

THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR.

SAINT JOHN, MARCH 15, 1848.

REGENERATION AN EXPERIMENTAL TRUTH.

There is oftentimes a very material difference between what one really intends to convey in a particular form of expression, and what is supposed to be intended by those who read or hear. In this age of the world, and in this land of Bibles, no surprise can be excited by repeating the language of even the obscurest parts of the Scriptures, whereas men may as really marvel at the true idea intended, as did Nicodemus when told that he "must be born again."

There are few expressions about which the enemies of vital godliness and the more honest of those ignorant of the operations of divine grace, differ more from the scriptural idea and also from each other, than about being born again.

The enemies of vital religion, by whom we mean those who scoff at secret and social prayer, and ridicule as hypocrites those who lead a prayerful, godly life, and profess an anxiety for the salvation of their fellow men, must necessarily wrest and pervert the idea, or they would stand before the world confessedly fighting against God. Those again who are more honest, and credit the Bible as a revelation of a practical and holy religion, but who are themselves inexperienced in the ways of grace, desiring to have a meaning for this and every other scripture expression, attach that significance which to them, with their natural blindness and the prejudices of the natural heart, appears most reasonable; and so we have it defined by one, a conversion from Paganism to nominal Christianity; by another, a change which shall be undergone at the resurrection; and by others a reformation of previous bad habits.

Fortunately however, and as one would think to the full confirmation of all others in the belief of a radical change in man when he becomes a christian, all evangelical denominations, disagreeing on many other points, perfectly coincide here. They may and indeed do differ even in regard to the immediate cause and manner of this process of grace, but as to the nature of the change—in what it consists—what its effects are, the reason and necessity for it, in each of these there is a perfect coincidence of opinion among them all. These denominations are frequently jealous of each other; they, or rather individuals connected with them, sometimes speak bitter things one of another; they have rival interests to promote and support; they embrace people of all ranks and professions; their advocates are, some of them, skilled in every branch of useful learning, others are ignorant of the rudiments of their own mother tongue; how then can this coincidence be accounted for? Every man who will give even a brief attention to this fact, whether he be a learned man or an ignorant one, will see whence this is. It is because this truth is an experimental, in distinction from a speculative truth. Of this distinction all can judge, and the credit due to an experimental truth all must admit. For instance, all men agree as to the nature of a fever, so that when the disease is spoken of there is no contrariety or difference in the apprehension which men receive as to the nature of the disease; all know the characteristics of it—an accelerated pulse, an increase of heat, a diminution of strength, and often a preternatural thirst. The truth of this definition may be called an experimental truth; men frequently have fevers, and therefore they know experimentally what they are, and those who have not had them, judge from observation and from other's testimony. So far the learned and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, the farmer, the mechanic, and the merchant all agree; but when we depart from this experimental truth, and give attention to the theoretical, as to what is the best manner of meeting and treating diseases, that moment those who were so well agreed on the other, are here all divided, and have each their different opinions.

At these divisions we cannot be surprised: we are all of finite minds and fallible judgments and shall therefore, as a matter of course, differ in our opinions which different systems of education and different circumstances in life have contributed to give us; and he who is a bigot in these matters, let his opinions be what they may, shows not merely a lack of discretion, but

a lack of good sense. If a man, however, who had never had a fever should attempt to argue against another who had one, as to the nature of the disease, or contend that there was no such disease, this is absurd, and there is no bigotry in withholding countenance from such a man's folly.

Every true christian, we repeat, of every different denomination coincides perfectly as to the Scriptural idea of being born again, because it is an experimental truth, and there is no room for a difference of opinion among them on this subject, even if they desired it. You may as well argue with a truly godly man that he has no eyes to see, or no ears to hear, as to argue that there is no such thing as being born of the Spirit of God, implying a radical change of the moral man, making him to find a sweet delight in things which were naturally repulsive, and to be dissatisfied and disgusted with what were previously the objects of desire; for he has the same evidence of the one that he has of the other; and this is the work of grace, so determinate, and so well attested by the universal experience of christians, necessary to qualify us for the favour of God here, and for his presence and kingdom hereafter. This is the saving change commended to the inquiring Master of Israel.

Kind reader, do you know it? Does your experience give you a definite conception of it? Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.

STEAMER ADMIRAL.—It was with sincere pleasure we witnessed the arrival, a week since, of this beautiful steamer, on her first regular trip for the season. We are glad to welcome, also, her experienced and gentlemanly officers, Capt. Rogers and Mr. Spear, with the former of whom we have enjoyed a long and somewhat intimate acquaintance as a christian man, and the latter we have known for years, as enjoying the fullest confidence and respect of those to whose service he has been devoted. They are every way worthy of the noble boat; her accommodations, so admirable last year, have been still further extended during the winter, presenting now every desirable convenience to the public, by whom we hope she will be liberally patronised. Her regular trips are to include the whole route from St. John to Boston.—Ed.

Rev. James Reid, of Hampton, has, at the request of many of his brethren in the Ministry, prepared for the Christian Visitor his reasons for adopting the sentiments of our denomination. We have great pleasure in acknowledging the receipt of his manuscript, and believing they will be highly acceptable to our readers; we shall probably commence them in our next number.

An interesting Soiree was held last evening at the Methodist School Room, Portland, the proceeds of which are designed to procure a Banner for the New Brunswick Division, Sons of Temperance. We understand the attendance was large, and the entertainment and exercises very agreeable. Speeches were delivered on the occasion by the Rev. Wm. Harrison, Rev. S. Busby, Messrs. S. L. Tilley, A. Sime, R. Stevens, D. Tapley.

Steamer Admiral. punctual to her time, is again in port, in season for us to announce the ratification of the Treaty with Mexico, by the Senate of the United States. This is her chief and best news.

Baptist Cause in France.

A clergyman in London writing to the N. Y. Recorder, gives the following intelligence of the disabilities of our brethren in France:—

We have just learned, to our great regret, that the Supreme Court at Paris has confirmed the decree of the Court at Amiens, who adjudged the Baptists of L'Aisne to the payment of penalties for having met for worship. Their meeting is adjudged to be an "unlawful association;" their appeal is dismissed, and their fines are to be paid.—The editor of the French Protestant paper, *L'Esperance*, says:—"The condemnation of the Baptists of L'Aisne afflicts us deeply. It shows how little the great and holy principles of religious liberty which the charter has consecrated, are understood; and amid these legal rigors we ask with anxiety—What can conscientious and upright men do in France, who, like these only desire to unite in serving God according to their wants and convictions? Ought they to renounce their convictions, and be converted, after the fashion of Louis XIV., or must they resolve to take, like our fathers, the dolorous road to a foreign land?" It came out, on the trial, that the whole proceeding originated with the Romish clergy.—A letter was read from the Bishop of Soissons, addressed to the prefect of L'Aisne, formally denouncing the Baptist meetings, and begging him to take measures to prevent their recurrence.

A correspondent of the Christian Reflector writes from Philadelphia as follows:—

It may indicate somewhat of the progress of Baptist principles among us, for your readers to be told that a young man educated for the ministry among the Episcopalians, was last week baptised in the Second church, south ward, by the Rev. J. A. McKean; that Rev. the H. D. Moore, pastor of the Second Independent (Pedobaptist) church, has baptised two or three Sabbaths since, in the Rev. J. H. Kennard's meeting-house, two persons on profession of their faith; and that the Rev. Dr. Berg, and another Pedobaptist clergyman, at West Philadelphia, alarmed at the progress of Baptist principles, have been preaching with considerable talent and energy against them. This last fact is of considerable value, for the Pedobaptist brethren, whenever they can be prevailed on to agitate the subject, usually serve our cause more successfully than we do ourselves. O that they would all preach on baptism at least once a year!

Your readers are already acquainted with the fact, that not a few of our churches are in a delightful state of feeling; and certainly the events of the last few weeks do not indicate any decline of interest. At Camden, on the opposite shore of Jersey, from seventy to eighty, since the beginning of the year, have sought the prayers of the church, upwards of thirty of whom have been baptised in the waters of the Delaware; and revivals are said to be delightfully progressing at Burlington and Trenton.

CORRESPONDENCE.

DEAR BROTHER VERY.—We have been attending a series of meetings of late, which we believe will terminate in the advancement of the Redeemer's cause, and in the benefitting of precious souls. Our first services commenced at Salmon River Falls, at the Baptist Chapel, on the 8th instant, and continued three days; and then on the 14th commenced at 2nd Wickham, and continued between that Church and the 1st Wickham Church, until Saturday afternoon, 19th. The ordained Elders that attended in the three different places, were as follows: Elder B. Coy, D. W. Fitch, J. Magee, J. Masters, J. Bunting, J. A. Smith, J. Skinner, J. King, D. Crandall, G. F. Miles; and Licentiates: A. Mark, E. Keirstead, and W. Coleman, and a large number of Deacons, and other gifted brethren from neighbouring churches, who all took an active part in the religious exercises, which rendered the season peculiarly delightful, and profitable. The preaching had a particular bearing on practical godliness, and personal piety, and self-denial, in order to enjoy a state of revival in our churches, and a gathering in of those who are in the broad road to death. The exhortations were to the same effect; there were also three conferences held in the three respective churches, in connection with the other services, which added much to the spiritual enjoyment of the season. At Salmon River, the Church and their much esteemed pastor were much encouraged, and the services connected with the ordination of a deacon gave special interest to the occasion. Other christian friends immediately connected with the church, manifested much satisfaction in the exercises. At the two Wickham churches, there seemed to be a spirit of revival in many minds, and several out of the church appear to be preparing to follow their Lord in his appointed commands. From all that we have witnessed in connection with our protracted meetings for some time past, we have great encouragement to continue them, believing that through the blessing of God they are being the watchmen on Zion's walls, to see eye to eye in the doctrines and practice of the gospel, and it certainly must have a powerful practical effect on the souls and consciences of the large congregations that from time to time assemble at these meetings. Such sermons and exhortations delivered under, and followed, by the influences of the Divine Spirit, must tell in a future day on the souls of the people. We hope that the appointment at Sussex, to commence on the 14th inst., will be attended with the blessing of God, for the comfort and strength of that afflicted church.

Springfield, Feb. 25, 1848.

DEAR BROTHER VERY.—I send you the following letter for insertion, with your concurrence, in the *Visitor*, which I received, by request, from Mr. Matthew Taylor, the father of the boy. The writer is only nine years of age, and is both deaf and dumb; and although he has only been about seventeen months attending the New York Institution for the deaf and dumb, it is, however, very evident that he has made unusual progress in his elementary studies. The hand writing is rather uncommon for one of his years.

My object in giving publicity to this letter is not so much from anything very striking which it contains, (though no one can read it without

appreciating the manner in which the Institution is conducted) as to direct the attention of such of your readers as may have children or friends deprived of the organs of hearing and speech, to the importance of giving them an education.

It is evident their system of education is of the right stamp. The pupils are instructed morally, intellectually and physically. In the absence of such training no man can be said in the true sense of the word, to be educated. It is to be hoped, that while the attention of our Legislatures in these Provinces, is lawfully directed to the establishment of Lunatic asylums and kindred institutions of true benevolence, that the day is not far distant when we shall have in these Provinces, an Institution erected in a central place for the education of the deaf, the dumb, and the blind, from among our people who are now alike destitute of any true knowledge of themselves, of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ.

Yours, &c.,

A. McDONALD.

INSTITUTION FOR THE DEAF AND DUMB,
New York, Feb. 24, 1848.

My dear Mother—I am very well. I am now writing a letter to you. I wish you to write a letter to me. James is happy to stay at the Institution.—I am pleased to learn the elementary lessons, and improve very much. Mr. Benedict is my teacher. I am very fond of him, because he is very kind to me. In the morning the pupils get up, and put on their clothes; they wash their faces and hands, and wipe them with towels. After they comb their hair, a man rings a bell for breakfast, then the pupils go into the dining room and eat breakfast. After breakfast the boys go into the shops, and work at their different trades. The girls make beds, and sweep the floor. At 9 o'clock, A. M., one of the teachers tells us that it is school time. They assemble into the chapel, and the teacher explains a text from the Bible, and prays to God. Then they go into the school rooms and stay till 12 o'clock.—They eat dinner, after which the boys play on the lawn. At 1 o'clock, P. M., the pupils go into the school room, and stay until 4 o'clock. After that they assemble into the chapel, and the teacher prays to God. After prayer, the boys put on their hats, and go to the shops, and work till the sun goes down. After supper, they go into the sitting room and study their lessons. They go to bed, and sleep all night. I send my love to you and to all at home.

Your affectionate son,
GEORGE TAYLOR.

From the Albion of Saturday last.

Saint John Young Ladies' Total Abstinence Society.

The first Annual meeting of the Saint John Ladies' Total Abstinence Society was held in the Hall of the Mechanics' Institute, on Thursday evening last, and although the weather proved unfavorable, a very large and respectable assemblage was present. The Chair was taken by Mr. N. S. Demill. The meeting was opened by the Rev. Sampson Busby. This proved to be one of the most interesting temperance meetings ever held in this city. The addresses were excellent, all the speakers acquitting themselves well, and the audience seemed to be highly delighted; and although the meeting did not break up until a late hour, no person seemed to feel the least impatient.

The receipts and expenditure of the Society are as follows:—

RECEIPTS.	
Received by collection and donation	£3 15 0
Proceeds of Mr. Gough's Lecture	9 6 8
Proceeds of Mr. Kellogg's Lecture	6 16 9
Proceeds of Soiree in May last	20 9 0
	£40 7 5
EXPENDITURES.	
Books and Stationery for Society	£0 17 6
Paid to Mr. Demill for Tracts	0 16 1
Relief to distressed families	2 5 3
Paid Mr. Demill for Temperance Hall	20 9 0
Paid Mr. Demill for Temperance Hall proceeds	
Mr. Kellogg's Lecture	6 16 9
Tracts purchased	3 15 0
Volume presented to Mr. Gough	1 17 6
	£36 17 1

Balance on hand 1st Feb. 1848, £3 10 4

A brief Review of the Rise and Progress of the Temperance Reformation, with special reference to this City and Province, was given by the Rev. SAMUEL ROBINSON. He adverted in a very clear manner to the formation of the first T. A. Society in this City, commenced by eighteen individuals, in the house of James E. McDonald—its removal to the Baptist Vestry, thence to the Methodist Long Room—spoke of its being by eight months precedence the first T. A. Society