

JOHN LELAND TO DR. CONE.

A friend has put into our hands a faded slip, cut from some old newspaper, containing a letter written more than forty years ago by the celebrated John Leland to the no less celebrated Spencer H. Cone. The latter was greatly interested in the letter, and requested its publication, because there was "so much of the character of an extraordinary man stamped upon it." We republish it for the same reason:

CHESHIRE, Dec. 10, 1820.

My Good Brother Cone,—I, John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ was in the city of Albany last August, where I formed a momentary acquaintance with yourself and brother Maclay. The Christian kindness which you and your elect lady expressed at our parting, fixed a soft affection in my heart, which I wish to indulge in a letter of friendship.

From a septuagenarian, whose sun is declining on the western hills, you will not expect energy of mind, logical argument, coherent reasoning, nor pomp of diction; but contrariwise, a sickening dose of egotism.

You will judge best of my health, by hearing that I breathe, in common, twenty-four times each minute, and my pulse beats three times as often; which health and strength I have employed, the summer past, in travelling and preaching; which, by-the-by, has been my constant practice for more than fifty-two years, with a few small exceptions. Since the first of June last, I have attended three Associations, seen eighty-six Baptist preachers, and tried to preach eighty-one times. In retrospect of my life, I do not much reproach myself for not giving myself to the work, as far as domestic duties admitted; but the lack of divine love—little care for the souls of men—weakness in handling the word of life—mangling heavenly truths with an unhallowed tongue—a proud desire to make God's stream turn my own mill, &c., sink me in the dust, and fill my soul with shame before God and man.

It has, in the course of my ministry, been a question of no small magnitude, to know how to address a congregation of sinners, as such, in gospel style. When I turn my eyes to the upper book, (*the eternal designs of God*), I there read that God's work is before him, and that he works all things according to the counsel of his own will; that neither a sparrow, nor a hair of the head, can fall without our Heavenly Father; that providence and grace are the agents to execute his purpose. But when I look into the lower book, (*the freedom of human will*), I find that condemnation is conditional; "Oh that thou hadst hearkened unto me, then had your peace been as a river; seeing ye judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, to turn to the Gentiles," &c. If I do not read and believe the upper book, I impeach the omniscience and wisdom of Jehovah. And if I do not likewise read and believe the lower book, I deny the possibility of guilt or blame. I must, therefore, believe both; and where I cannot comprehend, I will adore; where I cannot read, I will spell; and what I cannot spell out, I must skip. If the human mind should be so enlarged that it could solve every difficulty that has hitherto appeared, that same enlargement of thought would unfold a thousand difficulties more, so subtle and minute, that it never felt their weight before; so that there would be no getting through!

The truth is, sin has ruined men so entirely that any plan that human wisdom could devise or comprehend, would be incompetent to save. A scheme founded in infinite wisdom is necessary; and if founded in infinite wisdom, the wisdom is finite creatures cannot comprehend it in all its parts.

"Though of exact perfection we despair,
Yet every step to virtue's worth our care."

Let the man of God read, study, meditate, consider, pray, and seek after wisdom as for hidden treasure, but when he comes to water too deep for his length, let him adore and be humble.—Paul undertook to unfold the knotty question, which ever puzzles the world, in the ninth and eleventh chapters of Romans; but before he got through, he found the waters so high that he cried out, "O the depth—how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Let it be my lot to be a child at the feet of my Master, ever learning of him—who was meek and lowly of heart; then shall I find rest for my soul, and know enough to make me happy.

When I was young, I notice that old preachers never knew when to leave the work; and I confess I am at loss about it myself. I yet carry my eyes in my head, but my sight in my pocket; but if some monitor was to give me a friendly hint, that I was run down in decency, it is probable that (like Milton) I should reproach him as an upstart. I yet flatter myself that my performances have a little in them which is valuable. So Solomon's triennial cargo consisted partly of the precious articles of gold, silver, and ivory, and partly of apes and peacocks.

It has been rather trying times for Baptist preachers, who have travelled and labored day and night for the good of souls; like the mules which Agulastus saw, they have been loaded with figs, and feeding upon thistles. What the new order of missionary funds and exertions will do I cannot say; whether there is goodness enough in men to be pampered without growing indolent and haughty, is a question. One thing, however, is certain, viz: the captive children who lived upon pulse (Indian peas) were fresher, fatter, and ten times better in counsel, than the regular bred priests, in the realm of Babylon, who lived on a royal portion of meat and wine.

I have some drawings of mind to visit your city, and see my father's children who reside there; but to carry a dim candle among so many radiant

sons would be rather absurd. Could I, like Paul, visit you in the fulness of the gospel of Christ, and impart unto you some spiritual gift, I should not hesitate. But ah! my leanness, my leanness! Call me not Naomi, but call me Mara. The prayer that I have been making for more than half a century is expressive of my present state, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!"

I wish, my brother, that a gracious God may bless you in soul and body—for time and eternity. And may your dear partner in life have the courage of Deborah—the piety of Hannah—the humility of Mary—the intelligence of Priscilla, and the benevolence of Phebe. Adieu!

JOHN LELAND.

Rev. Spencer H. Cone, living in the city of regeneration, Grace Street—Penitent Alley—at the Sign of the Cross, next door to glory.—*N. Y. Ec. & Chron.*

Correspondence.

The writer of the following communication lives a long distance from Nova Scotia and could not have seen the article by Rev. Dr. Tupper on the same subject in a recent issue of the *Messenger*.

For the Christian Messenger.

PASTORAL VISITATION.

I believe that Pastoral Visitation, in its real sense, can scarcely be overestimated in the work of a Christian Minister. From the Memoir of the Life and Labors of the Rev. Francis Wayland—a volume of extreme interest and value—I extract the following. On accepting the Pastoral charge of the First Baptist Church in Providence, having been President and professor of Moral and Intellectual Philosophy in Brown University, for nearly 29 years, and being now engaged in important literary works, and in his sixty first year. In his reminiscences he writes:—

"The moment I assumed the duties of pastor, I relinquished every other engagement and occupation. I was well aware that the families of the church and congregation were in need of real pastoral visitation.

By the visiting rendered among them, I do not mean a mere call of civility to inquire into the health of parents and children, and to manifest a neighborly regard for their welfare. This is scarcely the business of men charged with matters of grave importance.

The visiting to which I refer is that which has for its end exclusively the spiritual good of those to whom it is made. This I attempted to carry on. I resolved that I would visit no house without introducing the subject of religion as a personal matter, and that in every case, unless it was manifestly best to omit it, I would pray with the family. This kind of visiting, however, reached but a portion of the community—the mothers and daughters. The male members of families were generally absent. It was necessary to follow them to shops, counting rooms, or wherever they were accustomed to spend the day. I talked to men wherever I could find them alone, or could draw them away for private conversation. Sometimes I would meet them in the street, and accompany them far enough to give the necessary warning. In this manner I believe I held personal conversation on religion with by far the greater part of the adults of the parish. And I will add that in all this labor, which became more and more pleasant and easy to me, I never once was treated rudely, or as if I was not doing the business most appropriate to a minister. Some cases I found of persons stupid in worldliness, who evidently did not wish to be disturbed; but by far the greater part were thankful; and were by this means personally attached to me and to the services of the sanctuary, and their hearts were open to the instructions and warnings of the gospel. I record with sadness that in many cases, even of those who had been associated all their lives with professors of religion, I was told that I was the first one who had ever personally conversed with them on the condition of their souls.

It will be thought that I had some natural aptitude for this kind of labor. Not at all. In the commencement of my ministry, it was as difficult for me as for any one. I gained upon it a little during my pastorate in Boston. When, however, I undertook this pastorate I resolved, in the strength of God, that I would carry religion with me into every house I visited, and, so far as was in my power, edify saints and call sinners to repentance.

What wonder is it that "at this period of his life, he was eminently wise in winning souls to Christ."

Brethren in the ministry, and fellow Christians: By how many shall it be said to those who come after us, of those under our ministry, or living in our society, that no one "had ever personally conversed with them on the condition of their souls."

Yours,

COUNTRY PASTOR.

For the Christian Messenger.

PEN SKETCHES.

No. XXI.

Useless Persons.

Is it possible there can be such a class of persons in this working world? Persons who eat, drink, and live without being of service to any one. Receivers but not givers. Willing that others do the work so long as they are not disturbed. Allow them to remain in the shell of their selfishness and they are satisfied. Alas, it is so. Observers of society have marked them and been pained. Like the sands of the desert receiving rain and sunshine and returning no green verdure.

There's the son in the family, having received a good education, he is fitted for a useful position in society, but he has turned out a fop—dressing and walking about as a spectacle for others, his education and powers are of no avail to him.—*Work, work, is beneath his dainty fingers. A mere drone in society.*

Then there is the young lady, who has been brought up by indulgent parents not to soil her fingers with contact with work. The piano—novel and the fingers of eligible partners in a dance are touched with pleasurable emotions, but not like a true daughter of Eve who is a help in society, is a dressed, good mannered useless person in the world. I pity the poor fellow who may take a fancy to her for a wife. As an ornament to his home she may be of service, but as a true companion she will be useless.—*For a home there will be required a woman not only with womanly feelings, but with adaptation to the circumstances of life in a home.*

Then there is the member of the church. He comes and goes from the house of God, may listen respectfully to the services, but as far as carrying out the design of church membership he is entirely useless. He is very innocent with regard to seconding the efforts of the pastor in bringing souls to Christ. Are you useless dear reader—if so it will prove your ruin.

JOHN.

For the Christian Messenger.

Mr. Editor:

In your issue of Nov. 23rd, Dr. Tupper makes some "remarks" on two communications which had appeared previously. In justice to myself, I must trouble you to insert a few lines. The author of the other "long communication" can answer for himself.

Dr. T. declares: that "the impression which they are adapted to produce on the public mind obviously is, that (the Foreign Mission Board) are, without a single exception, a body of unwise, imprudent, and cruel men."

I would like to see the individual on whom such an impression was made by my communication. His mind must be exceedingly plastic, and susceptible of gathering views never intended nor hinted at by *Sigma*.

Dr. T. honors me again by saying:

Sigma "professes to favor an independent mission. This seemed to be the general feeling expressed at the Convention. 'But actions speak louder than words.' The action taken was obviously adapted to postpone the establishment of such a mission indefinitely, and in fact interminably."

I am aware that some latitude must be allowed to the secretary, but I am indisposed to permit the paragraph just quoted to pass without "examination and correction." Suppose another man should say: "The general feeling of the Convention was in favor of an independent mission. 'But actions speak louder than words.' The action taken was obviously adapted to promote the establishment of such a mission on a sure basis, as soon as practicable." Suppose, I say, some one were to write thus, which statement would most commend itself? Evidently that which agreed with the general tenor of the action of the Convention. I exceedingly regret that the secretary feels compelled to put such a construction upon a very plain affair, and that in opposition to his view I must say, that as far as *Sigma* is concerned, and as far as I understand the mind of the Convention, there was no intention to "postpone indefinitely and interminably" the establishment of an independent Mission. The fact of the appointment of the committee shows that the Body respectfully entertained the idea of independence, and wished it to be dealt with fairly and rationally.

Upon an important point *Sigma* thinks Dr. Tupper must misapprehend him. In reference to the withdrawal of funds from the Native Teachers, I never dreamed of making a charge against the Board. It never occurred to me that

anybody had acted "cruelly" in this matter; but under the circumstances it was a necessary evil, and that perhaps the Convention might take means to prevent the occurrence of such an untoward step.

Sigma is not willing to admit the soft impeachment of "gross misapprehension" as to the residence of the members of the Board, nor as to any other ordinary "cases." It might be quite correct to say, that they are scattered over a distance of more than fifty miles; but it is equally true, that with the exception of the two New Brunswick members, they all live on or near the line of Railway running to Annapolis, so that his statement is substantially correct, that "the Board could go over now and then to New Brunswick in a body"—to which proposition he is glad to see, the good Doctor is "quite agreeable, if the cause will be benefited thereby."

Sigma desires to reciprocate the generous tone adopted by the Doctor in reference to the labors of the committee, and begs to say, that if the committee can present a Report in harmony with the views of the Board and its honored secretary, no one will be more gratified than

SIGMA.

Amherst, Dec. 1, 1870.

For the Christian Messenger.

HARD THINGS TO CONQUER.

Revenge, is a hard thing to conquer. It is all very well to say, Do your enemy a kind turn, but if the kind turn never becomes known to him does not affect him in the least, does not mitigate his ill will in the slightest degree, and a peice of revenge that will affect him, that will probably bring him to your feet.

When you can magnanimously forgive him, and impress upon him your superior nature. It is hard to practice forgiveness when only our Father in Heaven sees. When men will impute our conduct to cowardice, to anything but the right motive. Then indeed to forbear in silence becomes a heavenly virtue. We all know temper is hard to conquer. Pride, and selfishness, love of ease, indolence are trials to numbers. The pleasant fire-side and entertaining book, how reluctantly left at the calls of duty, for the visit of charity. *It is so much easier to please ourselves, sometimes, than Christ.* It is hard to give up our way and walk in God's way, very hard to the flesh. But thanks to Him who having suffered temptation for us, knows how to succor them that are tempted. We lose sight of this. We are willing enough to admit the larger temptations of Christ, but to think he was "tempted in all points like as we are." To give back an angry word, to shrink from an unpleasant duty, to make an untruthful excuse, to be ungentle and fretful, to doubt the love, and power of his heavenly Father. To wonder if all things were working together in the best possible way for him—to lose faith in himself, and in his brother man—to look abroad on the sinfulness everywhere abounding, and say, Is there a God? Can these be eternal beings, having an eternity of bitterness or joy before them? To feel tempted to say with one of old, "Where is the Lord-God of Elijah?" Oh give thanks for that word "Tempted in all points." He knoweth our frame, he remembereth we are but dust.

E. H.

For the Christian Messenger.

IN MEMORIAM.

MRS. ANN HARDING,

Widow of the late George Harding, died at East Ragged Island, March 6th, 1870, aged 73. Sister H. was a member of the Church of Christ for many years. When the church at East Ragged Island was first organized she united with it by dismission from the Lewis Head church. Many and severe were the trials through which our sister was called to pass. Wave after wave of trouble rolled in upon her, but through the grace of God she was enabled to stand. Christ was her stronghold. In him she trusted and often did rejoice in looking forward to a day of rest

"Where peace and joy eternal reign,
And glittering robes for conquerors wait."

Her last affliction—cancer in the side—hurried her down to the grave, but under all her afflictions she would often break out in rejoicing. Her faith was strong to the last, when she passed away without a struggle or groan, to join with the redeemed in singing praises to Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood. She has left two daughters and a large number of mourning relatives and friends. The occasion was improved by the writer from Heb. iv. 9, before a large and attentive congregation. May each one of the hearers be prepared to enter into rest.

J. F. MCKENNA.

East Ragged Island, Nov. 15, 1870.