to different branches of science, three theories, which have attracted the attention even of the unscientific. I have no doubt that they have promoted a great deal of very unintelligent small talk. Nevertheless they have produced an enormous impression in all parts of the world among all cultivated society. One of these is the philosophic theory known generally as the theory of Creative Evolution. The author of it is my friend, M. Bergson, a great philosopher and a Jew.

Another theory, or rather group of theories, constitute what is called the new psychology, the author of which is Mr. Freud, also a Jew.

The third theory, the most comprehensive, the most important of all is the theory of relativity that has been largely, mainly the work of Mr. Einstein, a mathematical and scientific genius of the very first order, a Jew. I do not mean to suggest to this audience that all the great scientific work of the world has been done or is going to be done by men of Jewish blood. It certainly is not. But it is worth noting to those who look with scepticism on the idea of a Jewish University in Palestine devoted to scientific research, it is worth pointing out what an important place at the present moment with regard to the immediate problems, which are interesting intellectual mankind, the Jewish race has made for itself in our day. Therefore again it seems to me, that this difficulty is one which need not cause much perplexity even to the most doubting, or any excitement even to the most nervous.

But perhaps you will say, ladies and gentlemen, that there is still a good deal of criticism in respect of recent developments in this country from the Arab point of view, and that in a Hebrew University the Arabs can play but little part, and from a Hebrew University the Arab race can derive but little advantage. But there is no doubt that the University must be a Hebrew University. There is no doubt that the language of the University must be Hebrew, but it is a profound mistake to suppose that on that account the Arab population of this country cannot

draw the full measure of advantage which the University is capable of giving to those whom it serves. Now the Arabs will remember that in the dark ages, when Western civilisation appeared almost extinct, smothered under barbaric influences, it was the Jews and Arabs working together in combination, who greatly aided the first sparks of light which illuminated that gloomy period. During the tenth century for example, Jews and Arabs could work together for the illumination of Europe. Cannot Jews and Arabs work together now in cooperation with Europe and make this not merely a great Palestinian University, but a Palestinian University from which all sections of the population of Palestine draw intellectual and spiritual advantage?

Ladies and gentlemen, this land, as I have already reminded you has been the seed plot of great religions. Its immortal claim to the gratitude of mankind mostly rests upon that. But it has had the effect of making this little country the scene of endless disputes, endless differences, endless controversies. To look at the spires, the domes, the endless ecclesiastical monuments in Jerusalem is an almost startling reminder of how far religious differences can divide mankind even though, if people would look sufficiently deep, they would find that the differences in their fundamental principles and fundamental aspirations are not so great. These differences I know well are inevitable. We have to expect them. We ought to minimise them, but we cannot deny that they exist, and we cannot hope that they will not be lasting. But the great happiness of endeavour on which we are all engaged at this moment, the endeavour to found a new University on worthy lines, that endeavour need not be interfered with and ought not be interfered with by those ancient sources of differences which have so unhappily divided mankind. Science at least is outside these sectarian differences. It changes, it moves in these days of ours, it moves with extreme rapidity, but at any one moment, at any period in the development of knowledge, you will find, broadly speaking, all competent men are agreed not as to what is the ultimate truth, but what is, at the moment, the best truth at which you can arrive, and it is from

that, that each day's and each year's progress starts and forms a base for a new advance. The learning of a modern University is not a cause of separation and difference between men, it is a bond of union. Learning is a bond which unites all mankind,—all men of adequate instruction in all parts of the world. It is a common base of thought, which provides common hopes for the future. It supplies common interest, and every student in every University knows that he has among his colleagues, not merely those who are working round him, but men far distant on the other side of the globe occupied with the same problems, dealing with the same difficulties, solving the same enigma. Well, that is an immense advantage which only work on the physical construction of the world can adequately give you. But do not let us underrate its immense advantage. Your guides in this matter, those who are settling the policy of the University, those who are marking out its future course, have done most wisely in determining, firstly, that the growth must be relatively small at the beginning, and secondly, that whatsoever the university is, whatever it tries to do, shall be done on the highest level, and shall mark out the University of Jerusalem as being on the very loftiest plane of human intellectual endeavour, most wisely in that ambitious. There is another piece of wisdom that I think they have shown in the plan they have worked out for their guidance. They realise, of course, as every true student would realise, that knowledge is pursued for the sake of knowledge, that knowledge which is pursued for some more petty or sordid end is knowledge which will never bear the highest fruits. But they also realise that knowledge which is pursued for the sake of knowledge, when attained, showers its blessings not merely upon the learned but upon the unlearned. The discoverer in the most abstract branch of science is sowing the material interests of the human race in ways of which the discoverer himself never dreamed. Developed later by other genius, by other workers in the same field, it in the end will benefit those who hold science an almost contemptible and unpractical pursuit. The two nevertheless would never share in the progress of civilisation were it not for this practical

application of theoretical knowledge to the needs of humankind.

Now, if we keep these two ideals in view the ideal of knowledge for its own sake and the ideal of knowledge as the mainstay of human material well-being, could you pursue a better course than that which Dr. Weizmann and his colleagues have pursued, namely, to select as the first branch of work to which they are going to devote their scientific efforts, those rapidly advancing spheres of knowledge which touch the health of man and the prosperity of agricultural industries by which man ultimately lives. They have seen and they have arranged their scheme of work accordingly and I believe that under their auspices you will find that this University carries out effectively the double task it is entrusted with, the task in the first place of augmenting human knowledge irrespective of the use to which the knowledge is to be applied, and secondly, the practical side which turns to account day by day the discoveries which men of genius, men of ideas are developing elsewhere. I am sure that that happy result is one to which we can confidently look forward, for we live in an age of unequalled rapidity in scientific discovery.

When I was born, the very names of the sciences which I find mentioned in the pamphlet as those to which the University is going to begin to devote its infant energies, the very names of these sciences were unknown and unused, and it is not too much to say that in the course of one man's life the whole outlook upon nature has been fundamentally altered. That is the very moment at which I should desire a University based on research to come into being. That is the happy moment when it may take its share in this great harvest of increasing knowledge which is being garnered in every part of the world.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is because I am confident that in that great task the University of Jerusalem is going to play no small or ignoble part, that it is indeed animated by ideals of the highest, and that it will be staffed and composed of men not inferior to men in any part of the world, it is for these reasons and with supreme confidence in its future, I now declare the University of Jerusalem to be opened.