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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.

#### EXPLANATIONS AND CONFIRMATIONS.

I had not intended to write again on this subject, and should not have troubled you now, were it not that the Provincial Secretary's speech in the Gymnasium at Wolfville, after the dinner of the Associated Alumni of Acadia College, seemed to require a brief notice.

I might reasonably enough complain of the manner in which that affair was managed. The Provincial Secretary was invited to speak at the meeting, and might have been expected to dwell on the state and prospects of the College, and the desirableness of cherishing suitable feelings towards *Alma Mater*. He chose, however, to occupy the bulk of the time with a vindication of the Dalhousie affair, and concluded by replying at length to the criticisms contained in my former papers. All this was entirely foreign to the design of the meeting—but it was permitted. When he had spent an hour and a half (some say, more) in this manner there was no time left for any rejoinder.

A lengthened answer is by no means required, as the main points at issue were not touched by the speaker. Practised debaters know how to go round and round a subject without getting into it, and how to say all about the question except what was most earnestly wished for, and which, if said, would settle the whole matter. And so it was on that occasion.

But the honourable gentleman particularly complained of some remarks of mine which he endeavoured to show were unfounded and unfair. He will do me the justice, I hope, to believe that I would not willingly bring a wrongful charge against any man, or exceed the limits usually assigned to controversialists. Nor do I think that I have done so in the present instance.

I said that the Provincial Secretary defied public opinion, and in illustration produced a passage from his speech, in which he declares that the actions of legislators are not to be "moulded," nor "their sentiments adapted to meet the pressure from without." The defence set up is that the observations then made had reference to a particular article in one Paper, and not to the Press generally. I do not see how this helps the case. The speaker started, I admit, from the Paper to which he referred, but he founded on it the general remark, applicable, of course, to all Papers hostile to his policy, and protested against the "pressure from without." I called it, and I call it still, a defiance of public opinion.

The gravest part of the charge is yet to come. Referring to the Provincial Secretary's statement about the marvellous success of Dalhousie College, in that it had gathered in forty regular students in the course of a few months, I said, "The description wants an essential element—truth. The speaker omitted to mention that *Truro had migrated to Dalhousie*." This, it is affirmed, is a direct accusation of falsehood. "You must retract!" said one, whose face was flushed with excitement—"you have charged him with falsehood." Softly—softly, good friends—let us look the thing in the face, and scan it well. Here are the Provincial Secretary's own words, taken from the official report of his speech:—

"Now Dalhousie College has been galvanized into new life. In a few months it has been able to make a return of 40 students for the full course, and 20 for the partial course, and I ask those who are familiar with the difficulties against which the denominational colleges have had to struggle and the length of time necessary to take such position, whether this House has not the right to believe that an earnest has been already given, and that this college will become an important addition to the educational institutions of this Province, and that we are alike bound by a regard to public faith, by what we owe to the unanimous enactments of this Legislature, after all that has been done on the guarantee of this legislation, and by a regard to the best interests of the country, to foster and support Dalhousie College as an acquisition among the collegiate institutions of Nova Scotia."

Now, I may fearlessly ask any impartial person to decide. Are not these observations calculated to produce the impression that Dalhousie achieved what other Colleges have failed to accomplish? It attracted forty students in a few months, and this is contrasted with the struggles of denominational colleges and "the length of time necessary to take such position." Who, that was ignorant of the facts, would have imagined that this vaunted prosperity was in reality owing to the migration from Truro? Unquestionably, forty students would not have been found at Dalhousie had it not been for that migration.

If a statement is made which produces a false impression—an impression, that is to say, at variance with fact—is it, not justly characterised as "wanting an essential element, truth?" Much is often said, I am aware, in the heat and hurry of debate, which will not bear the light till it is revised: but here is an official report, which, unless I am mistaken, the speakers had the opportunity to correct. It is unfortunate, to say the least, that the passage in question was not modified before it went forth to the public.

The Provincial Secretary must not flatter himself with the hope that this excitement will die away. The Baptists remember the struggle of 1843, and its issue. The battle of denominational colleges was fought and won. The advantage then gained will not be given up. The decisions of that year (I refer, especially, to the celebrated meeting of the Education Society at Yarmouth) will not be reversed, and no effort will be spared to work "the pressure from without" till all denominations are placed on an equal footing, and no one is allowed, directly or indirectly, to draw a larger sum than others from the public funds appropriated to education, or to acquire a position incompatible with the claims and rights of all.

June 7, 1864.

J. M. C.

### THE CELEBRATIONS AT WOLFVILLE.

(Continued.)

The Rev. I. E. Bill on "Education and Religion" shewed that it was impossible safely to attempt a separation of the former from the latter. Religion had always demanded a certain amount of education. Although we have no reliable information as to the anti-daltonian educational institutions, yet we know there must have been some instruction afforded by Divine and angelic teachers concerning the "more acceptable sacrifices of Abel, Enoch, &c." The provision made subsequently for connecting knowledge with religion, shewed that both might be expected to suffer by divorcing them. The two great representative men of the Jewish and Christian dispensations—Moses and Paul—were each signally fitted for the offices held by them respectively, by having a lengthened period previous to the more public part of their lives, employed in the cultivation of their minds. He depicted the characters of several of the shining lights in the religious world, and shewed that all who have been instrumental in effecting wide-spread benefit in the world, have been those who had obtained high educational advantages.

The next oration was that given on

### THE SPECIAL DEMANDS OF THESE TIMES.

BY REV. GEO. ARMSTRONG, A. M.

Every age has its own characteristics and leaves its impress on history. The characteristics of the times in which we live may be briefly described as distinguished for the extensive knowledge, untiring activity, energy indomitable, and progress almost universal and rapid without a parallel in any former period. The human mind is now thoroughly awake and most busily at work in all directions. The mind of this age is pushing its inquiries everywhere with a boldness and pertinacity resolved to know what can be known, to solve what is capable of solution, and accomplish what is possible. These great facts, our own loved Province, fair and beautiful, recognizes, and to some extent feels their influence, and is already become an important link in the great chain of causes by the operation of which society is served, improved, elevated and rendered happy.

Steam and Electricity—those gigantic forces which the prying and inventive mind of this most marvellous age, has, under Providence

called forth, and employed to do much of man's work, and to flash intelligence round the world, include our country in their extensive and favoured domain. Mind here is active. Much of the sluggishness of former times is gone, and improvement is everywhere apparent. This is seen as much in the present state of Education compared with what it was formerly, as perhaps in any one aspect of our social condition. Education is now far in advance of what it was twenty-five years ago in this province.

It would be unwise and uncharitable to ignore the fact that other agencies and institutions have contributed to effect this great and desirable change. But we claim that in its production Acadia College performed no small part. She has worked laboriously and nobly, and without ostentation or much boasting, and sometimes pressed by difficulties almost insurmountable. But through Providence she has been sustained till now. Having survived the perils of fancy, attained her majority, and now reached the respectable age of twenty-five, Acadia pauses to review her history, congratulate her friends, thank the Author and Giver of all, and gather up new strength for the great and important work before her. This work is responsible and very exacting.

These times demand from Colleges the utmost thoroughness in their work. This reasonable demand Acadia College is anxious to meet positively and satisfactorily. The work assigned her, and which she has assumed, and, in effect, pledged, is to thoroughly train, in all the great branches of collegiate lore, as understood in the enlarged and comprehensive sense of these times, all who commit themselves to her friendly and fostering guidance; to cultivate and bring out to the utmost, and as far as possible prepare for the highest and best uses, the powers which God, in his wisdom and goodness conferred on the human mind. To do this it is requisite that the curriculum comprehend all the great subjects of study, which wisdom and experience have found to be of special service in collegiate training and best adapted to fit the student for the real world of society in which he is to perform his part. In all the great essentials of a College course, it is required that Acadia be, at least up side by side with the best collegiate institutions in this and the adjacent provinces; and the aim and endeavour to reach as high a position beyond as possible, can do her no harm, may contribute much to her success.

It is expected that the sons of Acadia come forth from their *Alma Mater* with powers as fully and thoroughly trained, with minds as liberally stored with the spoils of knowledge, and as well prepared for the Arena of life, as are the Alumni of any College in the Province. They are required to be as well versed in the Greek and Latin Classics, as deeply skilled in Logic, as profound in Metaphysics, as thorough in Mathematics, as well acquainted with the English Language and with English Literature, with Antiquities and History, with Natural Philosophy, Geology and Mineralogy, and with the science of Humanity and Society. This, the public, the Baptist Denomination and the Students expect and demand. But how is this to be done? It is not enough that the work be properly laid off and arranged; competent and thorough workmen must be employed,—men who understand what to do, and have determination, tact, and energy to do it. Now, in order to carry on the work of a College successfully, and without undue friction and consequent loss of power, it is requisite that an adequate number of Professors be kept at work. It ought not to be expected that one man can continue to do the work of two, without detriment either to himself or his work, perhaps to both. While the efficiency of a Collegiate Institution should not be estimated by the mere number of its Professors, without regard to their qualifications and adaptation to their work, yet it is well to remember that a faculty well-appointed and numerically strong, is very desirable, as affording a larger promise of success and almost ensuring it.

Now who is to provide the workmen required to keep Acadia College in healthy, vigorous and progressive action? This duty devolves on the Baptists of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. The Baptist Denomination in these highly favoured provinces, is well able to do what is needed, to make Acadia College all that her most intelligent and her best friends desire.

It may be objected that thus to provide for, and keep a College in operation, is expensive. Of course it is. But it should be borne in mind, that this expense is necessary. The most intelligent and wise nations have recognized sound Education as an element essential to social elevation and progress; and while making provision more or less perfect for its diffusion among the people, have contributed immense sums to found, endow, and improve institutions for imparting instruction in the higher branches. The higher and lower do not conflict; if the lower be needed, as common consent cannot fail to perceive, so also are the higher; both harmonize to form a complete and beautiful system. Though separate, and regarded by some as antagonistic, yet they are connected, and reciprocally assist each

other in the great work of training the human mind.

Nor is the expense incurred without a corresponding return. What is expended in cultivating the minds of a people or denomination, and in diffusing knowledge among them, is repaid more than ten-fold in the power imparted,—in the improvement effected. Has not this been the experience of those communities, where most has been done for education generally, and especially for that of the higher grade? Look at Great Britain, the Continent of Europe, and at North America, and you will see that the people who have bestowed most attention, means and labour on higher education, have reached a much more elevated status of mental, scientific, industrial and social improvement and power, than those who neglected, or but sparingly provided for it.

Can it be said that Acadia College has been of no advantage to the Baptist Denomination? No. The ignorance, misapprehension or prejudice which would have said so in former years, have vanished before the light of truth, observation and experience.

Acadia College has rendered to the country, and to the Baptist Denomination, vastly more, than a full equivalent for the money contributed and the sacrifices made to found and support her. Look at the great change effected largely by her means, in favour of education among us during the past twenty-five years; consider the number of ministers now preaching the Gospel, and the Missionaries who have gone forth from her to preach Christ and salvation among the heathen; see the learned Professors she has trained, and who honour the positions they occupy in this and other Colleges; observe also other gentlemen who are Principals of Academies or superior schools, or engaged in the highly important work of superintending the general education of the Province; and others who are usefully employed in the very important and noble occupation of ordinary school teaching,—a work indispensable to the development, elevation and progress of a people; look also at the number who have entered the Professions of Law and Medicine, notwithstanding distinction and success; with those who are usefully engaged in other departments of labour, and you will be constrained to admit that Acadia College has been a blessing to the country generally, and to the Baptist denomination in particular. It has added much to the influence of the denomination, which our enemies perceive clearly enough, and which Baptists ought not to be slow to acknowledge.

It is sometimes urged as an objection against Colleges—that some who come forth from them, confer no honor on the institutions in which they were trained. This may be admitted, and so far as it is a fact ought to be deplored. But certainly it is no argument against higher institutions of learning. The same allegation may be brought against every good and worthy cause; even christianity itself has been misjudged, maligned and injured in a similar manner and from a similar cause.

But surely it is no argument against the religion of the Cross—that some who have been accounted christians, have dishonoured the worthy name by which they were called. But whatever be the objections urged against education, they avail not. Education is a necessity, and cannot without loss, be dispensed with. Individually and socially it is needed. If we would not deprive ourselves of the advantages of a valuable rule, we must submit to take the rule with the exceptions, and make the best of it.

The youth are thirsting for education; and age and experience, truth and religion commend and encourage proper efforts made in its pursuit. The mind of this country and of our denomination, cannot in these times be tethered down to the small circle of knowledge, beyond which some think it irreligious and dangerous to advance. If we would not fall out of line in the march of improvement, we must exert ourselves to sustain and improve our College,—the College of prayer—the College of Providence,—the College of Revivals,—and keep it in a position equal to the most rigorous demands of the times. According to the means at her disposal, Acadia College has done nobly; and the denomination cannot afford to let her fall behind. To do so, would be to diminish her strength, and imperil her existence.

An important fact, and one that ought to stimulate us to renewed activity and zeal, should here be noted. Never before in this Province did there exist so much of competition in respect to Collegiate Education, as now manifests itself. Other denominations are making strenuous efforts to put their Colleges into the most efficient state.

The Episcopalians contribute liberally, and labour earnestly, to continue their time-honoured College in Windsor in active operation and up to the times.

The Wesleyans are no less liberal and earnest in their efforts to make Mount Allison College worthy of themselves, and its benevolent Founder; and equal to the requirements of the age.

The Presbyterians are striving to excel all others in the work of higher Education. Dal-