

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

A REVIEW REVIEWED. JAS. C. L. CARSON, M. D., AND HIS "CAT O' NINE TAILS."

In offering a few observations on the article from the pen of our highly esteemed friend, Rev. W. Sommerville, which appeared in the Messenger of Jan. 25, and Feb. 1st, we commence with a passage which we most cordially approve of, and which we would earnestly commend to the careful consideration of all the readers of the Messenger. It runs as follows. "God has not required any man either under the former or present economy to give a penny to 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 laborer 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 store house that there be meat in his house.

Even so, says 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 that what they owe to God for the furtherance of the gospel; [is] a debt that 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 labor 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."

We would ask our readers to go over this paragraph carefully with their Bibles in their hands, and we are mistaken if they do not find matter for hours of careful study and prayer, and if they do not rise from the examination with the full conviction that the doctrine here advanced will bear sanctuary weight.

Our venerable friend has before now said and written things that we decidedly wish he had never said or written—alas! alas! we can remember many more failings of our own in this line—he has written some things in the article under consideration to which we must take exception. But the paragraph above quoted is not one of them. We feel very favorably inclined towards the Plymouth Brethren. The evidence of earnest scriptural piety we have discovered among them, has been truly refreshing.—We can account satisfactorily for many of the hard things that are said about them without either unchristianizing them or their opponents. To err is human. Nothing is more easy than to misunderstand and misrepresent an adversary, and more especially when we are bent on faultfinding, as controversialists from the very nature of the case are liable to be. The danger is increased when the assailant issues forth armed with a "cat o nine tails," authorized as he supposes to hunt down and scourge the offender till he screams and bleeds under the "harsh resounding lash."

By the way that same is an instrument to which we must confess a most decided aversion. We used to hear horrid stories about it when we were a small boy. In the jail yard at Kentville there stood a post called *par excellence*, the "whipping post," to which they sometimes tied up poor fellows and lashed them on their bare back with a whip having a handle and nine lashes, and called "a cat o nine tails."—A fellow convicted of stealing got thirty nine blows from this whip. We ourselves used to "catch it at home" and at school pretty often, and pretty hard from a birchen 'cat' that was wont to have, before it got much worn, at least two or three 'tails.' And the more public instrument was wont to be held over our heads at home in *terrorem* while we were smarting under the infliction of the other. "As sure as we were born," we were often told, "we would come some day to the whipping post." Whether as the result of all this our inherent propensity to "eat the forbidden fruit" was diminished, and the sugar, and the apples, the mince pies, preserves, &c., &c., were any safer when we could get our hand upon them unseen or not, we cannot now say.

ly say. But our present decided dislike to the "cat" leads us to think it did some good after all, and we must acknowledge that we do not see how as things are it is to be wholly dispensed with. We will not therefore entirely condemn Dr. Carson or our venerable friend Mr. Sommerville for a prudent use of that same "o nine." But let us remember the admonition in Mat vii. 1, 2, and also Mat. xxvi. 52, while employing it.

But to return. We have, we trust an undying christian affection for several members of that communion known as the Plymouth Brethren. We differ from them on several important points of doctrine and practice. But we have fellowship for them in the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We can say the same of some Presbyterians of our acquaintance. They bear the image of the Master. Their "conversation" is in accordance with the gospel. We feel our heart warmed up with divine love, and our desires after personal holiness strengthened and increased, while we associate with them in prayer and praise and in searching the Scriptures. Yes, we are free to own it, we love the godly Presbyterians as well as we do the godly Baptists or the godly Plyms. In fact we like the Presbyterians a little better than we do the "Plyms." We think that on some points they are nearer the truth. The Baptist Creed and the Presbyterian Creed differ from each other in two points—two half points we would say were we drawing our illustration from the Mariner's compass—viz., Baptism and Church government.—The Plymouth Brethren agree very nearly with the Baptists on these points, and we think it quite probable that for their supposed heresies on these very points our venerable brother's medical friend has laid on his "cat o nine tails."

But Mr. Sommerville's views of the manner in which the gospel should be supported is in exact accordance with the doctrine of the "Brethren." It is the "Muller Principle" out and out. "The minister is set apart to the work of the Lord. The Lord provides for them. The people pay their offerings, not to the minister but to the Lord." Some of our Baptist brethren are beginning to act on these principles.—So are some of the Presbyterians. We have acted upon them with very gratifying results for nearly seven years. We would they were universally adopted. What a fruitful source of dissatisfaction and trouble between ministers and people, and the people themselves, would be dried up by this simple plan. With Mr. S.'s objections to "praying for money," or to receiving it from the Master "in an envelope, whether with or without a name," we can have no sympathy. In fact we cannot reconcile these objections with the principle of ministerial support enunciated. Can it be wrong to teach the people what their duty is, and then wrong to pray earnestly that they may be enabled and disposed to do their duty? to tell them that the Lord requires them to "bring in the tithes," and then to pray that the Lord would bless them with a heart to do their duty, and when he has done so to take all as from his hand, &c. & to give him thanks accordingly? Where in the world can be the objection to this?

But says Mr. S., "The Saviour was poor and never prayed for money. The Apostles were poor and never prayed for money." These are bold assertions, but they are assertions without proof. Please shew us where the Bible says that the Saviour and his Apostles never prayed for money when they needed it? and never received it as a direct gift from heaven because it came in an "envelope"? Against all such bare assertions and unreasonable objections the plain direction of inspiration may be opposed. "Be careful (anxious) for nothing but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving LET YOUR REQUESTS BE MADE KNOWN UNTO GOD. There is our warrant to pray for all we need. If our Saviour and his Apostles acted upon their own injunctions, (and who will dare affirm that they did not), then when they needed money they prayed for it—aye, and got it too, and in whatever way it came, whether in an envelope or not, whether from an unknown individual, or one that was well known, whether as the product of the labor of their own hands, or a donation from another, they took it as coming from Him "from whom comes down every good and every perfect gift, and with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

I have no doubt that there are many who would send bank bills in abundance in any direction that would hold out a prospect of saving them from the wrath to come.—But because the "unlearned and unstable" will wrest a principle to their own unjoining,

it by no means follows that the principle itself must be wrong. How many people are quietly flattering themselves that they will inherit everlasting life, because they are somewhat more moral than their neighbors, are members of the "right church," go regularly to the House of Prayer, pay the minister well, assent to the doctrines of the Bible, and are good to the poor, and pray in their families and in secret? And yet all these things can be done without saving faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.—And how many alas! who do none of these things still expect to be saved! But what then? Shall we do evil that good may come? God forbid.

But we must draw our remarks to a close. We have taken a decided dislike to Dr. Carson's book. We don't intend to waste valuable time in reading it, and much less do we intend to waste valuable money in buying it. We think the good man would have been better employed in visiting his patients. We don't need to hunt up "lying" and "hypocrisy" among the poor Plymouth Brethren. We can find plenty of that stuff nearer home—we regret to say it—among the Presbyterians and the Baptists, and others that we "wot of." We say then "grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," of whatever name, and add, "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of those who seek thy precepts."

SILAS T. RAND.

For the Christian Messenger.

"YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN."

The condition of man is such that his recovery must be in and from God alone.—"The whole head is sick the whole heart is faint." Nor does it avail man, if man is still left to himself, that a wonderful provision is made and offered for his rescue.—The provision with all its richness is like the "price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom; seeing he hath no heart to it." Sinai and Calvary are alike impotent, the sinner unconcerned is unmoved; encastled within his own fortress, he neither knows nor feels until his heart is moved by the power of the Holy Spirit. This alone must be our dependence. The word, that grand instrumentality in the hand of the Spirit, is powerless without the Spirit. The word to the "dead in trespasses and sins," is like medicine thrown into a dead carcase, it cannot restore life of itself. "Paul may plant and Apollos water but it is God that giveth the increase." "Not by might nor power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord." The power of giving life is of God, hence the necessity of the New Birth.

What is it, and how is it effected? A correct understanding of our real condition seems necessary to a right apprehension of the new birth. Without this we are not likely rightly to solve the question. Indeed questions relating to spiritual things are generally answered according to the standpoint assumed. If we look at our condition as one of weakness only, needing nothing more than a little forbearance, compassion and help, we shall assuredly discover nothing radical, fundamental, or very important in the new birth. What then is our real condition as sinners before God? "Dead in trespasses and sins." If dead, then the new birth must be the restoration of life. Not the restoration of man to his normal condition thus placing him again on trial, not merely reforming nor remodeling. The new birth does more. It is a radical transformation of the inner man, the bringing into life, "the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" or "holiness of truth." It is "a creation in Christ Jesus unto good works." "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature" or creation. "God who being rich in mercy, on account of his great love wherewith he loved us, made us, even when we were dead in sins, alive in Christ." How different, then, is the standing of the new-born soul, from that of man in his normal state. In that he stood upon trial and fell. In this he stands in Christ, and his "life is hid with Christ in God," and is kept "by the power of God through faith unto salvation." In the former his life depended on his obedience, in the latter on his union to Christ. The new birth is not reforming but renewing, it is not remodeling, but new creating. But

How is this effected?

I answer, first, negatively. It was "not of blood." No lineal descent gives this birth. Parentage here avails not. Nor is it "of the will of the flesh." Natural generation gives us no information of its source, "that which is born of the flesh," is only flesh. Nor is it "of the will of man." The adoption of children only

changes their relative condition, it does not affect their moral relation to God. No act of the sinner participates in this work—nor is man in the ordinary sense of the term an instrument of it nor is the happy recipient conscious of it except by its effects.—"The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

This great change is effected by God alone. After giving the above negatives, the Evangelist adds "But of God." Thus we learn that God is the author of this work. By the same authority we learn that it is by the Spirit. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Now to this source and to this source alone do we look for the new birth. The change is wrought exclusively by the Holy Spirit and is effected by a single act and never repeated. It is an act that nothing else can do without the Spirit. The mode of action lies beyond the realm of our observation. We can form no analysis of it. It is of necessity God's work. It creates life in those that are dead. "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but of his mercy hath he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

This work is radical, a root whence springs every act of obedience acceptable unto God. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." "He that loveth is born of God." If we bear the image of God it is because we have "put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."

It is also fundamental. Nothing in practical christianity without it is genuine. FIDELITAS.

For the Christian Messenger.

AID SOLICITED.

Dear Brother Selden,—

In a recent communication I gave you and your readers an account of a heavy loss sustained by the burning of the Baptist Meeting House in Tremont, Aylesford. Our brethren and friends are now earnestly engaged in fitting up, at considerable expense, an old School House to serve as a temporary place for worship. This is quite too small; but it will be convenient as a vestry, for prayer-meetings, &c. It is, however, indispensable to have a capacious Meeting House, which will cost a pretty large sum, erected without any avoidable delay.

Under these circumstances a meeting was held in Tremont last evening, Feb. 6th, with reference to this subject, when it was Resolved unanimously, That the Pastor, Rev. C. Tupper, be requested to publish a statement of the case, and to solicit aid from sister Churches, and benevolent individuals, toward the erection of a new Meeting House; and that he receive in charge such sums, or materials, as may be contributed for this object.

As it is customary, and very proper, to afford assistance in such cases of serious loss by fire, it may be presumed there will be a ready response to this case for the exercise of beneficence.

Donors will please forward their contributions to the undersigned, at Tremont, Aylesford, Nelly Road, P.O., or to Stephen Selden, Esq., Halifax, who will transmit them to him.

CHARLES TUPPER, Pastor.
Tremont, Aylesford, Feb. 7, 1871.

For the Christian Messenger.

IN MEMORIAM.

ELISHA BANCROFT, Esq.,

died at Round Hill, Annapolis County, Nov. 25th, 1870, in the 76th year of his age. In his youth Mr. B. made a profession of religion, was baptized by Father Ainslie, and united with the Baptist church. Bro. B. mourned deeply in the last few weeks of his life that he had not fully and closely followed the Lord, that things of the earth had too much engrossed his attention, and drawn away his heart from Christ, the church and heaven. After a great struggle with temptation, doubt and unbelief, Bro. B. obtained forgiveness, feeling consolation and assurance by looking to Jesus as the propitiation for sins and the advocate with God for all who believe. The atonement was felt to be all-sufficient for procuring pardon for sin and for inspiring the believer with strong hope of eternal life. The earnest desire to live in order to glorify God, to honor Christ, to advance His cause, and to do

good,—the utterances and exhortations to his family and others to live for Christ, His church and eternity, together with the entire resignation to the divine will, showed to those observant of spiritual things,—that a work of grace was deeply wrought in the heart of Mr. Bancroft. May the consolations of the gospel sustain sister Bancroft and her family, and this discipline of bereavement be made by the power of God to contribute to their spiritual and eternal good!—Com.

MR. GEORGE WITHERS,

died in Middle Granville, Oct. 11th, 1870, aged 58 years. Mr. Withers was a quiet, orderly, excellent member of the community. Though he made no public profession of religion, yet his life and conversation exhibited a high regard for the gospel of Christ. He was earnestly attentive to the worship of the sanctuary and the preaching of the gospel; and contributed cheerfully and liberally, according to his means, for the support of the ministry. In the midst of severe sufferings he was uniformly patient, submissive to the divine will, and earnestly hopeful of salvation through the atonement of Christ. May the Lord abundantly comfort and bless sister Withers and her bereaved children and enable them to bear the deep affliction with holy patience and trust and to be earnestly looking for the life to come!—Com.

MRS. SUSANNAH STEADMAN,

widow of the late James Steadman, died at Bridgetown, Dec. 9th, 1870, in the 87th year of her age. Mrs. Steadman made a profession of religion in early life and joined the Baptist church. She was born in Lower Granville, and in her youth attended the ministry of the Rev. James Manning of whom she always spoke with great regard and veneration. For many years Sister Steadman gave evidence of true piety. Throughout a protracted illness, attended by the infirmities of age and much suffering, she glorified God by faith, patience and resignation to his will; she gave a decided and joyful testimony to the power of Christ to save, comfort and render fully victorious over every spiritual foe the soul that trusts in His precious name and blood. She departed in the joyful hope and full assurance of being received to the Heavenly Home among the spirits of the just made perfect now with God and Christ forever. May the bereaved children and connexion receive spiritual profit from the exhibition of piety in the life and death of the venerable parent and friend and seek a home also among the redeemed of the Lord.—Com.

For the Christian Messenger.

DONATION VISITS.

AYLESFORD AND LONG POINT, CORNWALLIS.—Allow me to acknowledge through your paper the kindness and liberality of my friends at Aylesford and Long Point in their generous donations presented to me this winter amounting to \$100 in cash and \$18 in useful articles. May the Master bountifully reward the givers, is the prayer of their pastor. We are holding some extra services at Morristown one part of this church there is an increase of religious interest both in the church and congregation.

Yours,

J. L. READ.

The Baptist Church and friends at St. Mary's Bay, on the evening of the first day of February, met at the residence of Brother John Clements, who kindly opened his house for the occasion. The Rev. Charles Randall was requested to take the chair, who favoured us with a very interesting speech, in which he referred in a very touching manner to the Baptist cause in the County of Digby, shewing the progress that had been made during his labours among the people. He stated that twenty meeting-houses had built or were in the course of erection. He then presented to myself and family a donation amounting to \$75. After some remarks by the receiver the Chairman called upon the Rev. F. M. Pickles, who was presented with a large number of his kind people. Brother Pickles gave us an appropriate address, after which the Chairman called on several who gave excellent speeches, expressing their love for the cause and their happiness in being present. A vote of thanks was then given to the friends who had favoured us with the use of their house. We all joined in singing the Union hymn and dispersed to our homes after spending a happy evening.

A. COGSWELL.