

REMARKS ON THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE PRESBYTERY OF TORONTO,
IN THE CASE OF MESSRS. LEACH AND RITCHIE.

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BY A MEMBER OF THE PRESBYTERY.  
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WHEN Messrs. LEACH and RITCHIE tendered the resignation of their respective charges to the Presbytery of Toronto, it seems to have been expected, that the Presbytery should have accepted of their resignations, and allowed them to depart quietly. This is evident from the first paragraph of Mr. Leach's Defence, where he says, "How much better would it have been had you suffered me to act quietly, according to my own conviction of duty, following in a case of such inferior importance the conduct of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, in the case of Mr. Marshall." It is highly probable, if not certain, that these gentlemen's resignations would have been accepted, and that they would have been allowed to go in the way they expected, if the Presbytery had seen nothing more in their cases respectively than a mere change of opinion with regard to Episcopal Church Government. But in the opinions they entertained, and the conduct they manifested, which were widely different from those of Mr. Marshall, the Presbytery saw so much that they deemed sinful, that they felt themselves called upon to decline accepting their resignations, and to put them under a course of discipline. It should be distinctly understood, that the Presbytery subjected them to discipline not on account of their change of opinions in reference to Episcopal Church Government, but on account of opinions and conduct not at all essentially necessary to holding simply Episcopalian views, and these being considered sinful in the estimation of the Presbytery, it was their duty, so long as these gentlemen were under their jurisdiction, to call them to account, and censure them as their cases might seem to demand.

The following quotation from Dr. Hill's work, "The Practice in the several Judicatories of the Church of Scotland," shows that the course pursued by the Presbytery throughout, was the proper one, and was in accordance with the laws of the Church:—"If a minister demits his charge, the Presbytery judges whether the demission should be accepted or not. It is not competent for the Presbytery to accept of the demission, if the Minister has pursued schismatical and divisive courses. In that case the Presbytery consults the commission, as it sees cause, calls the Minister to account, proceeds against him by way of libel, and censures him even to deposition."