

saved, and the execution of that purpose in time, this Church most earnestly proclaims, as standing in the forefront of the revelation of grace, the love of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to sinners of mankind, manifested especially in the Father's gift of the Son to be the Saviour of the world, in the coming of the Son to offer Himself a propitiation for sin, and in the striving of the Holy Spirit with men to bring them to repentance.

That this Church also holds that all who hear the Gospel are warranted and required to believe to the saving of their souls, and that in the case of such as do not believe, but perish in their sins, the issue is due to their own rejection of the Gospel call. That this Church does not teach, and does not regard the Confession as teaching, the fore-ordination of men to death irrespective of their own sin.

That it is the duty of those who believe, and one end of their calling by God, to make known the Gospel to all men everywhere for the obedience of faith. And that while the Gospel is the ordinary means of salvation for those to whom it is made known, yet it does not follow, nor is the Confession to be held as teaching, that any who die in infancy are lost or that God may not extend His mercy, for Christ's sake, and by His Holy Spirit, to those who are beyond the reach of these means as it may seem good to Him, according to the riches of His grace.

That, in holding and teaching, according to the Confession of Faith, the corruption of man's whole nature as fallen, this Church also maintains that there remain tokens of his greatness as created in the image of God, that he possesses a knowledge of God and of duty; that he is responsible for compliance with the moral law and with the Gospel; and that, although unable without the aid of the Holy Spirit to return to God, he is yet capable of affections and actions which in themselves are virtuous and praiseworthy.

That this Church disclaims intolerant or persecuting principles, and does not consider her office-bearers, in subscribing the Confession, committed to any principles inconsistent with liberty of conscience and the right of private judgment.

That while diversity of opinion is recognized in this Church on such points in the Confession as do not enter into the substance of the Reformed Faith therein set forth, the Church retains full authority to determine in any case which may arise what points fall within this description, and thus to guard against any abuse of this liberty to the detriment of sound doctrine or to the injury of her unity and peace.

THE STUDY OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE.

THE practical importance of a thorough acquaintance with the contents of the English Bible cannot be overestimated. The means of arriving at a comprehensive knowledge of the Scriptures in the common English tongue were never so abundant and within easy reach as they are now. It is common enough to hear certain classes of preachers and public teachers indulge in cheap declamation against the use of commentaries and similar aids to the intelligent understanding of the sacred text. Such disparagement of commentators is no guarantee that those who indulge it have a comprehensive scholarly acquaintance with the inspired writings. The opinions of individual exegetes may not commend themselves to the judgment of the student, but he may be tolerably well assured that before one undertakes to elucidate Scripture for the benefit and instruction of others, he must, at least, have devoted much time and careful study to the portion of Scripture he proposes to examine. The slovenly use of commentaries is certainly objectionable. Where they are conscientiously used to arrive at a clearer meaning of the text of Scripture, and to obtain an intelligent conception of the circumstances under which the respective books were written, the results of matured modern Biblical scholarship will be found to be of great value.

It may, without presumption, be asked: Does the English Bible, revised or unrevised, receive the measure of earnest study its importance and helpfulness fairly deserve? In ordinary circumstances, the Bible is read at family worship, a portion may be read devotionally in private. Its reading is listened to at the prayer meeting and in public worship, but is there among professing Christians anything like a general, systematic endeavour to master the contents of the sacred volume, to be intimately conversant with its doctrines, its instructive history and biographies, its devotional and prophetic contents? From certain indications, it is to be feared that the Bible is crowded out in too many instances by the pressure of worldly business and worldly enjoyment. The newspaper, the magazine, and the last new novel constitute the principal portion of the reading of considerable numbers in these days. Those engaged in practical Christian work, the Sabbath school teacher, the Evangelistic worker, and even the preacher, are occasionally under temptation to be content with merely fragmentary study. There is an inclination to be satisfied with a perfunctory study of the portion assigned for the day's duty.

In the neglect of good, honest, painstaking study there is serious loss. How is it possible to maintain a healthy, robust, Christian life without assigning the chief place to the Inspired Word? No wonder

that many are beset with difficulties and perplexities; small marvel is it that the moral fibre of not a little of our modern life is feeble and flaccid. Action is too often guided by expediency and too seldom by the light of Scriptural precept. Mind and heart would be strengthened by a systematic, personal study of the ordinary English Bible. Why do the higher critics succeed in bewildering the average professing Christian to the extent they do? There is too great readiness to accept them as authoritative experts, simply because so many are personally unacquainted with the scope and tenor of the sacred writings. Were the people more intimately conversant with the Scriptures, their confidence in the integrity and divine authority of the only rule of faith and practice would not be so easily disturbed. Instead of groping the way through perplexing darkness, the study of the Bible would impart a clearness of vision, increase moral strength, and a fuller measure of His spirit, of whom they testify to many who in these days are sometimes in needless perplexity. It is only in Him, in whom is the life of men, that we can see light clearly.

In some of the theological seminaries in the United States, so great is deemed the importance of a thorough, systematic study of the English Bible, that special chairs have been instituted for the express purpose of its advancement. The need of some such provision has been increasingly felt, and although experiments in this direction have been but recent, the results cannot yet be fully estimated. Of the value of such training to the future ministers of the Gospel, there is no room for serious difference of opinion. The study of portions of the sacred books in the original need not be disparaged in order to advance the study of Scripture in the language spoken by the people. The more thorough the knowledge of the original text, the more complete will be the equipment of the preacher for the instructive work of exposition; the more intimately versed he is in the English Scriptures, the more direct and forcible will be his appeals to the hearts and consciences of his hearers. In none of our theological institutions is there anything like adequate provision made for the systematic study of the English Bible. Whether any of the faculties have given the matter serious consideration we are not in a position to say; at all events it is one deserving of their attention.

RELIGION IN FRANCE.

THE impression is general that the French are an irreligious people. It is supposed that the women attend mass and go to confession, while the men are usually sceptical. Such have been accepted as the broad general characteristics religiously of the French people. The impression has in the past had a certain basis of fact for its support. To a certain extent it is true still, but there are now unmistakable indications that a more hopeful state of things is likely to supervene. The absence of religious conviction is healthy neither for a nation nor an individual. A dreary, arid period of unbelief never satisfies. The ineradicable instincts of the human heart long for something better than cold and cheerless negation. There are various evidences that a time of healthy reaction is coming to the French people. It is said of the Latin Quarter of Paris that a new spirit is beginning to animate its denizens, who have not hitherto been noted for their circumspect conduct. Many of the students are manifesting a spirit of thoughtful enquiry, and are struggling toward the light. The working people are not by any means so opposed to religious ordinances as is generally supposed. The unique success of the McAll Mission in Paris and throughout France is an evidence that if they are approached in the right spirit they are ready to make a cordial response. In various parts throughout the country there are signs of religious awakening among the people, and wherever the Gospel is preached in purity and directness it finds eager listeners. The religious instruction of the young is receiving more attention than ever before, and the Churches, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, are zealously undertaking the work. The Temperance cause is making progress, and the Young Men's Christian Association is extending its usefulness in various directions. Societies have been formed for the better observance of the Sabbath, and for the promotion of social purity. Many other moral and religious agencies are at work to promote the spiritual welfare of the people, and most of them are meeting with encouraging results. The religious outlook in France is more hopeful than it has been for many years.

Books and Magazines.

ST. NICHOLAS. (New York: The Century Co.)—The August number of this admirable magazine has respect to the season and is unusually attractive.

THE ILLUSTRATED NEWS OF THE WORLD, the American edition of the London publication, gives prominence in its pictorial pages to all interesting events as they transpire.

LITTELL'S LIVING AGE. (Boston: Littell & Co.)—Recent numbers of this valuable weekly contain excellent selections from the best current literature of the day.

OUR LITTLE ONES AND THE NURSERY. (Boston: The Russell Publishing Co.)—The special merits of this monthly for little readers are many. The reading matter is bright, cheerful and instructive and the illustrations are of decided merit.

HARPER'S YOUNG PEOPLE. (New York: Harper & Brothers.)—The class for whom this weekly publication is designed is large, interesting and hopeful. The magazine is specially fitted to amuse, refine and instruct its readers.

THE REVIEW OF THE CHURCHES. (London: James Clarke & Co.)—The July number of this ably-conducted magazine in addition to its ordinary contents has for special features a remarkably able paper on "The 'Darkest England' Social Scheme" from the pen of Archdeacon Farrar. It is powerful and sympathetic; "The Future of Religion in America," by Professor Briggs and Dr. Bradford, and full special report of "The Reunion Conference at Grindelwald."

THE CRITICAL REVIEW OF THEOLOGICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL LITERATURE. Edited by Professor S. D. F. Salmond, D.D. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.)—This is a quarterly but not of the ponderous order. To ministers, students, and all interested in theological and philosophic literature it affords valuable aid. The notices of all new noteworthy works are in reasonable compass and by men of insight and scholarly ability. Professor Macalister, Cambridge, A. H. Sayce, Oxford, Benjamin B. Warfield, Princeton, and George Adam Smith of Glasgow are among the contributors to the current number.

THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT STUDENT. (Hartford, Conn.: The Student Publishing Co.)—The August number contains papers on "Professor Otto Pfeiderer—the Character of the Man and His Work," "The Expedition of the Babylonian Exploration Fund," "Some Notes from Berlin on Biblical Study in Germany," "A Day's Journey in the Desert," "Messianic Prophecy," "The Formal Principles of the Reformation," "Some Recent Criticisms of the Pauline Epistles," "The Book of Job in Other Literatures," "The Study of the Original Texts," "The Founding of the Christian Church," and the usual departments are as interesting and profitable as they generally are.

KNOX COLLEGE MONTHLY. (Toronto: The J. E. Bryant Co.)—The number is one of great excellence. Dr. Laing contributes the opening paper on "The Alleged Protest of Nature against Miracles;" Rev. A. B. Winchester states "The Chinese Problem;" Rev. Robert Wallace supplies interesting "Reminiscences of Student Life in Canada Fifty Years Ago, and the Origin of Two Presbyterian Colleges;" Dr. Parsons shows "The Need of Biblical Study in our Congregations;" Professor Thomson gives a sympathetic sketch of the career of the late Mr. Thomas Logie; W. D. Kerswill recounts "Roman Catholic Opposition in the Foreign Field;" and David Carswell points out "Divine Agency in Modern Missions."

THE LAKE MAGAZINE. (Toronto: Lake Magazine Publishing Co.)—We extend a cordial welcome to this new Canadian literary venture. The first number contains several contributions on topics of varied interest by well known members of the journalistic profession. Mr. W. T. Tassie contributes a poem of decided merit. A commendable feature of the magazine is the free field it affords for the discussion of subjects of current interest, by writers who have individuality of opinion. Space is afforded for the free expression of the writers' own views. They are at liberty to speak according to their convictions. The *Lake Magazine* occupies a field of its own, and under the management of its experienced and competent editor it deserves every encouragement, and ought to have a large circulation.

AN illustrated edition of Green's "Short History of the English People"—a work which has probably been more widely read and enjoyed than any other of its kind—is in preparation, and the first volume will soon be published by Harper & Brothers. The illustrations have been selected with the purpose of carrying out the favourite wish of the author, to interpret and illustrate English history by pictures which should show how men and things appeared to the lookers-on of their own day, and how contemporary observers aimed at representing them. Besides a large number of elegant wood-engravings the work will contain several coloured plates, including reproductions from manuscripts, illuminated missals, etc., executed in the highest style of chromo-lithography. An exhaustive series of portraits of eminent persons will also be a prominent feature.

THE CENTURY. (New York: The Century Co.)—This month the Midsummer *Century* makes its appearance. It is everywhere worthy of the occasion. The Shelley centenary affords opportunity for a fine portrait of the poet and an able paper by George E. Woodberry on "Shelley's Work." The opening paper is on "The Ascent of Fuji the Peerless." In "Gloucester Harbour," "Architecture of the World's Columbian Exposition," "The Great Plains of Canada," "Christopher Columbus—The Great Voyage" and "The Apotheosis of Golf," the respective writers and artists find ample scope for interesting writing and pictorial treatment. "Paul Veronese" in the Italian Old Master Series supplies superb illustrations and appreciative comment. Edmund Clarence Stedman's essay on "The Nature and Elements of Poetry" deals this month with "Truth." "The Chosen Valley," "The Chatelaine of La Trinité," several excellent short stories, and some seasonable poems of great merit, as is fitting, find a place, along with the regular departments, in this handsome Midsummer number.