

The Presbyterian College Journal,

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Adieu!

IN bidding our readers a fond and final adieu, it is desirable we should seek to lighten the labours of our successors in office by indicating such an arrangement as would save them much trouble, and insure timely and correct information concerning our graduates. During the past session it has been a task something like looking for a needle in a hay-stack to get even a stray item of information concerning some of our graduates, whose work is not without great interest, and worthy of being known. It is useless to ask these gentlemen to communicate information concerning themselves; their characteristic modesty is an insuperable barrier; we wont even suggest such a method. Some one has hinted that the only true solution of the matter is to be found in getting the conveners of sewing-circles in the different congregations to enter into correspondence, but even this scheme has its difficulties, the JOURNAL being limited in space, and pledged to communicate fact rather than fiction to its ingenious readers. We only know of one way in which the difficulty can be overcome, and that is by our graduates—who are members of the same Presbytery—appointing one of their number to correspond with the editorial committee. Will they be kind enough to carry out this suggestion, and send any information they may have to the managing editors on and after the 15th of September next, when the first number of our third volume will be in preparation, and also see that all subscriptions are forthcoming *in advance*.

Monday Lectures.

Monday, 13th March.—The Principal gave the continuation of his previous lecture on the "Irreverent Spirit of the Age." (See No. V., page 56.)

The four points already illustrated as being causes of the irreverent spirit of the age are—

- I. It springs from vulgar ignorance.
- II. Degrading toil and poverty.
- III. Is fostered by the domination of great secular interests, and
- IV. Want of power in the lessons of the pulpit.

V. Consider now that this spirit arises from the speculations of the devotees of the natural sciences. I do not condemn speculation and theory, *per se*, these are indispensable to the advancement of human knowledge and science. We must conjecture before we can discover. I don't depreciate nor condemn the sciences in question, nor the study of them, nor belittle those who study them. To do that would be foolish and wrong. We have no fear as theologians. "Truth is like a torch, the more it is shaken it shines." Yet, many who have studied these sciences have become atheistical in their notions; others pantheistical, agnostic, or materialistic. It empties the human heart of reverence. The lower orders follow those above them whose utterances are in accordance with the inclinations of their own hearts. We must not become alarmists nor indulge in invective. To show ourselves competent judges of the things of which we speak, we must become the peers in knowledge of those whose opinions we dispute.

VI. It is promoted in a large degree by the secular and irreverent press of the day. We must be careful to recognize the power of the press for good. The church has not availed herself of this as she might, especially in Canada. In the secular press of to-day there is a great power exercised by anonymous scribblers. Many of those who write in the papers are half-educated and unprincipled. They are professional scandalmongers and tale-bearers. Sacred subjects pertaining to God and Chris', death, resurrection, and future glory, are often treated with irreverence and shocking familiarity, and those most remarkable for their success in this are very much lauded by the public. We must pray for those who guide the press. We need active measures. The dissemination of cheap and healthy literature.

VII. Defective training in our families and schools. This is a very wide field, though not universal. It cannot be denied that silence on divine things, and persistent activity in regard to what is purely secular has a great tendency to promote irreverence. As witness the exclusion of the Bible from the schools.

VIII. It is promoted by unseemly strife among religious denominations. When five or six churches are crowded together in one little village, diligently excommunicating one another, godless men will come to the conclusion that the leaders of them are not influenced by a regard to the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

IX. A manifest lack of faith and courage and honest determination of the churches to preach the Gospel to every creature. Worldly men reason from our profession of consecration to God's service to the vast majority of the human race left without the knowledge of salvation. The church's mouth is shut by this. She can only remedy this by sending out dozens of men like Dr. Mackay, of Formosa. The remedy is that God should pour into the hearts of students, and professors,