

For the Christian Messenger.

Mr. Editor,—

I am sorry Mr. Elder has felt it his duty to make so violent an onslaught on the author of the article you copied from the *Christian Era*. The opinions expressed in that paper regarding Professor Huxley are no means new or peculiar, nor do they seem so flagrantly incorrect as to merit the vials of wrath Mr. Elder pours out. In fact, almost all christian people who know any thing of Professor Huxley are accustomed to regard his scientific views as subversive of the teachings of revelation. Nor do I see that Mr. Elder has succeeded in proving that this common opinion is not the correct one. The quotations he introduces certainly do not prove his case. The only reasonable inference they will bear is that Huxley does not wish to be regarded as unorthodox. But this surely cannot be taken as a proof that the views he propounds are in accordance with orthodox teachings. Huxley is not the only man who professes not to cut himself altogether adrift from christianity, however opposed his views may be to the doctrines of religion. Colenso, for example, claims to be a good christian, and continues to wear the lawn and eat the bread of the church; but we do not on that account regard him as orthodox, nor do we think any the more highly of either his piety or his honesty. So Huxley, though not dependent on the church for a living, has doubtless sagacity enough to see that his theories will meet with less of hostile criticism if the fact of their being opposed to orthodoxy is kept out of view. Hence his efforts to make it appear that his topics and views are "extra christian" and have "a world of their own."

It is to be regretted that Mr. Elder has not adopted a more courteous and respectful bearing. He seems to assume that all who differ from him are ignorant of the facts of science, and are addicted to vicious modes of reasoning; that they condemn a man's views without having "read his own expression of them" and indulge in "grim theological jokes" which "save the trouble of investigation." I presume Mr. Elder will himself allow that such an assumption is not quite correct.

Nor is it altogether fair to assume, as he appears to, that all the honesty is on the side of science and all the bigotry and prejudice on the side of religion. If Mr. Elder would give a fair examination of the writing of theologians in reference to this matter, I believe he would find that the reverse of this is nearer the truth. He would find that no men are more willing to face the whole truth and accept its issues whatever they may be than are the leading students of Theology. On the other hand he will find that prominent men of science have been known to adopt and publish theories for which nothing worthy to be called arguments could be adduced, and whom chief recommendation consisted in the fact that they were beautiful theories. Theology has doubtless presented many absurdities but scarcely any thing more absurd than Descartes' Theory of Vortices or Darwin's Law of Selection.

LAICUS.

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, AUG. 3, 1870.

THE BAPTIST QUARTERLY, JULY 1870 is received. It contains a number of excellent articles:

1. **MIRACLES**, by Robt. E. Patterson, D. D. After considering the fact of miracles having been performed by prophets and apostles, and by Christ himself when upon earth, as proofs of their divine mission, the writer shews that the conversion of men is manifestly a continuous miracle, inasmuch as it is God's work upon man—the special act of God, independent of the order of his moral law. The argument provided in the sacrifice of Jesus is shewn to be the highest instance of miraculous intervention on behalf of sinful men.—These are not changes affected in physical and tangible objects, but it is very evident that both of them are the work of Omnipotence, whose authorship cannot be questioned.

The Bible narratives are full of miracles and need no argument to prove them such. Any attempt to bring them within the operation of ordinary law is but to encourage the sceptic in his doubts respecting the authenticity of the divine record.

2. **SUBTERRANEAN ROME**, by Rev. S. L. Caldwell, D. D. The Catacombs at Rome are full of interest. Their origin is involved

in mystery. Their history is a dark page in the annals of the church. The construction placed upon the views held by the early christians, as learned from the inscriptions and symbols on their sepulchres, vary according as they are read by different parties. The frescoes representing baptism plainly indicate that they were done before immersion had been changed into aspersion or pouring, and that the inhabitants of those dismal subterranean abodes were our brethren in other things besides holding the faith of Christ as a living power amongst his people.

3. **BIBLE CHRONOLOGY**, by President G. W. Samson, D. D., is a paper of great value. Some of the greatest men have given their attention to this subject. It is not one for superficial examination by youthful students, but is of the utmost importance in establishing the facts of history, both sacred and secular. A perusal of this review of some of the best writers on this subject, will give a degree of confidence in our scripture dates, which, we believe, nothing else will afford.

4. **GLADSTONE'S JUVENTIS MUNDI**, by Prof. J. L. Lincoln, L. L. D. A glance is here given at the work of a master mind, even of the Premier of Great Britain, on "the Gods and Men of the Heroic Age." A discussion of the religion of the Heroic Age is calculated to give a better idea of their modes of thought in ancient Greece and the sources of their power than could be obtained in any other way. The relation these forms of religion bear to Christianity too is a matter of interest to all men of enlarged mind and free enquiry into the facts relating to that ancient people.

5. **EXEGESIS OF HEBREWS xii. 18-24**, by Rev. H. M. King is a learned dissertation on a somewhat difficult portion of Scripture.

6. **THE TRUE HUMANITY OF CHRIST** by Dr. H. Crosby. Whilst the writer of this article affirms that "the supreme Godhead of Christ is a truth as clear as the light of day," he also states it as a remarkable fact that "no action of our Saviour's life exhibits divinity." "His words do, but his actions do not." The writer thinks that even the miracles of our Lord shew no more of omnipotence than do those of Moses, Elijah and Paul. He says "the whole life of Jesus becomes luminous with a new glory when we behold him, while Deity, yet a very man by the dormancy or quiescence of his divine nature during his humiliation. He is brought very near us in his sympathy and love. While mystery remains connected with his person, yet that mystery is not now where mystery repels comfort and faith."

"EXEGETICAL STUDIES" and "NOTICES OF BOOKS," completes the contents of this excellent number of our Quarterly.

By these brief remarks it will be seen that talent of the first order is expended in the preparation of the articles of this periodical.

The death of CHARLES DICKENS, the prince of novelists, has been the occasion of glowing eulogies by many of his admirers, all over the world. These, in some cases, especially in the United States, have passed the bounds of propriety. Some have claimed for this popular writer far more than he professed, or had ever claimed for himself. Some evangelical ministers in New York and Boston joined in this undue exaltation of one who had secured for himself so brilliant a literary fame, and endeavoured to lift him up almost beyond the reach of human frailty or infirmity.

His habits of life especially in reference to the use of intoxicating drinks, and his family relationships have been the more widely spread on account of these laudations. A sermon having reference to this matter, preached by Rev. J. D. Fulton, of Tremont Temple, Boston, exhibited more fully the other side of Dickens' character and the unchristian nature and tendencies of some of his writings. Following up this sermon the "Ministers' meeting," usually held once a month, comprising the pastors and ex-pastors of various evangelical denominations in Boston and vicinity, had this subject brought before them in a special manner by a call to consider "certain eulogies of the distinguished dead, and the proper position of the evangelical pulpit with reference thereto." Mr. Fulton was present at the said meeting and offered the following resolution:

Whereas, The tendency is manifest on every hand to ignore the plain teachings of the Word of God regarding the penalty attached to sin, which causes many of even our evangelical ministers to declare that popular and talented men find in death a release of sin and a welcome to the joys of heaven, though they lived without God and hope in the world,

Resolved, That the Baptist ministers of Boston and vicinity feel it to be their duty to stand

by the truth committed to their keeping, even though godless worldlings are compelled to feel that their former companions, having rejected the gospel, are suffering the penalties of a violated law, the wrath of an avenging God.

This was of course warmly discussed, it being generally understood that it applied to the Rev. Mr. Murray of Park Street Church, who had specially signalized himself by an unwonted pulpit eulogy of Mr. Dickens. Dr. Murdock sought to supercede Mr. Fulton's resolution by offering in its stead the following:

Resolved, That we hereby re-affirm our unshaken belief in the Scriptural doctrine of the future and final retribution of all who die in impure and unbelief.

This, however, does not appear to have obtained general favor in the meeting; and after some debate, the Rev. Dr. Lorrimer said he could see no occasion at the present time for any expression of opinion on the subject, and proposed a resolution as follows, which was adopted:

Resolved, That the position of the Baptist people of Boston and vicinity does not call for any re-affirmation of our principles.

Mr. Fulton in consequence of the position he has taken has been made the subject of bitter denunciation by a certain portion of the U. S. press. The last number of *Appleton's Journal* gives what may be regarded as a very fair and proper estimate of Dickens' character in reference to christianity, as follows:—

Dickens is before us as a teacher and as a guide; and it is very proper for us to ascertain whether his example in all things can be safely followed. That Dickens was a Christian in the strict, orthodox sense of that word, is not claimed by his friends: but on account of his kindly spirit, his humane sentiments, his genial tenderness, and his eloquent inculcations of charity and brotherly love, it is vehemently asserted that, in all essential things, he was a true Christian. We even find this sentiment enforced from some of our pulpits, and paraded with great pomp of diction in some of our religious journals. Of course this argument is essentially, radically and mischievously false; it is a mere sentimental glamour, very taking, no doubt, to certain minds, but it is one of those unscientific processes of thought, now so common, which lead to the confusion of all logic, empty words of all distinctions, and make of all argument a chaos. To Charles Dickens let us give the fullness of his due. Let us not merely acknowledge the splendor of his genius, but confess that his writings have exercised an admirable influence upon the public heart. Let us concede that he has supplemented two or three of the teachings of Christianity more eloquently and more effectually than any other writer that ever lived—and this is the highest of praise. But don't let us for a moment assume that his humanitarianism is or can be a substitute for Christianity, or that it, except in an imperfect and incomplete way, represents Christianity. Christianity is a definite and simple thing. It consists of certain dogmas of faith as well as of rules of conduct. Sympathy and kindness form a portion of Christian duty, and are truly excellent things; but, if we assume that they constitute the Christian creed, then the church and all our religious organizations have no necessary or suitable purpose, and the hundred thousand temples that dot the land are useless mockeries. The preacher in such a case might be appropriately supplanted by the novelist, and the whole spiritual relation of our souls to things divine would yield to an exaltation of our relation to things human. Those pastors and others who so enthusiastically lift Dickens' humanitarianism to a level of Christianity scarcely can know what they are doing. They are simply telling the world that the whole Christian theory as it has been expounded for eighteen centuries is a mistake—making good-nature and kindly sympathies convertible terms for faith and prayer. Assuredly these men can sufficiently admire the genius of a great novelist without emptying Christianity of nearly all its significance in order to do so. They can build a monument to the fame of a good man without pulling down the columns of the temple.

The following remark is appropriately made by the editor of the *Watchman*:

THE DICKENS discussion will have one good result: it will stimulate inquiry as to whether there is any difference between humanitarianism and Christianity; whether there is anything higher than mere morality; whether the young man of the New Testament to whom Christ said "One thing thou lackest" has any followers in these latter days. Call men and things by their right names, and there is a difference between a moralist and a Christian let us not hesitate to say so. The great diligence with which certain critics are searching Dickens' works for "proof texts" of his Christianity, shows a lack of easy evidence and also a strong desire to place him on the right side; all of which is an unintended but none the less real homage to Christian doctrine.

MINISTER'S INSTITUTE AT ST. JOHN, N. B.—Our St. John brethren sometimes do things up in short metre. The Ministers Institute proposed to be held there on Monday the 15th inst., and following days was initiated on the 25th of last month. This is quick work, the notice is somewhat brief. It is presumed, of course, that the gentlemen

from whom lectures or courses of lectures are expected, have them already prepared, as the time would hardly allow of original preparation. With the present facilities for travelling it is probable that a large number of Ministers will be in attendance, probably quite a number from Nova Scotia. We learn from the *Visitor* that the following brethren are a committee to provide places of entertainment for such ministers as may wish to be present at the meeting of the Institute, viz: Deacons A. W. Masters, J. H. Harding, Jarvis Hart, J. Lewis, J. S. May, and T. Christopher.

The pastors of the city churches and Rev. E. C. Cady, are a committee to procure lecturers and make necessary arrangements for the Institute.

It will doubtless be a very profitable occasion. We hope it will not interfere injuriously with the Convention to be held at Fredericton on the following Saturday, but will be, as we believe it is intended, a sort of auxiliary, offering additional inducements for those who can spare the additional time.

Since the above was in type we have received the communications in another column on the same subject from Rev. W. S. McKenzie. As it was important that these should appear without delay, we have laid aside other matter to enable us to insert them.

THE QUESTION OF COLOR AT INDIANAPOLIS.

In several of our U. S. exchanges we find reference made to the recent Convention of Young Men's Christian Associations, and to the treatment accorded to a resolution offered respecting the christian work on behalf of colored young men. The resolution was offered pending a motion to appoint an agent to establish Societies in the Southern States, to the following effect:—

Resolved, That the labors of the Young Men's Christian Associations be extended among our colored people; and that no discrimination be made among the young men of America upon the basis of color.

This caused no little nervousness with some of the members lately recovered from "Negrophobia," and the author was entreated to withdraw it. He refused to do so, and it was consequently "laid on the table" (not under). Some were not well pleased for it to remain there, and it was moved that all reference to the matter be expunged from the records; which, amidst some confusion was declared carried. At the next session a storm arose on a motion not to accept the records, which, on a vote, was lost by 72 to 65. Whether this was right, and therefore a wise course to adopt, is very questionable. It may have appeared expedient at the time, but so far as the resolution is concerned we think it would have been far better for a declaration to have been made, which would have shewn that the Young Men's Christian Associations regarded all men as made in the image of God, whether the casket of their souls be carved in ebony or ivory.

Since the above was in type we have learned from the President of the Convention, in explanation of the above, that there was not a word said in the Convention against admitting colored men to membership in the Associations, which thing is being done every where in the Northern States. It was thought undesirable to interfere with the Southerners, who still dislike the negro, and it was felt that such a resolution would only annoy them. The sentiment of the resolution he believes, was approved by every member present at the Convention, but the desire was not to promulgate it in so public a manner.

MANITOBAH.

The war cloud on this continent appears to be dispersing, if we may judge by a report of proceedings in the Assembly of Assiniboine. The task of Governor Archibald will consequently be a comparatively easy one.

The *New Nation* of July 1st., which has heretofore been regarded as Riel's organ, gives an account of Father Richot's report, and closes with the following:—

The President—We have seen the Manitoba Act—have heard the report of our delegation—and now we have to proceed to something else. Is it the intention of the house to pronounce on the Manitoba Act?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt—I would move that the Legislative Assembly of this country do now, in the name of the people, accept the Manitoba Act, and decide on entering the Dominion of Canada, on the terms proposed in the Confederation Act (cheers).

Hon. Mr. Poitras seconded the motion, which