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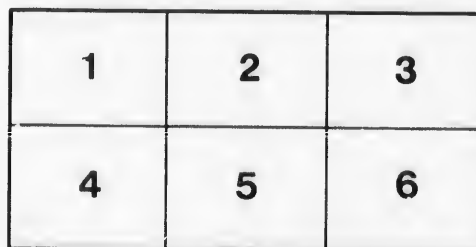
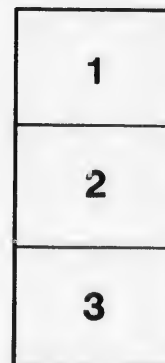
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TRAINING FOR THE TIMES.



BY

REV. W. M. BARBOUR, D.D.

G. BLACKETT ROBINSON, PRINTER, 5 JORDAN STREET, TORONTO

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-

tion of Christ, He is "like unto Moses in His fidelity over His own house, as Moses was over *his*." We thus believe that He left His house with such an outline of its order as can be kept by the dwellers in that house while it stands upon this earth. At any rate, we find an outline of church order, *substantially* followed by Christian believers among Jews at Jerusalem, and Gentiles at Corinth; in towns and villages throughout Judæa, Asia Minor and Europe; and which, in our judgment, is fitted to meet the governmental necessities of any body of Christians, anywhere, who hold that Christ's kingdom "is not of this world;" "comes not with observation," or great ado; makes no strain after even "a fair show in the flesh;" nor, indeed, spends any great amount of thought or energy upon the *shadows of power* as flung over territory, numbers, or widespread report; but whose chief concern is with the *power itself*, in the spirit of man, and the Spirit of God, and with both in their mutual relations. If the churches we represent have any "peculiarity" among other bodies of ostensible Christians, it is their reiterated insistence upon placing the emphasis of the new dispensation upon their life and order. And, in this, they hold that they find exemplars in the New Testament. The first characteristic, then, of a Congregational Church, is the first characteristic of the New Testament churches—*Spirituality*. Here let us not be considered arrogant, nor let us be misunderstood. In what is said we are not to be taken as either denying or suspecting the spirituality of other churches, or rather of other conceptions of the church. Nor by this emphatic claim for spirituality are we to be taken as insisting that churches are, or ought to be, spiritual gatherings only, admitting of nothing in their life and service that is outward, symbolic, or corporeal. As we understand a church of the New Testament, its economy is the reverse of the economy of the old dispensation. *That* was characteristically carnal, "standing in meats and drinks and divers washings and carnal ordinances *imposed* upon the worshippers;" but *this* is characteristically spiritual, standing in the offering of the heart, and the consequent obedience of the life, with such devotion of the whole man as love may *evoke from* the worshippers. But necessarily, so long as we are flesh and blood, the offerings of the spirit and the instruction of the spirit must in part be by what can be touched and tasted, seen and handled. While maintaining the predominance of the spirit, we by no means claim exemption from such things of the flesh as may minister to us of the Spirit. But their fewness and their simplicity are both grounded upon the evident preponderance of the glory of God over the glory of man in the things of the new dispensation.

Another feature of the New Testament we profess to make much of in our church life is *Catholicity*. We neither have nor hold to national establishments as political or semi-political aids to the Gospel; we have no churches of national name even, nor of race, caste, sex, colour or any other differing condition of mankind; no denominational creed imposed alike upon all believers; no stereotyped forms of worship nor set ritual for all times and cultures alike; no particular attachment to worship "in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem"—far less at Rome—as of special avail in honouring the Father. Nor do we separate from our fellow-believers because of differences in forms of Christian service, nor varieties in non-essential beliefs—holding with all who hold the Head, and parting only with those professing Christians who tell us they cannot follow Christ with us, nor with the great company of Christians who keep close by Him as the only Saviour of the world.

And this hastens me on to notice what is in fine harmony with their *Spirituality* and *Catholicity*, namely, the *Simplicity* of the New Testament churches. They are constituted under this simple charter, "Where two or three are together in My name [or for My name] there am I." Christ is their hope of glory—Christ, and not the coveted "powers that be." The glory of the terrestrial is one thing, it is the glory of studied magnificence; of power over the external; of laboured and complicated effort to gain the eyes, the ears, the nerves of men to a confession of its mighty sway. The glory of the celestial, of the spiritually celestial, is

another thing. It is simply free from observation ; it has no machinery, ecclesiastical or other ; it is managed without heat or bluster, or complicated subtlety in any department of its life. Its glory is that of love, of principle, of character ; it is the glory of heaven, the glory of God.

This is the New Testament's ideal of a church ; and to some extent its real church as in Philippi and Smyrna and Pergamos, Thyatira, Ephesus, Antioch and Jerusalem. And doubtless in the main to this every church bears a testimony, and by more or less direct effort seeks to attain it. However far short our churches may come of attaining it—seeking it as we believe by the most direct way—they have no intention of lowering the ideal, even while confessing their non-attainment of it as the real. Granting that they are under the reproach of the critical on the one side, and of the practical on the other, for insisting on an ideal of the church too high for even regenerated humanity to make its own, still we do not lower that ideal ; for it is not our own, but set before us by One wiser than we. It is not ours to make it more "serviceable," by accommodating it to the world, any more than it is ours to lower the Divine law in our promulgation of it ; or rather to think that the Divine Lawgiver should let down His law, because men do not live up to it. No, we are steadfastly set upon the upholding of these scriptural features of the church—not for a moment falling in with the current notion of some that "it is well to accommodate where you cannot attain"—as if an inveterate unbelief of the hearer is to be remedied by the apologetic unbelief of the preacher !

That the churches bring stress upon spirituality, catholicity and simplicity in their life, have a thoughtful and cultivated ministry, only shows their recognition of the fitness of these things. And it would be a sign of a change upon one of these fundamental positions if they did not. And it is this night opened in this place that such a ministry may be provided. As indicating the order of the studies here to be pursued, let me revert to the desire of the churches as expressed in my opening paragraph. I said they desire a ministry not oblivious of the past. It is among certain signs of our times to make light of the past, to count it among the by-gones that ought to be by-gones, of no present use in certifying to any present truth. But no church of the living God can take this position. For, under the living God, out of the past has she been born, and to be separated from all that has come to pass is to have neither root for herself to stand by, nor branch to extend to those beyond the reach of her present body. Besides, Christianity is not simply a system of thought, the conception and the production of a single mind, left among other great conceptions, to work its way in the earth ! It is part of the world's life ; it has always expressed itself through organized bodies of believers who have not only promulgated certain truths, but done certain deeds, in establishing an extending God's kingdom upon earth. Moreover, it has spread divergently, now in one direction, then in another, impressing itself, expressing itself, repressing alien systems, and in various ways affecting both itself and the world it has moved in. It is impossible to secure any trustworthy knowledge of what it is, without some historic study of what it has been, and what it has done. Moreover, its present doctrines need the past for their explanation. To follow the thinking of the ancient churches ; to look at the problems interesting the fathers ; to learn how the earlier master-minds of Christendom solved their difficulties ; to trace to their roots some of the pestilent heresies of an earlier day ; to read the lives of the holy and the true ; to see how sincere and earnest minds have, in other ages, been trammelled by what does not trammel ourselves ; in a word, to watch the evolving providence of God, is to put ourselves in training for enlightened action upon the Christendom around us. But, aside from its weakness of instruction, who—oblivious of the past—can pretend to progressive action in the present ? I cannot step forward without one foot behind me, to give me both poise and impetus in my movement. And it is sheer experiment if not recklessness, to cast one's thinking forward, and

forward only, without respectful attention to what has been thought. We are making up a past soon to be, and what think we of that contempt, applauded as originality, independence and progress, which reduces to ridicule what has made the past for us, virtually charging the benign Providence with folly, for allowing such men and measures to live a life and die a death, that the world might thereby be moved one step nearer to the end for which it has been made?

But while thus vindicating church history as part of a course of theological training, and while thus suggesting the value to a minister of a knowledge of past doctrines, rituals, liturgies and literature, let me advance a step by the assertion that he will be but a poorly trained minister for churches of our order, who lives in the past only, or even mainly. The ministry at present under call, is one *awake to the state of the world that now is*. I shall speak soon upon what is indestructible and unchangeable while man is man, but at present let me say that we shall betray ourselves as having anything but the spirit of the sons of Issachar, if we do not express our understanding of our own times, in our counsel to our own Israel, on what to do. The church of Christ has not passed this way before; she has therefore to lead her religious life amidst new surroundings; and, if her ministers do not recognize this, how shall they instruct the people to be religious, in the new religious circumstances?

Theologians may have some good hints on how to take this changing world—for changing it is, as everybody knows—from their brethren of the literary guild, who think *they* have reason to lament the disillusionizing processes of the last sixty years. Says a judicious and Christian critic (Delta—*D. M. Moir*). "I shrewdly doubt whether 'Marmion' or 'Childe Harold' would even now be hailed, as we delight to know they were hailed, sixty years ago. Still I do not despair of poetry ultimately recovering from the staggering blows which science has inflicted in the shape of steam conveyance, electro-magnetism, geological exposition, political economy, statistics; in fact, by a series of disenchantments. Original genius in due time must form out of new elements new combinations; and these may be at least what the kaleidoscope is to the rainbow, or an explosion of hydrogen in the gasometer is to a flash of lightning on the hills. In the foamy seas we need never more expect to see Proteus leading out his flocks; nor in the dimpling stream another Narcissus admiring his own fair face; nor Diana again descending on Latmos to Endymion. We cannot hope for another Una, making 'a sunshine in a shady place,' nor another Macbeth, meeting witches on the blasted heath; nor another Faust, wandering amid the mysterious sights and sounds of another May-day night. Robin Hoods and Rob Roys are incompatible with sheriffs and the county police. Rocks are now stratified by geologists as exactly as satins are measured by mercers; and Echo, now no longer a vagrant classic nymph, is compelled quietly to submit to the laws of acoustics."

But upon what does our lively critic fall back for his new combinations under the new conditions of his favourite branch of *Belles Lettres*? On the elements of poetry in the immutable principles of our nature. Certainly. On what else? While men breathe there will ever be room for a new Shakespeare and a new Scott. The passing away of the old form is not the total loss of the old thing. This world has as much in it as ever it had, and more; and he shows but a faint faith in the world's Maker or His modes of management who sighs over the disillusion of his own day, as if they argued a loss of like enjoyment or profit, in other forms, to other minds thus made ready for other things. Nor is literature alone in this experience. Medicine has lost, if loss it is to be called, in like changes. "It has lost alchemy, incantation, and cure by the royal touch. Law has lost trial by wager of battle, the ordeal by touch, and the mysterious confessions of witchcraft. Yet who would not be tried by law as it is, than by what it was"—though an eminent judge not many years ago said "that since evidence under torture was not procurable, he did not see how trials for high treason could be properly conducted."

Theology has had to take a share of these losses, so-called. She has lost certain verbal

excellencies, so some ancient men in Hebrew philology maintain ; by losing the unpointed text, for instance, though the wonder to most of us is how Hebrew was ever read without the points. Formerly Hebrew pronunciation was traditional, now it is scientific ; yet *Aleph* begins the alphabet still, and *Tau* ends it. Theology, within living memories, has lost the power to explain certain texts as they were once explained. She has to look at the Scriptures through improved spectacles ; travel, discovery, new power of critical judgment, all have affected her. And yet a consensus of even conservative opinion grants that, upon the whole, the gains are clear, the real losses but dimly perceived, and consisting of what is of decreasing value to those born into the world as it now is. To fail to recognize this is to be literally "behind the times," and in consequence to be so far short of the power to tell the Israel of to-day what ought to be done, in view of the truth as it now is. And, in matters to their personal taste, the most obstinate of theologians are free to acknowledge this. Witness it in those who favour the present advances in evangelical movements, modern missions home and foreign, new measures in moral reform ; how ready are they to fall in with what speeds the missionary to his field, the evangelist to his crowd, the visitor to her womanly work, and others to forms of labour among classes of the needy not named in the annals of the older world. But when something we do not altogether fancy, is proposed by men we do not altogether like, how ready are the most enlightened and catholic of us to confess to ourselves, if to none else, the wish that in some of its notions the world had remained about where it was when we were born !

And now, having made this generous allowance to the benefits of change, I can fairly claim the liberty to say, that there is nothing in reason or in history more demonstrably fallacious than this, that a change is necessarily a change for the better. *That is not so.* Vast is the difference between an innovation and a reform, between swelling and growth, between a novelty and a blessing, between what sets popular feeling aglow and what rectifies and purifies our common life.

At this point let me turn to the benefits of a course of theological study to those who are to be the guides of the people through the signs of theological unrest that the times are ever presenting to us. And one of the first is that by such a study they may be able to teach the people to discriminate between changes that are likely to be beneficial to the soul, hence to the life, and changes that are not likely so to be. Certain it is that change is not to be disposed of by ignoring it, nor by treating it superciliously ; nor by acting as if God had abandoned the world, and given up His government of it, because some phases in its life and culture for eternity take us by surprise. This is to be tripped headlong—a casualty easily avoided by a thoughtful investigation into the first principles of theology. Theology is the science of God ; it aims at a true knowledge of the true God, and its end is to impart this for the good of the people ; its motto is *Salus populi, suprema lex.* Very well, one of the first and grandest and most saving thoughts about God is that He is the Infinite and the Eternal Spirit, infinite in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth ; in a word, that He is the Absolute in life and love. Bring now the changing world under the impress of this thought of God. Here is one Being who is never surprised, never circumvented, never imposed upon, never baffled, never left to try experiments, never in doubt as to the issue of His plans, or to the efficiency of His rule over mankind. If there is not something in the knowledge of that God to give a man firmness and poise in a changing life, I despair of ever helping that man in a troublous time.

Again, as another thought in theology fitted to meet other demands of our life, this unchanging God has put within us certain unchanging attributes—reflections of His own. He has put a conscience in us—a thing an unholy God neither could nor would have done—by which we know with Him and within our own selves, what is right and what is wrong. And no

power in heaven above or earth beneath, or in any hell beneath the earth, can ever get the average man to believe that right is wrong, or wrong is right, or to think it ever can be the same with a man whether he be true or false in his speech, pure or impure in his thought, brave or cowardly in his actions. On these fundamental endowments we can fall back as evidences of God's care of us, just as we fall back on our constitutional desire for God as an evidence of His fatherhood of us, and of His desire for our filial love in return for what we find in our own very make. And this is only an indication of what, in greater abundance, is found in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ. Into further details I cannot go to-night, but upon this, I rejoice to say even a word, as indicative of a growing source of theology coming into a prominence for which there is a preparation in the growing study of man, in his constitutional attributes.

Nor is this to interfere with or lessen interest in the study of the Bible—the Word of God to His creature man—but rather to anticipate and to supplement it. The textual investigation of the Scriptures—corresponding to the microscopic study of nature—is as necessary to secure certain aspects of the truth, as are the thoughts of God that “wander through eternity”—corresponding to the telescopic views of the heavens, by which the far-reaching glories of God become better known. We are to remember that our Lord favoured all sorts of appeal to every source of knowledge in order to learn of God. “Consider the lilies of the field,” said He, “they tell of God.” “Search the Scriptures,” and ponder “the words I speak unto you,” said He, “they tell of Me; they bring you eternal life.” And that the minister be efficiently practical, he must be wisely profound; for we sadly miss the best of effects when we disregard the deepest of causes. Above all, the minister must not live in a constant terror lest the realities of things in some surprising form upset him, and his people with him. Nor must he fear the truth, the sweetly reasonable truth, the deep and solemn truth, the vastly overpowering truth of God. Its search doth lead to trust.

Reason pursued is faith, but unpursued
Where proof invites, 'tis reason then no more.

Hear this, from a seeker of truth: “To have a disinterested regard for truth, the mind must have contemplated it in abstract and remote questions. For the most part, the ordinary mind—that is, the uninstructed after this method—are only conversant with those aspects of truth in which their own interests are concerned. Most people's notions are local, present, personal, and consequently subject to what is local, present, personal, and little else. Hence the abundance of speech upon the striking and sensational; the disproportionate amount of utterance upon what comes uppermost, the lack of distinction between what is born of the heat of temper, and the warmth of love for the truth. Even the preaching of the Gospel may be open to criticism, as “of contention,” as manifesting a desire to overcome an antagonist, rather than to present Christ as the “altogether lovely,” or the “mighty to save.” It is to this more lofty, more taxing, more subtle and profound examination of the truth, that our rising ministry are invited. They are called away from the tramp and toil of life, to come up higher, to points of view beyond the ordinary, that they may be able more fully and richly to disclose to others the bearings of Christian truth, and to urge it on the conscience by considerations not always found on the surface of life. Some fear that this is to be wise above what is written; but it is upon what is written that these secluded years of contemplation are to be spent. And it is to make men wise unto salvation that the things written are thus to be pondered. Here we may well ask “Why are we endowed with intellect and reason, if not for an apprehension of the glorious perfections of our Maker, if not for minute and reverential examination of His wonderful works, the sublime movements of His providence, the more sublime operations of His

grace." While some, like the godly Leighton, would say, "Do not examine—turn to piety, love God with all your *heart*," we would say, with the severer class of thinkers—the Butlers and the Bacons of their day—"Examine, and be devout too," emphasizing another clause of the law, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God *with all thy mind*."

But I am pressed by the hour, to take up the desire of the churches for a ministry hopeful of the cause of Christ in the world as it is about to be. What like is the world to be when these young men are at three-score-and-ten? It is to be in the main what it is now. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein," and while much may change to them that has changed to us, other things will be the same to them that they have been to us. If angels from heaven should offer a better Saviour, if these young men themselves should profess to preach a better Christ than the one they are now beginning to declare, they are not to be believed. And it is a source of true hopefulness to recognize this fact, that whatever the future may reveal, Christ is to be in it, even as He has been in what has changed unto us. Christ has many crowns, and their number is on the increase, for each new century and new civilization puts one more on His conquering brow. And those look to Him as King of the kingdom of love, enter each succeeding experience with a predestinated victory in their hands, because under Him, and by His direction, they face the future as propagators of the truth in love. "Truth" and "love"—the truth in love, and love in truth—are the weapons of our warfare; and wherever they are wielded they invariably further the interests of their King. This is the hopeful theology which every age calls for—a theology which transcends the schoolmen's questions, which aims at something higher than sectarian triumphs—the theology which presents a saving knowledge of God as the exponent of that religion whose main element is the life of God in the soul of man. And the teaching of it, and the training of men for its application to human life, I conceive to be no easy task; nor is it undertaken here as an easy task. Nor is the effort to inspire the preacher of the coming age an easy task; for though what is dead may be kept embalmed a thousand years at little cost, what is alive cannot be kept a lifetime without great care, pains, outlay and solicitude. Hope, we are to remember, is not a cheap virtue: its constituents are desire and expectation combined; and both of these elements are restless, and craving, and disturbing unto others. But gladly shall the unrest and the craving be cared for; with pleasure shall the pains be taken, and the solicitude exercised, if so be that, with cheerful spirits and magnanimous intent, those who study here can be sent forth to bless the world by the preaching of Christ. Whether or not they preach Him as here taught, at this date God alone knoweth; but the Christ they are to be taught to preach is not the Christ of the æsthetic, or the merely preceptive schools; but the Christ of the sacrificial cross, the Saviour from sin, the Bread of Life, the Beginning and the Ending of all that God hath shown; in whom God stands revealed as in none other.

As an inspiration of hope, here let me say that profoundly do "I believe in the Holy Ghost, and in the Holy Catholic Church," and in a ministry within that church, by all spiritual and catholic minds. And in taking up this work of training I desire to further that ministry of unlimited love, which Christ never lets fall to the ground. For I do not believe that the ministry of any one, bent on the coming of the kingdom of love, is limited in either its truths or its fields of labour. No minister's parish or congregation is enclosed for the handful who hear him speak. If he preaches the Christ who is the gift of God to a dying world, that world will hear of him; if not by the hearing of the ear, by the seeing of the eye, and by the understanding of the spirit. Let me illustrate my idea by a leaf from a record of real life, as true as if it were "written in a book and sealed with the seven seals" of the divine approval. Half a lifetime ago, a worthy minister of a Christian church came

to a Scottish city half the size of this, and when he began his labours he had not a welcome from a single Christian pastor in that city. Even those of his own order kept aloof, because he was thought to be somewhat "advanced" in his views of the love of God, the work of Christ, the influence of the Spirit; and he *had* advanced in his belief in them as of avail, where others held they were *not*. But that is a matter of secondary importance now. This good man lived on and laboured on, growing steadfastly in the esteem of all, for he was never heard but in a testimony for Christ, never seen upon the street but when on some errand of love to some soul of man; never heard of, but as doing good. And so, like the leaven, whose first particles do their work by immediate contact, but which leavens the mass by what is itself more remotely leavened, this whole city came to know, and to acknowledge, that a man of spiritual power was in it. And when that good man one day fell dead at his own fireside, and was borne to the grave, every evangelical minister in that city walked in deep respect behind his dust. And yet, I question if ten of all that city's clergy ever heard a word from his lips. Great is the mistake that only to the handful who listen to him does the minister preach. The minister preaches through all who hear him and hear of him, through all whose lives are moulded by his truth, and through his own life as a persuading power. Alas for the Gospel, if eloquence of language is its main dependence, instead of the eloquence of thought, and the eloquence of life. We are to stand instructed in this, too: that the best man is not always the one with the widest sphere of influence; as we say, not the man who "does the most good"—that depends on other than human efforts on the one hand, and on other than moral causes on the other—but he is the best man and the best minister, who in his own sphere uniformly acts on the highest and the purest principles. Prominent virtues often require elevation in order to their display; but goodness needs no elevation, nor any arrangement of lights to give it effect: nor is it in anxiety lest it should suffer by accident or decay. We cannot live in contact with it, without being aware of it, and without confessing to its excellence. It is a thought to be engraven on our souls to-night that, in the long run, the pure motive carries the day with all that is worth securing. Circumstances may be untoward, but they are only circumstances; something in a man himself may hinder signal and successful action, but this is only an infelicity; ultimately, goodness can be neither obscured nor neglected, neither despised nor forgotten. By the degree of its purity of motive, every ministry makes an impression as a something with no equal among the forces of this life. Secularly said: "A man's strength is as the strength of lions, when his heart is pure." Religiously said: "It is not you, but the Spirit of your Father, which speaketh in you."

Men and brethren, I find it easy thus to speak of others, and to others, in a common experience with myself; but I find it harder to become more personal as I conclude. Yet I trust to an extension of your patience, as I speak of my own intentions as the one in charge of this College. I have lived long enough to know that, in mental as in physical life, when nourishment ceases, vitality fails; hence the necessity of a constant addition of knowledge to the mind that would inform and direct other minds. The teacher's mind, according to Dr. Arnold, should be kept in the state of a running stream; for, says he, "It is ill drinking out of a pond whose stock of water is merely the remains of the long past rains of the winter and the spring, evaporating and diminishing with every successive day of drought." It is my desire, therefore, to be the scholar of the best teachers, in order that I may be a teacher of the best scholars this college can graduate. And in order to this, I desire to undertake the work to which I am called as an important duty, calling for a consecration as sincere and devout as that expected in any other branch of the ministerial profession. In my place, I expect to study "things that are lovely, and of good report," entering as heartily as I may be able to enter into all that affects the interest, the honour, and the prosperity of the institutions

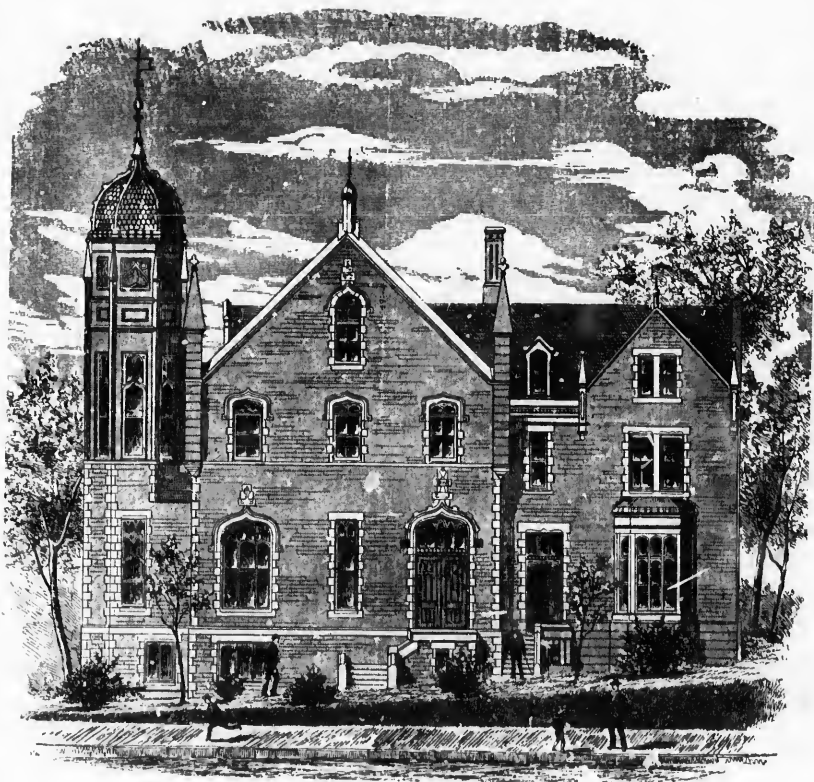
with which I stand connected ; but by no means neglecting what is special and personal in the teachers' culture, that there be no neglect in that quarter, of the improvement of those who are here to be taught.

And this is said not merely for its own sake, but for the sake of those whose professed attendance here is for the study of theology. I wish it to be distinctly and permanently understood, that it is expected of those who live here that they make study their *business*, and not their *by-play*. I here and now take this opportunity to warn off from these premises, those who have it not in their heart of hearts to "scorn delights, and live laborious days" in earnest and prayerful thought upon things divine. To any who are bent upon becoming amateur preachers while yet in their novitiate ; to others who think they are presently called to the conduct of exciting and exhausting services ; to any whose first and last thought is how to make a living, or how to improve their worldly circumstances ; or, in a word, to any who have a divided mind, and consequently a divided life in this place—in all Christian kindness, I say it—"I fear you will not find it good to be here." This is not the place to try experiments in ; it is the place of definite preparation for one arduous work, one day to be done ; it is the place in which to think, to examine ; to be taught here to apply what is secured for the benefit of others—a place of discipline, not of achievement ; a place for the sons of the prophets, not a cave for the prophets themselves to rest in between their stonings ; a place like what Arabia seems to have been to the newly-converted Paul, where in silence he made that mighty mind of his alert and strong in the Gospel he ceased not to preach till, as Paul the aged, he stood ready to be offered. The truth, to which he testified, not only struck him down on the way to Damascus, but stood all his investigations before he began to preach it, and it sustained him in his lifelong effort to make it known. But why need I cite Paul as secluded with the truth before he proclaimed it ? A greater than he, One, humanly-speaking, in less need of preparation to preach, between His baptism and His proclamation of the kingdom, was for a while led of the Spirit into seclusion : "And Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness." After these words, "full of the Holy Ghost . . . led by the Spirit into the wilderness," let no one plead a pious haste to preach as a reason for neglecting preparation. Indeed one reason why so many in their preaching end in the wilderness, may be that, unlike the Master, they do not begin in the wilderness and preach themselves out of it ; they begin outside of it, and preach themselves into it.

Aware of the unpretentious character of this school, and of the denomination behind it, because aware of their supreme design in the culture of individual souls, as distinguished from an effort to erect and sustain great institutions or to sway a wide territory, in the quietness and assurance of those who seek not so much the seen as the unseen, and who find their best life not so fully in the temporal as in the eternal, let us, beloved, as directors, teachers and pupils, begin the year's work, showing by our life here, our faith in the great principles we profess.

For my own part, I desire to begin near to Him of whom I read at daybreak, who said to those wondering how any *man* could give the thousands aught to eat, "How many loaves have ye?" and they said "Seven." And He took them, and blessed and brake them, and gave them back to the disciples to set before the people. And in like manner He blessed and used a smaller number of fishes. And the people did eat, and were filled. Comparatively few our numbers, small our means, little their variety ; but if He will ask for them, take them, bless them, break them, give them to us again to set before the hungry souls whom we may reach, by the thousand they may all eat, and be filled.

Commending myself to Him, to the considerate judgment of my directors and associates, and to the affectionate respect of the students, I assume the duties this night laid upon me, and I ask the prayers of all Christian people that I may discharge these duties aright.



CONGREGATIONAL COLLEGE, MONTREAL.

