

II.

From the Rev. THOMAS LIDDELL, D.D., formerly Principal of Queen's College, and Professor of Hebrew, Biblical Criticism, and Church History, &c., there.

LOCHMABEN, March 28, 1857.

Most willingly do I testify—because I can do so most conscientiously—how laboriously and successfully you devoted yourself, while a student at Queen's College, to the acquisition of the various branches of learning to which your attention was turned; and having had occasion to hear those Professors in Edinburgh under whom you continued to study, express their opinion regarding you as a student, I can also testify that the same assiduity and success which characterized you in Canada, continued to distinguish you in Scotland.

The Chair now vacant in Queen's College, requires, I perceive, to be filled by one acquainted with Hebrew, Biblical Criticism, and Church History.

According to my view, efficient success in teaching must depend not so much on the precise amount of information possessed by the teacher, as on his natural and cultivated power of imparting to his student the knowledge he himself may have acquired.

Hebrew and Biblical Criticism, are, no doubt, of a kindred character—a somewhat minute and critical knowledge of the one, being indeed essential to the knowledge of the other;—but even such a knowledge may be possessed, apart from a fitness in the instructor to convey either his acquisitions to his students, or the skill of making similar acquisitions for themselves.

With regard to Church History, I apprehend, that the talent for teaching it is disclosed, not only by lectures—merely containing information as to what has taken place, and when, in the history of the Church, (which may be collected by the perusal of books,)—but by presenting an analysis of what may have occurred, and a statement of the combined causes which may have led to the varied occurrences which make that history, that it may be ascertained that their powers of discrimination are brought out, and trained for the special work to which in future life they may be called, as themselves instructors and guides of the people.

Of course I am not in a position to enable me to say, to what extent you may have cultivated the peculiar talents to which I have referred; but I can safely and conscientiously say, as I hereby beg leave to do, that when I knew you as a student, you possessed that talent, and from what I know of your studious habits, I firmly believe that you have since cultivated it according to the extent to which your circumstances and duties permitted you to do so; and for this reason, I believe that you would conduct the business of the vacant chair with no ordinary success.

But I am persuaded that it would add very greatly to the suitability of the person appointed to the chair in question, if from experience he were acquainted with the habitudes of mind of the Canadian youth who might be expected to attend that class, and who should afterwards be required to take part in inculcating Divine Truth on the minds of the people of Canada.

As you have been brought up in Canada; as you have yourself studied in it; and so, as well as for several years since have been made acquainted with all sorts of minds in the country, I deem that you are in possession of a requisite for the situation which only few have been in circumstances to attain.