

# Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL & GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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## Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

"THOU ART NEAR, O LORD."

PSALM cix. 151.

When streams of mercy from above,  
Fill all thy soul with heavenly love;  
And "the voice of the turtle is heard;"  
'Tis then thy heavenly Shepherd leads,  
Thy longing soul to dewy meads,  
And the still waters of this word.

And when sorrows o'erwhelm thy head;  
And thy hopes, and joys are all fled,  
As thou feelest adversity's blast;  
'Tis then thy Heavenly Father proves,  
Thou art a child he fondly loves,  
And will surely receive at the last.

When from "windy storm and tempest,"  
Self-willed thy soul doth seek for rest;  
(As to death for ease from throes of pain)  
It is then in earthly cupel,  
By thy Refiner tended well,  
Thy bright'ning he seeketh, for thy gain.

A Shepherd's or a Father's hand,  
Thus holds thee through this desert land,  
To lead or else thy wayward soul chastise:  
Or thy refiner siteth near,  
To see himself in thee appear,  
That thou at last, may see him in the skies.

Let then this thought thy mind employ,  
And fill thy soul with sacred joy,  
In peace and rest, or sorrow, pain and grief,  
That thy Great Friend who died for thee,  
And saves thee through eternity,  
Is ever near to give the wise relief.  
Mira, April 22nd, 1864. II.

## Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

THE GREAT DEBATE.

No. II.

THE CURIOSITIES THEREOF.

It was a curious debate, in many respects. Among the curiosities may be mentioned the differences between the members of the government. The Provincial Secretary was an out-and-out supporter of Dalhousie, and defended the whole manœuvre through thick and thin; he even went so far as to maintain that the Act of last session was very deliberately carried through the House, and received a fair share of attention. The Attorney General, on the other hand, asserted the contrary, and both he and the Financial Secretary expressed their regret that the Act had found its way into the Statute Book.—The Hon. Mr. Shannon declared that Dalhousie College did not belong to the Province; the Attorney General proved that it did.—The Provincial Secretary was indignant at the insolence of the Press—meaning thereby those papers which were hostile to the Act:—but the Attorney General acknowledged the ability with which the discussion was conducted, and the respectful attention which the Press should receive. The government did not certainly present the appearance of a united family.

It is noticeable, too, that the main facts, as stated by Mr. Longley in his first speech, could not be got rid of. Neither the eloquence of one man nor the special pleading of another availed any thing in the matter. There are the facts. They are undeniable. A Provincial College has become a Presbyterian College, and Dalhousie is denominationalized.

If a skillful debater perceives that his adversary has some strong points, he will either evade them altogether or affect to regard them as of trifling importance. It is curious to observe how cunningly this policy was maintained in the "great debate."

Much has been said about the liberality of the arrangements. Dalhousie College is free to all! Every denomination is welcome! Let them all establish Professorships, and thus constitute it a Provincial University! But special care was taken to keep this out of sight till the contract between the Governors of the College and the Presbyterians was completed. The Governors negotiated with the Presbyterians, and with Presbyter-

ians only. No overtures were made to other denominations. Nothing was said about them till the Bill was brought in, and by that time all the preparations, had been made and the Presbyterians were ready to occupy the ground. It is sheer evasion to pretend to answer this by saying that the Hon. Dr. Tupper, the Hon. Mr. Shannon, and J. W. Ritchie Esq. were appointed Governors of Dalhousie, each of them representing a separate denomination. They do not represent the denominations to which they are professedly attached: those denominations were not consulted on the occasion, and had nothing to do with the appointment.

Some of the Presbyterians were desirous of avoiding the danger to which hasty measures would expose them, and counselled the postponement of final action till the decision of other denominations was known. A motion, to that effect was made by the Rev. George Christie, I believe, at the Synod held in Charlottetown last year, but it was lost on a division by 40 to 17. There is the fact, however, that seventeen members of the Synod, some of them, it is said, influential men, foresaw the trouble that was likely to arise, and wished to escape it by the adoption of a fair method of procedure. The upholders of the Act did not find it convenient to notice this, because it told against them.

Mr. Tobin wished himself young again, that he might join the classes in Dalhousie College, and thus satisfy his ardent thirst for learning. A very proper wish, not doubt. At any rate it shewed that Mr. Tobin, a steady Roman Catholic, felt that he would run no risk of losing his faith by mixing with the Presbyterian lads. But why should he ignore St. Mary's? Will the bishop commend him for his complimentary allusion to a Protestant Institution?

The Hon. Mr. Shannon advanced an argument for the College, which, however satisfactory to his city friends, will scarcely be admitted in the country. He spoke of it as the College of "the middle classes of Halifax, and eulogised the professor of Chemistry, by whose lectures the young druggists of the city had been already largely benefited. Granted. Dalhousie offers great advantages to the young men of Halifax. It is an excellent local Institution. Then let Halifax support it.

The expenditure of £900 a year, public money, for the benefit of the "middle classes" of the metropolis, and the training of her shopmen in these days of retrenchment, is a little too bad!

The Provincial Secretary has made a theological discovery. He wishes to prove that three different denominations have availed themselves of last year's Act, and secured Professors in the College, and that this shows the great benefit and value of the enactment. His three denominations are—the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia, the Free Church, and the Church of Scotland. We have been accustomed to think that these religious bodies, adopting, and using the same Confession of Faith and the same Catechism, and practising the same mode of church government, are virtually one, and that the word "Presbyterian" covers all. In fact, two of them have actually united, the designation "Free Church" being now disused. But the Provincial Secretary assures us that there is as much difference between these Presbyterian sections as there is between Methodists, Episcopalians, and Baptists. This is absolutely astounding. Arminianism and Calvinism, we have always thought, are "wide as the poles asunder." The monarchical and democratic modes of government can have but little in common. But the Secretary declares that these differences are but parallel to those existing between three bodies of religionists—all Presbyterians, all Calvinists! Verily, the spirit of partisanship is mighty.

There is another discovery. The Provincial Secretary announces that a loan is a gift! There are plenty of borrowers in the world who will thankfully accept the definition, and anxiously look for its endorsement by the courts of law. But the Secretary qualifies his assertion. Not every loan—but "a loan to a public work is a gift to all intents and purposes." If that be true, the creditors of Nova Scotia must look out for themselves. They have lent us a million of money to build our railroads. Do they expect to get it again? Simpletons as they are! Ought

they not to have known that "a loan to a public work is a gift?"—Perhaps, however, the Secretary may wish us to understand that every parliamentary loan to a public work is a gift. If so, I can only say, first, that all parliamentary history is against him, as might be abundantly proved; and secondly, that the Legislature of Nova Scotia intended, in 1823, to lend, not to give. They had given twice before and were tired of giving. Nothing can be more explicit than their language.

The marvellous success of the Presbyterian College was trumpeted by the Provincial Secretary as a thing to be especially admired. It had been established but a few months, and lo! there were forty regular students, besides twenty who were taking courses of partial study, and the people were to believe that this was the remarkable success of a new Institution, shewing the favour with which it was regarded, and betokening a brilliant future. But the description wanted an essential element—truth. The speaker omitted to state that *Truro had migrated to Dalhousie*. There were forty students at the close of the last Term at Truro, there were forty students at the beginning of first Term at Halifax. The list of their names shews clearly who they are and whence they came.

In the course of this "great debate" several of the speakers urged as a fatal objection to Mr. Longley's proposal that it would be "a breach of faith." The Bill for the resuscitation of Dalhousie College, they said, was passed last session, and on the faith of the permanency of the arrangement Professors had been engaged and the work of instruction commenced. Would it be fair and honourable to set the whole concern adrift? ought not the Institution to have "a fair trial?"

All this is exceedingly specious and plausible, but it is rotten to the core. Honourable members do not reason in this way when the question is one of party-politics. Then the cry is, "To the victors belong the spoils," and it matters not what amount of inconvenience or suffering may be endured by the poor wretch who is placed among the doomed—how recently he may have come into possession of his office—or whether the law under which his office was created has had "a fair trial" or not.—It is quite enough that it was the work of the other party. The law must be repealed, or the officer changed, and there are no compunctious visitings about it. It is well understood on all sides.

But it is maintained that the Dalhousie legislation was the enactment of a wrong, inasmuch as it placed a Provincial Institution in the hands of a sect. How can the wrong be remedied but by the repeal of the Act? The continuance of the Institution in its present state cannot make the wrong right. The longer it continues the more grievous is the wrong. The plea for "a fair trial" is in fact the expression of a hope that the people will become weary of the agitation and that the contention will die out. We shall see.

Assuredly, the Presbyterians themselves would not have been surprised at the repeal of the Act. They hesitated long before they finally resolved to take action on it, both because there was a division among themselves, and because, they saw that a storm was gathering which might sweep the whole away. Up to a late date the students did not know whether they might not be required to return to Truro. It was sagaciously ordered other wise, that the plea of *possession* might be put in and the righteousness of ejection become a theme for declamation. The ground was felt to be insecure, and the probability of being warned off was anticipated; but it was deemed the more prudent course to occupy it, that there might be an effective outcry against expulsion and dispossession.

Had Mr. Longley's resolutions been carried the Presbyterians might have done what they may perhaps be brought to see is the best thing now to do. They have it in their power to found an Institution of their own, sustained by their own funds and managed exclusively by themselves. Why should they lean on Dalhousie?

There is one more curiosity in the "great debate," to which the attention of your readers may be called. The Provincial Secretary defies public opinion. He tells the members of the House of Assembly that their actions are not to be "moulded" nor "their

sentiments adapted to meet the pressure from without." He is disposed to estimate at a very low value the expression of the people's will by remonstrance or petition. Let him beware, or he may soon find himself among the breakers. The people of Nova Scotia are not to be trifled with. They claim to be heard—to be respected—and, if need be, to be obeyed. They create the House of Assembly by their choice of its members. If any of those members prefer their private views to the well-known wishes of their constituents, or despise the "pressure from without," they must not wonder if they have to remain at home to study the subject more perfectly.

J. M. C.

For the Christian Messenger.

THE ANNIHILATION THEORY.

Dear Brother,

An esteemed brother sent me the other day a copy of a tract entitled, "Immortality through Christ alone. The doctrine safe and salutary. By C. F. Hudson," and requested me to give my opinion of it in the *C. Messenger*. I have sent to my correspondent the pamphlet entitled, "What will become of the wicked?" judging that he will find in its pages a reply, by anticipation, to the principal assertions contained in the tract. I will trouble you, however, with a remark or two.

1. The writer is an annihilationist, holding that the punishment of the wicked will consist in literal destruction, or ceasing to be; and a large portion of the tract is occupied by an attempt to prove that this theory is "Safe and salutary," or, in other words, that it is more likely to produce good effects than the doctrine of everlasting punishment, as it is generally maintained. Now, this is altogether beside the mark; for it is possible to hold the truth itself in unrighteousness, while, on the other hand, superstitious fears have kept many a man from gross vices. The proper inquiry is, Is the opinion in question founded on scripture testimony, or is it fairly deducible from the statements of the sacred writers? If so, we may be assured that it is a "doctrine according to godliness."

2. The writings of the early christians are confidently appealed to, in order to show that they were unacquainted with what are commonly regarded as orthodox views of the subjects discussed. This reference to human authority is greatly to be deprecated. Knowing as we do that error and corruption were introduced into the church even during the lives of the Apostles, we are prepared for crudities and oddities, and we find them in abundance in the productions of the first uninspired christian authors. As witnesses to facts we are willing to give them respectful attention; they may furnish truthful accounts of the events of their times or of the existing usages of the church. But their opinions are just their own, and must be judged of according to their merits.

3. It is stated that "for a full century after the death of Christ we find no proof that the early christians held any immortality out of Christ, or any doctrine of eternal misery;" and Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, and the authors of the Epistle ascribed to Barnabas and of the Shepherd of Hermas are mentioned as men never speaking of the lost "as suffering for ever." The answer is twofold:—1. There were no systematic treatises on theology in those days. It is therefore impossible to detail correctly and fully the sentiments entertained on many subjects because they do not happen to be referred to. 2. With regard to the point in hand the assertion may be met by a direct contradiction. There are passages in the writings adverted to which clearly express the views now generally held among us. See *Hefele's Patrum Apostolicorum Opera*, pp. 140, 166, 316, 381.

4. Errors are often found in clusters. He who denies the divinity of Christ denies also the doctrine of divine influence, and kindred truths. An imperfect and partial view of human depravity lies at the foundation of various heresies. I do not wonder, therefore, that the author of the tract before me is dissatisfied with the expression—"desperately wicked"—as applied to the human heart. He says that "we might render the phrase,