

ADDRESS TO THE GRADUATING CLASS.

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Gentlemen of the Graduating Class.

I have been asked by the Senate to address you on the completion of your theological course, and in prospect of soon entering upon the more immediate and active work of the Christian ministry. I do so with considerable hesitation, as I have never been present at such a meeting before, or addressed gentlemen in the position you occupy to-night. In consequence, I am very much at a loss to know what line of thought to pursue, so as to say something that might be helpful to you as you bid farewell to these halls where you have spent the past years in preparation and are now about to go forth to your chosen work. If spared, you expect soon to receive the imprimatur of the Church as Licentiates and Probationers for a call. You are about to close the life of the student and to begin the life of the preacher. Permit me, then, my young friends, at this particular stage of your professional career, to bespeak your attention for a short time to the special need in the present day of a pious and an educated ministry. The Presbyterian Church, in common with all other evangelical Churches, expects and requires that those who would undertake the work of her ministry be men of God, men who have themselves felt the power of Divine grace in their own hearts, and who, on reasonable grounds, have come to the conclusion that they have been called of God to preach the Gospel. Personal piety must lie at the foundation, and form an essential element in the character of the Gospel messenger. As an ambassador from God to a rebel world, he must himself be the friend of God and in full sympathy with the mind of Christ, whose message of reconciliation he proclaims. There was a time in our Presbyterian Church when the office of the Christian ministry was looked forward to and entered upon as

a highly respectable profession, one to be desired on account of the position of respectability and influence it gave and the material income it secured. Sons were educated by their parents with the prospect and promise of a church (as it was then called) whether they possessed the essential qualifications of a heart filled with the love of God, and the consciousness that they had been called by His grace to the work of the ministry. Happily such a state of things does not exist among us, where we have no State Church, or State endowments to tempt men to enter the ministry for the worldly position it gives in the community, or the stipend it secures. But while such a state of things may not exist among us to the same extent as in the lands where Presbyterianism is recognized by the State, or its ministers more liberally supported than in this Canada of ours, at the same time we are not altogether delivered from the possibility of men seeking the office of the ministry and thrusting themselves forward from motives of a more or less worldly character even in this land, and in our own Church with its limited but assured measure of income, and the respectable position in the community it carries with it. Such, my young friends, I have no reason to believe has led you thus far in your course; but as you have reached to-night a point in your official training which calls for close dealing with your own hearts, it were well to pause and answer to yourselves the question which must soon be authoritatively put to you before you receive the charge of a congregation, "Are zeal for the glory of God, and a sincere desire for the salvation of souls your great motive and chief inducement to enter the Christian ministry?" Better stop now, and proceed no further, unless you have a clear call to preach the Gospel, and are impelled by an earnest desire to save souls, other-