

Training for the Times.

BEING THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF THE REV. W. M. BARBOUR, D.D., ON HIS INSTALLATION AS
PRINCIPAL OF THE CONGREGATIONAL COLLEGE OF BRITISH NORTH AMERICA,
MONTREAL, SEPTEMBER 14, 1887.

MR. CHAIRMAN, FATHERS, BRETHREN, CHRISTIAN FRIENDS:

That is an honourable record of the tribe of Issachar, at the rally to make David king, "They were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do." While the other tribes are reported as strong in their warlike thousands, this tribe alone has this peaceful record; and with it this is added, that "the heads of the tribe were two hundred, and all their brethren were at their commandment." Neither a numerous nor a noisy company is here introduced to our notice, yet an orderly and a thoughtful one—a whole tribe characterized by an observant knowledge of passing events, and a practical application of that knowledge to life and duty.

From this historic extract, it is apparent that observant men, of a cultivated judgment, have long been in demand as counsellors in the crises of life. And, surely, they were never more in demand than now, when the signs of the times are a daily study; and when, to so many people, duty seems to be completely done when what is seen and temporal is sufficiently attended to.

At these opening exercises, including, as they do, a notice of the new Principal's appointment—it seems proper to turn attention to what, in the midst of the signs of our times, the directors of this college think ought to be done. And as the one through whose appointment they are pleased to indicate their general policy, it may be well for me, in a suggestive way, to give you their general counsel upon the work of the college, as I find it, not in their personal dictation, but in the plain and unforced dictates of my own understanding. As we mutually understand this turn of affairs, and as we jointly and severally acknowledge our dependence upon a higher wisdom than our own, I think I am fairly interpreting the present situation, and expressing their mind in this expression of my own: "*We desire the Christian public to take and to keep it for granted, that this college shall continue to meet its end in the training of such a ministry as the world always needs, and one that the churches of our order are specially calling for at the present day; namely, a ministry of the Gospel, not oblivious of the past; awake to the state of the world as it is; and ardently hopeful of Christ's cause in the world as it is about to be.*"

My reference to the "churches of our order" suggests to me the fitness of some allusion to what may be called our "peculiarities," or, better perhaps, "to what we lay special stress upon," living as we are among other churches and other colleges, with peculiarities, or emphases, in their own view, no doubt, as important as our own.

As we read the New Testament—I speak to those who are at one with us in the right to read it, and to interpret it as answerable to the One Judge—and, as we understand its revela-