

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Autobiographical Sketch.

By Rev. Charles Tupper, D. D.

CHAPTER III.

CONVERSION, AND ENTRANCE ON THE MINISTRY.

(No. 2.)

JEHOVAH "is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working." The tracing of the development of His gracious purpose, whether it be with reference to His people as a body, or in relation to the conversion and salvation of an individual, is an interesting and profitable exercise. It tends to excite admiration, gratitude, and praise. In researches and narrations of this kind the dispensations of Providence, and the influences of Divine grace, are both to be attentively regarded.

The vacation allowed at the close of the year was improved by me for the visiting of my relatives in Cornwallis. The late pious and zealous Clarke Allen, who was subsequently a preacher—a nephew of the celebrated Henry Allen—then resided in New Canaan, Horton. As a sister of his wife desired to spend a few days with the family, I conveyed her thither. Having visited friends in Cornwallis through the week, and intending to return to Aylesford on the Monday following, I took my sister Wealthy to Mr. Allen's on Saturday, which was the last day of the year 1814.

My friend informed me that there was to be a prayer meeting in the neighborhood that evening, which he designed to attend; and he invited me to take a seat in his sleigh, and accompany him. It was not at all congenial with my inclinations to accept his invitation; but as I could make no reasonable excuse, it seemed to me inconsistent with the rules of etiquette to decline it. I therefore went with him. It was a season of such religious excitement in that place as I had not been accustomed to witness. Some confusion arose by reason of two persons speaking at once. I coolly inquired in my own mind, Do not these people read their Bibles? Are they not aware that this is contrary to the directions of Scripture, and that "God is not the author of confusion"? (1 Cor. xiv. 31-33) (It still appears to me very desirable that such irregularities should be avoided. They tend to prevent the imparting and receiving of religious instruction and warning, and to prejudice the minds of people against revivals of religion.)

After a little time, however, this interruption subsided, and several persons spoke with great earnestness of the necessity and importance of experimental and vital piety. While these exercises were proceeding my mind was led into a train of very serious reflection. I thought with myself, I have noticed some extravagances among these people. They seem at times to be transported beyond reason. But am I acting a more reasonable part? I acknowledge myself to be a guilty sinner, under the curse of God's law, exposed every moment to death, and to an eternity of woe. Is it not, then, more consistent in them to be strongly moved with reference to matters of infinite moment, than it is in me to remain unmoved while in a state of such imminent danger? Under a consciousness of my sinfulness, and the madness of my course, I turned my face toward the wall, to conceal my emotions, and wept profusely.

My exercise did not appear to be noticed by any of the persons present. When the meeting closed I wiped away my tears, and, concluding that it was only a temporary movement of the passions, determined to prevent the discovery of it, if possible. Knowing that my feelings had been greatly moved on former occasions, without any abiding effect, and considering that in Aylesford, where I was residing, religious meetings were very rarely held, and the subject of religion was seldom mentioned, excepting by two or three aged pilgrims, I deemed my present circumstances unfavorable to giving attention to the subject of my soul's salvation; and concluded it was expedient to avoid excitement as much as I could. Indeed, the thought of being an apostate, or anything of that kind, was always abhorrent to my mind. It seemed to me, that if I were going to be a Minister in reality, I would not at all regard the reproach or contempt that might be cast upon me. But as there appeared scarcely a gleam of hope that this would be the case, I thought that any discovery of concern in me about my spiritual welfare, would only expose me to ridicule, and would be detrimental to the cause of vital religion. I felt, indeed, much inquietude of mind, and great anxiety with re-

ference to my everlastingly welfare, and endeavored in secret to pray for mercy; but deliberately resolved to conceal my emotions from every person.

A serious obstacle, however, in the way of carrying out this resolution, presented itself. On the next day, which would be the Sabbath, there was to be a prayer meeting at New Minas; and I had engaged to take my sister Wealthy to it. From the fear that my feelings would be so strongly excited as to put it out of my power to keep them concealed, I would gladly have avoided attendance there, if I could have consistently done so. But my sister, who had been decidedly pious for a number of years, and who greatly delighted in attending religious meetings, would have been exceedingly disappointed and grieved, if I had not fulfilled my engagement to convey her to this place of worship. Thus the same remarkable Providence which led me to the place at that peculiar time of an extensive and powerful revival, so hedged up the way as to render my attendance at the meeting on the approaching Lord's day morally unavoidable. I had too much of principle and honor to make a pretence of sickness, or to attempt the offering of any frivolous excuse. I determined, therefore, to go without any intimation of reluctance; but to guard most sedulously against excitement. It was, moreover, my fixed purpose, that how much soever my feelings might be moved, all serious emotions should be strictly concealed from all around me. Such, however, was the perturbation of my mind, that with all my stoical resolution I passed an anxious and disquieted night. A contemplation of the probable scenes of the morrow filled me with perplexity and alarm. The withstanding of Divine impressions might seal my doom for ever. And yet the idea of being thought to be religiously exercised, and turning presently again to the ways of folly, and so being held in disesteem by both saint and sinner, and consequently despised and wretched here, as well as miserable hereafter, seemed to me intolerable.

For the Christian Messenger.

Letter from Burmah.

My Dear Messenger,

Below I send you a Journal of a recent missionary tour, which may be interesting to some of your readers.

Yours faithfully, ARTHUR R. R. CRAWLEY.

JOURNAL.

June 1st.—Personal sickness, and sickness in their families having scattered my Native Preachers' Class—and the river not yet having risen sufficiently to admit of boat-travelling in the creeks of this district, I resolved to visit Pantanaw and Bassein. From the former place Moug Paw Oo, the Native Preacher, has repeatedly written me that there are many inquirers. My visits to Bassein have usually been made several months later than this—at a time when the people generally are about in their rice fields. By going now I hope to arrive before the ground is sufficiently soft to admit of plowing, and consequently when the people are comparatively disengaged.

June 5th.—Just as my arrangements for leaving are all completed, and I am expecting to set out on the morrow, a Christian family from a distant village came in and requested me to defer going until after Sunday. They have come expressly that their daughter may be examined, and, if approved, received for baptism. They are so urgent that there is no refusing.

June 6th.—The Church met to-day. Examined Ma Mya, the applicant above referred to. Received unanimously. She is an interesting girl of sixteen. Three years ago the small pox deprived her of sight. In this terrible calamity God has remembered her in mercy, and opened the eyes of her mind. Unable to employ herself in any way, prevented by an affliction from moving, even unassisted, she lightens the hours by singing and prayer.

June 7th.—This morning, at 6 1/2 o'clock, baptized Ma Mya in the Irrawaddi. At that early hour there were not many spectators—not more, perhaps, than one hundred. They appeared to listen thoughtfully to my explanation of what we were doing, and to a personal appeal to forsake their idols, and come to the only Savior.

June 9th.—Left Henthada at 11, A. M., yesterday, and reached Donabew about breakfast time this morning. This town continues still apparently unmoved and hardened. Supposing that Ko Choke might meet with more encouragement in a new place, I designed removing him and stationing some other assistant at Donabew.

But Ko Choke had not at all a mind for the change—preferred indeed entering some secular employment. To this, of course, as is invariably my rule, I made no objections—other than simply to remind him how few assistants there are. He was supported by the Truro church. In the dry season, Moug Yan Gin, now at Taing-daw, will probably come to this place.

June 10th.—Pantanaw. Have my quarters in a comfortable zayat, and, for immediate neighbors, Pagodas, Kyoungs, idols, sacred flag-staffs, zayats, and brick and mortar images of the lion, according to the Burman idea of the Lord of the forest—all in great profusion. Found Moug Paw Oo, and arranged that he should let all those who appear at all favorably inclined, know that I had come, and would be glad to see him.

June 11th.—Disappointed. Only a very few have come to the zayat. I expected multitudes. One man, however, Moug Youk, professed his entire belief in Christianity. This is something, but he shows no clear evidence of a sense of sin, and personal need of a Savior—except theoretically. A number of Phonyees (Priests), also came in, but all showed a cavilling spirit.

June 12th.—Spent the day in the town, going from house to house. Received a respectful hearing, and that is all. No evidence that God has breathed upon these bones, very many and very dry. There are indeed several cases of persons who confess that Christianity answers the demands of reason; i. e. persons almost nominal Christians. And it was to these, obviously, that Moug Paw Oo referred where he spoke of their being inquirers. Where obstinate incredulity, perverse refusal to weigh evidence, and a little malignant hostility to Christianity are the rule, if one or two instances of candor, though only the candor of indifference, are found, the assistant, not unnaturally, puts them down as inquirers. Still, Moug Paw Oo is a preacher of more than ordinary ability, and I can see evidence that his persistent presentation of the gospel will not be in vain.

To-day the magistrate of the place called upon me, and invited me to stop at his house. I excused myself, explaining to him that my object was to see the people, and to stay at his house would be just the way to defeat that end. The influence of the Civil Officers of Government is, of course, very great, for good or evil, among a people observing, suspicious, and place-hunting, as the Burmans are. And that influence is, I grieve to say, in a great majority of cases, evil only. The magistrate, here, for instance, a Roman Catholic, keeps a harem of native women, and his whole life goes to confirm the Burman in their unbelief. His predecessor, however, was a truly Christian man, with a family, and the good influence he has left behind him is still visible.

June 18th.—Part of the day spent in town—part in receiving visitors at the zayat. On invitation from a priest went to his Kyoung and had a long talk with him. He is a Karen of the Talaing tribe, and his brother, he told me, is pastor of a church, a short distance from Pantanaw—Christian and Buddhist—two brothers representing the very antipodes of religious belief. Said he often went to see his brother and had long controversies with him, and got tracts from him. Confessed that his mind was not by any means made up, that in fact he did not know which was true, Christianity or Buddhism. The comfort, and even dignity, of his circumstances sufficiently explained why, in such a state of mind, he still continued a Phonyee. He is clearly a man in intellect much above the crowd, whose various offerings—some of considerable value—he condescends to receive. Seeing he had a large book-case, filled with Burman palm-leaf books—and as he had been profuse in his assurances of great love for me, I gently intimated my wish to procure, gradually, a complete copy of the Bedagat. But he evaded my hints. He is probably laying up money with the intention of leaving the monastery, and entering the lay ranks again—and as they are constantly in the habit of selling their books, of course their books are money to them.

June 14th.—Sunday. A good many in at different times, though but few at the formal preaching service.

15th and 16th. On the way to Bassein. The whole of this part of the country is reticulated with water courses, into which the tide ascends, forming short cross-cuts from one part of the tortuous main stream to another. While passing through one of these channels the tide left us in a monotonous part of the jungle, for several hours when the water appeared again as abruptly as it had left us.

17th.—Owing to the great complexity of the water reticulation mentioned yesterday, the

traveller without a guide can only escape losing his way by sheer chance, inquire most diligently though he may at every house he sees on the bank. My boatmen regaled each other with associations and reminiscences congenial to the character of the country through which we were passing; for instance, of a priest and two boys who set out for a village a short distance from the monastery in a small boat. They soon lost their way and wandered about in these never ending water courses, until, worn out with hunger and fatigue they laid down in the boat and died—and many a year after their skeletons were found together in the boat. Taking very particular care we hoped not to lose our way, but did so, nevertheless, three times. The whole of one long night we rowed and rowed through a creek where gloom and silence seemed to reign alone, save when some night bird's harsh note was heard, for a moment, from the bosom of the dense jungle, making the silence seem tenfold more oppressive. When morning broke on this solitude we felt that we must have gone wrong, and began to retrace our weary way. At last we discovered a solitary cabin near the edge of the water, and learned from the inmates that we had spent the past night industriously going away from Bassein! Arrived again at the point whence we had wandered, found a boat going to Bassein, followed this boat as the surest way of not straying again. Got separated, however, in the darkness, and spent another six hours or so, in one of the innumerable creeks, which was not the one that led to our destination. After one more mistake we at last got fairly into the broad Bassein river, where there was no more danger of losing our way.

18th.—In accordance with my plan to visit first the out-stations, where Christians are, and reserve the tour for the last, remained in Bassein only long enough to replenish larder, and left for Padoukbiu.

20th.—Padoukbiu. A good assistant, Moug Ap, stationed here. The church consists of eight members, four of whom were baptised on my last visit here.

21st.—Sunday. In the morning preached from Heb. x. 3. After service, examined a young girl, sister-in-law of Moug Ap, for baptism. Her answers being satisfactory to the church, she was received and baptised in the stream flowing in front of the assistants' house.

22nd.—Hearing there were two applicants for baptism at a small village below, dropped down the stream after breakfast. Much pleased with the two men who intended, as we supposed, to come forward for baptism. They seemed truly sincere, and had they applied, not one of us but would have cordially received them. They are still very timid, however, and the attitude towards them of their families is so hostile, that they confessed themselves still unable to profess, boldly before men, the Savior in whom they trust.

23rd and 28th.—Bassein. The church here is one which commenced its history with very marked evidences of Divine favor. The first members were persons who were converted under circumstances which afforded the missionary peculiar satisfaction. The church is composed of Burmans principally, a few Chinese, and some natives of India. When Bro. Douglas returned to America the Church was steadily increasing. But the continued absence of the missionary has begun to tell sadly, and I found several cases of partial declension, calling for discipline. Bro. Douglass is expected to arrive about the beginning of 1864. Spent my time in endeavoring to encourage the brethren,—admonishing them of the danger of reposing too much in man, and forgetting the source whence alone the Christian can derive the strength needed by the way.

Monday 29th, left Bassein on my return to Henthada. After a tedious journey of six days against a rapid stream, reached home July 4th, most thankful to find all well, after an absence of 27 days.

For the Christian Messenger.

Victoria Beach, Annapolis Co.

DEAR EDITOR,

A Tea Meeting was held at Victoria Beach, one of the preaching stations of the Baptist Church in Lower Granville, on Wednesday last, a few particulars in reference to which may interest your readers.

The object was to raise funds to complete "Victoria Hall." This building was commenced more than a year ago, and through the liberality and perseverance of friends of the cause is now in a forward state. Heretofore there was no suitable place for public worship or for imparting instruction to the young—hence the present movement.