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## Contents.

EDITORIAL.	B. Y. P. U. Daily Readings 7
Report of Acadia Anniver- saries, 1 and 5	Prayer Meeting Topic, 7
CONTRIBUTED.	FOREIGN MISSION.
Address to Graduating Class, 1	W. R. M. L., 8
The Mystery of God, (J. D.), 2	THE HOME, 10
Letter from Burma, (Miss H.), 2	THE SUNDAY SCHOOL, Lesson II.—Rom. 14: 10-21, 11
Ontario Letter, 3	From the Churches, 12
SELECTED.	Marriages and Deaths, 13
What Will Thou? 3	The Farm, 15
STORY PAGE.	News Summary, 14 and 16
A True Dignity, 6	S. B. Convention, 13
A Cheap Price, 6	Ordination, 12
THE YOUNG PEOPLE.	S. S. Convention, 16
	Notices, 16

## Address to Acadia's Graduating Class.

BY DR. SAWYER.

Members of the class of '97; you have looked forward to this day with eager interest. The figures that indicate the year in which it would fall have been written after your names many times; they have been inscribed on walls and emblazoned on banners, as if they must be associated with some event of special distinction. You have felt that this must be an *annus notabilis*. Though your interest in this date may have seemed to the casual observer somewhat unreasonable, it has not been without reason. The day marks the end of a definite period in your lives and the beginning of a new one. The year and the day may well, therefore, be regarded by you as having some special significance.

But what is the significance? Your first answer would be that it closes a period of study through which you have pushed your way in spite of some serious obstacles. You have been called to observe regularity in the use of time, and you have found that the time was not your own, that every day assignments not of your appointment have apportioned your hours and your labors. In such conditions you have naturally looked forward to the day when you might be free to go and come at your pleasure. Remembering that it was solely by strenuousness of effort that you could climb step by step to the plane on which you now stand, you may at times have found your burdens lightened a little by the thought that, if you could reach this day and this stage, thenceforward you might feel that the severest conflicts with adverse circumstances were in the past. This may be so. But a cautionary thought is needed here.

We have to admit that the hope of early relief from the arduousness of duty is quite in accord with the general tendency of expression at the present time. Living for the pleasures that life can yield seems to be the attractive ideal now,—a life that shall be one long uninterrupted vacation. This conception of life finds expression in various ways. Many, whose resources permit it, make this thought of life manifest by the course of their lives. Quite as frequently the thought discloses its existence by complaints because the conditions of life make it impossible to realize any such ideal; and sometimes it expresses itself in distinct language, as when the leaders of a great labor organization demand that there shall be shorter hours of labor, more holidays and plenty of recreation. This means that the true conception of life is that of a time for play rather than for work.

In view of this frequent expression of thought and feeling, I wish at this time to lay a little emphasis on the other view, that work is the true ideal of life.

It is not necessary for us to pause for an explanation of the meaning of terms. We all know what work means. Our question is simply this, is work to be sought or avoided? Does nature work? A glance answers the question. The heavens above us and the earth around us make manifest the fact of ceaseless, varied work. Pulling down is work, building up is work. All these wonderful move-

ments that so impress us are changes produced by forces that never rest. So constant is their action that we tire in thinking of it. Nature works constantly. Do you say that when we approach the animal kingdom life is play? Not at all. Think again. Life seems to give these beings joy, but for the most part it is joy in work. If we read aright the meaning of the movements that seem at first to indicate joy, how much forced activity, how much solicitude, how much of wearying search are involved in these movements. Existence has its pleasures for them. But if we look at the facts with open eyes, we see that life for them is one continued conflict. Rest for them is the exception, labor is the law of their being. Call up the names of the men who have left their mark on the history of their race. Were they workers or idlers? In every instance workers. Of more than one of them it might be said that the ground of his success and distinction was that he could "work terribly." The players may have their place in a world of seeming contradictions; but the inheritances of blessings have come to us from the past through the workers. In them is the hope of the future. From the lowest facts of nature to the highest destiny of man all things are bound into a cosmos, a world, because all are steadily, forcefully working out an all-embracing plan. It is an earnest world. We are told that the fabled Aphrodite came from the foam of the sea, but the foam that tosses on the billows is but an accident of the mighty forces working in the ebbing and flowing of the sea.

But granting that you are part of a world the influences of which are constantly stimulating you to strenuous labor, you may properly ask how shall we work? Much might be said in answer to such a question. It is enough now to say work with some definite and worthy purpose. You are intelligent beings. You have learned to discriminate and judge. Find a worthy object, an object that in itself is noble, the accomplishment of which will make the lives of others better, an object that shall be the realization of some noble ideal of truth and goodness that has come into your lives (whatever science may say to the contrary) from some source that science has not yet discovered, and that comes as the promise of successful and noble achievement, if you are true to yourselves.

But here, again, suffer a word of caution. Much is said in these days in support of the view that what we do with the most pleasure is the object to which we should devote our lives. This is true, and it is false. You know that pleasure pursued for its own sake eludes and cheats the pursuit. The pleasure that comes as a cheering presence along the pathway of duty is real. Here I use a word that is not heard as frequently in these days as it was formerly. We have been told so often that duty is pleasure, that many have come to regard pleasure as duty. We are told that the laborious steps of the learner in any right pursuit must become the almost or quite unconscious movement of the actor, that the highest virtue is practice that has become so agreeable that we follow the practice for the pleasure of it without any thought of the right of the practice, just as the rose blooms because it cannot help it, or as an angel might become a ministering spirit simply from the impulse of self-gratification. Let us think twice before we accept the philosophy that the highest form of virtue is typified by the ox loosed from his yoke and going to his fodder. Let me urge you to cherish conviction of duty. Duty is the tribute that a reasoning being pays to Right. Be assured that nothing is so consonant with the nature of the soul as the cultivation of the habit of bringing daily conduct to this test. It will clarify the mind, regulate

the waywardness of the heart and put one into conscious relations with the highest forces of the universe; for with reverence we may say, God acts, according to our highest conception of Him, not because he enjoys his own action, but because His own action is right. If God is love, nevertheless God acknowledges the obligations of duty. One of the English laureates has given us such a clear strain of the old harmonies of the profounder music, in which the human soul expressed itself when moved by the grander views and sublimer relations of human conduct, that in his day gave a dignity to human life, which it seems almost to have lost in these days when ease is honored and the hope of enjoyment is the great motive of life, that I shall venture to quote some of his lines.

Stern daughter of the voice of God,  
O Duty, if that name thou love,  
Who art a Light to guide, a Rod  
To check the erring and reprove,  
Thou who art Victory and Law,  
When empty terrors overawe,  
From vain temptations dost set free,  
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity.

There are who ask, not if thine eye  
Be on them; who in love and truth,  
Where no misgiving is, rely  
Upon the genial sense of youth;  
Glad hearts, without reproach or blot,  
Who do thy work and know it not;  
Long may the kindly impulse last;  
But thou, if they should totter, teach them to stand fast.

Stern Lawgiver, yet thou dost wear  
The Godhead's most benignant gaze;  
Nor know we anything so fair  
As is the smile upon thy face;  
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,  
And fragrance in thy footing treads;  
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong,  
And the most ancient heavens through thee are strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power,  
I call thee. I myself commend  
Unto thy guidance from this hour;  
Oh, let my weakness have an end.  
Give unto me, made lowly wise,  
The spirit of self-sacrifice;  
The confidence of reason give,  
And in the light of truth, thy bondman let me live.

And so, ladies and gentlemen, assured that you have found such sentiments as these to be the light and the motive of life, and assuring you that we shall cherish among the treasures of memory the associations of the four years now closed, we dismiss you to enter paths of honorable and useful service.

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—As will be seen, our editorial columns are this week occupied with an extended report of the proceedings in connection with the Wolfeville anniversaries, which doubtless our readers will know how to appreciate. They will also, we are sure, be pleased to have the report of proceedings of the Ontario and Quebec Baptist Convention furnished by the skilful pen of our Ontario correspondent.

—Last Sunday was a day of special interest to the Baptists of Petitcodiac, as the church on that day celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of its organization. Pastor Estabrook was assisted in the services of the day by Rev. D. A. Steele, D. D., of Amherst, Rev. E. C. Corey of Penobscot, and the resident ministers of the town. Dr. Steele preached in the morning on the theme, "Why the Baptist denomination should exist." Pastor Estabrook conducted the evening service. A history of the church, tracing its varied experiences from the time it was organized in 1847, under the ministry of Father Joseph Crandall, until the present, was read by Deacon Jonah.

—Among those to receive academic honors this year are two well-known gentlemen of St. John, Mr. J. V. Ellis, M.P., and Mr. George R. Matthews each of whom has received the degree of LL. B. from the New Brunswick University. The degrees are fittingly bestowed. Mr. Matthews, though among the most modest of men, is a paleontologist of almost world-wide reputation. Mr. Ellis is a practical and an able journalist, a politician of large experience and generous views, a gentleman of scholarly tastes and widely read, and one who has shown an active interest in the promotion of popular education as well as in things generally which make for the well-being of the country and especially of his own city.