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WHOLE SERIES.
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Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

A Prayer for the Downcast.

Worn, worn, and heavy-laden,
Heart bowed 'neath a weight of grief,
Turn I weeping toward the Saviour,—
Man of Sorrows, send relief.

Thou hast dried the eyes of mourners,—
Thou canst wipe away my tears;
When thy Spirit dwells within me
Tearful sorrow disappears.

Worn by cares and disappointments,
Met by trials in the way,
When thou sayest, "Child, be patient,"
How can human heart obey?

Human strength is not sufficient,
Without thee, O Christ, I sink;
Even now my heart is trembling
On despair's alarming brink.

Come, dear Saviour, to my rescue
Ere the foe my hope destroy;
Thou canst clear the skies of darkness,
And restore my former joy.

SYMONDS.

Worcester Academy, Mass., Dec. 4, 1877.

Religious.

The Sister of Paul.

But for the one little episode in the history of the apostle's public career, we should never have known that any intercourse still subsisted between Paul and his kindred; and it might have been supposed that the duties and interests of his new spiritual sphere had absorbed his whole soul, or that his devotion to a hated and despised cause had severed the natural ties between the haughty family of the Pharisee and the follower of the Nazarene.

Luke's little narrative (Acts 25, 16) assures us that one member, at least, of that early home, was true to the holy voice of nature. Whoever else may have forsaken him, his sister had remained faithful. Like him, she had left the scenes of their childhood, and was married in Jerusalem. It is probable, from her knowledge of the conspiracy against Paul, that her husband was a member of the Sanhedrim; for the plot was undoubtedly communicated to those only whose aid was necessary to its execution. How it could have become known to her we can only guess; but it must be a well-kept secret, indeed, which can elude a woman watching for the safety of one beloved. That her young son was sent to warn the imperiled prisoner seems to exclude the idea that the father had any part in the friendly service. The transaction throughout bears the impress of a woman's hand. How naturally does it bring up before the mind the image of a family, in outward life one, but divided in heart; the father a stern Jew, to whom the apostate brother is viler even than a "Gentile dog;" while the nobler mother, and the boy she had trained, share a rich inward life, true to the holy and generous instincts which God implanted in the human soul. How entirely she confided in the truth and discretion of the lad is seen by the terrible risks incurred in case of betrayal or detection. What Jewish vengeance was for such offences we well know. Paul would probably not have been the only victim, had the errand of sisterly affection become known to the desperate conspirators who sought his life.

We would fain know whether this true heart, which thus watches in secret over Paul's life, were one with his in the faith. Apart from sympathy in this respect, we can readily understand the idolatry of affection with his natural traits might inspire a sister. That mind, rich with the gifts of genius, that proud will, that insatiable ambition, that passionate yet exquisitely tender heart, were just the combination to excite womanly devotion. The desertion of him by all others of his kindred might be to her the argument for clinging to him the more faithfully; the very shame by which his name was tarnished might bind her to him all the more

firmly, as one that had most need of her love. Thank God! he has so formed the heart of woman that this would be but one out of innumerable instances of like character. But let us please ourselves with the thought that as there were true believers even in Herod's court, so here, in the house of a Pharisee, a member of the haughty and corrupt aristocracy of the Jews, dwelt one who had drank from her brother's lips the living wisdom, and had been strengthened for woman's holy mission by the union of heavenly faith with earthly love.

Scandal.

There is much confusion in the popular use of the word "scandal," and it carries so much weight with it, even when misapplied, that not only for the sake of clearness in the abstract, but to avoid loose language in religious controversies, some thought may well be bestowed upon it.

The original meaning of the word is obviously something said or done which causes others to offend; but we do not always use it in this sense, as for instance, when we speak of some clergyman preaching doctrines or introducing ceremonies "at which members of his congregation are scandalized." The phrase there seems to mean that certain persons were hurt in their feelings or rendered indignant. What requires notice is this: that with the unthinking gravity of the word "scandalized" introduces obliquely the idea that what is not liked is necessarily worthy of condemnation. A moment's thought however, will show us that many things which grate upon our feelings may be in the highest degree correct and salutary.

The fact is, that taking offence is as often reprehensible as giving offence. Positive and sturdy objectors have no right to claim the consideration of babes and weaker brethren, without entering, to some degree at least, into the merits of the case. Preconceived opinions may be prejudices and if we are to be guided by our prejudices we must bid farewell to peace and improvement. Prevailing notions may have much in their favour; but they must have solid argument as a basis, otherwise they are valueless. The mere annoyance which they feel when something distasteful is presented to them, can only be considered by weak ignorant people a serious and conclusive argument. Carried out in practice, it would make the prevailing fashion of the day, however hollow it might be, sacred and inviolate. It is troublesome, no doubt, to examine the merits of a case; but it is singular that any should confess themselves unwilling to take the needful trouble, and prefer falling back on the substantial plea that they are scandalized.

Those who through ignorance or inadvertence, are led by others into sin, not those who make a noisy proclamation of their grievances, are the real victims of scandal. To stand quietly by and see abuses prevail without lifting a finger to remove them, from fear lest those who are not ashamed to call themselves weaker brethren should offer opposition, is really to be an author of scandal. And yet it is not uncommon to hear all giving offence deprecated in such a way that we are almost cajoled into the belief that activity and enthusiasm are sins in themselves, and begin to doubt whether the apostles were not in the wrong when they gave dire offence to the priests and the Sanhedrim or whether in later times such reformers as Borromeo and Luther were justified in disturbing the tranquility and rousing the opposition of the men of their generation. We must not always listen to the plaintive cries of those who profess to be scandalized.

That there is, however, such a fault as endangering the virtue of others by injudicious words and deeds is not to be denied; but this is quite a different thing from the conscientious advocacy of matters of importance. The latter is our bounden duty, however great may be the unpopularity with which it

is received; in this case the guilt involved often lies with the captious critic, and not with the active reformer. St. Paul devotes much care to the incalculable of a discreet self-restraint, even in things permissible; but his motive is not the petty fear lest any should be grieved or annoyed, but lest he should be hindered from becoming a disciple of Christ, or tempted to forsake the faith which he had embraced. In ordinary walks of moral duty, the real enemies of weak brethren are they who, without committing any palpable outrage, do what they ought not to do, or leave undone what they ought to do. The higher the worldly position of these false lights, the more extensive is the evil which they do. Thus those who waste their money on needless dress and entertainments embolden others to think lightly of the claims of frugality; those who are not quite temperate enough in the matter of bodily enjoyments, make it easier for others to plunge into positive profligacy. Unfortunately it is needless to enlarge on this: instances are only too obvious and too numerous.

—Churchman.

Hope in Adversity.

A SERMON PREACHED BY THE REV. S. W. DEBLOIS, IN THE BAPTIST CHURCH, WOLFVILLE, ON LORD'S DAY, THE 9TH OF DEC., 1877, AND PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE FACULTY OF ACADIA COLLEGE.

Ps. xlii. 11. "Why art thou cast down, oh my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance and my God."

The Rev. Geo. Mathew, one of His Majesty's chaplains in the reign of George III., preached a sermon once from this text, and his subject was, "The evil of committing suicide." Amongst the causes of suicide he mentioned "Religious Fanaticism," and took occasion to inveigh bitterly against the preachers of evangelical truth, against such men as Whitfield and the Wesleys, Rowland Hill and Richard Cecil, for spreading among the people doctrines which produced, 1st, a highly wrought enthusiasm; 2nd, a morbid religious melancholy; 3rd, self-destruction. It is needless to say here this morning, that such charges were utterly groundless. It was true then, as it is true to-day, that the great majority of suicides is found among the votaries of pleasure and the world, and not among the followers of Christ; that pure religion, instead of causing melancholy, produces true and lasting peace; that faith in Christ, instead of saying, "Destroy thyself," owns as one of its precepts, "Do thyself no harm," and that in trying, adverse circumstances, the contemplation of God's infinite power, and Christ's gracious love, is the surest and safest source of consolation.

Our text alludes to a time of great trouble and despondency, both personal and relative. The Psalmist remonstrates with himself. He upbraids himself for his weakness and fear, and turns his thoughts to the encouragement and hope which God alone can give, "Thou art the health of my countenance, and my God."

We also are in trouble. Not so much individual, or personal, or family trouble, pecuniary loss or relative bereavement, (although some of us, in months past, may have suffered from all these causes,) but our trouble now is a public adversity. As a church and a people, as a denomination, too, we feel that we have met with a sad reverse. A heavy trial has come upon us. Those who witnessed the awful spectacle of last Lord's day evening, will carry the memory thereof to their graves. It is not merely the loss of so much property in a building, although that is great and hard to be borne. There were other things in connection with our loss which that College seemed to represent.

There was a College life within those walls. The library and the class-rooms, the chapel and the Academy Hall, are replete with associations

to many hearts. The life that existed, so full of young strength and high aspirations, has been rudely, (not, we believe, extinguished, but) widely, interrupted by this catastrophe. The breaking up of College life, even for a vacation, used always, to my mind, to possess something sad, even in the midst of its light-hearted merriment; but to be violently, as it were, wrenched apart at an untimely season, and by the force of flaming fire, is a spectacle which is most unusual, most melancholy!

But not only so. You may say that the College was built of common timber and lumber, boards and shingles, bricks and mortar, but was it altogether so? I remember well, when I was a boy in the Academy, hearing of a College being built without money. I not only heard of it but saw it. I saw the huge teams bringing the timber for the frame, as they were unloaded on the College grounds. I joined in the hearty cheers which accompanied their reception. Vessels came into the creek laden with boards and shingles. Stalwart men, with sharp axes hewed the timber, nailed up the boards, put on the shingles. Others set up the chimneys. Others affixed the laths, and plastered the walls, and all this. The materials and the labor were free gifts, were offered with gladness of heart, to build an institution in which many of the sons and daughters of these noble-hearted donors have received their education. I remember the stockings that were knit by poor women who had nothing else to give. I remember the free-will offerings of all kinds that came in from every quarter, from the farmers and fishermen; from the rocky shores of Lunenburg County and the pine forests of Queens; from the fertile valley of Annapolis and the rich meadows of Colchester; from Cornwallis and Horton Mountain; from Halifax and St. Margaret's Bay; from Cape Breton and from Cumberland; from Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. I remember Prof. Chipman and Dr. Crawley, with a carriage fitted with sleigh-runners, setting out at the beginning of an inclement winter, and compassing the length and breadth of these Provinces, soliciting contributions, that the building might be finished. I remember their cheering report of the reception they met with, and the substantial results of their mission. All these things come up before me to-day, and, to my mind at least, there was not a board or a shingle, a brick or a nail in that glorious old building that was not full of a grand and benevolent meaning.

And these are all gone. A heap of smouldering ashes appears to be all that remains of those votive gifts, those holy purposes, that solemn consecration with which the walls of our temple went up in troublous times. Not only so. There are still more hallowed associations connected with that building. If ever there was an institution where God was intended to be honored, from the foundation to the roof, it was Acadia College. Edward Manning and Theodore Harding and others, whose honored names still live among us, as "household words," laid those foundations in faith and prayer, believing that God would bless their work. And he did. Witness the revivals of religion that have taken place within those walls. Think of the names of the honored and useful servants of God, who there found peace in believing. Arthur Crawley, the devoted missionary, E. B. deMille, the founder of Leinster Street Church, Saint John, Henry Vaughan, the pastor of Germain Street Church, taken away in all the full promise of youth, these were converted while students there. A host of others also, now in the ministry and doing noble work for Christ, look back to that building as their spiritual birth-place. Many others in other walks of life; in the law and in the practice of medicine; in the counting-house, and as teachers of youth, laboring in all these businesses as members of the Church of Christ, date their conversion and consecration to the days spent at

Acadia. I tell you, my friends, that the very space over those blackened ruins seems sacred in my eyes as I think of what there God hath wrought. At our last Convention, how grandly our Alma Mater shewed her fair proportions as the tribes of our Israel came up. On Anniversary occasions how proudly the flag waved as we walked in procession from that building to the house of God. Well may we quote the language of the prophet and say, "Our holy and our beautiful house for which our fathers praised Thee, is burned with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid waste." Is it any wonder that when all these memories and associations come rushing in upon us, we are ready to cry, "My soul is cast down within me. Who shall live when God doeth this?"

But let us look at the topics of consolation presented to us. Hope thou in God. God is our confidence still. The Lord Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. What He did in the past He is able to do again, and yet more abundantly. This God is our God, forever and ever.

It may be that we needed just this stroke to humble us and to prove us. As a denomination, we may have been perhaps, boasting in our own strength, resting on our own efforts. As a Church in this place we have not lived up to the standard which we know to be right and true, and as individuals we have lived too much after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet careless and secure. Let us learn the lesson thus taught us, let us seek to humble ourselves. Let us return with brokenness of spirit to the Lord our God.

Again, It has been well observed amongst us, that the College still lives, a building. The building has gone but the Lord has left us, the president, the professors, the students. I believe myself that the loss of any one of our professors and teachers by the hand of death, at the present time, would be a greater affliction than that which we have just sustained. The spirit manifested by the students too, is matter for congratulation. Their pledge even under great difficulties to return, and resume their studies at the proper time, shews a strong attachment to our Institutions.

Again we have great reason to be thankful that the fire took place at such a time, and under such circumstances, that there was no loss of human life. Those men who worked so nobly and successfully to save the old Seminary building, were at times exposed to great danger, which happily left them unscathed, and no household was left to mourn over son, brother, or husband perishing in the flames.

But these sources of consolation may be greatly augmented by the reflection, that we may arise and build. The silver and the gold, though not very plentiful amongst us, are at least more accessible, than when our fathers laid the foundation years ago. We have more people. We embrace a larger field. In 1848 Acadia was made the College of the three Provinces, and it still remains so. We may hope that God will open the hearts of all his people to give liberally, so that the houses may be built and the work go on. Those of us who were present at the meeting on Thursday evening last, will not soon forget the wonderful enthusiasm and telling power of the scenes there witnessed. That at one meeting, in the course of a few hours, nine thousand and fifty dollars should be subscribed for the purpose of putting up three new buildings, in place of the one destroyed is certainly the best proof we can have of earnestness in the cause. Not only did the wealthy men put down their thousands, and the less wealthy their hundreds, and their fifties; the sisters came forward with their twenty-fives and tens, the students, some whom had lost all their possessions in the flames, gave their votive offerings freely, and even little boys pledged their pocket money for months to come that they too might have a share in this benevolent enterprise.