

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

A REVIEW.

"HERESIES OF THE PLYMOUTH BRETHREN,"
BY JAS. C. L. CARSON, M.D.

By the Rev. Wm. Sommerville.

It is not often that there comes under our notice a volume, which takes such a firm hold of the mind, that we are dragged on from page to page till we reach the last, but Carson's "Heresies of the Plymouth Brethren" did not allow us time to do more than read a portion of scripture at family worship, glance at the war telegrams, and take food, (which last we did with great reluctance) till every page had passed under our eye; and we have read every part of it a second time with undiminished interest and gratification, our interest in the work may be largely owing to association. It recalled the "days o' auld lang syne," when we read with great zest some of the works, (we have not seen all), of A. Carson of Tubermore. We might not be prepared always to allow his premises, to acquiesce in his reasonings, or to adopt his conclusions; but the thoroughness of his convictions, his earnestness, his transparent honesty, and his unrelenting hostility to to what he considers unscriptural, were quite refreshing. We could smile, when with right good will he laid on an opponent his cat-o-nine-tails, (which by the way does not seem to have been used up at his decease,) being well aware that the application would not lead to the distressing results of the cowhide of the quondam Southern planter. The son could not fail to imbibe a large share of the father's spirit. He is proud of his father; and wishes rather to be known as the son of Dr. A. Carson, than as Jas. C. L. Carson, M.D., of Coleraine. He never quotes the words of the late Dr. A. Carson, but of "my father." Without possessing the father's intellectual power; (if his father's seeming superiority be not the result of greater concentration,) he has—what is far more valuable and captivating,—the same directness, the same love of truth and determination to defend it all at hazards, the same ignorance that right can suffer an ultimate defeat, the same abhorrence of all trimming, and of every attempt, under an imposing pietism, to push forward a masked battery in favour of error.

But where are all the D. D.'s of the General Assembly, and professors of Theology, where are all the learned dignitaries of disestablished Diocesanism, that a Physician of Coleraine must buckle on his armour to meet the invasion of the P. Brethren? Are they completely occupied with their financial matters,—the one to secure from a reluctant people a more liberal salary,—the other to save as much as possible from the ruins of the Establishment? Dr. Carson deserves the thanks of all the Churches for the example he has set of meeting error on the threshold.

Such expressions as "the divine man," and "heavenly humanity," unsupported by kindred utterances, when applied to the flesh of our Lord, may be feeble pegs on which to hang the theological sentence of condemnation against Macintosh and Darby. The Plymouthists, dealing largely in the sensational, may intend no more than to give a forcible exhibition of the purity and elevation of Christ's human nature; but it is hardly possible to overestimate the evil results that may arise from unguarded terms. Neither Arminius nor Socinus departed as far from the truth as many of their disciples, and seem not to have anticipated the development of which their sentiments admitted, and which they subsequently attained. Too often those whose special business it is to contend for the faith act with respect to religious novelties in sentiment and diction, on the sermon of the Quakeress.—"I wonder what pleasure people take in killing their enemies; if they let them alone, they would die of themselves,"—forgetting that human nature is predisposed to what is inhuman, and before the enemies die they may have done irreparable mischief. The error which, in the beginning, might have been easily crushed when let alone, attains a magnitude that presses heavily on Christian society, and is beyond the control of those who might have easily corrected it in its infancy.

The forms of piety, and zeal, and sincerity, which distinguish the "Brethren," especially when sustained by a profession of simple faith and prayer, which ignores the intervention of means and looks or supplies in a way that implies a constant miracle, are specious and well adapted to secure

public approbation, at a time when ministers are labouring to extract from the pockets of the people more than they have been accustomed to or are willing to give. The Doctor is quite right in supposing that a large element of truth bound up with error only makes it more dangerous, and he illustrates the idea with much perspicuity and power. The Devil is an apothecary, and to make his bitter pills more readily swallowed sugarcoats them. Truth and error, good and evil, can never be safely combined. Lot's piety did not reform Sodom, but Sodom's wickedness injured Lot and ruined his house.

Dr. C. gives a great degree of prominence to the doctrine of the atonement and the ground of a sinner's acceptance before God. After devoting a separate section to that subject, he returns to it in treating of the law as a rule of life, and again more largely, in discussing "Darby's Replies." He is here evidently much at home, and always seems pleased to be brought into contact with redemption, substitution, righteousness, and kindred topics. There is great need to keep this central doctrine of Christ crucified fully, frequently, and definitely before the Church, as there is a constant tendency to confound the work of Christ for us, and the work of the Spirit in us, and to make the latter the ground of confidence before God. But the necessity takes a wider range than the field occupied by the "Brethren." The scripture teaches us very clearly that there is an established union between the death of Christ and the salvation of those whose sins he bore. The doctrine of an indefinite atonement, as it has been called, very generally embraced by Independents, and not unknown among Presbyterians and Baptists, ignores that union so completely, that we are taught to believe that the great design of the atonement would have been secured, if not one sinner had been saved. An error on the ground of the sinner's justification cannot fail to lead to various other errors respecting the mission and work of Christ. In an age of great indifference to the claims of divine truth, it is quite exhilarating to find Dr. C. coming out so clearly and earnestly in favor of the great and fundamental doctrine of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ. The making of many righteous by the obedience of one settles the question of the sinner's plea before God, and fully sustains Dr. C. in holding the sinless life of the Saviour, under the law, to be an essential element in the righteousness of God. We are not, however, very partial to the distinction between *doing* and *dying*, *obedience* and *suffering*. Christ was under the law in the room of the elect, and is held bound to meet all the demands of the law on them. The Apostle is very explicit, and represents his death as the closing act of his obedience,—obedient unto death.

We must, however take decided exception to the idea that we are made righteous by imputation. Such expressions as these are not to be imitated,—p. 39 "We get it (righteousness) by imputation from Christ"—"The believer has the righteousness of Christ so really and truly imputed to him that he is innocent." Now it is most true that the man to whom righteousness is imputed stands before God as free from charge as if he had never sinned; but if his righteousness is the consequence of imputation, we do not see how the Doctor will vindicate himself from the charge brought against Darby, of representing God as accounting "the man righteous who is not, in any sense, truly righteous." The righteousness of the justified person is, in the order of nature, antecedent to the imputation of it. Apprehended by Christ and brought, in the day of regeneration, into vital union with him, his righteousness is ours and is accordingly imputed to us, we are accounted what we really are, and God would not be just if it were not imputed to us,—the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us."

Plymouthism does not originate error and immorality, but is an outgrowth of an unhealthy state of religious sentiment. It could no more successfully operate on a sound Christian constitution, than the "Man of Sin" could have been revealed, independent of a previous apostacy from the simplicity of the gospel. The true idea of a pastor, as a minister of Christ, has been fading away, and professors have been losing the expectation of a message from Heaven, while their anticipations of pleasure or profit are bound up with the hearing of this or that pulpit orator; and the platform speaker, the teacher of science or self-constituted exponent of morals, is listened to with scarcely less interest than the preacher of the gospel. Many were prepared to welcome the repudiation of the

pastorate, recommended by the consideration that no *pater noster* implies *no pay*, and the investiture of the Holy Spirit, who needs no pay, with the pastorate was an appropriate sequence. Perhaps one of the most valuable parts of Dr. C's book is his clear and conclusive vindication of a succession of Pastors and Teachers, divinely appointed officers, with well defined functions, and exposure of the fanaticism of the Spirit's presidency, superseding the duty of trying the spirits or of proving any thing, and laying the understanding prostrate before the presumptuous pretender to inspiration. Dr. C. has laid the Churches under an obligation, which we hope will be gratefully acknowledged, by seasonably fearlessly and forcibly throwing himself between them and the proud humility which speaks out of man's heart and proclaims, "He saith." In his digression on the manner in which the duties of the ministry should be fulfilled, preachers may learn a lesson profitable at once to themselves and their hearers. He administers a just rebuke to the liberal and accommodating preachers, who believe little or nothing, tell us a good deal may be said on both sides, and make the Spirit answerable for glaring contradictions, practically exemplifying their own ideas of that inexplicable book,—the Bible. With those are classed the not small company of Divines, who would deliberately catch by guile, of which Paul indignantly repels the insinuation, and would lead men into principles and a position foregone, without any appeal to the understanding, administering a good dose of chloroform till they have completed the operation.

Conclusion next week.

For the Christian Messenger.

THE MICMAC MISSION.

Dear Brother Selden,—

The friends of the Micmac Mission will be pleased to learn that we are still holding on our way in our work. The general operations of the Mission during the year that has just closed, have been carried on pretty much as usual. I have visited Indians in several localities, having been during the Summer on Prince Edward Island, at Fredericton and St. John. N. B., and at Yarmouth, Liverpool and some of the intervening places.

During the year the Gospel of John has been published in the dialect of the Malisets, or as they are sometimes called, "the St. John Indians," because they belong to New Brunswick. As near as I can learn, this tribe consists of about fifteen hundred souls. We have printed that number of copies of the Gospel of John—one for each man woman and child of the tribe.

The manner in which I was enabled to translate this gospel into Malisets, is worthy of notice. I do not understand this dialect sufficiently well to translate into it without an efficient assistant—one who understands Micmac thoroughly, as well as English and Malisets. I am acquainted with only two such men, and they are usually so industriously engaged in other business, and at so remunerative a rate of wages, that it is not easy to obtain the aid of either of them as an assistant translator.

Fall before last I found one of them laid up at Indian town, near St. John, with a broken thigh. He had been employed in one of the steam saw mills, had been struck while at his work, and his right thigh had been broken. He was confined to his couch and scarcely allowed to move for about six weeks.

It speaks well for both the Indian and his employer, that the latter, not only had the wounded man cared for with surgical attendance, but also sent him in addition a five dollar bill every Saturday during his confinement.

I was at his hut a few days after his wound was received. I immediately proposed to him to assist me in translating the Gospel of John into the dialect of his tribe. To this proposal he readily assented. As it took us about as long to finish the work, as it took the bone of his thigh to unite permanently, I was there when the Doctor removed the bandages and allowed him to rise from his hard bed. This was in October 1868.

Just before our Convention last August in Fredericton a box of the printed books was sent out from London by the British and Foreign Bible Society, and forwarded to Fredericton. After the Convention closed I visited several Indian villages, and had no trouble in finding attentive listeners to the precious volume, and a good many in individuals who willingly received it. Many of them can read a little, they having the Roman Catholic Prayer book, not written

in characters like that of the Micmacs, but in letters—the ordinary script hand of the French being used. This book they very diligently learn, and repeat and sing, though it is in the Penobscot dialect, and few of the Malisets understand it. This I have on good authority. It was interesting to me to notice how eagerly the request was often repeated by old and young, "Wikheeyan meeltn," give me a book, or in their more natural arrangement of the words "a book give me." May it make them wise unto salvation.

Another book of the Bible, the Book of Exodus, has been also added within a few weeks to our published volumes in Micmac. There are now scores of Indians who can read, and who eagerly secure such portions of the Scriptures as we can give them in their own tongue. I have already mailed copies of Exodus to a number of individuals who I am certain will joyfully receive them and read them.

I have just received a letter from an Indian thanking me for the book. It is written partly in English and partly in Indian. An extract from the former portion of which, simply mending the spelling, I will here present.

HALFWAY RIVER, Dec. 23, 1870.

My Dear Sir,—

I received the two books of Exodus on the 19th Dec., and was very glad of your kindness for sending the Book, and I been wanting to write to you this some time, and the reason I been wanting to write for I would like to know if you had now Dictionary that you could sell me. I would like to buy one from you with some Micmac in it, and if you have one to spare I wish you would let me know and I'll send you the money for it."

J. B.

The writer of the foregoing is a very fine fellow, steady, honest, and industrious, and anxious to improve. He went to school a few winters ago about three months. He writes quite a fair hand, nor is his spelling by any means worse than that of many white people, whose opportunities have been far more ample. He can read English as well as Indian, and wants a Dictionary not for the purpose of learning the meaning of Indian words, but that he may have explained in his own tongue the English words he meets every where. Alas! I have no such book for him. My English and Indian Dictionary is in manuscript, and the cost of publishing it, even were it in a fit state to publish, would quite exceed the utility. But we can do the next best thing to be done; we can give him and his people books in both languages—the New Testament in Micmac and in English and thus assist them in learning English and the Word of God at the same time.

This leads me to make another statement. In the year 1859 a heavy fire in Granville Street, Halifax, consumed nearly the whole stock of Micmac Scriptures then published, comprising Genesis, Matthew, Luke and John. Providentially I had removed to Hantsport a short time before the fire, about one hundred copies of each book. I said nothing publicly at the time respecting our loss. If what was left could not be distributed and read, the loss would be of little consequence. Should we succeed in our object, and any number of Indians should learn to read, and be willing to receive the Scriptures, the loss could be remedied, and a new and improved edition could be published.

I am now happy to report that we have distributed almost every copy of those books.

When we commenced our work, we knew of hardly an Indian who could read. But as soon as our first book of the Bible was published in Micmac, the Indians seemed to be prepared for it. Some were found sufficiently resolute to undertake and persevere in the task of learning to read, even under disadvantages that might well have made a pretty stout heart quail. When one had learned others were induced to try; and such was their success; such their intellectual capacity and perseverance that a few weeks often sufficed to enable them to conquer the main difficulties. And now instead of its being a rare and wonderful thing to find an Indian that can read, it is a very common thing, and has ceased to occasion surprise. Indian children to some extent attend the free schools, and instead of being shunned and abhorred as was the case in former days, they can mingle freely with their pale-faced comrades, who are rather proud and pleased than otherwise of their companionship.

Under these circumstances the committee of the Micmac Mission, at a late meeting, cheerfully concurred in the suggestion to apply to the British and Foreign Bible So-

ciety for means of publishing a new and revised edition of the four Gospels in Micmac. We wish to get out three thousand copies, and the cost will be about a thousand dollars. I may add that the three Gospels which have been already published, have been revised, and many very serious errors have been detected and corrected, and the Gospel of Mark has been added. I have been obliged to copy the whole out anew that the work may be printed in Halifax and in the ordinary English alphabet. It could probably be printed more cheaply in England, but as no one else can correct the proof sheets, and as at least three revisions must be made, the work must be done in Halifax, where I can have ready access to it.

I may as well say that we have limited our present request to the four Gospels, but I humbly hope that by the time these are printed, we will be prepared to add the remainder of the New Testament. Nearly the whole is already translated, and I cannot say that I have any serious doubts about obtaining the means of paying for the publication. It surely cannot be deemed a very extravagant request that the means of preparing and printing one New Testament for each Micmac now living, should be furnished by the Christians of the three Provinces where they are to be found.

I am happy to say that I am still enabled to report favorably respecting the "Muller Plan." Without having made any personal applications for aid, or given any hints to any one in any way of present necessities, we have received during the year in money and useful articles, one thousand and forty-nine dollars thirty-seven and a half cents. I have often been asked why I do not publish more respecting the Mission. One reason is that if too many means were employed our success would be likely to be ascribed wholly to these. The Lord's direct agency would be denied or overlooked, his glory would be obscured, and faith weakened. I published no separate Report last year. But the "salary" was paid all the same. I desire to ascribe all to the good hand of our God upon us. Still our friends are entitled to know what we are doing, and I therefore publish the preceding summary for their information.

Right glad am I that it is no longer necessary to waste money on a long list of names, nor to be worried and vexed over omissions and errors in the list. To all those friends who have so kindly aided us by their voluntary offerings, their prayers and counsels, and by other manifestations of kindness and sympathy to the Indians, to myself and to the members of my family I desire to tender our sincere thanks. And I can say in reviewing the past year, the language of the cxvi. Psalm suits my case and in some measure I trust harmonizes with my feelings:

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem, Praise ye the Lord."

S. T. RAND.

Hantsport, N. S., Jan. 11, 1871.

For the Christian Messenger.

OPENING OF NEW CHURCH EDIFICE.

Dear Editor,—

The Cow Bay Baptist Meeting-house was publicly dedicated to the Lord's service on the afternoon of New Year's Day, Jan. 1st 1871. Although the weather was unpropitious, the building was comfortably filled.

At the request of the writer, the Rev. Alfred Chipman, A.M., the esteemed pastor of Sydney Baptist Church, preached the dedicatory sermon from Exodus xx. 24.—"In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee and I will bless thee." In the development of the text the speaker displayed much thought and talent. The historic account of the first altar or altar upon which sacrifices were offered to God combined with that of the Jewish Temple, and the contrast between the worship, under the Old and New dispensation was most graphically and vividly set forth, and the simplicity and advantage of the latter were clearly and logically demonstrated. The truth we doubt not deeply impressed all present.

The choir with Bro. R. D. Rice as chorister, and Deacon R. Dubson at the Organ, favored the audience with some choice music. While all was good, especially did the two Anthems prepared for the occasion exhibit a high degree of musical skill and talent.