

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

A REVIEW.

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

By the Rev. Wm. Somerville.

(CONCLUDED.)

We are not prepared to express the same approbation of Dr. C's ideas of ministerial support as of ministerial character, although they coincide with the general views of those who recognise the pastorate, and the duty of supporting those who exercise it. If ministers are poorly provided for, they are to some extent culpable parties. They give too much prominence to *self* in the advocacy of their claims. They ought to be free from anxiety about the means of living. They should be able to make a respectable appearance. They should be able to procure books and keep abreast of the progress of progressive times. They should be enabled to exercise a generous hospitality. All right. Still it is no wonder they find people restive when many are expected to contribute who have fewer of the comforts of life than the poorest minister in the land. Now we have no notion of praying for money, nor of accepting as a direct gift from Heaven in answer to prayer, cash in an envelope forwarded by unknown or known hands. The Saviour was poor and never prayed for money. The Apostles were poor and never prayed for money. Yet this seeming simple dependence on God is captivating. If the impression once gets abroad that here is a man who gets all he prays for, and just when he needs, there are plenty of men who have thousands to spare, who know nothing of God's plan of salvation, who have no love of holiness, yet have a dread of eternal woe, and who would cheerfully give handfuls of bankbills to secure the prayers of the man who always gets what he asks: there are some who have no money and would steal, to send it to the man who always prays *in faith*, is always literally answered, even when he has no promise to plead. Neither can we commend the vile and contemptible trickery of lotteries and bazaars, soirees and donations, by which money is extracted from the worshippers of mammon, the lovers of excitement and fun, and who receive the equivalent that they are willing to accept. As soon would we lay a sacrifice on the altar of Momus.

God has not required any man, either under the former or present economy, to give a penny for the support of ecclesiastical officers. The Head of the Church is jealous of the independence of his servants, and firmly takes his stand between them and the public. They may not go a-begging to either *Prince or peasant*. The labourer is worthy of his hire, and it is to his Master he looks for his wages. They who served at the altar, under the former dispensation lived, not by the liberality of Israel, but of the *things of the temple*. Jehovah says the tithes, the first fruits, the offerings are *his*, and turning to the priests and Levites, *I have given you this and this*. His ministers go for their supplies to the Temple of the Lord, who has commanded that all the tithes be brought into the storehouse that there be meat in *his* house. Even so, saith Paul, hath the Lord ordained that they who preach the gospel live of the gospel. The law is not abrogated. The tenth and offerings are as much the Lord's as they ever were. Those who preach the gospel live, not of the people, but of the *gospel*. Christians should not be asked how much they will give to this or that minister, but be taught what they owe to God for the *furtherance of the gospel*:—a debt which never was nor is to be collected by the magistrate, and must be paid under the penalty of dispossession by the owner of the land. When the people recognise their responsibility, there will be in the gospel treasury plenty for all who labour in the word, plenty to send Bibles and Missionaries abroad, plenty to make the poor comfortable, plenty to meet every scriptural object. The build and equipment of the gospel railroad will be as complete as of any railroad in the world. The gospel telegraph lines will form a network over all lands more complete and efficient than wires erected for commercial and political objects.

The variations of Plymouthism are treated with great clearness, and constitute an unanswerable refutation of the fanatical doctrine of the presidency of the Spirit.

The rejoicing of the new creation is this, that in simplicity and godly sincerity he has his conversation in the world and in the Church. Lying is the sin of fallen man.

Sin had its origin in the belief of a lie; and every deformity of moral character may be traced to the same diabolical source. The liar has dogged the steps of God's children through all time. Jesus fell before a combination of liars. The antichristian system has been introduced and sustained by the deceptableness of unrighteousness, and speaking lies in hypocrisy; and every error against the truth requires the auxiliary of lies to sustain it. And of all liars "the sanctimonious looking hypocrite" is the worst, as his lie is a contradiction to his profession, is more readily believed, and is less easily met. The lies and prevaricating and shuffling of the Plymouth Brethren are no new thing in the world; and in a masterly manner has Dr. C. dragged them into the light of day, castigated them with well-merited severity, and discovered resolution and power to hunt the deceiver and hypocrite into his last covert. There is no mincing, no affectation of false liberality. By many he will be accused of too much severity, and we happen to know he has been. Had he not called things by their proper names, had he not torn away the cloak and exposed the foul ulceration, he had made himself a partaker with those whom he would refute. It is a common trick of the adversary to turn away the attention of Christians from important questions, to discuss the *spirit* of the man who cannot be met in honorable controversy. The discussion of a "Christian spirit in controversy" is a triumphant vindication of the method he has adopted. The affected liberal, who would be thought to have outgrown the *coarseness and harshness* of a half-civilised age, is not sparing of hard terms in denouncing the Reformers for their plain and honest speech; and were it not that his hypocrisy would be made manifest to all men, would denounce the Lord Jesus with the same hearty good will. It is quite cheering, in an age of ill-concealed infidelity, to meet a man who dare brave popular sentiment and follow the law and example of the Bible according to the following very just challenge,—"Whether is it more in accordance with a Christian-spirit to do as Christ did, and honestly, fairly and fully expose, in plain terms, the folly of the fool, the lies of the liar, and the hypocrisy of the hypocrite, or to adopt the language of that spurious charity and mawkish sentimentalism which are becoming so fashionable in the present day."

With respect to the author's dealing with the recantation of Macintosh and replies of Darby, it is not necessary to say more than that it is marked with the same acuteness, the same discrimination, the same accurate analysis, as the other parts of his work. If he is able to demonstrate the structure of the human body as completely as to dissect the guarded or unguarded utterances of pretenders to a more elevated and distinguishing piety; he is entitled to occupy the best endowed chair of anatomy in the British Islands.

We would be very unwilling to misunderstand Dr. C. and hope to find we do, but we are afraid that, in his zeal against the post resurrection theory of Darby, he has overlooked the distinction between the essential and mediatorial power of the Lord Jesus Christ. On p. 259, he says, "My Saviour is Jesus Christ, the Lord of Heaven and earth. He is Lord in his own right. His title is not by courtesy—is not conferred, but belongs to him in virtue of his Godhead." Had he not been God,—possessed of all divine perfections,—he could not have sustained the office of our representative, and discharged its responsibilities. But as Mediator, he is the Father's servant,—not as *man*, but as "God manifest in the flesh." Every word he uttered was according to *commandment*. Every act he performed was a part of the work *given him to do*. Every stripe inflicted on him was according to the *determinate counsel* of God. All his power over all flesh was *given* to him that he might give eternal life to as many as the Father had given him. Still "he was not made the Lord Jesus Christ, but he was *proved* to be the Lord Jesus Christ by his resurrection from the dead and his ascension to the throne of his power." He was Lord and Christ from all eternity,—as much Lord and Christ in the days of Abel as in the days of Joseph of Arimathea. He had put his hand to the bond by which he was held responsible for all the demands of law and justice on the elect of God, and was accepted; and as the debtor is fully released from the obligation of his debt from the moment an accepted surety has become responsible for it, al though weeks or years may elapse before the actual payment, the Mediator was truly Lord and Christ to the children of God among the Antediluvians as to those who

live subsequent to his ascension. As Mediator he has right by the Father's gift—not by *courtesy* but according to promise—to save the elect and does save them by his own inherent power. Has Dr. C. confounded *right* and *power*? Has he overlooked the fact that by the *eternal Spirit* he offered himself to God? that he was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the *Spirit of holiness*, by his resurrection from the dead? that the glorious displays of grace and power at Pentecost were the result of *his receiving* of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost.—The Spirit is given in answer to the prayer of Christ. Is the spot on the honest face of Dr. C., or is there a speck on our eyeglass?

Of the letters on the revival of 1859, we are not inclined to say much. We do not understand the subject so as to form a definite judgment, to put into the scales, Gibson and Nelson,—the "Year of Grace" and "the Year of Delusion." Our impression of that revival are not so elevated as the impressions of Dr. C. The Spirit abroad that year has a marvellous agreement with modern liberals, and calls to my recollection the remark of a father whose children came out at a season of Revival, and who told me, as a wonderful characteristic of the Revival, that some of his young folks came out Arminians; and some, clear Calvinists. The Doctor has effectively disposed of the hysteric theory of the bodily affections, but we are hardly prepared to place them in the same category with the miracles of the first age of Christianity. But we must have fuller means of investigation and give to the subject more time and attention than we have ever done, before we express a precise opinion. There is little doubt there are powers in nature still undeveloped, and that the Devil exercises more power than people are willing to believe. We have never seen the Doctor's work on Phrenology. The perusal of it might revolutionise our ideas, but at present Phrenology occupies a low place in our estimation.

We thank Dr. C. for the pleasure the perusal of his book has afforded us, and for a pleasing specimen of writing, level to the understanding of the masses and meeting all that the educated could desire. We hope the work will be imported and extensively read in Nova Scotia. Old wine is best—unmixed with water.

For the Christian Messenger.

THE BIBLE AN AUTHORITY.

Mr. Editor,—

A grand mistake is made with regard to our use of the Bible when its teachings are not received as decisive, when other sayings are put on a par with its utterances. The fathers are to some people an equal authority, the diversity of their sayings notwithstanding. Even to day there are multitudes who stand by the fathers, while the Bible is ignored. Reason by others is exalted into a pre-eminence, and to it is ascribed the arbitrament of all questions. Reason differs under, or is dependent on, the influence of circumstances, and therefore want of harmony destroys its claim as an authority.

The church is the infallible exponent of all questions of theology, say some. But what is the church? Aside from Christ its head, it is but a collection of people, who either maintain the right inalienable to think for themselves, or submit to be meted and bounded in their religious opinions by an usurper of the authority of scripture,—in either case there is no positive standard, away from the Bible. Among the best types of the church, there always has been, and in the nature of things must continue to be diversity of opinion. Who that knows any thing of the history of Popes, or of Councils, but knows that there always have been conflicts and dissensions among them. Under the failure of other sources science is brought to the front. She bows with modest mien and accepts a side seat by the Bible as God's "other revelation." Now, far be it from the writer, and far be it from any one, to withhold any just tribute due to the development of facts. That science has opened fields of thought and mines of wealth, none can truthfully deny—that many superstitions have been removed, that false theories of natural laws have been exposed, the unprejudiced will readily admit,—that her revelations have put her students on the track of a First Cause, all wise, good and powerful in its very nature, the undevout alone will have the hardihood to deny; but this done, a First-Cause evolved, the work of science is done. Pantheist, Polytheist, Deist, or Naturalist may then

have a God to suit himself. We cannot therefore accept Science, or Nature as "that only authorised comment on the Word of God."

Waving all difficulties of a commentary from Nature, on the works of God in relation to Creation and Providence, where is the comment on the self existence of the Deity?—If nature leads us to a first cause, and that first cause God, what explanation does nature offer on the origin of the first cause, or what comment on the words "I AM THAT I AM." Take another passage. "Let us make man." From nature where do we get a comment on this passage? If nature expounds this, would not a part of the exposition be in favor of a plurality of Gods? Take only one more passage. "And I, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto me." Let nature again, be asked for a comment on this passage, and her silence is perfect.

"Who by searching can find out the Almighty," we come back then to the Word of God which alone reveals to us the true God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent into the world.

The problem of the world has been, and is, to have a religion without God,—to eliminate God from the universe, by deifying his laws, and enthroning reason as an infallible expounder of their nature and use. The redemptive character of God's law is lost sight of by both Atheist and Deist. Man is placed in the condition of a probationer under no disability but the darkness of his understanding, with the light of nature for his instruction, and the Bible, perchance, as a beacon to save him from superstition and the fanaticism of deluded enthusiasts. The light followed and the beacon regarded and man may attain to all that is possible,—but alas! for the man, who after forty years patient study, only finds his brain relieved of an exploded theory. The great want of his nature has found no relief by his efforts. Revelation alone can meet his necessities.—Science is yet too feeble in its grasp of the verities of nature to afford a safe reliance for axiomatic results. Man's necessity demands an authority above and beyond all the accidents of the world, absolute and independent of all conditions of time and space, adapted to his moral and spiritual nature as well as to his mental and physical. Science can only reach the two latter of these, the mental and physical, while revelation meets the whole. In teaching men how to behave toward God, it teaches them how to behave towards their fellow men and themselves also. "The grace of God which bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, "Here we have an authority that admits of no rival, an authority that meets all the necessity of man in his need, not only of a rule of life, but also of a Redeemer. This gives man an indisputable authority for doctrine, reproof, instruction in righteousness, that he may be thoroughly furnished for every good word and work." This is surely a more sure word of prophecy unto which ye do well to take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place.

Man is not, under such instruction, the sport of every new theory, nor is "he tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine."

Let then the word of God be an authority, a decisive authority, and Science, if you please, a handmaid to religion, but not its equal or expositor.

RE-VERA.

For the Christian Messenger.

"WEEK OF PRAYER OFFERING."

Mr. Editor,—

Thankful for life prolonged, and blessings continued, and for affliction as well, I wish to appropriate, through you, as near as may be, my earnings the 1st week of Jan., 1871. The first week being less than a fair proportion, I put it at the one-fifty-second part of earnings 1870, viz., \$16.24, as follows:

For Bro. Richan towards Meeting-house building.	\$2.00
Bro. Boggs do.	2.00
Bro. P. Monaghan, (G. D. Agency.)	1.00
Home Mission to Bro. Beckwith	5.00
Bro. McBean to be sent to my address, at lowest rates for gratuitous distribution in Bibles and Testaments, cheap binding.	5.00
In Temperance tracts for do.	1.24
	\$16.24

Donations made to Foreign, French and Micmac Missions hereafter during year 1871.

On balancing up "Offering" acct., Dec. 31, 1870, I find set apart \$84.45, and paid 1870 but \$85.22, this being the one-tenth of yearly income so far as could be ascertained, leaving over paid 77 cents.

Though in but moderate circumstances, and having to labour very hard to support a large family, I find it quite practicable and very pleasant thus, in some small degree to show thankfulness to the Great Author of all blessings, for all we are, and possess, are His. "He can build up and pull down." Oh that the followers of the Lamb would but see their duty in the matter of giving, and of doing so unasked, and in some proportion to their ability, then might we look for, and expect that "outpouring of the Holy Spirit," on our dead members, dead churches and dead sinners, which seems so desirable; but so long as there exists such *stinginess and meanness* as characterize many professed Christians, they at least, cannot enjoy a large degree of the *Divine presence*. Happily Mr. Editor, some of our people are waking up to the importance of doing more for the Master's cause, than they did formerly. My sole motive for allowing this little matter to be known to even one in confidence, is to induce others of your many readers, who may not do so already, to give more and to pray more than heretofore. If such is accomplished, then my feeble attempt will not be in vain.

Yours in Bonds of Christian love,
3RD WEEK OF PRAYER OFFERING.

For the Christian Messenger.

IN MEMORIAM.

DEACON E. BLACKMORE

Died at Onslow on the — of December, aged 65 years. Bro. B. had long been a member of the Baptist Church in Onslow, having united with it during the Pastorate of the late Rev. J. Munroe. For more than 25 years he was a Deacon. When the church was divided he remained a member of Onslow West. For some months Mr. B. was unable to attend to his earthly duties, or visit the house of God and enjoy its ordinances, but his faith wearied not. The change experienced in his conversion, was very marked. His apprehension of sin was very deep, and when by the grace of God he obtained deliverance from the guilt and weight thereof, great was his joy, real and blessed his peace. So assuring to him was the change of his pardon, and acceptance with God, so real and abiding the joy, and so clear the light which shone upon his mind, that in his subsequent life he seldom if ever entertained a doubt of his conversion. To a considerable degree this experience both of the conviction of sin and joy of pardon influenced his views of religion in others.—This is not strange—the "law work" in him was deep. Its holiness and rectitude made him tremble, and nearly despair.—Deep and long was the struggle—difficult and almost impossible it seemed to him was salvation. But Mercy's hour came. Deliverance through Christ appeared, his righteousness awaited. God was seen to be just, and yet the justifies of a sinner believing in Christ. All was light His "tongue broke out in unknown strains and sang surprising grace."

To commend this Saviour and his salvation to others became his employment. If some derided, some also listened and believed.

His subsequent life, his exemplary conduct, his peaceful end all bore testimony to the reality of his hope, and the blessedness of his position.

Onslow West, Jan.

"But truly as the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death."

These words are true in the case of William Sprowl, as well as in a thousand others, who was killed whilst felling a tree in the lumber woods on the 3rd of January. He was in the employ of Mr. B. Rideout, Maine, Aroostock County. On the morning of the day he was killed, he very narrowly escaped with his life. A little before the fatal tree was struck, he was relating the circumstances to one of the men who stood by. He was killed instantly without a moment's reflection. Surely there was "but a step between him and death." On Monday the 26th of Dec. he left his aged parents and the family for the woods, well and smart, and on Wednesday the 3rd of Jan. he was brought to that sorrowful home which he had left, a senseless corpse. William was the third Son of Elliot and Ellen Sprowl of Wilmet Carleton Co. N. B. He was born in Clarence, Annapolis Co. N.S., aged 31 years.