

Book Notices.

THE PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY PRINCETON REVIEW.

The October number of this able and valuable periodical has but lately come to hand, and will have been in possession of the numerous subscribers in Canada some time ago. We shall only enumerate the articles as showing its utility as a journal of current important discussions, and that the taking the Review as it comes out quarterly is a desirable acquisition to ministers and others who would add to their general religious knowledge, thus keeping up in some measure with the times. The articles are: The Modern English Pulpit; Faith, its Place and Prerogative, The New Testament Meaning of Eternal and Eternity; The Vatican Council of Rome; The Necessity of Religious Instruction in Colleges; Infant Baptism; Life and its Origin; The Harmony of the Gospel Accounts of Christ's Resurrection; The Contrast between Man and the Brute Creation Establishes the Divine Origin of the Scriptures; Eating and Drinking Unworthily in the Lord's Supper; with other miscellaneous intelligence. These topics furnish a large amount of instructive matter for perusal and mental digestion. Rev. Andrew Kennedy, London, Ont., is agent for the Review in Canada. He desires us to state that he will count upon the present subscribers to continue in 1879, unless he is duly notified to the contrary. The charge will be the moderate one as hitherto, viz. \$2.25 in advance, while the full charge is \$3.50 American. He will be happy to receive new subscribers. He also wishes to intimate that the new series of the Review commenced with 1872, the two volumes for 1872-1873 will be furnished at \$2.00 for each year. This will be for the accommodation of new subscribers. Adjustable book covers for volumes can be obtained at a cheap rate. The volumes from year to year are well worthy of being preserved.

Contributors and Correspondents.

Autobiography of J. S. Mill.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—Whether it were wise to insert in your paper such an extract from the writings of Mr. Mill or not, I will not presume to say, but I certainly think it should have been accompanied by a much stronger disclaimer than that of the reviewer. With your permission, I would like to make some remarks on that quotation. Mr. Mill is a writer to whom great deference is paid at the present day. He is looked up to as a great authority on all the subjects on which he writes, and hence any remarks of his on the subject of religion are apt to receive greater weight than they are entitled to, and any remarks of his against the Christian religion are apt to be eagerly seized upon by those who are anxious to cast off its restraints, as a support to their views, and are likely to exercise a very injurious influence over the minds of the young. In the passage from his autobiography which we quote, he holds himself up as a favorable specimen of an enlightened modern unbeliever. He speaks of his unbelief as rather entitling him to commendation, and rendering his opinion of the Christian as peculiarly weighty. In short, you could scarcely have found, in any infidel writer, an extract so full of the spirit of unbelief, and so daring and supercilious in its treatment of that belief in which the whole Christian world rejoices, and which it holds to be founded on grounds which neither Mr. Mill nor any of his school have as yet been able to overthrow. He says that he is one of the "very few examples in this country of one who has not thrown off religious belief, but never had it." He "looked upon the modern just as he did upon the ancient religions, as something that in no way concerned him." Now, with regard to the first of these statements, he forgets that the examples in the old country of those who have never had any religious belief, are not so few as he makes him conspicuous, by being in that case himself. He might have known that in the city where he had his headquarters there are thousands who have never had any religious belief. Thousands both of the educated and the uneducated, and many of these have been telling the world for years that they never had any. Many every week continue to tell us so, in their writings and speeches; and not only so, but with a greater zeal than Mr. Mill, have been propagating their unbelief by every means in their power, and, after all, they have made very little impression on the world or on the faith of the Christian. It is no new position he takes up, and the spirit which he manifests toward our religion is one with which we have been familiar in every age. Nor does this fact, that he never had any religious belief, affect the questions at issue between the Christian and the unbeliever in the smallest degree. Nor is the fact in the least to be wondered at, seeing that his father did all he could, in his training, to prevent him from having any religious be-

lief. There his statement just amounts to his saying, "My father trained me not to believe in any religion, and, in consequence, I never believed in any." Now it is a strange conclusion to draw from that statement that he is peculiarly fitted to speak on the subject of religious belief. That statement simply places him among the vast number at the present day who have no religion, and who have a special animus against the Christian religion; and while he congratulated himself upon it, instead of making us afraid of him specially, as an enemy of our faith, it only excites our compassion on his behalf, and leads us to expect in his writings the same spirit and the same arguments which we have heard a thousand times over from infidel writers.

His next statement, that he looked on the modern religions in the same spirit as he did on the ancient, may be a fact interesting to know, as a part of the history of his opinions, but surely even he could not have imagined that the manner or the spirit in which he looked at our religion was a matter of the smallest consequence, so far as that religion is concerned. We know how all his class look at it, and have been looking at it for eighteen centuries, and not only looking at it, but assailing it, and we do not feel ashamed of our religion on that account. All the attempts of philosophers and unbelievers to injure it, all their hostile "looking" at it, all their unbelief, have not sufficed to make it hide its diminished head. It flourishes with increasing vigor, and if unbelievers can gather any consolation from the fact that Mr. Mill has been "looking" at it in a hostile spirit, they are heartily welcome to it. It can only excite our surprise and pity, that a man of such intellectual power could look at it, and see nothing in it different from or superior to the ancient religions of which he speaks. If he has not, myriads have, and are rejoicing in the fact that it has swept away and suspended these ancient religions, and now exercises a wider and a stronger sway than ever they held over the mind of the world.

But he adds that, the time has come, in his opinion, that unbelievers "should make their opinions known, especially if they are among those whose station or reputation gives their opinion a chance of being attended to." From this, it is evident he imagines that if such persons were to make their opinion known, it would be a great encouragement to unbelief, and give courage to those who, unbelievers at heart, are afraid to confess it before men. Mr. Mill evidently forgets that people of station and reputation have from time to time been making their unbelief known, without much effect on the constancy or faith of Christians, or adding very largely to the ranks of unbelief. And in this matter our desire is the same as Mr. Mill's. We would like to know the strength of the army of unbelief. We would like to hear whatever new arguments against our faith these modest unbelievers can produce. We would like them to try the utmost they can do, for all they have done has been answered many times over, and even in Mr. Mill's works not a single new argument has been brought against our religion. But he is forgetful when he speaks as though infidels have not spoken out. They have done so in every age. Since the days of Voltaire every educated person is conversant with their writings. And in these latter days they have been specially outspoken. In our country, Hume and his followers have spoken out, and in our own day, and recently Mr. Mill himself has declared his views, and of people of reputation the Duke of Somerset has given us his opinions of our religion. Professors Huxley and Tyndall have spoken out. Sir John Lubbock and many others of the same school, people of station and reputation, have not been withheld by modesty from delivering their opinions freely on our religion and the "revolution on which it is based. And not to mention foreign writers, such as Strauss and Renan, with their numerous sympathizers in this country, how many infidels of the lower class have been flooding the country with their effusions against this religion of ours, and yet all this has not, as Mr. Mill thinks it would, put an end to the vulgar prejudice that what is called unbelief is connected with any bad qualities either of mind or heart. No amount of writing can put an end to a fact, and it is a fact of history as well established as any fact of that kind can be, that, as a rule, unbelief has been connected with bad qualities of mind and heart. The heart which unbelief produces was shown in the French Revolution, and is shown daily in the crimes of that class, of which Mr. Mill says he is one, who have not any religious belief. But we have not space to prove, as might easily be done, not only that unbelief has been invariably accompanied by a loose system of morals, but that its chief advocates have been advocates generally of a system of morals that would reduce society in a very short time to anarchy and misery. Nor need we begin to show how opposite to these systems our religion is, in this respect, so that even its greatest enemies have been forced to admire the moral life of which it is the basis. We have cause to rejoice, believers and unbelievers, that it is the morals of Christianity that prevail in our laws and in the regulations of society, and not the morals of unbelief. And although Mr. Mill had not any religious belief, and although he looked at our Christian faith with as little reverence or faith as he looked on the ancient religions, we rejoice to believe that it stands unappalled before even his gaze, and that its strong hand grasps with ever firmer hold the passions and belief of men.

D. D. McLeod.

The Standing of Retired Ministers.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—I have been exceedingly pained upon reading some of the correspondence which has appeared in the PRESBYTERIAN about the standing of the Rev. Mr. Laing. I do not wish to criticize, nor yet to characterize the feeling which seems to have prompted the writer. If he would only drop his mask and show his face, then it might be possible to attach the proper amount of weight to his tender inquiries regarding Mr. Laing's standing. These inquiries may have been prompted by the most public-spirited and praiseworthy motives. Just as little do I agree with the apparent grounds taken by Mr. Melville in your last issue. I most cordially assent to everything he has said in praise of Mr. Laing, but not to the apologetic tone of the communication. Neither apology nor defence was needed.

Let us look at a few grave facts. 1st. Mr. Laing, was loosed from his charge by the deed of the General Assembly, and appointed Superintendent of the College Endowment Fund. That scheme failed in the accomplishment of its object, in consequence of the apathy of some, and the direct opposition of others. When the Assembly gave that scheme up, Mr. Laing was then a minister without charge, and that in consequence of the direct action of the Assembly.

2nd. Mr. Laing then accepted an appointment as principal of the Ladies' College at Ottawa. While filling that important position, I believe he still continued to preach occasionally as a minister of the Canada Presbyterian Church.

3rd. Mr. Laing never ceased to be a minister of the Canada Presbyterian Church. True, he had no pastoral charge. But, I have yet to learn that a minister in good standing who resigns his charge and remains in connection with the Church loses his status as a minister, even should he enter upon the secular work of cultivating a farm, managing a store, or writing for the press, or canvassing for a newspaper, or presiding over a college.

4th. But he does lose something by taking that course. On referring to the minutes of Assembly for 1871, page 43, you will find the following recommendation of the Home Mission Committee which affects his position. "Ministers, or Probationers who have retired from the ministry, and entered on some other calling for a time, shall not have their names put on the list of Distribution without the permission of the General Assembly." According to that decision, a man who has retired from the active work of the ministry cannot claim as a right that his name shall be on the list of Distribution, unless the General Assembly so ordain. But, as I understand the matter, so long as he remains a minister in good standing, although his name may not be on the Roll of any Presbytery, that decision does not prevent any Presbytery from employing him, so long as it is not done to the detriment of the Probationers whose names are on the list of Distribution. Neither does it prevent any vacant congregation from giving him a call, and just as little does it prevent such a minister from accepting the call should he see it to be his duty so to do.

Sir, I have written this communication not to defend my brother, Mr. Laing, he does not require any defence of mine, but in order that a matter which affects others as well as Mr. Laing may be put in its true light. There are other worthy fathers and brethren, who, for sufficient reasons, have retired from the active pastorate and have for a time entered upon some other calling, who would be grievously injured were it once to become the doctrine and practice of the Church, that no call could be given to, nor accepted by them unless with the special permission of the General Assembly. So long as a probationer retains his license to preach and his place in the Church, whether on the list of Distribution or not; and just so long as the retired pastor continues to be an ordained minister in connection with the Church, just so long and no longer are both alike eligible to receive and accept calls from vacant congregations, until the General Assembly shall decide otherwise.

As I do not like anonymous communications, especially when written with a reference to persons as well as principles, I beg leave to subscribe myself,

Yours, &c.,

D. WATERS.

St. Mary's, Ont., Nov. 17th, 1878.

Information Wanted.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—Can you, or can any of your readers, give me the basis of Union adopted by the Presbyterian Churches in Australia. What I wish to know is more particularly how they overcame the difficulty with regard to the "Headship of Christ," which is agitating our Churches just now; as the basis of Union adopted by them seems to have satisfied the churches in that colony.

Your obedient servant,
ROBERT STARR.

Woodstock, Nov. 12, 1878.

Presbyterian Union.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—I suppose it is best that all who are interested in the "Union Question," whether for or against it, should thoroughly canvass the subject, and vent their opinions upon it. At the same time it is possible to have a surfeit of what is even good in itself. Anything that I have to say on the question shall therefore be brief. I see that Mr. McTavish, on the one side, and Mr. McKay on the other, adopt in discussing this matter a course which is neither wise nor expedient. I mean going back to the stormy times prior to 1844. It should never be forgotten that the "Canada Presbyterian Church" of to-day is not the "Presbyterian Church of Canada" of 1844; neither is the sister Church, in connection with the Church of Scotland, the same that it was in that year. Not only is the former Church composed in part of the old U. P. Church, which was not a party to the transactions of 1844, but chiefly of younger men who have come upon the stage since that period, young men to whom the minutiae of the disruption controversy cannot be expected to be so sacred as to the old Free Church warriors. In like manner, the Presbyterian Church of Canada, in connection with the Church of Scotland, is almost wholly made up of younger men who are not committed to any past record on the questions at issue in Scotland. It is too much, therefore, for Messrs. McTavish and McKay to demand that when the present interests of religion in the land, and especially of those principles which the negotiating Churches hold in common, require Union, the Presbyterians of Canada should sacrifice those interests merely out of regard to what was said and done 30 years ago by other people. It is not asked that either party should recede from the positions they respectively took on that occasion. It is agreed that the memories of those days should be held in silence. This Union movement is founded upon mutual respect and confidence. On the whole, the Church of Scotland section is giving up the most, in surrendering the latter part of their present title, although that was one of the things contended for by most of them in 1844. The clause about "fraternal relations," in the basis of Union, provides not only for receiving ministers and probationers from any branch of Presbyterianism in Great Britain, upon an equality, but also for securing to such ministers of the Church of Scotland, of the Free Church, of the U. P. Church, and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, at present in Canada, their rights in the respective Churches to which they belong, in case they shall desire to return to their native land; but it is not designed to commit Mr. McTavish, on the one hand, to fraternize with the Established Church of Scotland; or Mr. McKay to fraternize, on the other, with the Free Church of Scotland. Indeed, these Churches will recognize in future only those of their own ordaining, out of the ministers in Canada. Any appreciative observer must know that as the agitations which culminated in the disruption in 1843 were the fruit of a national revival of religion in Scotland, so the desire for Union is the fruit of a revived religious sentiment in our day, only it is in a different direction according to the need of the times. Both are equally from God; and let us beware of letting questions of consistency hinder that good work among us which has been followed with such blessed results in the United States.

OBSERVER.

The Union Question.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

MY DEAR SIR,—Will you kindly give me space for a few candid words on the points of difficulty between the advocates and opponents of Union on the present basis. I have all along voted in furtherance of the Union movement, and I hope to see the union consummated; and in what I have now to say I hope I shall succeed in avoiding the giving of offence to any party. That there is a strong party in our branch of the Church who, either from a regard for the feelings of certain brethren, or from considerations of what is known as the *testimony* of the Church, or from both, desire for the United Church an Article on the Headship, is manifest, from the vote of the Assembly of 1872. The issue then put to the House was the four Articles just as they stood, or the four Articles and a deliverance on the Headship; and the latter proposal was the one preferred. And that the term *deliverance* was used in the sense of something to be drawn up in the joint Union Committee, is to my mind beyond all doubt. What was contemplated by the Assembly was not documents of the past or for the past, but something to serve for the United Church for the future. The authoritative documents on the question were called for in the joint committee meeting and read; and all the members declared themselves perfectly satisfied. And certainly they had most ample ground for declaring themselves fully satisfied. That the two

branches of the Church presently existing and specially concerned are perfectly at one on the point, no reasonable man can doubt, looking at the authoritative documents read; but it was for the non-existing Church of the future that the *deliverance* was intended, as going to make up part of her testimony and to meet the earnestly-voiced difficulties of certain brethren. Now, abundantly satisfactory to every reasonable mind as those authoritative documents are, that were read in the committee, they all become waste paper the moment the Union is formed, and it was in view of this fact that a deliverance was desired that would survive both Churches. Hence, when the members of our Union Committee declared themselves perfectly satisfied there was no deliverance before them such as the decision of Assembly contemplated, with which to express satisfaction. Suppose that, instead of the word *deliverance*, the function of 1872 had contained what the Committee brought back to the Assembly of 1873, would such a motion have found even a second in the Court? These documents were in print, and accessible to every one, and no calling for them in the committee and reading of them there could give them a more authoritative character than they already possessed. And that the Assembly supposed that those brethren for whose sake specially the *deliverance* was to be asked, had never seen, and knew nothing about those documents, would be a very unwarrantable imputation, both on the Assembly and the brethren concerned. Other forms of proof equally, or even more conclusive, might be adduced to place beyond a doubt the sense in which the term referred to in the motion of 1872 was understood. That there is the most ample evidence of the perfect agreement of the two Churches, no man can, on reasonable grounds, call in question, and yet that one jot or tittle out of all the documents has been reserved for the Church of the future, no member of the Committee on Union can for a moment suppose. Now, although personally I do not attach the importance to a deliverance on the Headship, in addition to what we have in the Westminster Confession, that other brethren do, yet since, to meet their difficulties, the Assembly of 1872 gave them a pledge in the instructions given to the Union Committee, "to procure in some way a deliverance," that pledge should be either fulfilled, or the impossibility of fulfilling it frankly declared. If out of the superabundant documents of both Churches read in the joint Committee meeting, some extract had been taken, or if in a sentence or two the substance of the Act of Independence had been preserved and reported as a deliverance, and if after all, these brethren still stood out against the basis, I would have felt that we had redeemed our pledge to them, and that our path of duty was clear.

As matters stand at present I cannot but feel that the minority have, in point of argument, a strong position, and that their difficulty, for the remedying of which the decision of 1872 was adopted, remains precisely the same as it was eighteen months ago. I regret to see, by a letter in the *Globe*, signed by "a member of the Union Committee," the attempt made to show that the Union Committee were not expected to formulate something new by way of deliverance on the Headship; for if this was their understanding of their instructions, it certainly was not the view of very many members of the Assembly. True, had they adopted something old, if anything could be found in the proper form for the United Church, that would have been a deliverance, but they adopted nothing, and gained nothing on this point for the United Church. That the Assembly of last June allowed this matter to pass is, of course, well known, and in some respects not to be wondered at; but that a deliverance on the Headship has not been procured for the United Church is so plain that for a member of the Union Committee to undertake to make out the opposite, is to me a marvel.

Yours very truly,
W. T. McMULLEN.

Woodstock, Oct. 29th, 1878.

Presbytery of Kingston.

This Presbytery met in Kingston on the 11th and 12th days of November. Congregations within the bounds were enjoined to contribute as liberally as possible to the Assembly Fund. Deputations were appointed to visit the congregations of Amherst Island and Melrose in relation to supplement, that they may come up to the standard required in the new regulations. Mr. Scott tendered his resignation of Napawa, and an adjourned meeting was appointed to be held in Napawa on the 2nd day of December, at 7 p.m., to bring the matter to an issue. The question of Union was sent down to the several sessions and congregations within the bounds, with instructions to report their opinions thereon at the next meeting of Presbytery. A motion was duly passed to request the Moderator of the Montreal Synod to change the place of the next meeting of Synod from Ottawa to Montreal, so as not to disturb the friends in the former place by having the meetings of Synod and Assembly all there within two consecutive months. The next meeting was appointed to be at Belleville, on the second Tuesday of April, 1879, at 7 p.m., Mr. Boyd to preach at the opening service.—Thomas S. CHAMBERS, Pres. Clerk.