

## The Presbyterian Review.

Issued EVERY THURSDAY, from the office of the Publishers, Rooms No. 20, 21, 22, 25 Millchamper Buildings, South-East corner Adelaide and Victoria Streets.

TERMS, \$2.00 per annum.

ADVERTISING RATES.—Under 3 months, 15 cents per line per insertion; 3 months, \$1.00 per line; 6 months, \$1.75 per line; 1 year, \$3.00. No advertisement charged at less than five lines. None other than unobjectionable advertisements taken.

All communications for either Business or Editorial Departments should be addressed PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW, Drawer 2464, Toronto, Ont.

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Toronto, August 10, 1893.

### Prof. Campbell's Case.

THE change in the first count of the libel against Professor Campbell, of Montreal, is of considerable importance. The Presbytery has strengthened its position, having given a definiteness to the charge. As it stood at first the libel charged the Professor with disbelief in the entire inerrancy of the inspired revelation of the Old Testament. The amended libel charges him with a view of the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures which impugns and discredits them as the supreme and infallible source of religious truth. It will be seen that the amended form places the case in a much more serious light than did the first draft. The central point in the first draft is the inerrancy of inspired revelation. The inerrancy of the inspired word may mean very little, or it may mean a great deal. There is room, to a certain extent, for differences of opinion, and had the libel remained unchanged, there is no doubt it would prove more difficult than now to reach a clear and conclusive deliverance. Definition is always greatly to be desired, and the Presbytery acted wisely in adopting the more specific language of the count as it now stands. The Presbytery has evidently profited in this respect by the case of Professor Briggs, the indictment in which was weak on account of the form in which it was presented.

The second count remains practically as at first drawn up. The statements in support of the charges are elaborate; the chain is long, but the links do not lack strength.

Should the libel be proven, one course alone will be open to the Presbytery to pursue, but until it has been proven it would be premature to enter into a discussion at length of the question. For this reason, and considering all the circumstances of the case the utterances of Principal MacVicar, before the Presbytery, are to be regretted. He spoke as if the libel had been already proven, while only the question of relevancy was before the court. To find a libel relevant, though a very serious thing, is a preliminary stage of the proceedings, and advantage should not be taken of the occasion to enter into a debate on the merit or demerit of Professor Campbell's opinions. The proper time to do so will be when the case comes up for proof, and when Professor Campbell will have an opportunity of defending or explaining his views. It must be assumed that there is a defence, whether it will be adequate is, at least, doubtful,

but the case is too grave to admit of unnecessary and irregular haste.

The Professor's opinions, as contained in his lecture and in the statement submitted to the Presbytery, together with the Presbytery's charges and reasons, are now before the Church. The case is a momentous one. It would be idle to regard it otherwise. It touches beliefs fundamental in the Presbyterian Church, and it is from the standpoint of the Presbyterian Church doctrine it must be approached by the Church courts. Neither prejudice nor extraneous argument should be allowed to enter into the proceedings or to influence the mind of the Church. The fact that Professor Campbell has a following, should, perhaps, lead the Church to consider whether her attitude to cases of doubtful opinion is comprehensive enough or sufficiently well defined, but no such consideration has a place in dealing with a particular libel. It is to be hoped the spirit of controversy will be restrained, and that no undue excitement will be aroused on the one side or on the other. The case is in the hands of the competent court of jurisdiction and it is safe there. If those who cannot see eye to eye will but wait patiently on the progress of the case, without rushing into debate, those engaged in bringing it to an issue will be greatly helped and the Church will be saved an experience which cannot be profitable, but which could not fail to be injurious to her best and highest interests.

### Roman Catholic Advances.

THE minds of many excellent people and keen observers of the signs of the times are alarmed at the growth of Roman Catholicism in England, fed, as they believe, by the ritualistic practices of the Anglican Church. It is not a recent alarm on the part of many of those identified with the Evangelical section of the Church of England, at the head of whom is Bishop Ryle, who have sounded warning notes, often and loud, but whose warnings seemed to have fallen on closed ears. Lately however, leaders in the Church have been aroused, and they are bringing forth startling statistics. Archdeacon Farrar is doing Trojan work in showing the trend toward Rome. His words at a recent meeting of the National Protestant Church Union, quoted in the Free Church Monthly, are too impressive to be passed over. That they will influence British opinion goes without saying. These are a few sentences which will indicate the problem which Protestant England has before it:

"The crisis has come. We are in the very midst of the crisis now; and when you consider the very extraordinary rapid development of what we know as Ritualism—I say when we consider what has taken place within the last ten years, if the Evangelical party is timid, if they are supine and spiritless, if they are afraid either of loss of popularity, or from love of peace, or of loss of promotion or preferment, to take their part openly and strongly in this struggle, they will have none but themselves to thank if, ten years hence, they find themselves members of a Church which has largely alienated the great heart of the English people, and which is to all intents and purposes Romanist.

"I want, if you will allow me, to illustrate this extraordinary rapidity of Romeward development. I take it there are 7,000 of the clergy who are avowed supporters of the Romeward movement; that 4,000 of them are members of the Church Union, who are pledged to support vestments, lights, wafer bread, the eastward position, and the mixed chalice. In 1882 there were 2,581 Ritualistic churches;