

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

By Rev. Charles Tupper, D. D.

CHAPTER III.

CONVERSION, AND ENTRANCE ON THE MINISTRY.

(No. 13.)

On the 1st day of April, 1815, I attended a conference meeting in Nietaux. Though my parents were Baptists, and I usually attended Baptist preaching and prayer meetings, yet I am not aware of having ever been present at a conference before this time. While on my way thither I was greatly depressed in spirit, and exceeding tried; but toward the close of the exercises my mind was much cheered, and my hope strengthened.

In the evening I formed a pleasing and beneficial acquaintance with the late venerable and excellent Deacon Joseph Morton. He informed me that when he was a young man, and was awakened to a sense of his ruined condition as a sinner, under the labors of Rev. Henry Allen he was so destitute of learning that he could not read a chapter in the New Testament without spelling a great proportion of the words. In this way, however, he went through the New Testament in the space of three months. By diligent efforts he became a good reader, and a man well informed. Perceiving from the perusal of the Scriptures that it was a duty incumbent on believers to be buried with Christ in baptism, he spoke of the subject to Mr. Allen. But this good man, whose views were in some respect peculiar and extravagant, seemed to regard it as a matter of indifference; and alleged that it was not needful to pay any attention to it, unless one felt it especially impressed upon his mind. This, however, did not satisfy brother Morton. He justly conceived that every duty divinely enjoined upon Christians, ought to be strictly observed and performed by every one of them. He therefore went to Horton, and was there baptized in obedience to his Saviour's command, and in imitation of His example.

On Lord's day, April 2nd, I attended the preaching of Rev. Thomas Handley Chipman, with edification and comfort. He was not what is usually called 'an eloquent preacher'; but was an eminently devout and exemplary man, possessed of good abilities, and capable of communicating important truth in appropriate terms. His gift appeared to be particularly adapted to the encouraging and strengthening of young and feeble Christians. One thing in his ministry was somewhat singular. In private conversation he maintained, that what he called 'an evangelical hypocrite'—one who professed to have experienced a change of heart when he had not—would in no case be regenerated, or obtain a good hope; and yet in his public ministrations he frequently labored to convince such persons of their error and danger. It may be supposed, however, that he deemed it incumbent on him to give faithful warning, though it should not be attended with success. Moreover, he may have considered it needful and beneficial to point out the nature and ruinous consequences of self-deception, in order that others might be put upon their guard.

But in my opinion the venerable Elder, though in general very correct, carried his view of the hopeless condition of self-deceived persons too far. Undoubtedly the state of such persons is an exceedingly dangerous one, from which very few are ever recovered; but there is no doubt in my mind that instances of it have occurred in the circle of my acquaintance. It may not be out of place to record here a case that transpired, in connexion with my own labors, shortly after the date given above.

Feeling a deep concern for the salvation of my kindred, according to the flesh, I strove earnestly and perseveringly to bring them to Jesus. I ascertained that my brother Samuel entertained a hope that he had experienced a saving change a considerable space of time before; but his hope was not satisfactory to my mind. I therefore wrote him an affectionate letter, expressing my fears with faithfulness and plainness. Instead of indulging resentment, as people in such cases often do, my brother received the friendly warning with gratitude. On attentive consideration of the subject, in connexion with the study of the holy Scriptures, and the perusal of the writings of experienced authors with reference to the nature and effects of the new birth, he became convinced that he was yet in the state of nature. The lifeless hope, which

had tended to lull him into a state of carnal security, was relinquished. Painful emotions ensued: but after a season of acute distress, under a conviction of his guilt and danger, he evidently obtained a "good hope through grace." His subsequent life clearly evinced the reality and genuineness of the work. Henceforth he was an obedient and zealous Christian, trusting implicitly in the Saviour, and actively striving to do good. He frequently delivered pathetic and impressive exhortations. About two years after his conversion he was called home, by profuse bleeding at the lungs, which suddenly terminated his mortal life; but, as is confidently hoped, ushered him into the beatific presence of his loving and beloved Redeemer.

What an unspeakable benefit appears to have resulted in this case, through the divine blessing, from the exercise of faithfulness! Though there is reason to fear that instances of self-deception are numerous, and, as remarked above, that few of the self-deceived are ever savingly converted, yet the hope that here and there one may be rescued from this destructive "snare of the devil," should prompt to faithful efforts for their deliverance. It was not by immediate inspiration, but by noticing the disposition of mind evinced, that Peter perceived Simon Magus to be "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." He distinctly informed him of the badness of his condition, and exhorted him to "repent" and "pray." (Acts viii. 18-23.) Ought not, then, every Minister, nay, every experienced Christian, to use like plainness in any case wherein it is evident that a person is resting upon a false hope of heaven? If one person be aware that another is likely to suffer serious loss by relying on a fallacious hope for the attainment of some earthly object, it is the part of friendship, usually performed, to give him timely notice of his error, in order that he may adopt a safer course. Ought not at least equal kindness and faithfulness to be exercised in a case of infinite moment, in which the loss of the soul is liable to result from the entertaining of a false hope?

Every instance of success in attempts to promote the spiritual welfare of a relative, as in the case noticed above, or of any person, caused me to "thank God, and take courage."

For the Christian Messenger.

LETTER FROM NEW ORLEANS.

New Orleans, Feb. 26th, 1864.

The following letter has been kindly forwarded to us by a brother of the writer. It was not written for publication, but from the interest which southern matters command at the present time, it was believed that others besides his own relatives would like to receive the information.

DEAR BROTHER,—

After writing you in January, I left here for a journey up the River. On going on board one of those huge Mississippi Boats, I found crowded with passengers and soldiers. I secured a room, with a bullet hole through it, a guerilla mark, and constant reminder of what I might expect at any moment, but no other room could be had, so I had to make the best of it.

The yellow Mississippi is a very uninteresting uninviting river to the traveller, more so now than before the war, many of the residences and plantation houses are destroyed or abandoned, and blackened chimneys are all that is left of once extensive negro quarters, as many as fifteen or twenty in a cluster, not a sign of a house to shelter them, and it appears to me that the negroes are the greatest sufferers, the able bodied men forced to join the army, the old and young in many cases unprovided for. As these are war times we could only get green wood and our progress up the river was very slow—eight days to Cairo, Illinois. In former times five days was an ordinary passage. We watched the cotton brakers and banks with a good deal of interest for the guerillas, but were not fired at during our trip. We had a part of the 24th Indiana Regiment, going home on furlough and to recruit, I do not believe the 24th will ever do much towards restoring this country to the cause of "the best government the world ever saw." There was no discipline, no respect shown to their officers, neither did the officers respect themselves. The privileges of the cabin were only extended to the officers, the sick were laying on the floor near the stove, several died in the boat, the surgeon and officers treating them with the utmost indifference. Much might have been done to alleviate the sufferings of those men, the officers were unquestionably very remiss in their duty. Just before going on shore at Cairo, I saw a very intelligent looking young soldier lying on the bare floor dying, no one to care for or look after him, a sad sight, so near

kind friends and home, to die alone, and find an unknown soldier's grave.

Port Hudson is a very formidable place a high bank along the river, and, without much military knowledge should I think it might be easily defended, but I could not see the great natural strength of Vicksburg, although built on a hill, still the ascent is gradual, and can be approached from any direction, the ravines running along back of the city, and the river channel being close to the bank are no doubt great military advantages, yet I think great credit is due to the few men, who so long held that post, I did not see the great destruction I expected of property by shot and shell, I noticed the glass broken from several buildings and where a few stray shot had struck. The city is not blown to atoms, neither is it a second Gibraltar. Island No. 10 is flat with not very steep banks, and there is a small garrison stationed there at present.

I did not remain long at Cairo, and took passage in the first return boat, there was little of interest in returning until the morning of the day we expected to arrive here, just before daylight. I felt a sudden shock and on going on deck learned that the boat was sinking having struck against the bank in a fog. She was taken alongside of the bank where she soon sunk, the stack pipes and cabin falling just before I got out, the clerk's desk saved me, and I came out of the wreck uninjured, afterwards I saved a part of my luggage, the boat was a total wreck, happily no lives were lost, this accident is another exemplification of carelessness or mismanagement so conspicuous in this country. The next day after the accident we came here in another boat.

I have not seen anything to change my opinion in regard to the feeling entertained here against the North. Balls and parties are made to cultivate a more friendly feeling between the rival sections. Military reviews are frequently held, I attended a flag presentation a short time ago, the flag was given by the Northern ladies to the 4th army corps, and presented by little Miss Banks, about 12 years of age. They were soldiers' hats that were raised when three cheers were called for General Banks, the citizens were apparently indifferent. The children of New Orleans delight in calling themselves rebels. When General Banks' children first attended dancing school, the children here would not dance with them until compelled to by their teacher, and many of Miss Banks' schoolmates positively refused to attend her receptions; they would not visit the Yankees.

We hear privately that the army which left Vicksburg a short time ago has met with misfortunes and defeat, but no news is published. How to get cotton is still the vexed question, no doubt holders in the Confederacy would sell cotton could they get provisions and necessary supplies, but this the army will not allow to any large amount.

I went up the river to purchase a cargo for my ship, but I find it impossible to secure a freight here, and will leave to-morrow for Matamoros to try for a load of cotton there.

Spring is here with all its brightness, delightful weather, warm days and cool nights. Peach trees are in blossom, and the planters, the few that are left, are busy preparing for crops. I leave New Orleans the crescent city with regret. These rebels are very kind, giving freely of their favors and their cheers. Although we may think their case hopeless, still they have faith and give their all, life itself for their country.

I do not expect to be in England before May.

Kind regards to all,

I remain as ever yours,

RUFUS F. CUTTEN.

For the Christian Messenger.

FAULTS, AND FAULT-FINDING.

March 12th, 1864.

DEAR SIR,—

If I comprehend the meaning of "A Brother" in his communication in C. M. of March 9, it appears to be that a man's social position may give him a higher standing in society than that he is entitled to by being a member of the church of Christ. I am prepared to dissent from this in the most positive manner as I believe that the status a person occupies as a christian is superior to any other. While I admit that Christianity recognizes the positions of servant and master, and enjoins upon the one obedience to the other, I at the same time deny that their relative standings prevent them from associating with one another, but on the contrary when they are both christians they are not only brothers but equals. Paul entreats Philemon to treat Onesimus, who probably occupied a lower position than a servant, being

a slave, "as a brother." Jesus himself rebuked his disciples when they disputed who among them should be greatest and informed them they were all brethren.

I cannot see any thing wrong in church members being "sometimes jealous of other members who mingle in circles from which their own position and habits of life exclude them," and I believe that this jealousy may exist without the "arch enemy" having anything to do with it. The only places in society from which a christian ought to be excluded or rather from which he ought to exclude himself, are the assemblies of the vicious and profane. He should not "walk in the way of wicked men," and should always remember that "evil communications corrupt good manners." If "church members" mingle in circles "where there is drunkenness, and revellings and such like," or with those "who walk in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, &c.," I think that other church members should take hold of it, and not only bring it to the knowledge of the minister but also before the church, and that it is the duty of the minister to preach to the disorderly brethren and for the church to subject them to discipline.

I make these remarks because I believe there are members of Baptist churches in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia who are not as careful as they should be as to the company they keep and who are sometimes to be found in the ball-room surrounded by its evil influences and exposed to its seductive temptations, even partaking of its intoxicating beverages and wheeling in the mazes of its giddy dance. I hope it is not something of this kind that "a brother" is trying to defend, and concerning which he would lay his minister under a perpetual injunction not to open his mouth. I cannot imagine that it is not in "in harmony with the spirit of the gospel of Christ," for a faithful minister to say, "take these things hence, for it is written my father's house shall be a house of prayer." I cannot think that our Saviour was to blame when he accused Judas of being a devil, or that Peter did any wrong when he condemned Simon Magus or Ananias and Sapphira.

"A brother's" recommendation, "to try to win back a brother or sister by private admonition," is all right enough when the act is not very notorious, and should always be followed when the character of the church, a denomination is not in danger, but when the act is such as to create public scandal and bring reproach upon the church or denomination, it is the duty of the minister to denounce it from the pulpit, and of the members of the church to see that the offending brother or brethren are subjected to discipline.

Your's, &c.,

A CHURCH MEMBER.

[It was not the intention we believe of the "Brother," who wrote the communication referred to in the above, to apply his remarks to associations of a really sinful character, such as those mentioned by "a Church member." He would not we know for a moment attempt to "defend" such practices. Neither of these writers is known to the other, one dwelling in New Brunswick and the other in Nova Scotia, and we believe they would both agree in denouncing that worldliness in the lives of church members which brings reproach on the cause of Christ, and destroys the influence of christian life on the world, and the power of divine truth on the minds of the ungodly.—ED. C. M.]

For the Christian Messenger.

OBITUARY NOTICES.

WILLIAM MOFFATT.

Died at North Sydney, August 25th, Brother William Moffatt, in his 58th year.

He was baptized by Rev. Robert Porter during his visit to North Sydney Church, four years ago. But from early years he was a member of the Congregational Church, and though dead he yet speaketh, and though we see him no more he will not soon be forgotten. At our last Annual Association at Guysborough, he accompanied the writer and we felt, as we travelled on, like the two disciples of old, "our hearts burned within us." Many of the brethren that met us there, remember, his christian intercourse for he was interested in all our denominational labours. He was regular in his attendance upon the meetings of the church, though there no more his example still lives. In our social gatherings we miss him, in his own family circle, he is no longer the centre and the soul to direct their songs of melody and praise, and to aid the mother and children through the rugged path of life. Their loss is an irreparable one yet God is the God of the living, and has promised to be of the widow and the fatherless. Our dear Brother's family has experienced this to the joy of their souls. And I hope will be holier through this dispensation of God towards them.

WILLIAM MOORE.

Also, a beloved brother who was best known to the community in which he resided, by the name of Uncle William Moore, who died only a few