

THE
Canadian Independent.

VOL. XX.

TORONTO, MARCH, 1874.

No. 9.

ERRORS OF THE ORTHODOX.

BY REV. A. J. PARKER.

Reader,—Don't be startled or mistake me ; I do not say, and could not prove, if I would, that the orthodox are a club and combination of deceivers ; that the system of doctrine held by them is a sham, cheat and deception. No, not this, though I have seen this written, and have heard it proclaimed by men in human form, and in ministerial garb. But I would as soon hold and teach that the sun is the cause and source of darkness, as that orthodox truth is a cheat. Still, orthodox men and orthodox ministers have not all attained to angelic perfection ; and it sometimes occurs that they weaken the cause which they have espoused, and mar the truth which they aim to vindicate, not merely by an occasional outburst of imagination or an unintentional slip of the tongue : these were quite pardonable in comparison with what we now charge upon "whom it may concern;" and sure I am that it does concern some good men, both in the ministry and in the ranks of the laity. The charge is this : A *misquotation* and *misapplication* of at least a few precious pages in the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ; and such misquotation and misapplication as tends to pervert the true import of those passages, and convey impressions quite foreign to the tenor of the text, and measurably antagonistic to the general teaching of the inspired New Testament.

The first passage I note is that recorded 1 John i. 7 : "The blood of Jesus Christ—cleanseth—from all sin." The words are there, and they are not unfrequently quoted as though they were placed there without either of the evasive dashes which are here inserted. The words are sometimes quoted in this form : "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," as though it were a bible text complete in itself. Then, as such a text, it is used as though it declared the amplitude or universality of the atonement of Christ in behalf of all sinners, able to take away the sins of the vilest transgressors, as well as those who sin in more respectable ways. Now that doctrine—the doctrine of the completeness, the amplitude, and if you please, the universality of Christ's atoning sacrifice, so that no other or farther sacrifice or expiation is requisite, in order that "the chief of sinners" may be saved, and that "Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life," is the very gospel, the glad tidings which we receive with untold thankfulness. Every friend of Jesus may rejoice in this ; and wanting this, the glad tidings would be sadly deficient. But then, does this passage, as here quoted, teach this truth ? If it does, do not the words teach too much ? Is it literally true that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth" our world and our nature from all sin ? Did the shedding of that blood so change the moral character of mankind, that for these 1841 years, men have come into our world with a moral nature pure as angelic spirits are, or with hearts as clean as the unblackened