

THE PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

FOR THE
DOMINION OF CANADA.

VOL. VIII

FEBRUARY, 1883.

No. 2

CONTENTS.

<p>An Explanation from P. E. Island..... 29 Notes from the Mission Field 30 Map of the Travels of St. Paul 31 Sabbath-school Interdenominational Lessons..... 32 Our Own Church 34 Manitoba Items and Presbyteries. 36 Obituary Notices..... 38 Ecclesiastical News..... 38</p>	<p>French Canadian Evangelization 41 Letter from Père Chiniquy..... 42 Our Trinidad Mission 43 The New Hebrides Mission 44 Street Preaching in India..... 45 It never dries up 48 My Company 49 Literature..... 50</p>
---	---

An Explanation.

To the Editor of the RECORD.

DEAR SIR:—The attention of the Presbytery of Prince Edward Island has been called to an inaccuracy in your report of the Lawson Appeal Case as part of the business before the last General Assembly. As the error refers to a matter of fact and materially misrepresents the position of the Presbytery in the whole case, I am directed to draw your attention to the mistake and give you the simplest facts of the case.

The error complained of is in the following sentences:—"Mr. Lawson is the editor of a newspaper in which appeared unkind and unchristian reflections upon the character of certain members of the Presbytery. Mr. Lawson had expressed regret for his conduct and promised to apologize, but instead of doing so seems to have added more fuel to the fire, and aggravated his offence. The result was a libel, &c. The above extract quite misrepresents the origin and history of the libel case to which it refers. Allow me to state the facts. Mr. Lawson, in his newspaper, preferred charges of fraud and complicity in fraud against a private citizen, *not* a member of the Presbytery. The said citizen brought an action of damages against Mr. Lawson in the civil court. When, after various postponements, the action came to trial, Mr. Lawson settled it by paying costs and furnishing a written engagement to retract, in his newspaper, the offensive charges. Instead of his keeping his promise to retract Mr. Lawson repeated his charges with increased asperity. The citizen con-

cerned thereupon had Mr. Lawson arrested and brought before the police court on a charge of criminal libel. After preliminary enquiry the police court sent Mr. Lawson up for trial in the circuit court. In that court he was tried, convicted, fined and imprisoned until the fine was paid.

With all these proceedings the Presbytery had nothing at all to do. They simply looked on with humiliation and saw a minister of the Presbyterian Church arraigned and convicted as a criminal. They now called Mr. Lawson before them and demanded some explanation of his conduct. He explained nothing but justified himself at every point. Then they libelled him. In the draft of the libel some matters affecting certain members of the Presbytery were introduced, but in considering the relevancy of the libel these *were struck out*.

It will be seen from the above statement that your representation of the case errs in three particulars: 1, The charges were not made against a member of Presbytery, but against a private citizen. 2, The promise to retract was not made to the Presbytery but to law officers as the basis for settlement of an action for damages in the civil court. 3, The Presbytery in dealing with Mr. Lawson did not seek to redress its own wrongs but to purge the character of the christian ministry from the reproach arising out of the fact that one who held the sacred office had been convicted and punished as a criminal.

On behalf of the Presbytery,
12th December, 1882. N. MCKAY.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—We are sorry for having misrepresented the Presbytery, but as we did it in ignorance, we hope to be forgiven, and that the above explanation will put an end to all controversy on this subject.