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Contributors and Correspondents.

CHRISTLIEB'S "MODERN DOUBT AND CHRISTIAN BELIEF."

"Canadensis" has again revived in your columns a subject I expected had been closed; although I at least, regretted at the time it should have been so summarily and abruptly dismissed. I do not now regret its re-opening, if only the discussion be carried on courteously, with all absence of personalities. I can scarcely help thinking, however, in connection with the manner of the re-opening, on the part of "Canadensis," of an illustration that suggests itself in the life of Dr. Chalmers. A certain gentleman called on the kind-hearted Doctor one day, and at once ingratiated himself into the good Doctor's regards, by pretending to have some spiritual difficulties which he would like to have removed. If I remember rightly, he represented them as connected with Melchizedek. But he had not long engaged in conversation upon these difficulties of his, till he broached the subject of pecuniary difficulties, as being more urgent and pressing than spiritual; and the removal of these pecuniary difficulties, as lying nearer his heart and pocket than the other, he had indeed broached the one in order to the relief of the other. The Doctor took in his man at a glance and with all that hatred of sham which characterized the great man, he at once rose and showed him to the door, saying, as he did so—"and to bring in your hypocrisy on the back of Melchizedek, it is too bad, too bad, Sir." One would have liked to have seen the expression of honest indignation on that massive countenance, as he uttered these words. The anecdote suggests itself in connection with "Canadensis" only to this extent, that he brings in his views in regard to the salvation of the heathen, not directly as the avowal of his own belief, but on the back of certain great names of confessedly great men; as before on the back of Dr. Caird, so now on that of Professor Christlieb. I suppose, however, it will not be assumed as presumptions, that a plain, country pastor should venture to differ from so great a man. I have as yet only read Christlieb's paper "Armor Against Modern Infidelity" which was delivered at the Evangelical Meeting in New York; and which is of the highest value. The work which is the occasion of the present letter, I have not yet seen, but hope soon to do. All that I concern myself with at present is, that part of his writings which "Canadensis" quotes, in the last number of the B. A. PRESBYTERIAN and which he introduces very modestly, as "fearing on a subject recently recently discussed in these columns," and which he says rightly, "will be interesting to some readers." They are certainly interesting to me, as showing that this great man, if "Canadensis" has correctly reported him, has, like other great men, failed to recognize what I consider an important Bible truth. But let me quote Christlieb's words as given in your last number. I have marked three sentences in one paragraph upon which I intend making some remarks. The first sentence is—"how it is argued, and the infinitely good and righteous one have attached salvation to the reception of revealed verities of which the majority of mankind are ignorant without any fault of their own, and others are cognizant without perceiving?" The italics in this quotation are mine, and are intended more distinctly to mark the passages to which I take exception. On the question here raised I remark, (1.) It is an old infidel objection revived, and has been repeatedly answered; (2.) As it is, the Professor seems to recognize its relevancy and validity, as he offers objection to the form into which it is shown, but gives it a direct answer in a wrong way, as I shall endeavor to show; (3.) The objection I have to the form of the question is, that, unless narrowly scrutinized it is misleading; I say, misleading. It is true, that all that Christlieb recognizes in the question is that, as the gift of revelation to some of the men of earth, is sovereign, gratuitous, and therefore undeserved; in like manner, in the case of the great majority of the men of our world from whom as yet, this gift of revelation has been withheld, it has been withheld "without any fault of their own." This revelation has been withheld without any peculiar fault leading to the withholding on the part of those suffering so great privation; the withholding is thus contrasted with the withholding; and as the one was undeserved, the other was without any peculiar fault, as the cause or occasion of the withholding. As thus limited to the sovereignty of God in giving or withholding, I so agree, but only so far. There is a modifying circumstance in this case it is important to bear in mind. The primal revelation verbally given to men at the beginning, and which by tradition, even oral tradition, could be handed down from

generation to generation, leaves man not altogether blameless in his treatment of God's message. For, in a note in Collins's Bible, Glasgow, 1856, on Genesis 11th chap. 12-26th verses, we have these pertinent remarks. "We may, by computation find that the original revelation made to Adam might be transmitted to Avraham at above two thousand year's distance, through only three intermediate persons. Enos, the son of Adam, lived till Noah was seventy four years of age; and Shem the son of Noah, lived almost as long as Avraham." Thus, of the revelation originally given in primitive times, and which, from the circumstances was, or might easily have been world-wide, and therefore universal, if I say, this revelation, thus given, had been rightly dealt by, the race need not have been so universally without the knowledge of God. And therefore, I submit, that not alone to the sovereignty, of God, but to the sin and guilt of men, must this dreadful privation be also traced. This it is important to remember, as God deals with the world at large as with nations. He holds the world at large responsible for gifts he has conferred upon it, through some of its number representatively. And therefore it is not without reason that Paul urges, that "as men did not choose to retain the knowledge of God in their thoughts, he gave them over, in righteous judgment, to a reprobate mind." To this, it will not suffice to say, that men cannot rightly be held responsible for events that transpired six thousand years ago, and which long since open their force. Well, if so, men, by parity of reasoning, should not be held responsible for, or have any guilty share in the sin of Adam. And yet the Apostle Paul makes that one sin the origin, and cause, of the death where-with men universally are affected; and which extends in full force of operation, down to us, in the present age of the world. It is still true, "that death passes upon all men, for that all have sinned." And it is still true, "that by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin." And thus we have, as a matter of fact, still to do with transactions that took place thousands of years ago. And if in the one case, why not in the other? Again, I ask why not? Why should not the Almighty hold the men of the world responsible for the treatment they gave the earliest revelation of His Mercy, and Grace in the primal promise. "The Seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent." Why did they not see to it, that this promise was made to circulate from mouth to mouth, and from generation to generation? If the importance of a message gives it interest, then surely nothing could possibly exceed in interest, this promise of a coming Saviour for guilty men. But (4.) I have said that the form into which this question is thrown is misleading; in as much as, on the infidel side of the question, there is the ignoring to another element, which has an important part of play in this discussion. I refer to the fact that men are held responsible, not so much for that which they have not, but for that which they have now, and always have had. Scripture lays down this principle clearly enough, and Christlieb gives it prominence even in the quotations "Canadensis" has furnished in last number of the BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN. I refer to the principle, that the heathen are held responsible for the use they have made—not of Divine Revelation as furnished in the Scriptures—which vast numbers of them have never actually enjoyed. But for the revelation God has given of Himself in the works of creation and providence, and by their own moral and spiritual nature. It is for the use they have made of this revelation that they are held responsible, and are guilty and condemned. I do not need to argue this, for Christlieb has already done so, in sufficiently clear and definite terms, at least so far. I say so far, for I hold he has not gone far enough; which leads me (5) to the second sentence to which I take exception, and of which I have said that Christlieb gives a direct answer to the question thus raised, but in a wrong way. The answer he gives to the question we are now considering is—"But Scripture nowhere teaches, that all who die without knowledge of the revelation of God in Christ are irretrievably and eternally lost." The italics are again mine. I hold this answer to be direct enough, but wrong in point of fact. I could even conceive how a young man, as I suppose "Canadensis" to be, although in this I may be mistaken, who had not had time or opportunity to cast his attention over the whole field of revelation on this point, might overlook and mistake the force and bearing of certain parts of Scripture; but I can scarcely strongly enough express my astonishment at a man of such comprehensiveness of view, and of such vast stores of solid learning as Christlieb possesses, so signally overlooking what appears to me so plain and so important a part of Bible teaching, and to which I have already referred in my former letters in your paper. In direct opposition to this statement of Christlieb, I submit, that the language of Paul, and of Solomon, and of the prophetic teaching generally, is to the effect, "that the knowledge of the revelation of God in Christ is essentially to salvation; and that nowhere are men affirmed as capable of being saved without this knowledge;" and therefore, "that all who die without knowledge of the revelation of God in Christ, are irretrievably and eternally lost." To this conclusion I am shut up, if language has any meaning; and if language can be supposed to furnish any clear and effective medium of communicating thought. Solomon says—"where there is no vision, the people perish." And Paul says in Romans 11:12, "For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law." I do not enter into the exposition of these words again, as I have already so recently done in your paper.

But, if spared in health and strength, I may at some future time give a more comprehensive statement of the principle for which I contend, as exhibited in the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament. Permit me to say now, that the only reason that occurs to me, why the view which I hold as contained in the express words of Scripture, is so persistently and systematically overlooked, is its sadness and melancholy nature. But not the less true is it on that account. It is to be noted, that Christlieb has resorted in precise and definite terms, to other expressions of the Apostle, just a "Canadensis" did; "to the law written in the heart;" to the Gentiles, which have not the law, doing by nature the things contained in the law; and to "not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." But Christlieb never appears to have been arrested by the statement of the Apostle in the 12th verse of 2d chapter of Romans, "as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law;" for if he had, I am persuaded he never could have penned such words as—"that Scripture nowhere teaches, that all who die without knowledge of the revelation of God in Christ, are irretrievably and eternally lost."

I should like to ask even this distinguished professor some pertinent questions, which might tend to make him give his answer to the question under consideration not the less directly, but much more rightly. Again, these words of his, "It is one thing innocently not to know; it is quite another wilfully to reject." In regard to the innocence here affirmed, I have already presented a consideration which is calculated to modify the force of the statement. I am inclined to think, Scripture directly charges guilt upon men for the treatment given to the revelation of God's mercy. And that this innocence is only a comparative thing. When, after the lapse of ages, the knowledge of God has been sinfully and guiltily lost by men, and the reoffending, and enlarging of this revelation is an act of God's sovereign goodness and grace; then there may be a comparative innocence in ignorance, in the sense, and to the extent thus indicated. But we have to guard against the idea of absolute innocence; inasmuch as God has revealed Himself sufficiently to cause responsibility, and guilt, and condemnation, by the works of His hands; by His providential government, and by the moral and spiritual nature of man, to all of which he makes appeal. I might say, if disposed, and say with truth in reference to Christlieb's statement, "that Scripture nowhere teaches, that all who die without knowledge of the revelation of God in Christ, are irretrievably and eternally lost;" is simply an assertion, in support of which no proof has been furnished. For, to say that men are to be judged hereafter according to their works, and that the measure of such judgment will be the degree of revelation, natural or supernatural, vouchsafed them in the present life; and that hence from a man more, from another less will be required, and that even among the lost, it will go harder with some, and be more tolerable for others," all this is undoubtedly true, and it will be remembered that in my previous letters I had stressed on those considerations. But, though true, and important in their bearings, they by no means furnish ground for the sweeping statement of Christlieb. On the contrary, while I and others holding with me, give all importance to such considerations we think they merit, fail to see them in the light thus presented; and come to the very opposite conclusion, and that from express words of Scripture, which are persistently and systematically ignored. The third, and last sentence to which I take exception is—"Nor are the Scriptures altogether without traces of the thought, that the Gospel was professed, even after death, to those who had died in ignorance of the way of salvation." Am I to suppose that "Canadensis" agrees with Christlieb in the statement here made, and in the principle here affirmed? His making these quotations, without any note of dissent, would seem to indicate such agreement. I would very much like he would give a clear and distinct indication, either of approval or dissent. But, whether he does so or no, I may say now that I have no faith in any such belief as is thus indicated, and do not think this passage furnishes any proper and solid ground for so thinking. Into this, however, I cannot enter now, but must defer them to another letter, as this is already, I fear, too long. I remain, Yours very truly,
D. ANDERSON.

ACTION OF THE ASSEMBLY—ANOTHER OPINION.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN
DEAR SIR,—If the amended Basis of Union had been sent down to Presbyteries in accordance with the provisions of the Barrier Act, there seems no doubt that it is unconstitutional for the Assembly to call for returns at the adjourned meeting in November and then act upon these.

The terms of the Barrier Act, passed in 1897, are as follows:—"The General Assembly &c., do therefore appoint, enact and declare, that before any General Assembly of this Church shall pass any act which may be binding rules and constitutions to the Church, the same act be first proposed as overtures to the Assembly, and being so passed as such, be remitted to the consideration of the several Presbyteries of this Church and their opinions and consent reported by their commissioners to the next General Assembly following, who may then pass the same in acts if the more general opinion of the Church thus had agreed thereunto."

The action taken by the Assembly in sending down a remit, with a view to changing the constitution of the Assembly is equally illegal.
Yours &c.,
S. W. R.

DR. FRASER'S VISITS.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN

DEAR SIR,—I should have written you last week, but it is not too late yet to tell our people, who take your excellent paper of the exceedingly encouraging meetings we had in Port Hope and Cobourg on Sabbath the 9th inst. Notwithstanding the heat, which was excessive, and the absence of many of the people for their holidays, we had good congregations—churches almost filled. In the afternoon, after addressing the children of Port Hope Sabbath School, I drove in the heat and dust seven miles to Cobourg, but was amply repaid by finding a large congregation of children and many grown up people awaiting my arrival. On the platform we had Dr. Nelles, President of Victoria College, who manifested his interest in our Mission, and his kindly feeling for us by taking part in our exercises. In the evening again we had a large and most interesting congregation. It will not be regarded as invidious if I say, that, all things considered, these two places gave the best collections for "outfit and passage" which we have yet received, \$46 from each place. On the whole, I spent a very pleasant day, and met with Christian kindness in Port Hope and Cobourg.

On Tuesday evening I held a meeting in Peterboro, and was much pleased to see the interest of the people in the work. The friends there will give us a good contribution to the outfit and passage fund, for they retained their collection, which was a good one, to supplement it. I must not omit to mention, either, a valuable gift to our mission, from the Rev. Mr. Roger, of a large and beautiful collection of Anatomical Plates by Dr. Lizars, with the accompanying letter-press. In a country where the superstitions and prejudices of the people prohibit dissection, these plates will be invaluable to the surgeon.

Yesterday I spent in London, preaching in the morning to Mr. Scott's congregation, and in the evening to Dr. Proudfoot's. Our congregations were large and our meetings very interesting. I addressed the Sabbath Schools of both congregations in the afternoon. I am delighted everywhere with interest manifested by our young people in our mission, and am sure that our policy of interesting the young in our Church work is the best we could pursue. We have the future ministers and missionaries of our Church in our Sabbath Schools. If the teachers were more impressed with this thought they would bestow even more care and attention on their training than they now do. Our Sabbath School teachers are Theological Professors in the highest and truest sense of the word, and our Sabbath Schools are Theological Colleges. May the Professors be carefully and wisely elected, and the Colleges be liberally endowed and maintained. The results—the blessed and glorious results—will be seen not many days hence.

Yours truly,
J. B. FRASER.
London, August 17, 1874.

DR. FRASER IN HAMILTON.

A correspondent favours us with the following respecting Dr. Fraser's visit to Hamilton:—"We had a very pleasant and profitable visit in this city last week from Dr. Fraser. It must have proved a hard day's work for the missionary, but he will not regret the toil when he knows that it made impressions which have already yielded fruit, and are likely to continue to do so for years to come. It was difficult to divide him so as to afford a share to each of the four congregations, but we carried the division as far as we could. He preached in the morning in the Central Church, and in the evening in McNab St. During the afternoon he addressed the Sabbath-schools in these two churches, and also in Knox church. We expected to have a Monday evening address, but, on account of other arrangements made by the Dr., we had to be satisfied without it.

A personal acquaintance with the missionaries sent out is a most powerful incentive to missionary zeal. Many of the children throughout the country who see and hear Dr. Fraser, will remember his visit as long as they live. In one of our schools the teacher of the infant class found, on the following Sabbath, that nearly all the little scholars could tell the missionary's name, the name of the island to which he is going, and other items connected therewith, while some of them had been so much interested in the matter as to find out Formosa on the map.

Many a heart in Hamilton most readily responds when the Dr. asked us all to remember him in our prayers when he is gone away."

LAKE MEDAD.

A SKETCH FOR THE "PHILSBY CURIAN."

It would take a great deal of research on a map of the Province of Ontario to discover the geographical position of the Lake whose name forms the heading of this article. It may even be doubted whether the many thousands of people who reside in its vicinity ever heard of its name or knew of its existence, and yet it possesses many points of interest, and is not without beauty and natural attractions. Situated about ten miles due north of the village of Wellington Square, and reached by a very pleasant drive over a winding country road, each angle of which present a lovely panoramic view of the north and south shores of Lake Ontario, our little lake is found embosomed in a slight depression of the highest part of the table land, and has apparently no outlet of any kind. Such lakes are not uncommon in Ontario, and our Geologists have ample scope given to their talents to explain the "why and wherefore" of these curious developments of nature. Having thus discovered the whereabouts of Lake Medad, and having doubtless aroused the curiosity of some of your readers, who may perchance be seized with the laudable ambition of seeing it for themselves, it may be as well to give the experiences of our trip to this interesting part of the country, that others coming after us may benefit by the same. The Great Western Railway soon lands a passenger from Toronto at Wellington Square, and then ones troubles begin. "It is one of the peculiarities of the country," was the remark often used by an American Cousin to his guest from across the water, as one after another of the prominent traits of American character affected his sensitive British ideas of the fitness of things; and perhaps no one peculiarity seems to be so well developed in this section of country, as independence of character, manner, and everything else. "It is a free country, and we are a great people;" and thus one lesson is here soon learned. Of course it is necessary to drive; to do this one must needs procure a conveyance, and a horse, or horses; but the choice here is limited, and the "Tutler" of the village will furnish you or not as it suits his convenience; and after many kind promises, may, like Capt Cuttle, leave one in the lurch. However, by dint of a great deal of coaxing and palaver, one gets started, and then one does enjoy the drive. The country on all sides is lovely; the road winds here and there, now passing through beautiful woods or shaded valleys, or over undulating hills, from the summits of which a very panorama of beauty is spread out which can scarcely be surpassed on one hand, and lying as it were below you is the Burlington Beech and Bay, with the City of Hamilton, and in the distance the wooded south shore of the Lake, stretching away until lost in the purple haze of the distance, whilst on the other hand is the north shore with its numerous villages and the broad expanse of Lake Ontario. But as if pleasure must always have its drawback, we had one also—the dust. A sandy soil in every direction, the roads seemed covered with a deep layer of visible and invisible dust in the most attenuated form, which seemed to insinuate itself in lesser or greater quantities into every pore of one's body, until we wished that even the City Contractor for watering the streets had been present and favoured the road with the light sprinkle so generally bestowed on our streets, and so heavily paid for by the much enduring tax payers.

However, to relieve the tediousness of the dusty drive, and our horses having lost two shoes, we thought we would stop half way, where

"Under a spreading chestnut tree
The village Smithy stands,
And rest and get matters repaired. The
Smithy was quite on style, the proprietor
unfortunately was not. For instead of
being

"A mighty man,
With large and snowy hands;
And the muscles of his brawny arms
As strong as iron bands,"

He seemed quite the reverse of this, and yet with his one eye covered with a bandage, his other eye blazed forth with that "independence" for which this district is so celebrated. Kindly approaching him and mentioning our loss and knowing that the smithy

"He earns whatever he can"
And looks the whole world in the face
For he owes not any man,"

we humbly requested to have matters put right. But no, this man of might would not, being otherwise busy, condescend to oblige us by working for us, but "guessed if we would lie up for two hours we might perhaps be accommodated. Gently informing him that we would recommend him to our friends, we drove on, feeling quite sure he was not the smithy who,

Each morning sees some task begin,
Each evening sees it close"

a rapid drive and the Lake is reached and in a few minutes we are in a boat rowing here and there over its placid surface. The lake itself covers some three acres, and the water is very clear and Carbonate of lime in solution. The shade is one side slightly rocky, forming under the shade trees a splendid place for laying out the substantial pail and usual accompaniment of a picnic. We would advise, however, a careful use of the row boat used on the lake, as being built on other than scientific principles, being a cross between a canoe and a skiff, it requires almost the ability of a "Blondin" to keep yourself above water. After a very pleasant afternoon spent in this vicinity we left, on our return and arriving safely at home felt that another day had fled, but left many pleasant reminiscences behind. W.