

✻ CLOSING EXERCISES. ✻

THE BACCALAUREATE SERMON.

—SUNDAY.—

REV. PROF. ROSS, a member of the theological department in Queen's University, preached the baccalaureate sermon in Convocation Hall, Queen's College, Sunday, April 24th. There was a large attendance. The address was based on the words, "Quit you like men"—1 Corinthians, xvi, 13. Paul had written these words to the Christian converts at Corinth, when he heard that they were rent into rival factions and their religious life imperilled by immoral practices. Because of these things he urged them to quit themselves like men, to prove themselves worthy of the tuition they had received and the calling wherewith they had been called. The aim of Christianity is to build up men after the pattern of Christ. The type of manhood which it insists on our acquiring is that which the example of Christ furnishes, and to be complete in Christ is the grand task to which every man should apply himself with all the energy of his nature. Ambition, wealth, dignity, learning or earthly honor were of no importance; the great desire should be the attainment of a genuine, vigorous, Christian manhood. The speaker referred to the belief of many that religion is incompatible with true manliness, that religion fetters a man, narrows his vision, curtails his liberty, and that its rules are too rigid and exacting for the broad and full development of human nature. But the fact was, religion restricted no man in his freedom to do anything good. Some theologians in interpreting what is writted have narrowed the boundary lines, but the whole drift and scope of religion is to make man free to act in regard to everything that is good and true and pure. Judged by its fruits, Christianity has proved itself worthy to receive the homage of the greatest intellects, and the unbiassed and earnest study of every one who desires to become a full-orbed perfect man. It stands today, after a trial of eighteen centuries, unequalled as an educator of the race, unapproachable in its power of developing manhood in man. "Let its assailants and detractors," he remarked, "say, if they will, that its hold upon the intelligent and thoughtful is on the wane; that the spell it once exercised over so large a part of mankind has been broken; that the advanced thought of the age has provided a new gospel for humanity, and that an era full of brilliant promise for the future of the race, for its enfranchisement from the narrowing conditions in which the old faith has forced it to move, has already dawned. I, for one, would be unspeakably glad were such new revelations delivered to the world, even though it came by the methods of science and philosophy, if it only presented for our imitation a better type of character than the central figure of the new testament, and had the power of raising men to a higher moral plane than that on which Paul and John and Chrysostom and

St. Bernard and Latimer and Rutherford and Wesley and McCheyne stood. But until we have evidence of this we surely are not going to abandon the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth and his apostles, which have had so sublime a record in moulding the thought and the civilization of the nineteen centuries. I ask you to note well the part it has played in human history, to observe how it has taken men whose intellects and hearts have been poisoned with the spirit of a sensual philosophy, and transfigured and glorified them. I bid you look at such sovereign and cultured thinkers as Newton, Paschal, Herschel, Copernicus, Faraday and Clark Maxwell, prostrating themselves reverently before it and accepting it as the rule by which their lives should be moulded, and I leave it to your own candid judgment if the religion of the bible is detrimental to the growth of a hearty, robust, noble manhood."

"Quit ye like men" is the solemn exhortation which their Alma Mater addressed to those about to leave her halls. To fulfil the hopes and expectations of the University they should be courageous to face difficulties and overcome hindrances and bear disappointments. Moral courage is essential to the best type of manhood. Most of the failures to achieve success arise from men's lack of confidence in their own resources and strength when they experience a reverse. The consciousness of failure should only nerve them to redoubled effort and the determination to win at last. Disraeli failed at first, but he afterwards swayed for years, with masterly skill, the most august and critical of assemblies. "Cannot" and "impossible" ought to find no place in the vocabulary of anyone except in matters of right and wrong. Again, to fulfil the expectations of the university, they must be men of honor, setting a high estimate upon truthfulness, uprightness and fairness. Honor is dearer to a true man than life. It is a cardinal virtue of a perfect manhood. The disposition to measure men by the success they have achieved was referred to, but the speaker urged the alumni of Queen's not to follow the devotees of the goddess success. They should be the incarnation of honor, preferring to cut off their right hands rather than do anything that would cast a shadow of discredit on their Alma Mater, scorning the very thought of what is not equitable and true and just and of good report. They should demonstrate to the world that the methods of instruction carried out at Queen's are the best for developing a true manhood— independence of thought, reverence for all that is good in the past, intense passion for the triumph of principle over expediency, and a sacred regard for the rights of others.

To reflect honor upon their Alma Mater they must carry on the educative process which has been begun, and he constantly broadening the horizon of their thought by earnest, diligent, unremitting study. In this respect the speaker made a strong appeal for men not to be mere encyclopedias of facts, but men who could grasp and understand fully the principles which are explicative of facts, who could discriminate between truth and error,