

DENISON AVENUE.

JANUARY 25TH, 1861.

TO THE CLERGY AND LAITY OF THE CHURCH,

Having received a copy of a Memorial which has been addressed to the Lord Bishop of Toronto, by certain members of St. Stephen's Church, and others, and his reply thereto, I think that in justice to myself, I ought no longer to be silent, as his Lordship, by his sentence, appears to endorse the erroneous statements which have been published and widely circulated. In His Lordship's letter I find the following passage: "*On reference to the Rev. Mr. McCollum, I found that Mr. Denison, the patron of St. Stephen's, had summarily dismissed him from the ministry of that church, allowing him only three months' notice.*" This I consider an outrageous proceeding, and altogether indefensible." Such a sentence of condemnation from his Lordship on a mere statement, entirely devoid of truth, from Mr. McCollum, has caused me the greatest surprise and pain. Much has been said and done during the last fortnight by members of the congregation and others, calculated to excite my indignation, and to call for a reply. I have thought it right, however, not to publish a word in my defence, feeling in my own conscience that I had acted rightly. I could submit to misapprehensions, and even to wilful and absolute misrepresentations on the part of such persons, instigated I may hope by a false and partial view of matters only having been set before them. But, since my conduct has been represented to my Bishop, by one from whom something different might have been expected, in such a light as to bring down upon me the grave censure to which I have referred, I now feel myself bound, in justice to the cause of truth, in justice to my own reputation, to set forth the facts of the case as they really stand. His Lordship says, that on reference to the Rev. Mr. McCollum he has learned,

1st. That the Patron of St. Stephen's had *summarily dismissed* him from the ministry of that church.

2nd. That the Patron had *allowed him only three months' notice.*

To both these charges I give a *most direct and emphatic denial.*

In proof of the truthfulness of my statement, I need but refer to the correspondence (printed and circulated by Mr. McCollum or his friends) which passed between Mr. McCollum and myself on the subject, a copy of which was forwarded by me to his Lordship at the time; another copy I believe was forwarded by Mr. McCollum.

1st. It may be seen by reference to this, that my first letter was one simply of remonstrance, such as might have been written by any member of the congregation. In it the following alternatives were proposed: (1st.) Either a change was to be made in St. Stephen's, (2nd,) or I and my family would be obliged to leave, (3rd.) or that the subject must be brought before the Bishop.

This last course, *Mr. McCollum will well remember, was the one agreed on between us*, in case any difference or dispute should arise; but rather than leave the matter to be settled by the Bishop, he at once sent me his resignation, to the surprise of no one more than myself.

How a distinct and definite *self-chosen resignation* can by any perversion of language or reason be represented to his Lordship as a "summary dismissal" I am quite at a loss to imagine. 2nd. The next charge, that I had given him only three months' notice is so gross, so palpably in contradiction of his own printed statement, that I can only consider its assertion as an act of judicial blindness. The simplest child must see, on reference to the correspondence, that the proposal respecting the three months was *Mr. McCollum's own; it did not originate with me at all.* Such an idea I had never entertained.

For myself, I can only say that if three years had been named, instead of three months, I do not see how I could have declined acceding to the request.

I subjoin the following extracts from correspondence to verify my statements.

"A change must take place within a short time, in St. Stephen's, or my family and I must worship elsewhere."

"I remain, Rev. and dear Sir,

"ROBERT B. DENISON.