

MONTHLY RECORD



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Church of Scotland in Nova Scotia and the adjoining Provinces.

"IF I FORGET THEE, O JERUSALEM! LET MY RIGHT HAND FORGET HER CUNNING."—PSALM 137.

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Review.

The Christ of History: an argument grounded in the facts of his Life on Earth: By JOHN YOUNG, M. A. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1855.

The above is the title of an admirable little volume, which we have perused with much satisfaction. It is an important contribution to the evidences of our holy religion, founded on historical facts, and exhibited in such a striking and novel manner as to carry conviction to the minds even of the most sceptical. It is not, in one sense, that christianity requires any additional defence or support, for it is already fixed upon an immovable basis which defies the most skilful and vigorous attacks of all its enemies. But there are times when it is desirable, that the arguments on which it rests should assume a new form in order to meet the ever shifting positions assumed by the assailants, the adversaries must be followed, and beaten out of every nook and cranny where they may lie in wait to deceive the unwary. The present times have been fruitful in the production of works, either directly attacking the religion of the Bible or containing insinuations against its divine authority, particularly on the continent, where the most audacious theories have sometimes arisen, and again, scholars and learned men are breaching opinions contrary to some of the received doctrines of Christianity. Nevertheless the counsel of the Lord shall stand. More particularly is this true of the Germans, whose men of letters, from the very superabundance of their learning, are sometimes apt to run into extremes in their exposition of religious truth. Patient and laborious in their enquiries, they have been awarded by a rich harvest of truth in almost every field of human knowledge, which, however, they are more successful in detecting than in applying. In general, they are more to be relied upon for their facts than the inferences which they draw from them. They collect the materials

which those of greater practical wisdom and clearer insight may turn to good account. This is more particularly the case in the investigation of subjects connected with theology; and however strange some of the conclusions they arrive at may seem to us, who are of soberer habits of mind, we ought not hence to be surprised at their speculations, believing with the poet that in the end, in matters of religion as well as everything else.—

"Ever the truth comes uppermost
And ever is justice done."

Not content with the plain and manifest declarations of Holy writ, there seems a restless activity to make the Bible speak some new doctrine which has never been heard of before. A man, we shall say, spends a good many years in acquiring a knowledge of what may be called the antiquities of revelation—and as he is unwilling that his friends should believe that all this labour has been thrown away, he is at his wit's end, not so much to throw light upon it, as by starting some plausible hypothesis, to throw into confusion the patiently wrought out results already arrived at by other men. In short, vanity has a good deal to do in the matter sometimes. The real cause of infidelity among the people, on the other hand, is the ready credence which the wicked human heart is so apt to give to learned proofs and arguments of this kind. A German professor some years ago, wrote three or four large volumes to prove that it is doubtful whether there ever was any such person as Jesus Christ—that the miracles ascribed to him could easily be accounted for with the help of modern science, and that the whole of the New Testament is to be regarded as little better than fabulous! And yet this same man was very learned and erudite, though his learning and erudition were in this case woefully perverted and misapplied. But learning and unbelief often coexist. The understanding of such a man may be both very acute and very comprehensive. It may dive into itself and evolve many of

the mightiest mysteries within. It may evoke, like Milton, the beauties of paradise, the horrors of Hell, and the glories of Heaven, or it may, like Milton, grasp the airiest abstractions, and weigh, as if in a balance, the worlds above, and comprehend all the vast and intricate workings of that mighty law which binds heaven and earth in harmony. But the understanding, though deep and powerful in relation to such subjects, is invariably shallow and weak in reference to the things of God and Eternity. We freely admit that it is a fair and legitimate exercise of the understanding to examine the truths of the bible. But we know that the heart has often a great deal to do in colouring and modifying the conclusions of the intellect. Thus, if a man goes to the bible determined to find it a lie, if the grace of God does not interfere, the chances are ten to one that he will find it to be so. Much therefore depends on the spirit with which we begin such an enquiry, and in the case now referred to the investigation is commenced in such a sneering and irreverent manner as prepares us for the conclusions at which the author arrives. But the work before us is begun and carried on with an evident desire to reach the truth. Its style and manner show this clearly. There is the utmost candour displayed in weighing the various parts of the argument. The author is ever disposed to make concessions, if only the reader is willing to allow the force of the most evident truths. All he seeks is a fair hearing, and an honest decision on the point at issue. Demanding nothing more than the *simple humanity* of Jesus of Nazareth, he ventures from this platform to assert and expound *his true divinity*. Dismissing all preconception, however fondly cherished, and however long adopted into the faith of the churches, assuming nothing which is not virtually and even formally admitted by enemies as well as friends, he believes that it can be shown that the *manhood* of Christ, as it appeared to the senses and the minds of the