

Close, who represented the Presbytery in the negotiations for union with the "Free Church" Synod.

OTHER EXCEPTIONS.

Mr. McMillan takes further exception to the words: "It is evident, from many circumstances, that it was as 'revivalists' that the 'American ministers' were especially suspected or judged." The writer concurs with Mr. McMillan that these words were "unnecessary," and, in consideration of the exception, regrets their use; but he fails to see wherein they were "fitted to support if not to create a prejudice against the Presbytery." Nor can he understand how their substantial truth can be questioned. Messrs. Buell and Marsh, with Messrs. Curry, Murray, Sessions and other "American ministers" were chiefly known for the revival work in which they had been engaged during the year or two previous, and it was in their revival preaching almost alone that their doctrinal views had found expression. During the preceding half year, Rev. Wm. Proudfoot had gathered from "other Presbyterian ministers who had been a considerable time in the country," including some of the members of the Presbytery of York, unfavourable testimony in reference to the "revival system that had been imported from the United States." Rev. Mr. Harris, of York, had reported his experiences at a revival in Ancaster, and "Rev. Mr. B." had given "a full account of the manner in which he acted at the revival meeting at Grimsby" (reference to which is elsewhere made in a foot note). The whole region was agitated by the revivals, and it is no new item of history that the old country ministers generally were not in sympathy with them, and looked with suspicion upon all revival preachers. To state these facts, however, is not to condemn such old country ministers. They and the "American ministers" were alike earnest, honest, Godly men, each in his place acting up to the light given him, and influenced, like others, by education, association and human circumstances, in his efforts to promote the interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom on earth, in his adoption or rejection of measures, and in his judgment of those with whom he came in contact.

NO CENSURE FOR PRESBYTERY.

The writer has not published a word of censure of the Presbytery of York for any of its acts at the Clinton meeting or elsewhere, nor does he, in any manner, sympathise with such censure from whatever quarter it may have emanated. The Presbytery decided in accordance with the best judgment of its members. They believed the American ministers unsound in their interpretation of the standards, and honestly acted upon such belief. Under the circumstances, the act of rejection was probably an act of wisdom as well as of honesty, preventing an otherwise almost unavoidable development of "incompatibility of temperament" within the Presbytery, which would be likely to lead to a speedy ecclesiastical divorce. The time had not come for the union of all Presbyterians in Canada in one Canadian Church, nor for the commencement of such a union on the Niagara Peninsula. Indeed, that was an era in Presbyterian history the world over, apparently foreordained from the beginning to be an era of misunderstandings, misinterpretations and divisions. But, fortunately, it was to be the proverbial "darkest hour just before the dawn" of the better era of peace, good will, fraternal concord and progressing union, in which we are permitted to "occupy" and work for the Master. Surely, in the light and enjoyment of present privileges, we can afford to recur historically to the divisions and controversies of the past, with no word of censure or reproof—marvelling, indeed, that so few errors were committed, and that the era of union was not longer deferred.

THEOLOGICAL DEGREES.

MR. EDITOR,—The Committee on Theological Education and Degrees submitted to last Assembly the draft of an Act for the establishment of a University in connection with the Presbyterian Church, having the power of conferring Degrees in Divinity. A minority report of the same Committee was also presented and read. A motion and two amendments were proposed, and, after considerable discussion, the second amendment was carried over the motion by a vote of 83 to 73. The amendment is in the following terms: "That the Report now submitted be sent down to Presbyteries, with instructions to report as to the principle of the Act, to the next General Assem-

bly." According to the decision of the Assembly, therefore, we are to consider the "principle" embodied in the report submitted, and not the details of the scheme. The time cannot be very far distant when the various Presbyteries of the Church must take up this remit, adjudicate upon it, and report thereon to the next Assembly. It is scarcely necessary to say what every one must feel—that this is a most important question; one most intimately connected with the cause of theological education in our whole Church; a question having far wider and graver issues than at first sight appear; and one therefore requiring the most careful consideration by the various Presbyteries of the Church, so as to give an intelligent judgment thereon. And as it may be suspected that one who is personally interested in this matter, however candid he may be, may not be able to consider it with an absolutely unbiassed judgment, you will perhaps permit one who is not a member of Committee, nor on the staff of any of the Colleges, to present for the benefit of your readers such views of the subject as appear to an outsider to be best conducive to the well-being of the whole Church and most in accordance with what is just and fair in the case.

I propose, therefore, to consider the following questions: First, Is the present movement with reference to Theological Degrees necessary? And second, If so, is the plan proposed the wisest course to take to accomplish the end in view? The first of these questions will suffice for this communication.

Is the present movement with regard to Theological Degrees necessary?

(1) The movement in regard to Degrees is not new. In regard to one of the Colleges, at least, the matter was talked of for several years, but the Union and other causes delayed action until a recent period. The matter was first brought before the Assembly in 1877, in a Report of Knox College Board, which recommended "that the General Assembly apply for the legislation requisite to modify the Charter of Knox College in such a manner that the College shall have the power of granting Degrees in Divinity, subject to such regulations as the Assembly shall see fit to adopt." A committee was appointed to consider this and other matters connected with theological education, and report to next Assembly. The Committee reported to the Assembly of 1878 that they had not yet agreed upon a scheme to submit to the Assembly, but had the matter under consideration, and were re-appointed with some additional members. The result of the Committee's deliberations we have in the Minutes of last Assembly. The movement therefore in regard to Degrees is not new, though the mode of accomplishing the end in view, when submitted to last Assembly, was certainly new to the Church at large; and it is not to be wondered at that time should be sought to consider the matter.

(2) The abstract right of any properly constituted authority to make such distinctions as are implied in Theological Degrees, cannot be called in question. The Church now requires of all her students, unless in a few exceptional cases, three years theological training; it is therefore no new principle to permit some of them, who so desire, to take a longer or a wider range of study, or to exact from them a higher standard of attainment in the same studies, and allow such superior excellence to be designated in any recognized manner. Such distinctions prevail in all other subjects of study, and in all other professions, and why not in Theology? Such distinctions, of course, can just be taken for what they are worth. So, too, in regard to Degrees that are merely honorary. Should a man be distinguished in any way for his attainments, or his eminent services to the Church, there is nothing abstractly wrong in any properly constituted authority conferring a becoming mark of distinction upon him. The matter of Honorary Degrees is, however, of very little consequence in connection with this question.

(3) In some cases justice requires that such a distinction should be made. Any one who has had anything to do with the examination of students is aware of the wide difference in the attainments of those who have pursued the same course of study, and enjoyed apparently the same advantages. In one case, perhaps, the examiner scarcely knows whether he should pass the student at all or no, his standing is so low, and his attainments are so meagre; and in another case, the student takes a very high stand in all departments, and exhibits remarkable proficiency in the various subjects of study; and yet in some of our Theological Halls there is no way of marking any distinction between

these two, which the Church can recognize, except, perhaps, the ephemeral distinction of gaining a scholarship or bursary, or obtaining, it may be, an honourable mention at the close of the academic year. His standing is known only to his Professors and a few members of the Senate, or Board of Examiners; but the Church at large knows nothing of it. All who have finished their three years' course in the Divinity Hall, unless absolutely rejected, are alike accredited to the Church, though differing oftentimes very widely in attainments. Is it not a pity that all our Theological Halls had not the power to give honour to whom honour is due?

(4) The conferring of such Degrees, as proposed, would naturally be a great stimulus to theological education. Many of our young men are animated by the purest motives, and most honourable ambition. Some of them graduate in one or other of our Universities with the highest honours; they bring to the study of Theology minds disciplined by the severest training; they are prepared to consecrate all their powers and sacrifice all their prospects of worldly preferment to the great work to which they have given themselves, and are willing to prepare themselves for it by the most devoted application to study; but in most of our Colleges there is no stimulus to pursue the same career of honourable ambition as that which they have hitherto pursued, save that which comes from a strong sense of duty, and an earnest desire to fit themselves for the obligations and responsibilities of ministerial life. Is it not desirable that all our Institutions should be able to furnish the same incentive to study, and to designate a well-merited distinction in the same way?

(5) One of our Institutions has already the power in regard to Theological Degrees, which is sought for by the whole Church. Queen's College has the right, and very properly exercises it, by virtue of its Royal Charter. Having an Arts course, it confers Degrees in Arts; and having also a Theological Faculty, it confers Degrees in Divinity. This it does, not because the authorities of Queen's profess, or claim to be the best, or sole judges of the cases in which these Degrees are merited; not because a higher or more thorough course of training in Theology is claimed for Queen's, but simply because, by their Charter, they have such a power; and certainly no one can blame them for the legitimate exercise of it. Our other Theological Institutions may just do as good work, may have as full, or perhaps a fuller staff of Professors, may be just as thoroughly equipped for their work, may have as many or even a larger number of students of equal or even greater attainments, but they can confer no degree whatever—Academic or Honorary—simply because they have not the power!

(6) Justice requires that all our Theological Halls, so far as Theology is concerned, should be placed on the same footing. That they are not on the same footing at present is self-evident. Queen's unquestionably has an advantage which the others have not. Young men, unless there are other counterbalancing considerations, will naturally go where the greatest advantages are to be enjoyed, or the greatest distinctions gained. It just then comes to this, that we are virtually helping to build up one College at the expense of others. Queen's is certainly not in the slightest degree to blame for this; but we are to blame, if we allow any of our Colleges to remain under disabilities which are in our power to remove. It is not fair to the Principals and Professors of these Colleges to allow them to remain under any disadvantage whatever.

I think I have now answered the first of the questions proposed at the beginning of this communication. But enough for the present. B.

MISSION LIFE IN MANITOBA.

A Missionary! what nobler title can a man desire? To be a Columbus or a Johnson is worth a man's persistent, life long effort; to be a Howard or a Tell, is what the best of men might well desire. But to suffer for the truth, to endure "hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ," to be the Lord's ambassador, is the highest sphere a human being can occupy. Let it not be thought that alone among the devotees of false religions, or among the disciples of a semi-paganism, or among religious enthusiasts only, are found the men coming up to the ideal of the true missionary. And further, probably much of the truest work for Christ is done by the uncomplaining, patient, unassuming pioneer who regularly, ploddingly, without much apparent success does his work and leaves results with God.