

sharp dilemma in the philosophy, the struggle between the purposes of God and the free will of man, not only took much of the laughter out of life, but it laid the stress upon the intellectual rather than upon the spiritual side of religion.

Religion then was the supreme interest of this country where life had little to distract. It was not wonderful that when divisions of opinion on religious matters arose these divisions should be extremely bitter. Men fight desperately for things in which they are desperately interested, and a good deal of toleration is due only to the fact that in their hearts there are some people who do not care. Every advance in thought has been challenged in the person of some strong and representative man and the whole country has been stirred by an issue that would hardly receive a newspaper paragraph in the life of another land.

The interest taken in these "heresy hunts," as they have been called, was immense, and the effect upon the country at large was that every shepherd, whatever side of the argument he might take, knew that there was an issue and he knew the whole issue. In a country spread abroad through thousands of miles as Canada is, it is not possible to concentrate interest on any one question, least of all upon a question relating to the interpretation of the Bible; but the thing is possible in Scotland where the whole population practically is Presbyterian, and where the religious interest is still supreme. The vitalizing effect of these heresy hunts cannot be overestimated. They have resulted in a breadth of view, and in a toleration for fresh thought that seemed to be far enough removed from the original type of Scottish religion. Within my own memory religious opinion has made great forward strides owing to the publicity of heresy hunts. In the case of Professor Wm. Robertson Smith the issue was raised as to whether or not there were in the historical books of the Old Testament various strata of narrative following different phases of Hebrew thought, embodying traditions and legends, and fused together at an age centuries later than that in which these documents were first compiled. It was a question of first class moment and for eight years the case went on in one religious