

lighted to have when the minister is present—blow out the lamp and let you find your way to bed in the dark.

"The people have very hard times just now, having lost their crops last year, upon which they depended for a living during the winter and summer; and having in the majority of cases only money enough to keep them until the crops were gathered, much want of the bare necessities of life has been felt, and almost starvation to a few.

"The people are willing to give what they have, and receive the missionary gladly, and I am raised to know that many appreciate the service of the sanctuary as a spiritual refreshment to weary souls, and do not attend from unworthy motives."

SUNDAY SERVICES AT THE ISLAND.

MR. EDITOR,—In your issue of the 6th inst., you have the following sentences in reference to the Sunday services on the Island:

"A well known tavern-keeper on the Island has secured the services of popular clergymen for a Sabbath afternoon service in his hotel. This necessitates the running of the Sunday steamers. . . . It was a very astute movement on the part of the taverner at any rate—a big advertisement, both of his place and his wares."

Will you kindly state in your next issue three facts which cannot have been present to your mind when you penned these lines?

1. The services of the "clergymen" were not secured by Mr. Hanlan—the "well known tavern-keeper" referred to—but by citizens of Toronto resident on the Island. Mr. Hanlan, when asked, very kindly gave the use of the dining-room in his hotel, and he has taken trouble to secure the comfort of those who attend the services, for which in my judgment, he deserves something else than sneers.

2. The Sunday steamers were running for weeks before these services were begun. I shall be surprised if the discontinuance of the services—and the action of the Ministerial Association points in that direction—have any effect on the running of the steamers.

3. The services were instituted not for the benefit of excursionists from the city, but for the families resident on the Island. If there were no communication by ferry between the city and the Island, the need of such services would, of course, be greater than it is.

I ask your insertion of these few lines in justice to the ladies and gentlemen who made arrangements for these services, to the "well known tavern-keeper," to the "popular clergymen," and to myself as one of the offending brethren who have conducted service on the Island (though I did not go by the steamer!).

August 9th, 1880.

D. J. MACDONNELL.

HOME MISSIONS IN THE NORTH-WEST.

MR. EDITOR,—A few days ago Mr. F. J. McLeod came to Winnipeg and has been giving me some information about the field in which he laboured all last winter and spring as you are aware without expense to the Home Mission Committee. Part of his field was given to Mr. Wellwood who arrived recently in the Province. There is yet unprovided for, however, at least eight townships, or over 288 square miles. Within this area about 400 heads of families or young men have taken up homesteads, and at least three-fourths of these are residing on their land now. More than one-half of these are members or adherents of our Church. There are, Mr. McLeod tells me, representatives from at least fifty-two different Presbyterian congregations in Ontario, Nova Scotia, England, Ireland, and Scotland—most of them being from Ontario. What is to be done for them? Dr. Cochrane writes me in a letter received to-day that unless money is forthcoming no more missionaries can be sent out here at present. Are our people there to be like sheep without a shepherd, or let to stray away into other folds? Others are on the ground and active when their prospects are not nearly as good as ours. The Church will awake some day to see and regret her mistake unless fields of this kind are taken hold of and cultivated now. We have been taught some sad lessons in the past in Ontario. I hope we are not, like the Bourbons, incapable of learning anything. Since money is the great desideratum in the case, let all members of the Church contribute as liberally as possible for this Home Mission work and they will thus be helping such promising fields to get a minister. The field I speak of is the Beautiful Plains and Rolling River country.

JAMES ROBERTSON.

The Manse, Winnipeg, August 3rd, 1880.

BRANTFORD YOUNG LADIES' COLLEGE.

The Rev. Dr. Cochrane, who for the past six years has been so intimately connected with the Brantford College, having resigned his connection with it, the

Board of Directors have passed the following resolutions:—

"Whereas the Rev. Dr. Cochrane has withdrawn from his former active and intimate relations with the Brantford Young Ladies' College, the Board of Directors beg to express to him their deep regret and disappointment thereat, in the absence of the College at the present time.

"The Board desire to place on record their sense of the obligations the College is under to him for his very able and untiring efforts in the establishment of the College in 1874, and for his many eminent and constant services towards it up to the present time, both as President of the Faculty, and in the general administration of its affairs.

"They recognize his successful services to enlist for the College the sympathy of the Church with which it is connected, and his able advocacy of its claims to public confidence and support; and they have pleasure in recording that the name of the Rev. Dr. Cochrane is linked in intimate association both with the establishment of the Institution and with the success which has hitherto attended it."

PROFESSOR SMITH'S CASE.

PROFESSOR SMITH ON THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE EDINBURGH PRESBYTERY AND HIS OWN POSITION.

A good many of the Scotch papers have published the following letter addressed to Dr. Spence, Clerk of Aberdeen Free Presbytery, by Professor Robert Smith.

DEAR DR. SPENCE, I am anxious to call the attention of the Presbytery to the proceedings of the Presbytery of Edinburgh at its meeting this week, in a matter affecting the jurisdiction of the Aberdeen Presbytery and my personal rights as a member and minister of the Free Church.

I first thought of making a statement on the subject at next meeting of Presbytery, but, on reconsideration, I have thought it best to put the thing in your hand by a letter, which I shall ask you, as Clerk, to bring before the Presbytery. If you think it desirable that members of Presbytery, who at this season are much scattered, should have previous notice of the point that is to come up, you may make this letter public in any way you choose.

The Edinburgh Presbytery find "that some statements in an article of mine on 'Hebrew Language and Literature' are causing much disturbance and anxiety in Edinburgh, and throughout the Church, as to their bearing upon the doctrine of inspiration and otherwise." They, therefore, "without committing themselves as to the character of the article," ask the August Commission "to take the article into consideration, so far as to adopt such steps as they judge fit to meet the disturbance and anxiety, and to vindicate scriptural principle." The position in which the Edinburgh Presbytery has placed itself by this deliverance is perfectly clear. It has made itself the mouthpiece of a *fama* against me without inquiring into its ground, and without communicating the matter either to me or to my Presbytery. That is a distinct departure from Church order and the Form of Process, chap. vii. Further, the Edinburgh Presbytery, to the best of its ability, endeavours to take the matter out of the hands of my own Presbytery, by invoking the interference of the Commission—a body which has no power in matters of discipline. If members of the Edinburgh Presbytery believe that I have in this new article taught doctrines which are not covered by my acquittal in a former trial, and which can be proved heretical, they have a very clear course open to the. It is their right, and may be their duty, according to the Form of Process vii. 3, 4, first, to acquaint me, and then, if need be, some of the most prudent of the ministers and elders of my Presbytery, and thereafter to come to the Aberdeen Presbytery with their complaint, giving some account of its probability, and undertaking to make out the libel. On this course the mind of the Church would not be distracted with vague complaints; and the mischief of my teaching, if mischief there be, would at once be checked. The interference of another Presbytery, or of the Commission, can contribute nothing to a solution. It can only operate to relieve individuals of the responsibility of initiating a formal complaint against me. And even this responsibility may legally and regularly be lightened, if the brethren who censure my doctrine choose to put the matter into the hands of the College Committee, which is empowered to prosecute Professors for heresy before their proper Presbytery.

I apprehend, however, that the brethren of the Edinburgh Presbytery are not clear in their own minds that they have ground for action in an orderly way. This is the natural interpretation of their preference for irregular action, and it is confirmed by facts which came out in the debate. For it appeared that the mover of the motion adopted had not read the article about which he was ready to entertain suspicion, that the supporters of the motion were drawn from those who, on a previous occasion, found heresy in an article of mine which formed the ground of a trial in which I was acquitted, that several speakers more or less frankly admitted that the object of the action was to overturn the decision of last Assembly, while others expressed in a most irregular way their want of confidence in the Presbytery of Aberdeen, although in every essential point the judgment of that court on the previous libel has been the judgment of the Church.

There was no serious attempt to show that the article on "Hebrew Language and Literature" raises any new point of doctrine not covered by the old libel on which I was acquitted; and I am confident that nothing of the kind can be shown. The publication of the new article is the occasion, but not the cause, of the attempt to fresh agitation. The real meaning of that agitation is a desire to overturn the finding of last Assembly.

Having said so much on the action of the Edinburgh Presbytery, I think it due to the Presbytery of Aberdeen, the court to which I am directly responsible in matters of discipline, and to which I look for counsel and direction in all my work for the Church, to make a clear statement of my own position, which may help them in whatever action they are called to take in the matter.

The main facts as to the publication of the new article are already before the public. The article was completed

and in the publishers' hands in October last. So far as I was able to calculate, I had all reason to expect that it would be in the hands of the public some time before the meeting of Assembly, and the article was written in this expectation. I do not think that it can be difficult to satisfy candid minds as to the considerations which influenced me in undertaking at that date an article which discussed the history of the Hebrew language, and so necessarily called on me to repeat in a brief sketch my scientific convictions as to the order and progressive stages of Hebrew literature. The history of the Hebrew language is a subject of legitimate study which an Encyclopedia of the scientific character of the Britannica cannot ignore. And the subject cannot be treated without reference to the discoveries of modern criticism. At the time when I wrote it was a question whether persons who accepted these discoveries on their evidence, and held them to be fully consistent with the doctrine of our Confession, were to be permitted to hold office in the Free Church. But it was never a question with me whether, in order to remain in the Church, I should sacrifice my convictions as to the truth of the opinions under trial. It was incumbent on me as an honest man to make it quite clear that if I remained in the ministry of the Free Church, I did so without giving up anything which I held to be true. I had, therefore, no scruple in restating so much of my critical position as bore on the subject of the new article—especially as I had had opportunity since the publication of the article "Bible" to explain at length, and in several publications of much more popular form, the grounds on which I accepted these critical views as innocuous to faith and thoroughly consistent with our Protestant doctrine of the Word of God. I did not, and do not, believe that anything is gained by mixing up religious questions with philological and literary investigation into the text of the Bible. The libel must be looked at from both sides, and the two points of view are mutually complementary. Each helps the other, but each has its own right and its own method.

Since I wrote the article on "Hebrew Language and Literature," the Assembly has given a final decision on the question whether the critical views for which I was libelled are inconsistent with office in the Free Church. The Church declines to make these views matters of discipline, and leaves the ultimate decision as to what truth they contain to future inquiry in the spirit of patience, humility, and brotherly charity. This decision enabled myself, and those who hold like views, to remain at our posts with a clear conscience, and to return to work in the Church with fresh vigour. But having vindicated our freedom in a contest which was not of our seeking, we are now called to use our freedom with patience, humility, and brotherly charity. The Church does not live by critical discussion. There are higher interests and higher tasks on which the mind of the Church is at once, in which men of all opinions can labour side by side, and so labouring forget the minor differences, and the irritation which in a period of conflict these differences are sure to produce. For my own part, feeling the hand of God, the gracious direction of our Divine Head, in the issue of last Assembly, I recognized in that issue a solemn invitation to throw myself into such departments of Church work and scholarly research as could not excite fresh controversy, but might rather bring me into closer sympathy with those who differed from my critical opinions. I took immediate steps before the Assembly closed to arrange my literary engagements in accordance with this plan. Had the result been otherwise, had the Church resolved to close its doors on critical opinions which many of us cannot but accept as established by adequate evidence, the call of duty would probably have been to protracted controversy. But since God in His providence has saved our Church from the peril of laying undue restraint on the consciences of office-bearers, I, for one, feel that the path of duty is the path of peace, and that we are called upon to make it manifest that the new views with which we have been charged do not make us less earnest and faithful in the great work of the ministry in the declaration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the upholding of His Church and the spread of His kingdom.

I am sure that the vast majority of Free Churchmen accepted the decision of last Assembly in a similar spirit, that all parties in the Church are anxious for peace and unity; that we have learned amidst the controversies of late years that our differences, however keenly felt, do not destroy a deeper oneness of faith and love knitting us together to united work for Christ our Redeemer. If we can continue to maintain this spirit, differences of opinion will be smoothed away without angry controversy. In minor things as well as essentials, truth must at length prevail. If we of the critical school have gone too far, fresh and quiet study will surely teach us our mistake, while so far as our opinions are true and right, they must ultimately make way in all parts of the Church by the force of their proper evidence. If the more conservative part of the Church is willing to exercise patience, faith, and charity enough to leave the matter to this issue, as the finding of last Assembly directs, I, on my part, am most anxious that no action of mine should try their patience or needlessly offend their conscientious zeal for the purity of our Scriptural doctrine; and I trust that the present statement has made it plain that I accept the decision of last Assembly with all loyalty, and have given it immediate effect by so arranging my studies and plan of literary work as to give the Church a respite from critical controversy, so far as I am concerned. In saying this, I do not wish to shrink from full responsibility for the statements of my new article, but I wish the Presbytery to understand that the appearance of the volume immediately after the Assembly, was not of my seeking, and that while I should have been glad to see the article in the hands of the public before the Church's final decision, I am really sorry that it came out just after that decision at a moment when the reassertion of my critical views was unnecessary for the maintenance of my own position, and might seem, though it was certainly not intended, to be gratuitously irritating to a section of the Church whose convictions I desire to treat with all respect even where my view of truth differs from theirs.—I am, dear Dr. Spence, yours very truly, Aberdeen, July 17th, 1880. W. ROBERTSON SMITH.