No inaugural address by Jeremiah Day could be found, but newspaper stories about his inauguration, a hymn sung, an entry from the Yale College minutes about the inauguration, and Day's own ordination speech delivered before his inauguration survive. They are included to suggest the tenor of the ceremony.

Jeremiah Day graduated from Yale in 1795. Interestingly, though he had just received his degree, he was appointed head of Greenfield Hills Academy, which Timothy Dwight had established and run until his appointment as President of Yale. Day left the Academy after a year to teach at Williams College, where illness struck after only two years. His health eventually improved and he returned to Yale as a tutor. In 1803 Day was appointed Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy and went on to write several textbooks on trigonometry, geometry, and algebra. Day, who had been Timothy Dwight’s choice as a successor, at first turned down the Corporation’s offer of the presidency in 1817. When Dr. Henry Davis, President of Middlebury College, also refused the position, Day was persuaded to accept. Once again following in Dwight’s footsteps, he was inaugurated—and ordained into the ministry, in keeping with Yale tradition that presidents must be ministers—on July 23, 1817. The historic and important Faculty Report of 1828 was probably the greatest achievement of his tenure in office. Emphasizing the importance of the Classical Antiquity curriculum, it reaffirmed Day’s belief that “to lay the foundation of a superior education” was the aim of a college. During his presidency, many new professorships were created, and much physical construction took place. Day was particularly enthusiastic about the plan to construct an art gallery, the first on a college campus, to house the paintings of Colonel John Trumbull. Also built were a gymnasium, a dining hall, a chapel, and a new College library.

Suffering from the ill health that had plagued him throughout his life, Day retired from the presidency in 1846 and was elected a Fellow of the Corporation. At the time of his retirement he was seventy-three and not expected to live much longer. Indeed, as he had been in ill health for some time and had served as president for twenty-nine years, the Corporation may well have assumed his service with them would be short. To the surprise of all involved, Day lived until 1867, served as a trustee for twenty-one years, and no doubt caused some consternation to his successor, Theodore Dwight Woolsey. He served on the Corporation until a month before his death at the age of ninety-four. In total, Jeremiah Day had served the University for almost seventy years.
Jeremiah Day
by Samuel F. B. Morse (American, 1791–1872)
Yale University Art Gallery
Gift of the Class of 1823
Jeremiah Day, Theodore Dwight Woolsey, Benjamin Silliman
Being about to offer myself a candidate for receiving ordination as a Christian Minister, I profess my belief that the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by Divine inspiration, and that they contain the following doctrines.

There is one only living and true God, self-existent, eternal, immutable, omniscient, omnipotent, and perfectly holy, just, and good; the creator, proprietor, and governor of all things; the lawgiver, judge, and rewarder of his intelligent creatures.

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one, spoken of, in the scriptures, as distinct, and yet as one God. The nature of this distinction, and of the union, appear not to be fully revealed. The distinction, however, is such that personal properties are ascribed to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. The term person, therefore, is as proper, perhaps, to denote this mysterious distinction, as any which human language affords. To each of the three persons in the Godhead, one ascribed the same divine attributes, works, and worship.

The purposes of God are from everlasting. All his works are known to him from the beginning. He disposes of all beings and all events in such a manner, as to promote his own glory and the good of his kingdom. His counsel stands forever, and he will do all his pleasure. He governs his intelligent creatures in such a manner that while they are voluntary and accountable agents and under the influence of measures and secondary causes, he can overrule their actions to his glory, can bring good out of evil, and cause the wrath of man to praise him.

Adam was created in the image of his maker, perfectly upright and holy. But by eating of the forbidden fruit, he fell from his state of innocence, became corrupt in his disposition, and was exposed to the wrath of God for his sins. In consequence of his fall, all his posterity come into the world destitute of holiness, and continue so, till their hearts are changed by the renovating influence of the Holy Spirit.

The law of God requires perfect and unceasing obedience, and threatens eternal death for transgressions. It makes no allowance for a want of inclination to do our duty. By violating this law, mankind have become exposed to its penalty. From this there is no deliverance, except through the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ.
The eternal law of God being united in a mysterious manner with the man Christ Jesus, became God and man in two distinct natures. He perfectly obeyed the Divine law, and in his human nature, suffered and died in the room of sinners. He has so magnified and honoured the law, that through his atonement, God can now be just, and yet justify the ungodly that believeth. The mediation of Christ is the only meritorious ground of our justification.

The benefits of Christ's redemption are applied only to those who exercise a cordial faith in his name. This faith is not a mere part of the understanding. It is a receiving of the truth in the love of it. It is produced in the heart, by the operation of the Spirit of God. It is accompanied and followed by repentance and other Christian graces. Good works proceeding from a right disposition are the evidence of a title to eternal life, as they are invariably connected with that faith which unites us to Christ. The obligations of Christians to obey the law of God are not diminished, by the offer of free pardon through the Mediator.

The sacraments instituted by Christ, and enjoined upon his followers, are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The latter is to be celebrated by the members of the visible church who have made a profession of their sincere faith in Christ, and cordial devotion to his service.

Baptism may be administered to adults who give evidence of being the real followers of Christ, and to the infant children of those who are members of the visible church. These ordinances are to be administered by such as have received a special commission for the purpose, handed down from the Apostles through a regular succession of ordained ministers.

The preaching of the word, reading of the scriptures, meditation, prayers are means by which sinners are alarmed, their consciences enlightened, and by which Christians are made to grow in grace; and in the knowledge of their Lord and Savior.

At death, the wicked are separated from all good, and the souls of the righteous enter upon a state of happiness and perfect holiness. At the end of the world, the bodies of the dead will be raised, angels and men will be assembled before the judgment seat of Christ; those who have believed on his name will be admitted to complete and everlasting happiness, and the impenitent will be sentenced to suffer the punishment which their sins deserve, and from which they will never be delivered.

The scriptures reveal to us the doctrines which we are bound to believe, and the duties which we are required to perform; and are intended to be the guide of our faith and practice, in all things relating to salvation.
HYMN

To Be Sung at the Inauguration of
President Day, July 23, 1817

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1 PRAISE the Lord who reigns above;
   And keeps his courts below;
Praise the holy God of love,
   And all his greatness show;
Praise him for his noble deeds,
   Praise him for his matchless pow’r;
Him, from whom all good proceeds,
   Let heav’n and earth adore.

2 Publish, spread to all around
   The great Immanuel’s name;
Let the trumpet’s martial sound
   Him Lord of Hosts proclaim.
Praise him, ev’ry tuneful string,
   All the reach of heav’ly art,
All the pow’rs of music bring—
   The music of the heart.

3 Him, in whom we live and move,
   Let eve’ry creature sing;
Glory to their Maker give,
   And homage to their king.
Hallow’d be his name beneath,
   As in heav’n on earth ador’d:
Praise the Lord in ev’ry breath,
   Let all things praise the Lord.
Y.C. April. 22, 1817

Voted, that the Prudential Committee confer with the President Elect and in connection with him take such measures for his induction into the office of President as also for his ordination to the Gospel Ministry as may be necessary and that they convene the Corporation on the occasion when required.

P.C. April 22, 1817

The Committee having conferred with the President Elect, concur with him in the opinion that it is expedient that the Corporation assemble on the 22nd day of July next at 2 o’clock in the afternoon for the purpose of his induction into office, and that the solemnities be conducted in the following manner:

That they be introduced by prayer and appropriate music

That the President publickly give his assent to the Confession of Faith and rules of ecclesiastical discipline agreed upon by the Congregational Churches in this State A.D. 1708, as adopted in this College.

That Mr. Professor Kingsley prepare and deliver a Latin Oration suitable to the occasion.

That the Senior Presiding Fellow deliver a Latin Oration, committing the care, instruction, and government of the College to the President Elect, and in the Name and by the Authority of the Honorable and Reverend Corporation constitute him President of Yale College in Newhavens, and deliver to him the Charter, records, Key and Seal.

The President being seated in the Chair:

That the President address the audience in a Latin Oration and that the exercises be concluded with an Anthem.

The Committee having conferred with the Professor Elect, regarding his ordination to the Work of the Gospel Ministry, as a measure proper to be adopted previous to his entering on the duties of his office as President, and he concurring in the expediency of the measure

Voted, as the sense of the Committee that it is expedient to request the Gentlemen in the Ministry members of the Board, to constitute an ecclesiastical Council for the ordination of the President Elect, at the time of the meeting of the Corporation for his induction, and that they would be pleased to proceed in ordaining him.
to the work of the Ministry; and that the Rev. Isaac Lewes, D.D., prepare a sermon to be preached on the solemn occasion in case the Corporation should approve of the views of the Committee on this subject. (Approved by the Corporation)

The Committee then adjourned to meet on the second Monday of June 1817.

Y.C. July 22, 1817

Mr. Day having given to the President and Fellows satisfactory evidence of his religious belief and qualifications and assented to the Formula prescribed by this Board, the Corporation proceeded to induct him into office on the 23rd day of July at three o’clock in the afternoon.

The students formed a procession and preceded the Fellows and the President Elect to the Center Meeting, accompanied by a large concourse of the Clergy and other literary characters. The Exercises were introduced by music and appropriate Prayer by the Rev. Hezekiah Ripley, D.D., the Senior and Presiding Fellow. Mr. Ripley then pronounced a Latin address in which he inducted Mr. Day into office and invested him with all the power of the President of the College. Professor Kingsley delivered a Latin Oration, congratulating the audience and friends of literature on the accession of President Day to the office. The exercises were closed by an Inaugural Oration from the President and by solemn music.

CONNECTICUT JOURNAL, JULY 29, 1817

"INAUGURATION OF PRESIDENT DAY"

The people of Connecticut have so long enjoyed the blessings which flow from their College, that they now look for them, and receive them as they do the congenial influence of the sun, as a matter of course. Still there are some who profess to believe it a Seminary, principally for the education of Gentlemen’s sons, that additional influence may be given to that which is conferred by wealth: the idea is entirely discordant with the fact, and will be seen to be so, from even a slight examination of the subject.

A large proportion of the young men who graduate at this college, commence their public life with no other means of subsistence than their education; and many poor youth might have been, and might now be educated here, had the Legislature yielded the patronage due to the Institution. With the prosperity of the College are connected the best interests of the State, and therefore no object could have been more worthy of their munificence. For their present excellent system of common school education, the citizens of Connecticut are not a little indebted to Yale; the principal weight of influence which preserves the morals and religion of the State, is derived from Yale: Our first civilians and politicians formed their habits, and laid the foundation of their usefulness in Yale. In short the most important interests of the state, whether civil, religious or literary, are inseparably connected with the prosperity of the College.