

THE RELATION OF McMASTER UNIVERSITY TO THE
THEOLOGICAL TREND OF THE AGE.*

The founding of a University anywhere or at any time is an exceedingly noteworthy event. That a University should spring up in this province with its splendid system of state education and under the very shadow of the noble University which crowns that system, is something that may well challenge enquiry. And when it is known that a great merchant prince of this city, an honored Senator of the Dominion, invested in this enterprise the accumulations of a life time, and that tens of thousands of the best people of these Provinces beheld in its inauguration the fulfilment of long cherished hopes, the answer to many a prayer, and the fruitage of long and patient endeavor, it is time to ask what it all means.

I. What does it mean? Let the charter answer. It says that "McMaster University shall be a Christian school of learning." That means just what it says. It means more than a mere varnish of Christianity, or an infusion of the culture of so-called Christendom. It means that within Christendom McMaster is to be distinctively and emphatically Christian—Christian in its aims, its spirit and its methods, Christian through and through in deed and in truth. Christ is our ideal of character and of life. This University is, by its charter, committed to an honest, earnest effort to be just what Christ wishes it to be—Christian.

Lest there should be any doubt of this, any danger of diluting that word 'Christian' to the weak solution of the age, the great Educational Convention at Guelph in 1888 resolved that "McMaster University shall be organized and developed as a permanently independent Christian school of learning, with the Lordship of Christ as the controlling principle." Indeed the paramount reason for developing the University independently was that we might be free to give the fullest possible effect to this principle and make the Lordship of Christ not nominal but gloriously real. May we never surrender to custom or convention what we denied to legislation.

*The substance of the address delivered at the opening of the University, Oct. 16, 1896.