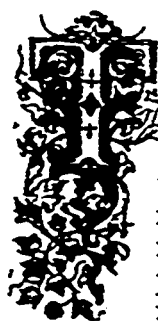


# THE PRESBYTERIAN.

DECEMBER, 1865.



HE Congregation of St. Andrew's Church, Montreal, about fifteen months ago, desirous of affording to the Revd. Dr. Mathieson that relief from many of the more laborious duties of the pastorate to which his long and faithful labours in the ministry entitled him, resolved to seek for a suitable assistant. The Rev. Mr. Paton, a young clergyman, highly recommended by friends of the Church in Scotland, was selected. The choice appears to have met with the approval of the people. Mr. Paton gave general satisfaction in the performance of the various duties devolving upon him, and his zeal and earnestness, as well as his talent, induced the congregation to give him a call to become assistant and successor to the Rev. Dr. Mathieson. This call was, as far as we can learn, unanimous. We hope that his connection with this charge may be prosperous; that he may have before him a long life of usefulness; that he will prove a source of strength to the Church in which he desires to cast his lot. While we congratulate the Church on this accession of strength, we are sorry that we cannot congratulate the Presbytery of Montreal on the part it has played in this matter. Here are the facts of the case:—

Having a strong desire to be ordained by a Presbytery of the Church of Scotland, in which he had been educated, and by which he had been licensed, Mr. Paton resolved to proceed to Scotland with as little delay as possible, for the purpose of ordination. There were two reasons why he wished to avoid delay. One was his wish to take advantage of the most favourable season of the year for such a journey, and the other his anxiety to be back in time to take part in the approaching communion. All the necessary documents were prepared, but, owing doubtless

to haste in leaving, were not presented before the Presbytery of Montreal for their action. Mr. Paton's application was presented to the Presbytery of Kinross on his arrival in Scotland, accompanied by the call and the necessary certificates, but with nothing to shew that the Presbytery of Montreal had taken the matter into consideration. The prayer of the petition was, that the petitioner *be ordained as assistant and successor in St. Andrew's Church, Montreal.* The minutes of the Presbytery shew that they granted *this* petition, and after reciting the steps taken to carry out the resolution, the minutes state that the Presbytery "ordain him to the work of the Holy Ministry," without naming the charge to which he was ordained. We have mentioned this point because it was insisted upon by one or two of the members of the Montreal Presbytery, but we can scarcely think reasonably, that the Presbytery of Kinross did not ordain Mr. Paton to any particular congregation, but only generally to the work of the Holy Ministry. If such was their intention it was certainly very ill expressed. The prayer of the petition was for something specific. The answer was: We will grant the petition; and unless every rule of interpretation is to be set at naught, we can come to only one conclusion, that the Presbytery of Kinross intended to ordain Mr. Paton to be assistant and successor of St. Andrew's Church, Montreal. This action of that Presbytery, supposing our interpretation is correct, brings up a very serious question.

That question, in its most direct form, is: Can a Presbytery of the Church of Scotland, on the application of a licentiate of that Church, and on the presentation of documents, unauthenticated by any Presbytery of the Church here, ordain such licentiate to a charge in Canada? Does that ordination legally confer upon such licentiate the status of a minister of the