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## Contributors and Correspondents.

### CANADENSIS TO "A READER."

DEAR SIR,—“A Reader” appears to have forgotten that in his first letter he expressed a wish to see in Scripture some warrant for the statement which he disputed. He need not, therefore, have been surprised or indignant that I should have referred him to passages of Scripture which seemed and still seem to me a sufficient warrant for the opinion expressed. If, however, he does not see them in this light, no words of mine would be likely to alter his view.

His argument proceeds on the assumption that “one God and Father of all” has left the great majority of His human children absolutely without a guiding light. Now this is entirely opposed not only to our belief in God's love and justice, but also to the teaching of His Word. In the first place we are told that “God so loved the world, (not a small fraction of it,) that He sent His only begotten Son that the world through Him should be saved.” Then we have only to study the course of Old Testament history, of God's dealings with the two Pharaohs, with the heathen inhabitants of Canaan, with Naaman, with Nebuchadnezzar, with Belshazzar, with Nineveh, to see Him dealing with them, both in love and righteousness, chastening, rebuking, judging them by the light which they had, by the “law written in their hearts.” And that which we see He has done in the past, we may, I think, believe that He will do as regards their future judgment. If Paul tells us that even in the times of greatest darkness God “left Himself not without witness” among them—a witness, not of condemnation merely, but to draw them to Himself by the manifestations of His love and goodness. St. Paul, moreover, did not disdain to quote from a heathen poet, in order to remind the Athenians that they were “God's offspring.” If so, would not the Father of their spirits deal with them as father? And if haply they felt after Him as we know some of them did, would they not “find Him who is not far from any one of us?” If, even in their darkness, any true cry ascend to the “unknown God,” can we suppose that the cry was not heard and answered by Him who “is nigh unto all that call upon Him in truth?”

The possible effect of any opinion is not an argument for or against its truth. There might, however, be some force in what “A Reader” says as to the effect of this opinion on Christian Missions, were it at all claimed that the heathen are saved because of their ignorance. It falls to the ground when we admit the enormous difficulties that their ignorance places in the way of their salvation, though it is no greater than the ignorance of many in so-called Christian lands. Those who know anything of the great darkness and even the present miseries of Heathenism, as well as of the infinitely great blessing of Gospel light, which was to be “good tidings of great joy to all people,” will hardly require the additional stimulus of believing that all who have not heard of it must be lost! If any should thus object, I would reply in the words of the Duke of Wellington to one who threw doubts on the usefulness of missions: “Look to your marching orders, sir!” And we all know how that command has been comparatively neglected during those eighteen hundred years, to how great an extent the responsibility of the present condition of heathen countries lies on the coldness and negligence of the Christian Church. Can we then believe that a righteous God will punish, not his negligent followers, but the benighted ones who could not help themselves for the selfish carelessness of Christians? I do not think that “A Reader” quite realises all that is involved in the opinion he expresses—and I am thankful that I do not see any such doctrine in God's Word.

It is a solemn fact that all light given does involve additional responsibility, but this truth affects many more than Christian Missions. Our Lord recognized this truth when He said that it should be more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment than Capernaum; and when He said “If I had not come and spoken with them they would not have sinned; but now they have no excuse for their sin.” It was the condemnation of the Jews that “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not;” yet He came! A father would hardly be restrained from teaching his children all that could touch them of God's will, by the notion that the servant that knew no more than his Lord's will should be beaten with few stripes. Every earnest sermon adds to the condemnation of those who reject the truth, yet no minister would hesitate on his own ground to preach the gospel.

knowing how great a blessing it would be to them if it be received. On this principle we send the gospel to the heathen, knowing that the means alone are with us, the results with God.

“A Reader” calls the opinion in question my “theory” and seems to be unaware that it has been, and is held by many who are most earnest and enlightened Christians, as well as profound theologians. Two or three may be quoted, not as arguments, for they are of course only human opinions, but to show “A Reader” that some whose intelligence and knowledge of Scripture he must respect, have not come to his conclusion. The following from Richard Baxter, is worthy of his serious consideration: “I am not so much inclined (as he once was) to pass a prophetic sentence of damnation upon all that never heard of Christ, *having some more reasons than I have of before to think that God's dealing with such is much unknown to us.*” To go farther back, both Zwingli and Justin Martyr, granted saving knowledge of Christ to Socrates, and Plato and others, “on the principle,” as the Rev. Dr. Bruce, a distinguished minister of the Free Church of Scotland, observes, “that all true knowledge of God, by whomsoever possessed, and however obtained, whether it be sunlight, moonlight, or starlight, is virtually Christian; in other words, that Christ because He is the only light, is the light of every man who hath any light in him.” The following reply to an enquiry on this subject was given some time ago by the editor of the *N. Y. Christian Weekly*, a family paper, published by the American Tract Society, and remarkable for its sober Christian tone, its zeal for Missions, its opposition to scepticism as to other evils, and its advocacy of a living Christianity. The Editor, a clergyman, is himself the author of a useful and esteemed Commentary on the New Testament, and would not be likely to apply Scripture carelessly. As I have seen no complaint or structure as to his reply from any of the readers or contributors of the paper, numbering many of the most earnest and zealous workers for Missions in the U.S., I conclude that they did not find it objectionable. “Paul answers the last question definitely, ‘God will render to every man according to his deeds, to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and immortality, eternal life. We have a confident faith that Socrates is among the saved,—saved by Christ, though never knowing his ransom till he met him in heaven. We answer you also to the first question. There is such a necessity (for trying to convert the heathen). For there is a great difference between having an abundant entrance into the kingdom of heaven and being saved as by fire. If you were on a dock and a man was struggling in the water, would you throw him no rope till you knew he would be drowned if you did not?”

As I said before, I have no wish to dogmatize rashly on a subject belonging to the deep counsels of God, of no practical utility to us. But I think that dogmatic limitations of God's love and goodness, which are more human inferences from promises beyond our present powers to grasp, are likely to do serious harm, and have driven men into free-thinking before now. St. Paul begins the eloquent plea for missions from which “A Reader” quotes, with the words—“Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved;”—or ends it by exclaiming, “But I say, have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into the earth, and their words into the ends of the world! When, in another life we shall behold the mysteries of God's wondrous dealings,—righteousness with the nations, from a higher plane; when we shall see things that now appear crooked made straight, we shall find more and more abundant reason to join in the Apostle's ascription of praise. “Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!”

P. S. Will you kindly append the following extract from another editorial of the *Christian Weekly*, which expresses very forcibly some of the thoughts which I tried to bring out in my first article, though I had not seen it when the article was written. The reference is to the late Louis Agassiz, the “ablest opponent in America of Darwinism and Positivism.”

“And yet this man, a lover of his fellow-men, a lover of truth, a lover of God, belonged to no Church. How happens it? Was it all his fault? or was it also, brethren in the Christian ministry, partly ours?”

And he is but a type of character. Who of us cannot count, among his own acquaintances, one or more, who, in practical goodness, in real devoutness, in earnest, unselfish consecration, shows forth a real though possibly a but dimly apprehended sympathy with the character and mission of Jesus Christ, who is nevertheless bound to the disciples of Christ by no visible tie? why is it? Is this all their fault, or is it also

partly ours. When at the last day, we meet these sheep that are not of our fold, will the Master chide them alone, or will He not also, perhaps, have chiding for us, that we managed the fold in such wise that some who should have been within, lingered possibly, wistfully without?”

Have we, perhaps, been so busy in unchristian controversies, one with another, concerning the notions on our regimental banners, and the devices on our buttons, and the fashion of our capotes, that we have drawn from our souls some who were too heartily in sympathy with Christ to be in any sympathy with the spirit of sectarianism. Have we, perhaps, been so busy with our abstract questions in theology, our philosophical discriminations, our doubtful disputations, that men who should have been drawn to us by our sympathies have been drawn from us by our too zealous and dogmatic logic? Have we, perhaps, in our earnestness to hold fast to that which is the very radical and central doctrine of the gospel: “Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God,” insisted, not too strongly on the need of a new and divine life in the soul, for that cannot be too strongly insisted on, but on conventional ecclesiastical and human tests and measures of that life, rather than on the simple tests which the New Testament, and especially Christ have given? “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven!” Have we, perhaps, made too much of the saying and too little of the doing as an evidence of faith?”

## REVIVAL IN MITCHELL.

### INTERESTING PARTICULARS.

DEAR SIR,—Many readers of the *PRESBYTERIAN* will be interested to hear that a revival has been going on in Mitchell for several weeks. The whole town seems to be stirred with a deep religious feeling. Men, old and young, and women too, who have been hitherto in utter regardlessness about the “one thing needful,” are now realizing the fact that Christ is better than the world.

I could fill many sheets with interesting particulars respecting the work, but I do not wish to occupy too much of your valuable space. But I must give a brief narrative of what I saw while spending a few days with the earnest and devoted pastor of the C. P. congregation of that town. Special meetings have been held in the church during the past four or five weeks. Rev. W. M. Roger rendered valuable help at the beginning of the work. His labours, together with those of Mr. Mitchell, were greatly blessed of God in the quickening of the dead, and in building up believers.

A prayer meeting is held every morning at 9.30, which is well attended. At this meeting special prayer is offered for individual cases; the answers to these prayers have been, in some cases, very surprising.

There is a meeting in the church every evening at 7.30 which is largely attended. From 9 till 10 o'clock there is a meeting for enquirers. Mr. Mitchell conducts all his meetings with a great deal of tact.

There seems to be an entire absence of what I may call denominationalism in this revival. Members of the Church of England attend these meetings to drink from the river which makes glad the city of our God. Other denominations are represented also. Revival meetings are held in two other churches in Mitchell. All are well attended.

To show the spirit of harmony prevailing in the town, I may mention that a large Union meeting was held in the Town Hall on Sabbath at 3 p.m., to give God thanks for the showers of blessing which He is at present causing to descend. The large hall was literally crammed, and though it had been much larger, it would have been filled. Many came to attend the meeting who could not get standing room inside the door.

A word about the Sabbath School. Many of the children are rejoicing in the Saviour. The boys hold meetings by themselves. It is pleasing to hear them uniting in praise. I was particularly struck with the subdued joy which showed itself in the countenance of some of the boys. It is pleasing to see what we so seldom see—old and young taking a lively interest in those things which belong to their peace.

BRUCE.

Whoever there is a Paul to preach there will be a Tertullus to find fault.

Francis Robert St. Clair Erskine, Earl of Rosslyn, is announced as Lord High Commissioner of the General Assembly, Established Church of Scotland. He was born in 1833, and succeeded his father, James Alexander, the third Earl, in 1866. In 1866 he married Blanche Adeliza, second daughter of Henry Fitz Roy, Esq., of Saley Lawn, Northamptonshire, and widow of the Hon. Charles Henry Maynard.

## The Eldership.

### EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—I noticed a reply to my communication of the 27th ult. in your paper of the 20th inst., but it contains so little further on the subject that I might well pass it without notice, were it not that the writer addresses an argument in favour of a superior class of elders, the 2nd chapter of Book of Revelation, where the glorified Head of the Church addresses the seven churches of Asia.

I suppose I need not remind my brother that this passage is considered by prelatists a stronghold of Episcopacy, and his argument from it might prove too much. In compliance with his kind recommendation I will, however, examine closely as the Divine guidance enables me, the portion of Scripture referred to, and must request him to join me in the study. In the 12th verse of the 1st chap. the Apostle John has a vision in symbol of the Church, he saw seven golden candle-sticks, the medium of upholding and diffusing the Light of Divine Truth. In the 13th verse he sees in the midst of these candle-sticks, the appearance of the Son of Man as Prophet, Priest, and King of His Church. He holds in his right hand seven stars, (verse 16th), to symbolize the powerful support his ministering servants have in ruling and teaching—and we are told in the 20th verse that the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, or according to Dean Alford's version are angels of the seven churches—now then, the question arises what are we to understand by angels of the churches. I think that I have shown in the context that the word is symbolical of the office of the Eldership. The angels are said to watch over God's people, to be ministering spirits, and to be deeply interested in the grand plan of salvation, and such is the nature of the spiritual office. The angelic host may have duties assigned them, varied as their capacities, on an equality as to their nature, so in the Eldership there are diversities of gifts but the same spirit. I come, therefore, to the conclusion that the symbol of an angel is intended to point out not an individual but a power, not a single pastor, but the body of pastors, bishops and elders, to whom is committed the oversight of the several churches, and that through these as the official representatives of the said Churches, the Lord speaks to them in the seven following epistles, upon no other theory can I explain why it is that he uniformly speaks as if addressing a congregation of believers,—read 2nd and 3rd chapters, but it has been said why is the singular number used instead of the plural; why angel instead of angels. I answer for a very good reason, because it is the only grammatically correct word. Our Lord does not address the Presbyteries of Ephesus of Smyrna of Pergamos, of Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia or Laodicea, through their individual members but as corporate bodies, therefore he addresses them in the singular number. He addresses them just as the Governor-General might address any corporate body in the Dominion of Canada as a unit. But enough, Mr. Editor, for the columns of a newspaper. I trust my esteemed brother will ponder over the matter a little more; had he done so I think he would hardly have referred to the Confession of Faith. The Reverend Fathers who draw up that wondrous compendium of Divine Truth, knew better than to countenance any Scriptural warrant for the classes of elders. Let him read chapters 30 and 31.—PRESBYTER.

## Reviewers Reviewed.

### EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—Will you allow me, for the benefit of my reviewers, to state a few “facts.” The Act of Independence teaches that, prior to 1844, the “independence of this Synod” “has been repeatedly, and in most explicit terms, affirmed, not only by itself, but by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland,” and proceeds to declare that the powers involved were always possessed by the Synod, and that its connection with the Church of Scotland was conformable thereto. I asserted that all this was false, and that the documents necessary to prove those statements could not be produced. Now, all that Mr. MacDonell has given us in reply, on behalf of his own Synod, are contemporaneous resolutions, which, moreover, make no reference to the explicit and repeated affirmations alleged, which they would, no doubt, have done, had such existed. Mr. MacDonell cannot avoid the period beyond 1844, if he is fairly and honestly to meet my charges. As regards the Church of Scotland, he is apparently more fortunate; he quotes one letter of the General Assembly, only one, and adds suppositions in lieu of “facts,” as if one, even if explicit, and suppositions would justify the statement, that the independence was “repeatedly” affirmed, “in most explicit terms.” This one letter, which has to do duty for “many,” appears, from the quotation given, to be a general one, making no special reference to the Canadian branch of the Church of Scotland, or to the state of matters before it was written, or to previous utterances of the Assembly, as it would certainly have done, had such been made “repeatedly” and in most explicit terms. The Assembly was evidently ignorant of those, and well it might be, for the Church of Scotland, up to 1848, never recognized the complete independence of the Colonial Churches, as is obvious from the fact, that it was wont to ordain ministers for them, and especially, it did not recognize the independence of the

Canadian Church; for the Colonial Committee presented to the Assembly, “previous to the Disruption,” a report, in which they say, “an effort is now being made in the Colonial Legislature of Canada to procure the incorporation of the Presbyterian ministers there, heretofore connected with the Scottish Establishment, as a separate Presbyterian Church;” “and the vesting in them of the property and endowments, and interest in the Clergy Reserve Fund, now secured by law to the recognized head of the Church of Scotland &c.” Such a measure the Committee will, with the approbation of the General Assembly, steadily resist as a gross invasion of our Church's rights. Its share of the reserves, wrested with difficulty from the Church of England, and solely on the ground that the Church of Scotland was one of the Established Churches of the Empire, and was given to the Presbyterian Church in Canada, as part of it, and as its representative in this land. With Dr. Bayne's and the other resolutions quoted by Mr. MacDonell, I have not much to do. The Dr. held that the Synod never fully asserted her independence, and that the Church of Scotland never conceded it, that the connection was “constitutional, not contingent or discretionary;” and wrote as follows: “That connection was expressed in the designation of the Synod—in order to enjoy the recognition of it by establishment, the inherent powers of the Synod to confer ordination, and to grant licence to preach the gospel, were both of them for a time suspended—on the ground of it, the assistance of the establishment was sought for and obtained in securing for the Synod the recognition of her right to the Reserves.” Dr. Bayne was anxious that the Synod would, in 1844, assume its inherent powers, and was prepared to sacrifice the recognition and enjoyment for which it had bargained then, but he did not assert that the Synod and the Church of Scotland had repeatedly, and in explicit terms, declared the independence of the Church in Canada; he knew that was not true.

Mr. MacDonell admits that the commutation was effected, not on the basis of the ordinary, but of an exceptionally large income. He asserts that “before commutation was thought of, before it was decided to secularise the reserves, or secularisation was expected—the commissioners found that they had a surplus.” I do not doubt that the agitation for secularisation went on for several years; but, strange to say, this surplus, which existed before “secularisation was expected,” “or commutation thought of,” was divided and paid, so that ministers could, when commutation returned their incomes as soon, instead of slow, which it had been till these two years, and was likely to be again had not commutation taken place; he wishes to leave the impression, that the division would have taken place at the time, and in the manner it did had commutation not been mooted, and that the coincidence was fortuitous; that was not the general impression at the time when these events occurred, and the Globe dealt with the matter, as a blow to public morals, which would be reproached, if perpetuated by any except ministers.

The statement regarding Queen's College may be correct; I know not.

The other matters I do not feel called on to refer to at present, further than to say that when I make the distinction which Mr. Sievright attributes to me, between science and honor, I will then admit the justice of his remarks.

Yours truly,  
JOHN MACDONELL.  
Woodstock, 23rd March, 1874.

## Mr. Herald's Syllogism.

### EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—The Rev. Mr. Herald, of Dundas, no doubt believes that he has forced the Rev. John McTavish into a corner; for the conclusion of the syllogism constructed by Mr. Herald is really abominable, and yet it is a legitimate inference. Your correspondent thinks that all will admit the major premise which he supplies, and he is no doubt satisfied, that, seeing the conclusion is so merciful, your readers will unanimously reject the minor proposition. It may not, however, be amiss to examine the matter a little further before we pronounce it false. It is substantially as far as I recollect; (for I have not the *PRESBYTERIAN* before me) “The Church of Scotland practically denies the Headship of Christ.” It is a historical fact that in 1848 a protest charging her with that very sinvarious aggravated form was laid on the table of the General Assembly, to answer which a committee was appointed. At a future meeting the same committee separated and submitted the draft of an answer, but not being considered sufficient it was recommended to the committee with instructions to prepare a satisfactory answer. That committee has not reported to this day, and so the protest remains unanswered;—in other words, the Established Church of Scotland tacitly admits herself to be guilty of the sin which she is charged therein. If then the major proposition must be admitted to be true as your correspondent thinks, and seeing the minor is undoubtedly proved, the conclusion, fearful as it may be, necessarily follows. To test the truth of the syllogism, however, I will construct another syllogism: Whoever denies Christ is not a Christian. The Apostle Peter denied Christ; therefore the Apostle Peter was not a Christian.

Truly yours,  
D.