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THE IMPORTANCE TO THE CHURCHES OF AN EDUCATED MINISTRY.*

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MR. CHAIRMAN AND CHRISTIAN FRIENDS.—The address I am called upon to deliver, whatever its defects, will have, I flatter myself, at least one merit, that of appropriateness. I mean by this, not merely a general appropriateness to the occasion, but in the present state of the College Endowment scheme, a very special fitness. The subject I have chosen on which to address you is that of the importance to our Churches of an educated Ministry.

During the brief time allotted me, I shall not attempt to treat such a subject exhaustively. I am afraid I shall not be able to discuss it fully as I could wish, and its nature would seem to demand. But I have the satisfaction to believe that in addressing this audience, there are no prejudices to be overcome requiring long and laboured arguments. This Church, I cannot but remember, has always enjoyed, as it still enjoys, the advantage of an educated and learned ministry; and, therefore knows how to appreciate its importance. This Church has the honour of having done more for the College than any other in the denomination. And the gentleman whose very generous contribution has initiated the movement to place our "School of the Prophets" on a basis of extended and enduring usefulness, is, as I understand, a member of this Church. From considerations such as these, I have no misgivings as to the favourable reception you will accord the subject I have the happiness of presenting to you.

Indeed any misgivings I have, I am free to confess, are of the opposite kind. My only fear is, that some of you may readily take for granted all I have to say, as a mere matter of course; and the address as readily pass out of your minds without leaving behind it any adequate results. My object will certainly not be attained, if it is merely relegated to that category of self-evident truths, of which it may be said that everybody accepts them and nobody acts on them. I have no ambition that it be placed in the *limbo* of trite truisms.

But some one may challenge the proposition I have thought it in place to discuss, with the question. "Who denies it?" As if that settled any such discussion as a work of supererogation. This crucial query were pertinent, did I submit a thesis for debate before some literary society, instead of a practical matter for earnest christian men. The question here is not, does anybody deny it? but, has everybody attended to it? Something more is always in order to be said, so long as anything more remains to be done.

The strongest argument I need bring in support of an educated ministry, is, that christians generally, I had almost said universally, favour it. When all the denominations have come to occupy the ground we have always held, it would be exceedingly unreasonable for us to seem to abandon it. And this statement of

* An address delivered in Zion Church, Montreal, at the close of the late session of the College.