

Pictou Sept 10, 1844

Dear Margaret,

As there is a friend of mine about to sail for Glasgow, in a few days; and I have half an hour of leisure (not a very usual occurrence just now) I sit down to write a few lines to you.

I dare say you were somewhat surpris^d by my new views respecting a pro²pe²tion, and perhaps have scarcely got over it yet, and are inclined to think your American friend a very odd ver²itable sort of person. Yet it is very easy to explain some of the reasons of it.

Let me suppose that a prospect were offered to you, of entering a new and enlarged sphere of action, where it would be possible to bring all your powers and capacities of doing good into the most extended operation, where you could be a centre whence knowledge and

beneficence might flow from you in all directions; where too those pursuits and studies in which you most love to engage, would be those which you were required to follow; the consequence of all being that your usefulness would be vastly extended, your means of doing good multiplied exceedingly. Such are some of the inducements which if I were certain that they would really be fulfilled would induce me to enter into the ministry.

The only result of my thoughts on this matter, is that I intend to attend the lectures of our Theological Professor for a month this autumn, without of course pledging myself to do anything further. You and I may differ about education of ministers, but after all if properly understood the disagreement may be small.

I believe that the greater the amount of education a preaching elder may receive the better; but that no man should be appointed to such an office merely because he is educated, without other and higher qualifications.

This general principle, if properly carried out, should I think satisfy every one. Two opposite errors have I think been committed in reference to it. Some sects have made education the sole question, and have neglected to require piety as well; and others have rigidly required good intentions and piety, but have not taken sufficient pains to cause those who were thus qualified, to acquire that knowledge which would have made their efforts more effectual. However I am not writing a lecture, and must not imitate most modern controversial writers, who, like the Pharisees

give titles of mint and anise,
and neglect the weightier matters of
the law, in other words they are
constantly wrangling about small
and comparatively obscure points,
on which they differ, while the
great principles of the gospel are
left to shift for themselves. This
I have no patience with, whether
among Presbyterians or any one
else.

There is another point in my
present position which you can also
understand. You and I are both
left alone with our parents, who are
declining towards age and infirmity.
We owe much to them, more than we
can repay. And ~~it~~ strong is this feel-
ing of gratitude and affection with me,
that I am determined never to desert
them and their service, as long as they
require my assistance. So that in this

ways am bound to my present occupation for some time.

You know I am a great friend of Temperance, and I lately attended a meeting in the country which I may describe to you, as a specimen of the doings of our Nova Scotian teetotalers. It was a meeting rather for recreation than anything else. There was first a procession, or rather drive in carriages and on horseback, along the bank of a beautiful river, for several miles; and a train of more than 50 of the light showy vehicles sported your farmers makes no insignificant appearance. Having crossed the river, and returned along the opposite side, the whole company betook themselves to an arbour, constructed of green boughs decorated

with flowers, in the centre of a
grove of trees. Here the people being
seated on benches and chairs, pro-
vided for them, tea & coffee tablets
were served round, and succeeded
by music, speeches and singing.
I never saw a better looking assembly,
Near all were young men and women,
as the old people do not favour tem-
perance societies as much as they
should; all well & even tastefully dressed,
and very many good-looking. You
may think that I am too partial
to my countrymen & countrywomen;
but I am convinced that few
countries can show a finer rural
population than Nova Scotia. They
are not overworked and underfed
like too many of the labouring class
in Britain; they are able to dress well,
and have time to improve themselves,
and I am happy to say that tem-
perance and a love of information,

are rapidly gaining ground among them.

I have been rather busy of late, as father is engaged at his harvest. Times are bad, as people say, but I think are mending, and our bad times chiefly result from the folly and extravagance of people who can live too early. Our apples and early plums are ripening fast, and if you lived within any reasonable distance, I would send you a bushel of them. We are all well — and with this I believe ends my matter. I do not know that I have written anything to interest you, or indeed anything that I have not written before; and there is another blank page very much tempting me to write something that

I should not, when I am so far
distant, and have so little certainty
of seeing you again; but which I should
be at more liberty to say, if so far
favoured as to be able to revisit Edin-
burgh you have gone the way of
most young ladies. Mind, I do
not intend to make love to you,
but only to say that I have no
particular desire to do so to any
other person, until I have an op-
portunity of consulting you on
the subject.

Remember me to all your rela-
tives & my friends. — May all blessings
be theirs and yours. Let me soon
have the pleasure of again receiving a letter
from you; and in the mean time may
God be with you, to bless, direct and
protect you.

Your affectionate friend
J. W. Dawson