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From W. A. Johnson to W.O.

"The Parsonage" Weston Jan.y 9th 1873.

My dear Osler,

Your's of the 8th Ult.o is at hand, & it is the third you have my kindly & thoughtfully written without an answer from me. Had it not been for a passing thought wh. came across me while calling at your dear sister Chatters last autumn you would have had many a letter from me. I was proud of, & delighted with a letter I had just received from you & added I hope to hear from him very often: she, kind soul, full of true love for you said, the countenance more than speaking at the same moment, "I hope he will find time for us too, we do so love to get a letter from him". I was ashamed at my selfishness. Surely if it were pleasant for me to hear, how much more so for them. How would I have felt to hear a stranger even suggesting that he stood in possession of my sons first recollections. I tried to make amends for all I had said but have never forgotten it. Pride, pride, self, self, in everything. How the old adam does peep out; & creep in again too, even when one tries to drive & keep him out altogether! Remember your relatives & friends. Write to them when you have a moment to spare: & from them I shall hear of your welfare. Presently, when you have less to claim your attention, & are more your own master; if God wills, we may let the flame of mutual love & sympathy rise higher, & I trust burn freely while life lasts. You are in the midst of an early harvest. England is really a great harvest field in every thing. Good & bad, Love & Infidelity, Science & learning seen occasionally as ~~a~~ rare & lovely flowers, hidden from the passing gaze, even like a shy & fragile

Calypso woulis, scarcely resting here on earth, beneath, below, around, damp, wet, cold & dark, so humble as to be unseen & unknown, yet beautiful, surpassingly beautiful, such as the eye of God alone, who made it, can really appreciate, and on the other side, "science," falsely so called, "learning" wh never comes to a knowledge of the truth," like way side thistles, claiming with pretentious insolence to thrive & make itself seen in the way-side field, that man has broken up & tilled for better fruits. A harvest you have on every side of you. Sitting in my little den close to that dear spot, wh the world now so sadly neglects, (the altar of God,) I can only muse on your life, & then pray God you may be able to choose the good & refuse the evil. But then, is angels work, may your guardian angel be with you. That dear loving spirit will still often plead you into the swamps now & then. Many a bright gem needs much seeking & working with before it can be fully known. Many a true character, has no beauty, or attractiveness that you might desire it. And even when one has by toil & self denial found a "tree of life" it will not yield its fruits at every season, therefore says the wise son of Sirach "If thou art a man of understanding, get thee betimes unto him, & let thy foot wear the steps of his door."

Reasoning on general principles, no doubt your friend Dr. Howard's advice to devote yourself to general medicine is good. I can not be expected even to offer an opinion on a thing I know nothing of: but surely it is early for to choose a specialité as unless you feel within yourself a constant increasing desire to follow one specialité, if so, it ought not to be neglected. This is matter for quiet enquiry. It is not difficult to examine & prove it fairly. And having done so set yourself some limited time to see if the special desire continues as strong as ever.

Many, probably most young Doctors exhibit a preference for Surgery. It is more satisfactory than medicine. But this wears off, as it is not so clean or nice. Time shews they have made a mistake. If you are sensible of a very marked inclination towards one speciality you will follow it whether or no. By dint of disciplining yourself, no doubt you can bring yourself to follow any speciality, but from my point of view it would appear better to devote yourself with energy to all until circumstances seem to favour your speciality & then gradually & increasingly follow it. What I would say is May you not necessarily lessen your usefulness & knowledge, by passing by general information to pursue a speciality? You know I think I am a great hater of technology though I know no man can be jack of all trades without at the same time being master of none. I think I was turned from Botany as a speciality early in life, by some old medical man who lived near those steps wh. go down from Oxford St by his saying "don't think of a speciality until you are forty", or some such words. I really must not write so much on a thing I know nothing about. Is it likely that the faculty of McGill College can afford to answer you distinctly in writing, concerning your future position with them. I do not see how they can, because you would have a claim upon them. Perhaps they will: but if they do, they surely rate you very high. It is quite likely they will extend the offer, but not definitely, & it will be for you to consider what it may lead to eventually: provided there is a reasonable remuneration for the present. If you are obtaining a present remuneration (i.e.) if you are in a position where you are regularly paid, though it be

only a small amount, look well before you leave it for future increased salary, or something indefinite: for one bird in the hand is better than two in the bush. I am very glad you got comfortably settled in London. It is a great thing. It leaves you free to work, regularly, & hard. I envy you your Church privileges. Do not be afraid to use them freely & lovingly. Many Churches in London, from what I hear & read must be doing a good work. I suppose many of them freely & openly admit every sensible usage of the Roman Churches without any reference to papal authority, or the errors wh. have grown up from it. This is the end, if I see plainly of the Alt-Catholic movement. It is just what I could enjoy, & seems to me right. A return to the old paths. Tell me all you care about these matters when you write, but remember dear fellow I do not expect a letter. Lose no time for me just now. Be just, then generous, to me at any rate. I must close so as to catch the mail. May God bless & prosper you, & lead you so that you may always glorify His Name. Make time somehow or other to ask Him. It can not be time lost for He will never be any mans debtor, Take a minute frequently to ask Him to "endue His ministers with righteousness," then depend on it "His chosen people will be joyful". With my love & best wishes & constant prayer for your success.

Believe me ever

Your affect.e friend

W. A. Johnson