

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Autobiographical Sketch.

By Rev. Charles Tupper, D. D.

INTRODUCTION.

It is a delicate task for a man to undertake to write any thing with reference to his own life. If self-esteem predominate, he will be very liable to make it a leading object to commend himself. Hence his statements will probably be partial and exaggerated; and consequently they will be in a great measure unreliable and valueless.

On the other hand, a different man will be likely to conceal facts which would seem creditable to himself; or at least to fail to exhibit them in their full and true light. His excessive modesty may deter him from recording distinctly the manifestations of Divine grace toward him, and the consequent happy effects. By this means he will be prevented from "giving to the Lord the glory due unto his name," and also from furnishing such accounts as might be interesting and profitable to his readers. Great care is requisite to avoid these extremes.

There are, however, some considerations in favor of autobiography. The man who publishes the principal events of his own life, so far as it is past, can state particulars more fully and exactly than another can. He is better acquainted with all the attendant circumstances. The motives that influenced his mind in his acts are, in many cases, known to no other person. If he be a man of unquestionable veracity, his statements with reference to matters that have fallen under his immediate observation, command implicit credence. From him they come directly, while another, in general, has to give them at second hand. Indeed, the most satisfactory and valuable parts of a biography are usually those that are copied from the manuscripts of the person whose memoir is published.

Moreover, biographers do not ordinarily feel themselves at liberty to relate the errors and faults of others so fully and plainly as an autobiographer may his own. The inspired writers are justly noted for their impartiality in this particular, both as respected themselves and others. Doubtless these narrations may be abused; but they are adapted to do much good, by putting people on their guard against the snares in which others have been caught. (1 Cor. x. 6-12) My own opinion is, that the inspired example ought to be imitated to a much greater extent than is common in our day. Good examples should be recorded for imitation; and failings, from which none are exempt, may be properly noticed for caution. No error or fault should be needlessly published; but the slightest reference to any thing of the kind, for the purpose of cautioning others, is liable to be resented by the relatives and peculiar friends of one deceased. In this respect, therefore, an autobiographer has the advantage of another, because none can reasonably object to his publishing what he conscientiously believes that duty and candor require him to state to his own discredit, for the benefit of his fellow men.

It may be remarked, also, that the contemporaries of one who is extensively known, usually take a deeper interest in the events of his personal history than do those who live subsequently, and so have no acquaintance with the person whose memoir they read.

The thought has frequently occurred to me, that it might be well for me to publish some acknowledgment of the Lord's gracious dealings toward me, as an expression of gratitude for mercies received. It has likewise appeared to me, that a recital of some of the events of my life, with suitable reflections and suggestions, might, by the Divine blessing, be serviceable to the rising generation.

Having repeatedly travelled over large portions of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island, as an Agent for the Christian Messenger—for which I have obtained many subscribers, and written numerous communications—and formed a pleasing acquaintance with a great number of friends, whom I shall not probably ever see again in the flesh, I flatter myself that there are many to whom it will afford pleasure to see a narrative of some of the scenes of my life.

If any thing of this kind be ever published by me, it is obvious that it must be done soon: as I have long been an infirm man, and I am now in the sixty-ninth year of my age. "The time of my departure is at hand."

I beg to apprise my friends, at the outset, that it is not my intention to attempt the furnishing of the Nos. of this Sketch at any stated

times. Should occasion seem to require me to write articles on other subjects, I wish to hold myself at liberty to do so. Let none be anxious for me to proceed rapidly with the narrative. I am, of course, commencing a work which it is certain I shall not finish. Should it be deemed advisable, after my decease, to have a memoir of my life published, whatever Nos. of this Sketch may be found scattered through the pages of the Christian Messenger will be available toward that object.

It is not improbable that some may think I narrate events which are not worthy of record. Very likely instances of this will occur. My design, however, is, to furnish such a narrative as, while strictly true in every particular, may be both interesting and profitable. Some reflections may be interspersed; and others will doubtless occur to the minds of attentive readers.

May Divine assistance be graciously afforded in the execution of this delicate and difficult undertaking! May the blessing of God attend the perusal of what may be published, and render it subservient to the promotion of His declarative glory, and the present and future welfare of the children of men!

The Friend of my Childhood.

There are seasons when the mind reverts back to the early scenes of life, and calls up to its view those who have long since departed, and who, as time rolls on, seem to be forgotten; but there was one whom I knew in my childhood, whose saint-like virtues are almost as firmly remembered as the reality of my own existence. My father, who, in the early part of his life, had served in the British army, settled himself in Cornwallis, Nova Scotia, and, with a fine farm, he owned a flour mill. The miller was a Christian gentleman—taught to be one by the God of nature, and whose meekness and simplicity of manner were proverbial. His little farm, situated on a meagre soil, was insufficient for the support of a large and growing family; to maintain which, he applied himself to the labours of the mill. His integrity and honesty were admired by all who knew him. For years, this man attended to the duties of his occupation. He would travel nearly four miles after his labour for the day was over, through a then houseless pine forest, to reach his home, and to return betimes next morning, having carried to that house the entire produce of his industry, struggling, at the same time, against the trials of life, which many of the wealthy are ignorant of. This man was of the highest order of Christians, and one that never complained of his lot. Of the many incidents I could recount regarding him, I will only mention one. My Christian friend, during storms, would sometimes sleep in the mill. On one occasion, a violent tempest and freshet came on in the night. The dashing of the rain aroused my father from his slumbers, and he called out his "hired men," stating that the milldam was gone—he had heard the crash and rushing of the water, and he knew the good old miller was in the mill, which was situated only a few hundred yards from my father's house. All hands rushed to the alarming scene. The water had broken the dam on both sides of the mill, and to reach which, seemed an impossibility. Finally, by the aid of some planks, and by felling a willow tree across the broken part of the dam, the mill was reached. When my father entered the building with his lantern, he found the miller at prayer, and who, when he saw the light, raised himself up, and, with a smiling countenance, said, "I had faith to believe that you would come, for God has been with me all the time." This man taught me my earliest prayers and hymns. Often did he carry me in his arms, while I sung to him—

"The hill of Zion yields A thousand sacred sweets, Before we reach the heavenly fields, Or walk the golden streets."

I have travelled much; I have been three times shipwrecked—have clung to a tottering mast; and have been in perils by land, by water, and by fire; and amidst all these dangers, and many more, the prayers and hymns of old Charles Tupper have never been forgotten. More than half a century has passed away. The mill is no more; the mill pond is now a meadow, and the benefactor of my childhood is in heaven. His family have grown up respectable. One of his sons, although self-taught, has performed an unrivalled feat in learning, and is an eminent minister of the Gospel. One of the grandsons stands high in the medical profession, and in colonial politics. Another grandson is a minister, and has acquired the Micmac language and is now a missionary to the native Indians. Others, with whom I am less acquainted, are

reaping the blessings derived from a Christian ancestor; while the writer of this brief biographical sketch can joyfully repeat the prayers and hymns taught him by "the friend of his childhood," and in memory of whom, he can repeat with the poet:

"Lives of great men oft remind us, We can make our lives sublime, And departing, leave behind us, Footprints on the sands of time— Footprints that, perhaps, another, Sailing o'er life's solemn main, A forlorn and shipwrecked brother, Seeing, shall take heart again." A. G. January 1, 1863.

For the Christian Messenger.

Bible Class Essay.

The following is a specimen of the brief papers read at a Bible Class in Annapolis Co. We commend the practice of preparing such papers to be read in the class, and think it might be made very useful and profitable.

The man that beareth false witness against his neighbor, is a maul, a sword, and a sharp arrow.—Proverbs xxv. 18.

Solomon must have meant something, for his words were spoken in wisdom; every word had a meaning; he did not write nonsense.

1. The man that beareth false witness against his neighbor is a maul.

A maul we all know is used to pound with, likewise to bruise, and in bruising or pounding anything it is bruised itself; so with the man who beareth false witness against his neighbor, he injures himself, and oftentimes even more than he does the other; if the thing struck by the maul is harder than the maul—the maul is bruised the more; so the better the man is who is falsely witnessed against, the more is the false witness injured.

2. He is a sword. A sword is intended for war. It is used in war—its edge is made keen to wound; so with the man who beareth false witness, he is fitted for war, he is at war in his heart; for no man would bear false witness against the one with whom he is friendly. As a sword is intended for no good, but for evil, so it is with the man who bears false witness against his neighbor.

3. And a sharp arrow. Like the sword it is used in war, but as the arrow was generally aimed at the mortal parts, it was worse than the sword, so with the man who bears false witness against his neighbor, to cause him to be put to death, he is a sharp arrow. Now as one is more trifling than the other—the maul in itself is not intended to do harm, the sword is intended to inflict injury, and the arrow for a greater injury still; so with the man, who bears false witness,—1st. not intending or considering the mischief he is doing; 2nd. he bears false witness that he may injure; and 3rd. that he may cause the death of another: he is a maul, a sword and a sharp arrow.

For the Christian Messenger.

Letter from Rev. A. D. Thomson.

St. John, N. B., Feb. 5th, 1863.

DEAR EDITOR,—

I think it is over three months since I troubled you with any scribbling, the reasons are these, our present winter has been so destitute of snow, and the uncertainty of wheeling, generally, after the middle of November, and the trouble attendant on procuring and changing vehicles far from home, has prevented me from prosecuting my Agency. I, however, made a start on the last of Jan., and have got thus far. I left Lepreau yesterday, (supposed by some the coldest day of the season) and drove to this city, a distance of 25 miles, without farther detention than was requisite to refresh my horse with a draft of water. The road for the most part is very bleak, and the smarting of my face to-day is positive proof that Jack Frost gave me a close shave. I very much wonder, Mr. Editor, that after such sacrifices and exposure on our part, that our fireside worthies do not more readily and cheerfully respond to the calls of this all-important and most useful institution.

I was greatly surprised and saddened on my arrival here, to hear of the demise of our worthy brother, Capt. Jacobs, of Liverpool. Perhaps it would not be too much to say that a great man is fallen in our ranks. My first acquaintance with him was of the happiest kind. I found him ardently attached to, and anxiously as well as actively engaged for "the school of the prophets." He rendered me every possible assistance; and after giving by hundreds, in his own name, he offered and did obligate himself in the sum of £25 more, to encourage one of his brethren to complete a Scholarship, which

said brother had commenced. This was the first year that I was engaged in the Agency. In June last, at the Association in Liverpool, he took up his paper, and again entered another £100 for Acadia. In the religious services of the Association, he seemed at times to be marvellously carried beyond the limits of time, frequently speaking of his approach to the spirit-world; and his trembling voice, made so by the deep emotions of his soul, thus giving utterance to the fountain within, had a powerful effect on all present in the morning prayer-meeting. I can think of no better figure, by which to represent my idea of the man, in view of past and present, than of fruit which has come to its full size, and receiving that peculiar tinge or hue, which indicates ripeness, perfection, fitness for the Master's use.

That brother Jacobs has remembered the College in his will, is not surprising to me at all; yet not the less gratifying because anticipated; yea, more gratifying, because in no wise deceived in our opinion of the man.

I hope what I am now about to propose will not be foreign from the hearts or feelings of our brethren generally; and that is, that a life-size portrait be procured, to have a place in the Library of our seat of learning. Such men are not more numerous than desirable. Like a strong man we read of, that performed marvelously in life, but accomplished more at his death than in all the days of his life.

Yours, &c., A. D. THOMSON.

For the Christian Messenger.

Nature.

When we look at the great volume of Nature spread out before us in all its beauty and grandeur, and contemplate its instructive pages, fraught with such great lessons of truth and wisdom, our minds are at once drawn away from the low, corrupting things of the world, and lifted up nearer to the Maker of the Universe, the all-wise and Mighty Creator. A mind cultivated in its finer, nobler feelings, will be an ardent lover of nature, for there is something in its inspiration which vibrates responsive to the poetry and harmonies of the soul. A careful observation and study of the works of creation, is not a mere search after dry, dull facts, but a pursuit of pleasure, of pure, lofty delight, of almost boundless enjoyment to one whose spirit enters into sympathy with the beautiful and the good.

Who can look abroad over the face of the wide, wide world, and view its towering mountains, and extensive plains, its noble forests and fertile vallies, and say that there is nothing beautiful there? Or who can behold the vast, vast dome of heaven studded with its countless shining orbs that sparkle like diamonds in the azure blue, and remain unmoved at such a display of the Creator's power?

Yes, the world is indeed full of beauty, and every object possesses some trait peculiar to itself to attract and interest us, something to excite our admiration and inspire within us a love of the truly grand and beautiful. When the rosy light of morning flashes across the eastern hills and the diamond drops of dew glitter in each tiny cup, and upon every leaf and blade; when the air is ringing with the sweet warbling of birds, the murmuring of brooks and the soft whispering of the gentle breeze, all joining in one sweet song of praise to their Maker, does not the soul of man at once expand with noble, elevating thoughts, rising above the cares and perplexities of life, and soaring away beyond the narrow horizon of our earth vision, dwell for a time amid the bright ideal beauties of that better land where the crystal streams for ever flow, and the flowers fade not.

How beautiful are the clouds at morn; and at noon when they float upon the air, and show their pearly whiteness upon the azure, sky. At night when all is hushed and still, how silently they float along in the pale silver light of the moon, moving onward into boundless depth of space. When the last faint beams of day have faded away from the western sky, the night has dropped her dark hued mantle o'er the earth, then what a scene of splendor and beauty presents itself to our view. The diamond points which sparkle with unfading brilliancy. The moon, queen of the night, moves majestically amid the starry hosts, and sheds her soft silvery light over all the earth below, while here and there darts a "flying star" along the sky, passing onward in its wild course along the starry sphere. While the eye is thus delighted with all of Nature's works, yet there is something to delight the ear. There is music in nature. We hear it in the soft summer breezes that come up