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FRIDAY, AUGUST 7, 1874.

SABBATH SCHOOLS OF P. CHURCH.

The future of a Church depends largely on its Sabbath Schools, for the almost universal experience of pastors is that the surest source of supply of new communicants is the class of the devoted Sabbath School teacher...

has given wings to the Gospel among the coral islands of the wide Pacific. What better could our Church do than adopt the suggestion already thrown out by Dr. Fraser...

PRESBYTERIAN UNION.

The Presbyterian Advocate, of St. John, N.B., writes as follows on this important subject:— "The Union of all the leading Presbyterian bodies in Canada may now be regarded as certain, the Basis agreed upon by the Presbyterian Church in Canada and the Synod of the Church of Scotland in Canada having been unanimously accepted by the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces, and accepted with but five or six dissentient voices by the Synod of the Church of Scotland in the Maritime Provinces.

We presume that as soon as the First General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in Canada is fairly organized and in working order, one of the first steps taken will be to organize the Provincial Synods, throwing the Presbyterians of New Brunswick into a Synod by themselves for local work, and the same in Nova Scotia and P. E. Island.

The Rev. Isaac Campbell, of Toronto, who was recently licensed, has received a unanimous call from the congregation of Kilbride, in the Presbytery of Hamilton.

The Rev. Thos. Alexander has great pleasure in informing those individuals and congregations who have kindly assisted, by subscription and collecting, towards the erection of a Presbyterian church at Burford, that the building is now enclosed, and that arrangements are being made to have it finished as early as possible.

Ministers and Churches.

Rev. J. Robertson has arrived in Ontario from Manitoba. Messrs. Currie and McKellar had arrived before his departure. Mr Vincent is at present supplying Winnipeg; 110f. Bryce has gone east on College business.

The Rev. P. S. Livingstone was the recipient of a well filled purse of money a few days ago, presented to him by the members of his late congregation, St. John's Church, Pittsburg, which charge Mr. Livingstone recently resigned.

We regret to learn that the Rev. Wm. Cochrane has been seriously indisposed for some days. He attempted to conduct the services in his own church on Sunday morning last, but was unable to finish them.

A congregational meeting was held in the Widder Street Presbyterian Church on Monday last to moderate in a call to a minister for that congregation. The choice lay between the Rev. Mr. McAlpine, of Widder, and the Rev. Mr. Bakie, of Brampton.

The Rev. Gavin Lang, in a letter to the Gazette, regarding the Union of the Presbyterian churches, maintained that the rights of a minority in any case should be respected and due deference paid it. This appears strangely inconsistent with his previous course of action, he having, some time ago, utterly ignored the rights of a minority in St. Andrew's Church.

On the 29th ult., at New Glasgow, the ordination and induction of Rev. Mr. Munroe took place here. The ministers present besides Mr. Munroe were Rev. Mr. Milloy, of East Aldboro, Moderator; Rev. Mr. Sutherland, of Aylmer; Rev. Mr. Sutherland, of Fingal; and Mr. Johnson, of Cran, probationer.

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CHRISTLIEB'S "MODERN DOUBT AND CHRISTIAN BELIEF"

BY CANADENSIS.

A recent issue of the BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN contained an admirable and characteristic extract from Professor Christlieb's new and valuable work, on "Modern Doubt and Christian Belief." It seems matter for regret that the source of the extract was not indicated, so that those who, doubtless, read it with pleasure and profit, might have had their attention drawn to a work which, to a remarkable extent, combines clearness of thought and expression, profound scholarship, critical ability, sound Scriptural theology, and a most thoroughly devotional and earnest Christian spirit.

The first portion of the book is devoted to an examination of the breach between Modern Culture and Christianity, its extent, its causes, its results and its remedy; and the extract from this portion, already given in these columns, will give a tolerably fair idea of its scope and spirit. Some of the causes of this breach, Professor Christlieb traces to the shortcomings, the coldness, the one-sidedness, the dissensions of the Christian church itself; others to political complications; and others, still, to the natural pride of the human heart and its antipathy to the humiliating truths which Christianity enforces.

The next division of the book treats of Reason and Revelation, defining the plan which they relatively hold, with regard to our knowledge of God. Some quotations will best show his treatment of this interesting subject.

"So little does the Bible demand of a mere blind faith, that, on the contrary, it requires a spirit of examination in all things (1 Thess. v. 21; 1 Cor. x. 15; 1 John iv. 1). It often exhorts us to follow the Divine footsteps in the works of creation (Ps. civ.; Is. xl. 26); it affirms it to be the duty of all men, even of the heathen, to seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him; because He is not far from any one of us, and we also are His offspring (Acts xvii. 27-29, xiv. 17); it recognizes the existence in man of a spiritual eye, by means of which he obtains and possesses light in respect to his relation to God (Matt. vi. 22, 23; Luke vi. 34-36); and it ascribes to the very heathen, and consequently to the human intellect per se, independently of the revelation contained in Scripture, a capacity for obtaining from creation and conscience a certain amount of real knowledge as to the nature and will of God.

"And this doctrine of the Apostles of the Gentiles is not only almost literally repeated in so many words by Gentile philosophers, as e. g. by Aristotle: 'Although invisible to every mortal nature, God is yet manifested by His works;' and by Cicero, 'Thou seeest not God; and yet thou knowest Him from His works;' but also has its truth practically demonstrated by the various forms of religion, however imperfect, of all heathen nations. And so again as to conscience: the law and will of God respecting human conduct, manifesting itself as a moral law and divine revelation in the hearts of all men, was equally well known to those who spoke of the conscience as, on the one hand, 'infrangible and immutable, recompensing every good

action,' and, on the other, as 'arrows of the gods penetrating the heart of the ungodly,' (Cicero), who, 'night and day bear about, within, their own accuser,' (Juvenal); and again, as 'a holy spirit settled in the inmost heart and watching over all actions, whether good or evil,' (Seneca and the Laws of Menu).

He then goes to show the falsity of the position of Rationalists—that Reason unaided, is able to attain to a full knowledge of God, "and so to answer all moral and religious questions in respect to man's ultimate destiny and purpose." "Scripture, on the contrary," says Professor Christlieb, "teaches thus: Reason, like every other faculty and every other talent, needs culture and education, such as God from the beginning has vouchsafed it; first, through the medium of the outer world, (Gen. i. 28, 29; ii. 15, 19, 20); and secondly, by the imposition of a moral commandment. By the transgression of the letter, mankind entered on a perverted course of development, a mis-culture; so that their moral, and thereby also, their intellectual faculties, experience such a weakening and disturbance, that henceforth, for the knowledge of truth and salvation, a special revelation of God to man became infinitely more a necessity than before; just as a sick child needs help much more than a healthy one (Matt. vi. 22, 23, John ix. 39-41). According to the Scriptures, therefore, natural reason is insufficient for obtaining a right knowledge of God; and a supernatural revelation of the nature and will of God is absolutely necessary as a light to the darkened reason and the weakened conscience, to prevent their falling into various aberrations." "I could call your attention to many an honest confession on the part of philosophers—to the complaint of Plato, how hard it is to discover the Father of the Universe; to the utterances of Socrates, that he held it to be the greatest happiness to know the will of the gods, but did not believe this could be discovered by the conclusions of reason—utterances which reveal to us what a profound longing after some special, divine revelation existed in the greatest philosophers of antiquity, or to some of the impressive songs of the Indian Rigveda, in which the longing for a knowledge of the original source of life, and the pain of uncertainty on the part of the seeker, is expressed in the ever-recurring refrain—

"Who is the God to whom our gifts belong?" After thus examining the province and the results of Natural Theology, the author goes on to Revealed Religion, and meets the objections with which sceptics have assailed the doctrine of a special revelation. The following passage, bearing upon a subject recently discussed in these columns, will be interesting to some readers.

"How, it is argued, can 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 deservings? This argument, strongly urged in former times by J. J. Rousseau, is warmly echoed by many in the present day, and derives some countenance from the harshness and one-sidedness of many Christian theologians. But Scripture nowhere teaches, that all who die without knowledge of the revelation of God in Christ are irrevocably and eternally lost. It is one thing innocently not to know, it is quite another willfully to reject. The express doctrine of Scripture is, that men will be judged hereafter according to their works, and that the measure of such judgment will be the degree of revelation, supernatural or natural, vouchsafed them in the present life; and that hence from one 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 (Matt. xi. 20-24, xii. 41, 42; Luke xii. 47, 48; Rom. ii. 6, 12; v. 13). Nor are the Scriptures altogether without traces of the thought that the Gospel was proffered, even after death, to those who had died in ignorance of the way of salvation; (1 Pet. iii. 18-20, iv. 6). But to demand now, at once, an explanation why the divine counsels determine that some nations should receive the Gospel earlier and others later, is a great act of presumption. It will not be till the final development and end of the world that it will be possible to survey the whole course of God's dealings with man, and so determine whether the way in which the knowledge of salvation has been spread among nations and moulded their history, resulted from an absolutely wise and holy plan, or not. Finally, the divine attribute of goodness can be alleged as an argument against the probability of a special revelation only by one who will not see to how much nobler a degree of moral and spiritual elevation nations have attained, with a revealed religion, than without one, a fact the truth of which no reasonable persons ought to call in question."

One is tempted to make too many quotations from this book, so full is it of striking passages. And even a detailed notice of it would occupy too much space. The division devoted to the examination and refutation of the "modern non-biblical conceptions of God"—Atheism, Materialism, Pantheism, Deism, and Rationalism, will repay a careful perusal. The lecture on the "Theology of Scripture," is almost a course of Systematic Theology in itself, and the lecture on the "Modern negation miracles," is particularly interesting and suggestive. The latter portion of the book treats of "Modern accounts of the life of Christ," such as those of Strauss, Renan, &c., exposing their misrepresentations and absurdities; and the last lecture treats of Primitive Christianity, in refutation of what has been called the "Tubington theory."

Professor Christlieb closes with a "request to his readers," part of which, applying to his Christian readers, is so wise and practical that it must be quoted. "And, first of all, to those who are believers. Let me beg of you not to place all doubts indiscriminately in one class. Some of them seek, in order to find. These we must never despair of. God gives success to the upright. Others, however, seek in order to lose, and to cast away our article after another of the old faith; they diligently gather together specious arguments in favour of the unbelief, which suits them; they have soon settled the