Baccalaureate Sermon.

Delivered before the Graduating Class of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Sunday, June 7, 1896, by the Rev. Dr. Donald, of Trinity Church, Boston.

Proverbs xxiii. 23. "Buy the Truth."

It is frequently taken for granted that men engaged in physical studies, engineering, electricity, chemistry, and biology are irreligious; not wicked or unmoral above men engaged in other studies—language, literature, philosophy,—but irreligious. It is asserted that they are pre-eminently and characteristically unsensitive and irresponsible to whatever belongs, or is asserted to belong, to the idea and worship of God. Darwin is claimed as their noblest type—a man of singularly pure character, but caring nothing for the things of the spirit—as the things of the spirit are ordinarily defined. Romans is an exception,—a man who showed a marvellously deep interest in religion while making investigations and discoveries which have given him a high place among the great scientists of Europe. A man of science is not expected, by the general public, to be a thoroughgoing, earnest, interested, intelligent man of God. There is a widely prevalent opinion that there is something in the very nature of physical studies which makes belief in God, Heaven, and the Spirit difficult, and perhaps impossible. And, as a consequence, there is an equally prevalent opinion that they who have given themselves up to the mastery of physical studies will speedily manifest a disinclination to, and an inaptitude for, religious ideas, and the consideration of spiritual truth. This opinion was founded upon substantial facts, then a Baccalaureate Sermon to a body of young men fresh from four years' strenuous devotion to physical studies in yonder laboratory would be a flagrant solemnism. It would be as great a blunder as to provide a magic lantern exhibition for the pupils of the Perkins Institution for the Blind, a symphony concert for the deaf mutes at Northampton. It is because I believe that opinion is baseless, and is a virtual slander upon students of physical science, that I gladly accepted the invitation of the Senior Class of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to preach to them to-day. You will remember, young men, that there is no provision in the statutes or regulations of the Institute for this service. You will remember that the request for it came from you to me, and not from me to you. And you will remember that I greeted and granted your request with an eager joy. Under the happy circumstance of your voluntary invitation, and of my voluntary acceptance of it, we have met in God's house to ask God's blessing upon the knowledge you have gathered in the last four years, and upon your use of it in the years that are beckoning you with glowing hands. It would be difficult to imagine conditions more favorable to preacher and audience than these which I have described. It is as if the willing seed and the willing soil should unite to invoke the blessing of the sunshine and the shower.

In that widely read and justly admired little book entitled "The Greatest Thing in the World," Professor Drummond makes love, or charity, the central and supreme principle of human life. He shows how, without love, the best we have is defeated, and quite wins us over to his proposition by the brilliancy of his illustrations, the cogency of his reasoning. But apart from the significant fact that St. Paul explicitly says, "And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three, but the greatest of these three is love," it is clear that faith without truth is superstition, hope without truth is empty credulity, and love without truth speedily degenerates into mere personal fondness, into a condition of mere affectional sentiment that exalts emotion above character. The universe is manifestly and squarely built up upon the truth of its creation. Civilization rests solidly upon the truth of the civilized beings who compose society. Truth alone is ultimate. Should the truth of the Creator fail, the universe would lapse back into the chaos out of which the Creator's truth originally called it forth through long evolutionary processes. Truth alone is ultimate. Should the truth of man fail, society would break in pieces, as it has again and again broken in pieces when man for a moment lost, or threw away his truth, and attempted to live by something other. From the point of view of religion the only place, and from the point of view of science the best place, in which to locate the origin of the forces, the laws, the orderly processes of the great total world, is the truth of God. Creator and sustainer of all things, known and unknown, just as the truth of man is the origin of the