

Divinity Hall, and the University of Queen's College. If the term Queen's be employed to denote the Theological Hall at Kingston, corresponding to the Theological Halls at Toronto, Montreal, and Halifax, then the plan suggested would not give Queen's any such advantage or pre-eminence as "B" speaks of. The list of theological students at Queen's would not be increased by other theological students competing for the degree which is conferred not by the Theological Hall, but by the Senate of the University. Neither would the lists of the students attending other divinity halls, be diminished by the mere fact of some of them taking a degree from the Church's University at Kingston. And if the term Queen's be intended to designate the University, possessed of degree-conferring power, then it is not correct to say that as the result of adopting the plan now under discussion "Queen's alone would be the Alma Mater." A man's Alma Mater is generally understood to be the institution in which he was trained, and not the one from which he happened to receive a degree. And even if an individual, who had studied in one college, and taken his degree in another, might be said in a certain sense to have *two* Alma Maters, there can be no difficulty in deciding which of the two he would regard as the most *alma*.

In conclusion, let me merely mention two considerations in favour of the proposal that we should avail ourselves of the University already in existence.

1. Such a course would be a fitting recognition of the place which Queen's University originally held, and of the work which it has since done, and would be at the same time a convincing proof that the late union was not a nominal but a real one. It does not seem any more than right that the only University of the undivided Church should be the only University of the united Church. Surely it is not counting too much upon the existence of the sentiment of union to expect that a proposal which would never have been made, if there had been no disruption, will not be pressed now that the old divisions have happily been healed.

2. The high standard with regard to Theological Degrees which Queen's has always maintained would seem to render such a course eminently wise and proper. I need not say anything about her Honorary Degrees after "B"'s frank acknowledgement that she "has been sparing in the use of her power in this respect hitherto, and judicious in the exercise of it." As to the Academic Degree, it may be sufficient to state that of all who have pursued their theological studies at Queen's, *only five* have succeeded in obtaining the title of Bachelor of Divinity. Surely "B" must have been ignorant of this fact when he suggested the possibility of the theological faculty of Queen's seeking to be affiliated to the proposed University. M.

THEOLOGICAL DEGREES.

MR. EDITOR,—Presuming that your correspondent "B" has for the present concluded what he has to say on the subject of Theological Degrees, I beg to thank him for the opportunity afforded me of giving, by your kind permission, to the members of the Church, my views on the question. I was summoned away from the General Assembly in June last, just as the report of the Committee was beginning to be discussed, and I had not the opportunity of saying then and there what I wished to say.

Let me premise that I am a graduate of one of our Colleges, but am now more intimately identified with another one, and from local considerations am necessarily more interested in its prosperity. But I desire to approach the discussion of this question, not from the standpoint of the Colleges at all, but from that of Presbyter. How should the Church view the matter? What will it be wise for the Church to do in regard to it?

1. I agree with "B" that "the Church might by its own authority, and without any application to the Legislature at all, confer Degrees in Divinity." I go further, and say that, in my judgment, it would be a far more dignified thing for the Church thus to take the matter in its own hands, when it is *only Degrees in Divinity* that are in question, than for it to go, hat in hand, to the Parliament, to request power to mark the rank which its students and ministers had reached as to professional attainments. Why should the Church ask permission of the Legislature to pass its opinion upon the learning and qualifications of candidates for its ministry, or to distinguish in any

way it chooses those who have shewn themselves *pious, grave, et doctus*—the three supposed attributes of a D.D.? What has the Parliament to do with Theological matters? Do they not pertain to the Church, and to the Church only?

2. Your correspondent furnishes the answer—it would be an *innovation*. "Such an exercise of Church authority would, however, be unexampled, not only in our Church, but in every other branch of the Christian Church." Since the days of the Reformation, at least, in Protestant communities, Degrees in Divinity like all other Degrees, have been *academic*, not ecclesiastical. They have been conferred by *Universities*—that is, by institutions in which *all branches of learning* are supposed to be taught, as well as Theology—and the Theological Degrees have borne the signature of the members of all the Faculties of the Universities, as well as those of the members of the Theological Faculty, and it is this circumstance that has stamped their value upon the Diplomas conferred, attesting their *academic* character. A University created not for the purpose of training students, which was the original conception involved in the institution, but only for the purpose of conferring Degrees in Divinity, would surely be a new thing under the sun—for conferring Degrees, not upon all and sundry that might offer for competition, or whose claims to distinction might be brought under the notice of the governing body, to whatever religious denomination they belonged, which has been hitherto the practice with Universities, but only upon the students and ministers of the Presbyterian Church. Surely, they are not so hard up for titles and honours as such a proposal implies. If they are, the Church had better invent some new method of satisfying the craving, and let the old symbols B.D. and D.D. which have till now had a fixed academic signification continue to mean in the future what they have meant in the past. The Church can have no difficulty in originating new titles, it may be encouraged by the success achieved in that line by the Free Masons and Good Templars.

3. The proposal now before the Church is an *innovation* also, as "B" has well said, in that it is a departure from the position occupied by other Presbyterian Churches, whose situation is in many respects similar to that of our Church in Canada. Has the Free Church of Scotland, the United Presbyterian Church, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Presbyterian Church of Australia, or the great Presbyterian Church in the United States felt called upon to take any such action as a Church? And surely they were suffering as great hardships as any our Church is labouring under, in regard to this question. If ever a Church was under a temptation to attempt such a movement as is now proposed, and would have been justified in attempting it, it was the Free Church of Scotland, or the U. P. Church, considering their relations to existing Degree-conferring institutions. Yet they had too much respect for use and wont, or perhaps so slight a craving for titles of the kind in question, that they were satisfied to let Degrees remain on their old University or Academic footing, taking their chances with others. And this notwithstanding that they can boast of the best equipped Theological Schools in Scotland. Ours is the youngest of all the Churches in the Presbyterian Confederacy, and we had better let some of the older ones lead the way in such a movement, and so maintain our right to terms of respectful reciprocity with the rest.

4. But it is an *innovation* in a more serious sense than either of those mentioned, in that it proposes to drag the Church into an arena of intrigue, and envy, and strife, that cannot but work mischief. If I remember rightly, it was Principal Caven, in introducing the question to the last Assembly, that justified Church action in the direction indicated, by reminding the Assembly of the fact that all the old Universities of the world received their charters not from the authorities of the State, but from the Church, through its head, the Pope. But the Pope had and has facilities for conferring rights and honours that are not vested in any Presbyterian authorities. He can distinguish any Theologian he pleases, and no other Theologian dares complain, nor will be disposed to complain, since His Holiness is infallible. But no General Assembly, nor Committee of Assembly, nor Moderator, will have so much conceded to them. Their acts may be questioned, and will be questioned. The persons whom they fail to mark with their approval will naturally be aggrieved, and will be dis-

posed to count those their enemies on the staff for distributing honours, who do not put them on the same level as others whom they may not think their superiors. This would inevitably lead to causing and strife, as to the composition of the Degree-adjudging Board, which could not but prove disastrous to the peace and well-being of the Church. Of course, this remark applies chiefly to honorary Degrees, but the same thing would be in a measure true of competitive Degrees. Would any advantages accrue from the proposed scheme compensate for such unavoidable strife and contention for place? I think I know what the answer of the Church will be.

But I must not draw more largely upon your space, or the patience of your readers at present. I will, with your leave, return to the subject.

Montreal, Dec. 2nd, 1879. ROBERT CAMPBELL.

SCEPTICISM.

I was up at Knox College the other evening, Mr. Editor, and listened to a very able and interesting debate on "Scepticism, its influence on Christianity—is it prejudicial or not?" It was agreed on all hands that a very marked feature of the present age, as to a greater or less extent of every age, is a vast amount of scepticism of one kind and another about the various doctrines of Christianity. That such is really the case is what I think no one will deny, nor will Professor Caven's opinion be much disputed, that scepticism, like every other phase of man's fallen nature, must have a retarding effect on the only cure for the great evil of sin. The thought occurred to me, as doubtless to many others, what reasons can be assigned for such a state of things? If Christianity is more assailed now than ever it has been before, can we at all explain why it should be so? Leaving out of view the natural depravity of the human heart, and the not altogether unnatural conceit of positive science at its own wonderful success in discovery and invention, is the Church of Christ herself not deeply responsible for the dishonour done in this respect to her Master? Given on the one hand the respectability, and, in many cases, profitability, which, despite scepticism, attend as yet, at least, on nominal Christianity; and, on the other hand, human nature as it is, is it not almost inevitable that a great deal of humbug and hypocrisy, whether altogether self-conscious I shall not say, but is it not almost inevitable that these very undesirable visitants should get mixed up with what is really genuine, and so bring it into disrepute? For the life of me, Mr. Editor, I can see very little difference between many of the professing Christians with whom I come in contact, or about whom I hear, and others who make no pretensions to having any religion at all. At every ball, where men and women, perfect strangers to one another in many cases, loll about in one another's arms, there are, I venture to say, almost as many professed Christians as unprofessed heathens. At every jollification of a dinner there are so-called Christian men who either guzzle themselves into a beastly state of intoxication, or, as far as their cowardice will permit them, keep in countenance those who do. At the tables of very many in this good city of Toronto—of many who would be very angry at being considered as anything but very good Christians—young men, and women too, will be pressed to take those beverages which anyone with eyes in his head, and with but a modicum of brains, can see is yearly sending hundreds to utter destruction. By no means all the applauding spectators, or interested onlookers, at more than questionable scenes in our theatres are hardened reprobates, or still more hardened mere men and women of the world. What kind of conception is this to give of Christianity to thoughtful and earnest men, as many of these sceptics undoubtedly are? They are unphilosophical and illogical of course to reject a religion because the professors of that religion do not act up to its teachings, but how can you help them doing so? They may not be fortunate enough to be acquainted with any genuine professors, and judging by what they see, they all but inevitably come to the conclusion that though very good theoretically, perhaps, Christianity is useless, or next to useless, as a practical religion. This does not justify them, to be sure, but it should make believers very careful about what they do. As I read the Bible, the religion of Jesus Christ inculcates abounding brotherly love, large-hearted and all-embracing charity, and close realization of oneness in one Great Head. Are those the distinguishing char-