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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

THE GREAT DEBATE.

No. III.

INFERENCES AND DUTIES.

Lord Dalhousie projected the establishment of a Provincial University, to which young men of every denomination might have free access, without interference with their religious views or professions.

A negotiation was at one time entered into with the authorities of King's College, in the expectation that by the union of the two Institutions Lord Dalhousie's design might be carried into effect. That negotiation failed of success.

In 1858, when, after years of inaction, it was determined to put the College into operation, the liberal views of the Founder were altogether departed from, by the appointment of three Presbyterian Professors, clearing shewing the policy of the governors, and their intention to make it a Presbyterian Institution.

Then came the great excitement. The other denominations saw themselves shut out, and resolved to act for themselves. The denominational system of education was deliberately adopted. It was held to be the best suited to the circumstances of the country and most consonant with the religious views and feelings cherished by the respective bodies.

Nothing has since occurred to change their opinions. On the contrary, there is a growing attachment to the denominational Colleges and a determination to sustain them. And with this is connected an indisposition to send young men to Halifax, where the expense of living in comfort is necessarily greater than in other parts of the province, and where they would be exposed to the temptations which abound in all cities.

The Presbyterians have for some years acted on this principle, having established a flourishing institution at Truro. But the Kirk party had no share in it, and a desire rose up among them all to obtain collegiate education of a higher order, for their joint benefit. This might have been easily effected by their own liberal contributions, the Presbyterians being generally a well-to-do class of people and in fact owning a large portion of the property possessed in the province. Dalhousie College, however, happened at that time to be in a dormant state, as it had often been before, and it was judged economical and expedient to endeavour to get hold of its funds. The attempt succeeded, as we all know.

When the compact was formed between the Presbyterians and the Governors of Dalhousie College, the position in which the other denominations stood to their own Colleges was well known. The Presbyterians knew it. The Governors of Dalhousie knew it. Everybody knew it. No one supposed for a moment that the other colleges would be given up, or that the other denominations would connect themselves with Dalhousie. The Governors did not think it worth while to make any inquiry about it, or to present any proposition to the other religious bodies. They had to do with the Presbyterians, and with the Presbyterians only, and so Dalhousie passed into the hands of that denomination.

I know that the Act of last year provides that "any religious body," raising a sufficient amount of funds, may have a Professor of its own in Dalhousie College. That clause was necessary to the success of the measure. But no one dreamed of any advantage being taken of it except by the Presbyterians. They had already bargained with the Governors of Dalhousie, and it might not be too much to say that they neither expected nor desired any other partners in the firm. They have acquired a snug property for themselves, and they shew a decided disposition to retain it.

Among the offences against society which are usually treated with commendable severity is "obtaining money under false pretences." I do not charge the Presbyterians with that offence, but I must say that in the judgement

of many impartial observers the transaction wears the appearance of a very near approach to it, taking into consideration all the circumstances under which it took place.

All parties look upon the present state of affairs, in regard to the other denominations, as fixed and settled. They abide by their own Institutions. And the late Attorney General indicated in no obscure terms, his persuasion that their policy is good and will prove highly serviceable. He did not think it possible, or wise if it were possible, to break up those institutions.

It is much to be regretted that the honourable gentleman, and the Provincial Secretary, who acted with him, did not allow those convictions to have full play, but rather suffered supposed political exigencies to prevail over them. The Kirk was to be propitiated, and a share in Dalhousie, promised by the leaders of the Conservative party, was a part of the arrangement, as in like manner the leaders of the Liberal party had engaged to secure a share to the other Presbyterians. Hence the quiet way in which the bill was passed through the House. Both parties were compromised, and the leaders understood one another. But that there was no previous communication with the religious bodies, or with the authorities of other Colleges, so as to ascertain whether united action could take place, is, to say the least, to be deeply regretted. And it is the more to be regretted because one of the gentlemen alluded to regarded himself as representing the Baptists in the governorship of Dalhousie, and the other is a governor of Acadia. The preponderating influence yielded to party politics, to which education, temperance, and sometimes even religion is made to bend, is one of the calamities of Nova Scotia.

What, then, is to be done with Dalhousie? It is not difficult to say what ought to be done. If the people will not obey a law, or take advantage of any facilities which it offers, the law is useless, as far as the people generally are concerned, and should be repealed. If the inhabitants of any town or city wish to appropriate the advantages of such a law to their own uses, let them do so, but *not at the public expense*. The present case stands thus:—The Presbyterians have obtained possession of Dalhousie College, a Provincial Institution, and by that means have secured an income of £1150 a year. This is £650 a year more than they are entitled to. The other denominations receive £250 a year each in aid of their institutions. Counting the Presbyterians as two, viz. the Church of Scotland and the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia, they may claim £500 a year. But they hold the building of Dalhousie College, which cost £13000, and they have the use of its funds, £900 a year, to which sum the Legislature added £250 at the recent session. They might expect, as I said, £500 a year. They have £1150, in addition to the building.

It is altogether beside the mark to affirm that Dalhousie is open to every body, and that the other denominations might come in and partake of the benefits, on compliance with the conditions. We all know that. But the people have made up their minds the other way, and that, two, was known beforehand by the parties to the contract. The people have shewn it by their petitions; all classes have joined in asking for the repeal of the Act. Further—the boasted liberality of Dalhousie exists in all the other colleges. Every one of them is open to young men, of whatever denomination they may be, and no questions are asked on the subject. We are all as free as Dalhousie but with this advantage, that we can connect religious influences with education, while Dalhousie cannot.

In conclusion, our duty is twofold:—

1. To come forward, with greater zeal and more liberal contributions than ever, to the support of our own colleges, and not only to support, but to improve them. They will stand or fall by their own merits. They will be what their supporters make them.

Acadia College claims of our denomination a warm-hearted and energetic upholding. It has ever to contend with opposition, and scorn, and cold indifference. But it stands, still, and its prospects in an educational point of view are brighter than ever.—All we want now is a re-excitement of the old enthusiasm, a readiness to sympathize, and act, and give

—in a word, to treat it as our own child, with tender and assiduous care.

Those who have been educated at Acadia are especially bound in honour and affection, to exert all possible influence in its favour. Much is in their power. Their own indebtedness to the Institution is a consideration the force of which they cannot but feel. *Alma Mater* will ever be regarded with loving reverence. They will adopt the impassioned language of the Psalmist, "If I forget thee,—let my right hand forget her cunning." Those of them who are in the ministry will plead with their people for co-operation and generous assistance, nor will they consent to remain in connection with those who decline to render such aid.

2. It is our duty to persevere in efforts to obtain a repeal or amendment of the Act respecting Dalhousie College. Our defeat at the last session need not discourage us. The subject was but imperfectly understood, and political complications tended materially to mystify it. We shall go to the Legislature next year under more favourable auspices. There will be an answer to the cry, "Let Dalhousie College have a fair trial." It will be found that the denominational Colleges continue in action and manifest growing vigour. It will be found that the "religious bodies" stand aloof from Dalhousie. It will be found that the would-be Provincial University is nothing more than a Presbyterian College. The Legislature will discover that the enactment of 1863 was a blunder, and will be prepared to take measures accordingly.
May 24, 1864. J. M. C.

INFLUENCE OVER THE YOUNG.

The following is a letter from Henry Ward Beecher, to a young minister, published in a late number of the *N. Y. Independent*.

LETTER TO A YOUNG MINISTER.

My Dear—: There are two natural departments of influence in ministerial life—the social or personal, and the professional or teaching. He is fortunate who can with ease and skill act in both. I am under the impression that few clergymen aim to do much for the young of their flocks, except by some form of meeting. But, without disparaging catechetical classes and gatherings for discourses, it seems to me that much may be done by personal influence. Do you not recollect, when you were a boy, any larger boy, or some young man, who inspired you with admiration? The influence which some persons exert over the young amounts almost to fascination. They accept their decisions, admire their style, copy their manners, court their approbation, and are made happy in their smile. The influence is not always beneficial. Children are taken out of their parents' hands, and carried away from teachers, by the social influence of companions. It is this tendency of the young to become social enthusiasts that pastors might direct to the highest ends. A boy is often conscious that he is following some leader against his conscience, and yet cannot disengage himself or break his influence; but how much more potent would such an influence be if he went with his conscience!

Boys are hero-worshippers. They delight in a master. A minister may become their friend—may pour into their ears such wealth of knowledge, such narratives, may initiate new sports, set on foot expeditions and enterprises—and, in the accomplishment of these, develop a hundred questions of honor, rectitude, magnanimity, generosity, lawful rivalry; or, he may awaken their minds to discussion, to criticism, and judgment of conduct; and, at every case, adduce some precept or command from Scripture, which would not only teach them how to settle practical cases of conscience, but how to use the Bible, not merely for a reading book. And if, to do this, it should be found necessary for the minister himself to become more familiar with the wealth of ethical lore in the Bible, it would not be the least of benefits.

A minister can gain the sympathy and confidence of children by an easy familiarity with them in their sports and daily duties. There is no danger of detracting from his dignity, or of lessening his influence in the pulpit.—Kindness inspires affection, and affection respect.

I would have you to know every child in your parish by name and disposition. I would have you win their confidence, secure their love. It is a good sign if children, when they see you, run to you with eager and pleased faces. You are their natural, and ought to be their best friend, and they ought to think so.

I do not say that all have this gift of social influence. But no minister should take that for granted, until after thorough and persistent trial. Where there is an easy and natural social power, to no other more does the injunction apply, Neglect not the gift that is in thee.

It is bad to see children afraid of their minister. You ought to have the confidence of the youth committed to you, to such a degree that to you, next their parents, and in some cases even before them, they should spontaneously apply in emergencies.

You cannot well exaggerate the moral power of such social influence. It will often transcend that of formal and direct teaching. The person will be more than the pulpit.—And even the pulpit will find itself richer, and fresher, and more fruitful in subject for discourse.

You speak of a difficulty in finding topics for your children's meetings. Of course, every one must consult his own disposition and circumstances in this matter. But there are certain things that all may do. It is the custom of some pastors once a month to have a service on the Sabbath for children. The life of Christ, or some portion of Biblical history, is taken up and gone over in regular course. Sometimes the catechism is taken, and instead of formal question and answer, an illustrative and even parabolic lecture is given. It might be well to select from children's life a series of duties, or trials, or temptations, and make them the subject of familiar remark. But while life and catechism are to be used, the Bible, after all, furnishes the chief store of materials, and in a form best adapted to interest and instruct children or adults; and you can scarcely be in danger of employing that too much, even if you employed it exclusively. I do not know why a collection of children should not be as much fascinated by Scripture narratives, detailed by the pastor, as they are wont to be at home, when some parent, or nurse, or aunt, of a Sunday afternoon, reads or recites from the sacred pages. Nothing ever so filled and excited our heart and imagination as the simple reading to us of the Scripture by a revered aunt. Sermons, in our boyhood, were lost upon us. We do not recollect being impressed with a single sermon till after we were twelve years old. But long before that, reading, and conversations, and the narratives of experience were wont to produce profound impressions. The stateliness of preaching, the exclusion from it of picturesqueness and descriptiveness, the abstruseness of many of its ideas, take it out of the sphere of childhood. But, while these hints may serve to aid you in some degree, it is yet true that you must mainly find out your own way. The main thing is a heart really alive to the work, and a zealous determination to win the young to Christian truth and Christian living. Such a spirit will sooner or later find or make a way.

OUR MISSIONS IN BURMAH.

BASSEIN.—Mr. Crawley, of the Henthada Mission, being on a visit to Mrs. Ingalls at Thongzai in Dec., 1863, arranged to accompany her to Basssein, and spend a few weeks before the meeting of the Association in aiding Mr. Douglass. Under date of Basssein, Jan. 20, 1864, he writes as follows:

Preaching in Basssein.—We have been here since the 1st inst. Several native preachers came with us, and after preaching from house to house during the day, we have had a meeting every evening in the town, among the heathen. The attendance has been large, and on every occasion the audience has been most orderly and attentive. The result will prove, we hope, that the good seed has not been sown in vain.

The delegates have now all arrived and the Associational meetings will commence to-morrow.