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BOOK
REVIEWS

JOHN CHARLTON.

A Recollection and a Tribute.

By Rev. R. G. MacBeth, M. A.

The news of the death of John Charlton, a man of mark in Church and State, has naturally attracted wide attention and has drawn forth many expressions of respectful admiration. For the last few years he has been much broken in body and mind as compared with his former physical and mental vigor. But his retirement did not mean obscurity for the achievements that filled up the measure of his active days were such as to give him a large place in the thought and the esteem of the people of Canada.

With his record as a member of the House of Commons, it is not my purpose to deal at any length. His published volume of addresses cover a wide range of subjects, and include many of the great speeches he delivered in the Parliament at Ottawa. When one recalls that he had never had many educational advantages—simply public and high school training, with some special reading in his earlier years, one is amazed at the extraordinary extent of information revealed in his public platform efforts. History and statistics, sacred and secular literature, movements in church and state, all seemed to be equally at his command, and all were set forth in remarkably clear and logical diction. We can readily believe, as Sir John Macdonald once said, that Mr. Charlton was "the ablest reasoner and most logical speaker in the House." He must have been a tireless worker, an omnivorous reader, and a constant thinker, getting together his facts and coming to his own conclusions. To the ordinary onlooker, the fact that such a man was never called into the National Executive is profoundly puzzling; but one cannot help feeling that any country would be the better for such a man in its councils. Despite his being only one of the private members of the House through all the long years, he commanded its respect and attention by his commanding ability, as well as by his fearlessness and integrity. He was the brave pioneer and pathfinder of our later accomplishments in the way of Sunday Rest legislation, and the "Charlton Act" remains as an evidence of his desire to save innocent girlhood from ruin. It is not creditable to the House of Commons to recall that he had to stand much ridicule as the sponsor of "grandmotherly legislation," but he had the consciousness of knowing that grandmothers were a safer guide in the interests of morality than the kind of men who sneered at efforts to put the affirmation of God into the laws and the laws of the nation.

It was as a member of the General Assembly that I knew Mr. Charlton most intimately. His powerful figure clad in broadcloth, made him conspicuous, the strong clear voice arrested attention, and the convincing address claimed the respect of the court. His counsel was recognized as specially valuable, and the Assembly greeted him as if proud that one of its elders was standing in the House of Commons, with the courage for righteousness and morality which a right conception of the Presbyterian creed engenders. In recent years Mr. Charlton held strong views on certain college questions, and only the vested rights of some college constituencies prevented his opinions on college consolidation receiving larger support.

I have grateful recollections of the aid given by Mr. Charlton when seven years ago, I invited the General Assembly to meet in the city of Van-

couver. The invitation had been given at Ottawa the year before, and renewed at Toronto in 1902. Vancouver was not then so prominent in the eyes of the Dominion as now, and on account of the cost of travel, etc., a good many of the leaders objected to going to the western coast. The matter was referred to a committee, and after an interesting discussion, in which I took some part, Mr. Charlton, who was on that committee, came to me and said that if I would repeat my motion in the Assembly he would second it, as he saw the situation in a new light. The motion was accordingly made, and Mr. Charlton seconded in a splendid speech on the resources, and the needs of the great western provinces. The motion was carried, and the next year Mr. Charlton, leaving many other tasks, came to Vancouver and took a most important part in the Assembly. It was mainly due to his attitude that the Assembly halted proceedings in the separation of Queen's University from the church, and Mr. Charlton showed his faith by his works when he contributed \$50,000 to the University Endowment.

The Assembly was entertained to dinner in the City Hall at Vancouver, through the courtesy of Mayor Neelands, and the council, and at that dinner the leading feature was a magnificent speech by Mr. Charlton on "Canada." It was the utterance of a man who knew and loved the Dominion and had faith in its wonderful destiny.

And now full of years and honor he has gone to his rest. This young nation of ours and the Church are the richer because he lived and wrought here in the service of God and humanity.

Paris, Ont.

SHIPWRECKS.

By L. M. Cross.

To one who has never crossed the ocean, but has only stood on the shore and watched its restless billows as they wrathfully washed against the beach, there is associated in the mind a picture of awful danger. The impressions are deepened if, during a storm, the eyes rest upon some ship which is vainly endeavoring to ride safely to port upon its waves and is dashed against the rocks or landed a hopeless shipwreck. Yet if the vessel is staunch, if its machinery and boilers are in perfect order, if the captain is experienced and intelligent, if the pilot is guiding the vessel with the intelligence which the knowledge of the chart gives him, the dangers are not so appalling. The storm only drives the ship temporarily from its course; by and by, when it subsides, the grand old vessel goes safely and surely on its way to the desired haven.

What if there is no one at the wheel? What if the pilot has no chart to guide the ship with its priceless freight of human life? Sure and certain shipwreck awaits the vessel. It makes no difference how splendid the machinery, how strong its timbers or how experienced its officers and crew may be. The pilot must have the chart and compass; and this is true of human lives. To avoid shipwreck and ride safely and strongly upon life's ocean one must know of the location of the rocks and shoals to be avoided as well as of the right and safe course.

Thousands of parents and teachers, not willfully perhaps, but thoughtlessly, if you choose, are leaving the boys and girls under their charge, to certain shipwreck of mind and body because they do not instruct them in a pure and healthful manner upon subjects concerning which intelligence is so essential.

Why should boys and girls be shipwrecked because of ignorance?

BAPTISM: ITS MEANING AND FORMS THROUGH THE AGES.

By Professor John Henry Strong.

Baptism, like the Christian church in which it is enshrined as an ordinance, has had its history. It has its roots and preparations in the past. Some have emphasized its kinship with heathen ceremonies—the lustrations of Greeks and Romans, or that stream of purificatory rites which, rising in Babylon, overflowed into other lands. Before pagan ablutions of priests and worshippers, of murderers, of cities, of fleets and armies, one seems to see the universal conscience of mankind occupying itself, though never so ineffectually, with the stain and problem of sin. Wherever the human heart has ached with the primeval malady, its acts have been more than "mere ritual." But the roots of baptism lie nearer. We may confine our attention to Israel.

Israel was the land of the consciousness of sin. The sense of sin is our first reaction on God's approach. So Israel's multiplied rites of purification, as well as her system of sacrifice, was a temporary handling of the sin-problem. It registered her sense of a moral gulf, and her desire that the gulf should be bridged. These rites of purification and lustration are recorded especially in Leviticus. We find things there suggestive of baptism, though there is nothing that answers fully to the idea.

Yet, though morally aloof and unideal, Israel was hallowed by the Covenant. Israel was God's people. To Israel belonged the circumcision, the promises, the inheritance; while the vast Gentile world lay without.

But into the relatively higher and purer life of Israel representatives of the Gentile world often came. They were called Proselytes. They took upon themselves many of the obligations, and enjoyed many of the privileges, of Israelites. One of the ceremonies of initiation was a purificatory bath. This suggests baptism. It furnishes an analogy. And yet in the central point of moral meaning the likeness fails.

Baptism in the Ministry of John.

It is in connection with the ministry of John the Baptist that baptism, properly speaking, is first found. The baptism is a part of the mission of this man. John had a burning sense of Israel's alienation. It drove him, son of a priest, with the priesthood in his fist, into the wilderness to ponder and to pray. With the Scriptures before him, he came into God's will for his life. The Messiah was coming, and that coming must mean a crisis in the nation's life. Every warning of judgment in the ancient Word stood out luridly in view of the nation's state. Israel must be prepared. He would gather before the judgment the remnant which should be saved. The judgment which he foresaw was coming. It did not come then, it has not come yet, because this is the Day of Grace, the "acceptable year of the Lord."

Hence John's baptism. It serves as both winnowing test, and sign: It concentrated, crystallized the response of those who "Justified God" by having respect to the man he had sent. The baptism itself Professor Sanday, of the Church of England, thus describes: "He took them down into the running waters of the Jordan; he made them plunge in or let the waters close over their heads, and then he led them out again wet, the consciousness that they had left their sinful past behind them, and that they were pledged to a new life. This process was called 'baptism'; and John, from the fact that it constituted the main outward expression of his mission, was called 'the Baptist.'"