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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

TO THE GRADUATING CLASS OF ACADIA COLLEGE,
AT THE ANNIVERSARY, JUNE 6, 1865.

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GENTLEMEN,—

The long toil is over. Your four years' course is ended. You have been nestling together for the appointed time under the wings of your *Alma Mater*, and now you are about to take flight, not indeed to unknown lands, but in order to engage in untried duties. We cherish the hope that you will be found much better fitted for those duties in consequence of your residence here, than if you had contented yourselves with meagre and insufficient preparation. Money spent on mental culture is like "bread cast upon the waters," which is "found after many days."

You live, Gentlemen, in a very remarkable period. The domains of knowledge are extending every day, and new acquisitions are constantly made. Scarcely a year passes without the inauguration of some Society for the purpose of pushing inquiries into unexplored regions. Sciences whose very names were unknown fifty years ago, are cultivated with all the ardour of youthful zeal, and already yield abundant harvests. Things knowable are divided and subdivided as they never were before, and so parcelled out as to favour minuteness of investigation and accuracy of results. Novel applications of principles and facts in the various branches of art, whether useful or ornamental, attest the growing ingenuity of the age. Conclusions which to those who preceded us appeared to be firmly established, have been first doubted and then dismissed to oblivion; and new laws, or rather, laws as old as the creation, but which have been hitherto hidden from human ken, have been brought to light. So vast and boundless, so infinitely diversified is the prospect, that the mind is bewildered by the marvellous complexity of the phenomena, and the untold numbers of objects that present themselves for review and examination.

It is true that only a small minority, even of the well-instructed, can engage in critical pursuits, or track science to its remote and unfrequented haunts. Nevertheless, the influence of advancing knowledge cannot but be generally felt; wherever it plants its foot, the tone of intelligence will be elevated, honourable ambition will be excited, and there will be an uprising of society to a higher level.

In this march of improvement Nova Scotia has taken her part and shares in the advantages. You will find very a different state of things from that which existed when this Institution first began to send forth her sons. There is far more knowledge in the country, and it is more widely diffused. Efficient school teaching has borne good fruit. The colporteur has circulated useful literature. The educated men of 1865 know more, and know it better, than the men of 1845. Youthful intellect is subjected to more vigorous training, and demands a supply of mental aliment adapted to the altered circumstances. The improving process is still going on, exerting everywhere a healthy influence, and promising to leaven the whole mass.

We are doing what we can to keep pace with the times. We shall do it better, especially with regard to the scientific and theological departments, when the people furnish us with the means, as we cannot but believe they will when they see the necessity of the case, and participate in that ambition to excel which is gradually pervading the public mind.

I call your attention to these facts for the purpose of impressing your minds with the importance of aiming at continual progress. This will be required of you whatever course of life you may adopt. As Alumni of Acadia College you will be expected to stand in the first rank of the intelligent, and you will find that it will task your utmost energies to maintain that position. You will not accordingly. Studies will be reviewed. Inquiries

which have been commenced here will be continued. You will apply your powers to the further and more extended consideration of many topics which have been as yet only glanced at, and await the application of matured thought. You will preserve mental health and strength by appropriate exercise. You will "forget those things which are behind, and reach forth unto those things which are before."

Let me remind you, too, of a peculiarity of the present age which thoughtful and religious men cannot fail to contemplate with anxiety, it not with alarm. There is much dreaminess of fancy abroad—much useless and perilous speculation. Intoxicated with the draughts of "science falsely so called," some men babble incoherently; and even profanely, about divine works and arrangements, and appear to welcome with delight any theories which will so explain phenomena as to contradict the bible and keep the Creator out of sight. There is a tendency in the schemes of many of the Philosophers of our day to divorce science from religion and make knowledge godless. It will be for you to show, as you have been continually taught, that they are indissolubly connected. While therefore you participate in the general enthusiasm, and pursue with ardour all legitimate inquiry, you will studiously watch against the sceptical propensity, and regard with suspicion such systems as affect to substitute law for God, and thus strip the Omnipotent and All-wise of his power and skill. You will soon see for yourselves, and it will be your object to convince others, that it is much easier to invent difficulties than to remove them; that we have nothing to do with what may be, or might have been, but with what is; that instead of losing ourselves in the mazes of endless doubtings, it is wiser and safer to note the proofs, which abound on every hand, of the true, the right, and the good; and that, although we may be sometimes encompassed with mists, or passing clouds may intercept the vision, the Sun of righteousness still holds his place in the heavens, and sends forth his enlightening, cheering beams.

I greatly rejoice in the thought that five of you intend to devote yourselves to the christian ministry, and that you expect to enter shortly upon its solemn duties. Some of the remarks that have been offered apply to you with peculiar force. In the congregations to which you may be called to minister, you will probably meet with many young men who have profited by the advantages of these times, and to whom reading and reflection have brought their accustomed blessings. You will breathe a more intellectual atmosphere than was given to your predecessors. And more will be expected of you than of those who were less favoured. Noisy, frothy declamation will not be tolerated in an educated man, nor will it be imagined that he can employ inconsequential reasonings, or argue from false or insufficient data. You will learn that education has its responsibilities as well as its benefits.

All this will stimulate you to effort. You will diligently endeavour and earnestly pray that you may be "workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." You will aim to be instructive. You will at the same time seek to be so affected by the truths you preach, that, as it was said of your Heavenly Master, "gracious words" may "proceed out of your mouths," proving that the enlightenment of the understanding does not repress devotional fervour, and that learning has not chilled your hearts. To this end, "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom." Set forth his glory. Dwell with holy constancy on his grace and love. Live near the Lord, in the perpetual exercise of faith, and thus secure the fruits of christian devotedness and ministerial fidelity.

Gentlemen, whatever may be the course of your lives and the positions you may occupy in society, we look to you for an affectionate remembrance of the Institution you are now leaving. Acadia relies on her sons. You will not tarnish her honour nor be indifferent to her welfare. You will rather desire to repay her with interest for the benefits she has conferred.

Go then, my young friends, to your various spheres of action, and occupy them worthily. Our best wishes attend you. May God's rich blessing rest upon you all! And

long, long after the lips which utter these parting words shall be cold in death, may you be living witnesses for truth, and faithful servants of the Great God!

The four Gospels.

Four biographies of one and the same Person, commonly called "Gospels"—each of which may be read through in a few hours, and all within a couple of days—have wrought a greater change upon the world than all other writings taken together. Yet less is known about the external history of these books than about most of the authentic productions of antiquity. The precise date of none of them can be determined with certainty, the order in which they appeared, with the exception, perhaps, of the last, is a matter of dispute to this day; of the primary causes of their publication, and the objects immediately in the view of their authors, we know no more than can be gathered from internal evidence, aided by some vague though respectable traditions; of the personal history of the first and last of the four writers we know but little, of the third still less, and of the second—if we are right as to who he was, but this also is matter of dispute—next to nothing. What are we to infer from these facts? Clearly this, that the unexampled power of these four books is due to their contents alone. This is the more surprising, considering that there are questions touching the relation of these four writings to each other, which have baffled the acutest students for the last sixty years. The fourth Gospel, for example, so remarkably differs from the other three in tone and even in contents, as to raise the question, Were the sources of information in possession of both equally good? Again, the first three Gospels so remarkably resemble each other, not only in matter but even to verbal identity in the relation of what is common to all, as to suggest, on the first view of them, a dependence of one or two of them upon a third; but then again, the serious differences of representation—amounting in certain cases to apparent, some say real, contradiction—render it difficult to conceive how any of the first three writers could have had the productions of the others before him. But though these and other perplexing problems have to this hour received no certain solution, the wondrous efficacy of the four Gospels, or of the fourfold Life of Jesus which we obtain from them all in combination, is no more affected by this uncertainty than if it did not exist. Thousands of copies of all the four were made and dispersed quickly through every land; for the multitudes who could but imperfectly or not at all comprehend the original, translations of them continued to be executed from the second century onwards from age to age, and still continue to be made; nor will there be a tribe of mankind, however remote and insignificant, in whose tongues these Gospels will not soon tell their marvellous tale. Nothing in the least like this can be said of any other ancient works, nor of all works, ancient and modern, put together.

Now the question is, How is all this to be accounted for? Whence do these four biographies derive their power? What is there in the *Life* which they have presented to us, which has the matchless virtue of attracting from age to age the homage of millions of minds, and ravishing hearts unnumbered, the rude and the refined alike? How comes it that the Object which they all hold forth to us commands what no other human being ever claimed or ever received—the trust, the love, the humble imitation of the most advanced and enlightened portion of mankind? What spell is there about that Object which makes the best of men feel more deeply wounded by slights offered to His name than by any affronts cast upon themselves? Whence is it that they are ready any day to die for Him? What is it that draws them into ennobling communion with Him unseen, makes them look forward with rapture to the hope of seeing Him, and persuades them that there will be no higher bliss in the world to come than to be forever with Him? It is to these intensely interesting questions that we now address ourselves. The answer to them will explain why myriads of men, without any external evidence, irresistibly feel and know

the Gospel History to be true, and the Christianity which lies in the bosom of that History to be God's sovereign balm for the maladies of our nature, in which all preceding revelations and all preparatory Divine institutions find their designed and appropriate termination.—*Sunday Magazine*.

Abuse of Baptism.

A well known pastor of a Baptist church was in a weekly meeting according to custom, with the ministers of the town, a few weeks ago, and while they were engaged in prayer, a loud rap called one of them to the door, where a voice said, "My sister's child is not expected to live; I wish you would come and baptize it."

This was addressed to the Episcopal clergyman, the Presbyterian clergyman, whose services the child's mother attended, being absent. So he took up his prayer-book and robes and set out for the sick chamber with all convenient haste.

Our friend took occasion, during his absence, to ask the Methodist clergyman if it was agreeable to the doctrine of his church to baptize children because in imminent danger of death. He replied in the affirmative. On the return of the Episcopal clergyman to the room, our friend asked him, knowing the father to be an open unbeliever, whether the mother of the child was a member of any church. The reply was, "I believe she is a member of Mr. L.—'s (the Presbyterian minister) church."

This led to a free conversation on infant baptism, which soon developed the fact that the three Pedobaptist denominations represented, advocated infant baptism on entirely different, and mutually antagonistic, and mutually destructive grounds; and although all avowed their readiness to baptize children in prospect of death, yet the grounds on which they each and all defended the practice of infant baptism, are utterly inconsistent with its administration in the sick chamber.

Now, why do these clergymen baptize children in danger of death? To save their souls? If not, for what purpose? It is for this that the parents desire it. There is no doubt on that point. If the practice were confined to ignorant papists, we should not be surprised at it. But, that persons brought up in Presbyterian, Episcopal, and Methodist societies should be so ignorant of the first principles of Christianity, is as strange as it is mortifying.

And, what are we to think of ministers, who profess and believe in justification by the grace of God through faith alone, lending the sanction of their example to such a dangerous and corrupt delusion, who instead of pointing the afflicted mother to the true source of consolation, teaching her that no external act performed on the child can have any effect to save its soul, only confirm her in her gross delusion?—*National Baptist*.

What Science has done for our Knowledge of God.

What then have the sciences added to our sense of the awful power of the infinite God? Astronomy by slow degrees has advanced from the conception of a single earth tented over with the jewelled canopy of the sky, to a result which I suppose is as real as any other inference of reason, that the earth is one planet among many in the solar system, and the solar system one among many in the stellar cluster, and the stellar cluster one among many in the visible heavens. It was a great discovery that the sun's apparent motion was an illusion, and his rising and setting were but moments in the earth's revolution. But the sun itself is moving, and with a speed that can be measured, attended by its planetary train, and the narrow scrutiny of the astronomer's glass can tell us how the receding stars converge as we are driven along, like the houses on a shore we are quitting. If, as is at least probable, our whole system is revolving round a centre, lurking unseen in enormous distance behind the Pleiads, then may not that very centre itself be subject to the same laws of motion? And where is this chain of thought to end? How far should we travel over immeasurable space before we could reach the point of central rest? If we were to try to