

Correspondence

For the Christian Messenger.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

By Rev. Charles Tupper, D. D.

CHAPTER IV.

LABORS AS A LICENTIATE.

(No. 11.)

The following entry was made in my Diary, January 1st, 1817: "I spent the day in fasting and prayer, together with reading and meditation. My principal petitions were, that God would save me from sin, make the path of duty plain before me, make me much more faithful and zealous in the cause of my Redeemer than hitherto I have been, and enable me to be wise as a serpent, and harmless as a dove. In the evening preached [in Onslow] from 1 Cor. xii, 29. But this I say, brethren, the time is short. The Lord was gracious, and appeared present."

I remained in Onslow about a week, assisting my worthy and excellent Brother Nathaniel Cleveland. He was then the only Baptist Minister resident in all that extensive region. Though bodily infirmity obliged him to desist from the regular work of the ministry, some years ago, yet he and his pious companion are still living, in Alma, Albert Co. N. B., and pursuing in the path of the just, in joyful anticipation of unending bliss.

On my way to Five Islands I called at the house of Mr. H. who had expressed to some of my friends a desire to see me. He had become dissatisfied with some of the views of the denomination with which he had been connected, and had withdrawn from it; but had not united with any other. Information had been communicated to me, that Mr. H. had conceived some prejudice against me; for, on being told that a Methodist Minister called me "Brother Tupper," he remarked, "If he is his brother, he is not mine." Doubtless there is too much of this spirit still remaining among some people; but happily it has, in general, been greatly diminished in the course of the forty-eight years which have subsequently passed. Another circumstance transpired at the time of my calling which tended to increase his prejudice. In consequence of suffering great distress at the pit of my stomach, one of my hands was pressed against the seat of pain. It was afterwards ascertained that he regarded this as a pretence made by me of being "full of religion." To all acquainted with me it is well known, that among my numerous foibles and mental infirmities the practising of any such kind of affection is not one. When a man once advised me to give my eyes a cast upward occasionally, as indicative of devotional feeling, the advice, instead of being acceptable, was regarded with strong disapprobation. Mr. H. however, while laboring under much misapprehension with reference to me, seemed disposed to find fault with all denominations. He was evidently quite unacquainted with Baptist views and usages, and blamed us for adopting a course not practised by us. If our interview was not mutually satisfactory, doubtless we were mutually satisfied to let it be the last, as well as the first.

On my arrival at Lower Economy and Five Islands, my reception by many was evidently very cordial. Some, however, were said to have uttered threats against me. This appeared to me rather a favorable indication. Paul determined to "tarry at Ephesus . . . for," said he, "a great door and effectual is opened unto me and there are many adversaries." 1 Cor. xvi, 9.

As many of the people renewed their urgent request for me, to devote a portion of the time in these settlements, and they were wholly destitute of ministerial labor, and there appeared to be serious attention paid to the word preached, and a prospect of usefulness, I decided, on mature and prayerful consideration of the subject, to spend one third of the time with them (D. V.) during the year 1817. I made my home at the house of Mr. E. Crocker, who was then a Congregationalist, but subsequently became a Baptist. By him, his godly wife, and their obliging family, I was invariably treated with great kindness.

While thus laboring among people of different denominations, of whom nearly all differed from me on some points, it appeared to me necessary to deal honestly and faithfully, but not to excite needless prejudice by direct attacks on their peculiar sentiments. It was, therefore, my usual course to dwell principally on the elemen-

tary and most necessary parts of religious instruction, as man's native state of guilt, pollution, and depravity; the fullness and suitability of Christ as a Saviour; the necessity of faith, repentance, and renovation of heart; obedience to the Divine commands, and the attainment of holiness. The indispensable necessity of experimental religion was a theme of frequent discussion.

To these truths many listened respectfully, a few with manifest consciousness of their vast importance. Some, however, continued to evil and deride behind my back. One opposer evinced his ignorance of Scripture by inquiring of other hearers, jeeringly, "Who ever before heard of wood in bell?" because he had heard me recite that text in which it is said of Tophet, "the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it." (Isa. xxx, 33.) In one instance an enemy made a direct attempt to carry his threats into execution by personally injuring me. He was driving an ox team, and met me on horseback alone, where the snow was very deep. Perceiving that it was almost impossible for me to give him the whole of the beaten path, he drove his oxen with great violence, manifestly intending to break my horse's legs. Had his nefarious purpose succeeded, it must have subjected me to heavy loss, and exposed me to serious personal injury, endangering my limbs, and even my life. He evidently averted his eyes, lest they should meet mine; as he could not adventure to look me in the face. His countenance, however, betrayed mingled emotions of wrath, guilt, fear, and confusion. While grateful for that kind interposition of Providence which protected me from intended harm, my heart was filled with sorrow for the poor unhappy man, in view of such an exhibition of the spirit of Cain and of Ahab, and such "an evident token of perdition." (1 John, iii, 12, 15. 1 Kings, xxii, 8. Phil. i, 28.) It was my sincere desire, and earnest prayer, that he might be brought to repentance, and that "his spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

For the Christian Messenger.

THE SCHOOL LAW IN ANNAPO-LIS COUNTY.

The interest which was awakened by the information furnished by the Rev. D. M. Weston, as to the working of the new school law in the County of Hants, induces me to think that a similar account of results in Annapolis may be acceptable to the friends of education. Hants stands high in its appreciation of the law; and though Annapolis has not reached the elevation desired, yet her estimate, considering the character of the adverse influences with which it had to contend, is not unfavourable; indeed may be regarded as promising, at no distant day, a higher valuation of the law, and its general adoption. There are in this County 82 sections; of these 60 have made arrangements to work under the law; 37 of them by assessment, Forty-six teachers have been examined and classified. Some of these are employed in the adjacent counties. The number of schools in operation under the law, is 34; 27 of which are supported by assessment, the remainder, of course, by subscription. Annapolis Royal has done nobly in voting to make the provision required by law for locating the County Academy within its time-honoured precincts. Leguille, Hall Rectory, Willett, and other sections in the Western District, have done well in adopting assessment at the outset.

In the Eastern District, Melvern Square, Margateville, Middleton, and Nictaux, are most prominent among those which have adopted assessment.

Twelve Sections have rejected the law; and consequently prefer to be independent;—either to have no school, or to support one without the aid which the law proffers to those working under it. Among these I am sorry that the following important sections are found,—Bridgport, Bridgetown, Caledonic, and Lawrence town. These sections are large, rich and influential, and well able to support schools under the law. Their example has tended to discourage smaller and less able sections. It is much to be regretted that these sections give the weight of their influence against a law, which, notwithstanding its imperfections, is well adapted, if faithfully worked out, to largely advance education in the province. Bridgetown, having no school house for its 120 or 130 children, and being required to make provision for building a new one, became alarmed at the expense, which exaggeration swelled to \$ or £700 and refused to work

under the act; and she deprives herself of public money, and her children of a free school. About £800 would suffice to provide a neat, commodious and respectable building which would be an ornament to the town, add value to property, be an indication of her growing intelligence, and public spirit; and a blessing to her children for years to come. Subscription has been proposed and tried in vain; assessment would easily do what is needed in the way of school accommodation, had we the wisdom and courage to adopt it.

That the new law, though designed and adapted to benefit the country, has not been more generally received, ought not perhaps to create much surprise. The old law failed to rain the districts to anything like systematic support of schools. It was defective in plan and was loosely worked. In order to participate in the Provincial Grant, it required the districts to build the necessary school-houses; and that a written agreement should be made between the Trustees and Teacher for a certain time, and for a specific sum. The former provision was very often, and the latter, generally disregarded; and always, so far as known to the writer, with impunity. The teacher took the school on his own responsibility; and obtained his pay as best he could. Sometimes 3, 4, 5, and in one case upwards of 10, (though not in Annapolis County.) Schools were kept in one Town or Village; two or three would have done the entire work needed, and done it much better. Generally the whole number, whatever it was, received a portion of the Provincial Grant; and thus not seldom, no small portion of public money was frittered away, and perhaps wasted. Nor are the Commissioners to be blamed for this; it is to be attributed to the want of system under the old law. Had the law been enforced, no doubt, many schools would have been closed; and perhaps as great an outcry, raised against the old as has in many quarters greeted the new law.

Misapprehension as to the provisions of the law prevented its adoption in some cases.

Misrepresentation, openly in the press and otherwise, as well as by less public means, performed in respect to the law a large amount of its mean and unhalloved work; and with by far too much success.

How much Partisanship had to do with the rejection of the law, I will not undertake to say; for I do not know. But when the law is denounced by persons because it does not make assessment absolute, and both assessment and legal subscription are voted down by the same men in their respective sections, I cannot help thinking that something other than patriotism, benevolence, or a regard for education, prompts them to so inconsistent a course.

But enough; suffice it to say that new phases of depravity have darkened a part, at least, of the opposition directed against the school law. The law has been rejected or denounced because it is not perfect; it does not meet every difficulty;—it presses unequally and hardly on this interest and on that—on this class, and on the other. As reasonably might the best piece of machinery which human ingenuity has made be denounced, because it has not been constructed so as to work without friction.

All that mechanical science and art can effect, after repeated and long continued experiments, is to lessen the friction, and by so much add to the force.

The Legislature, it is expected, will soon try its best skill in order to diminish the educational friction of the school law; and no doubt success will attend the effort;—but some will of necessity remain.

Then it is alleged that the system of education laid down under the law is, in its requirements, too high for Nova Scotia; one much lower will do well enough for us. It is time that this unworthy and injurious sentiment was banished from its last resting place in the Provincial mind. Foreign and other traders know how to turn this sentiment to their own advantage, and to our loss. To it we are, no doubt, indebted for much of the inferior merchandize, flour, &c., which find their way into this Province. It will do well enough, they say, for Nova Scotia. Let us not be unjust to ourselves. Are the children of Nova Scotia wanting in intellect? Certainly not. Why then should an inferior system of education be thought good enough for them? The best education that Legislative wisdom, patriotism, and christian benevolence can provide, should be given them. Raise the educational standard high, and neither the children, nor the country will lose by it. It should be mentioned that in the sections in which schools are sustained under the law, there is a large increase in the number of pupils attending them. It may be safely affirmed that, with perhaps the exception of one or two schools, this increase ranges from

60 to 120 per cent on the attendance under the old law. This is an emphatic commendation of the new law. Let the fact be pondered; and the advantages of the system which provides free schools will be seen and felt by the people.

Respectfully, &c.

GEORGE ARMSTRONG.

Inspector for Annapolis.

Bridgetown, Feb. 7th, 1865.

For the Christian Messenger.

OBITUARY NOTICES.

MRS. ALEXANDER BLAIR,—OF NORTH RIVER, ONSLOW.

"And thou, loved spirit; for the skies mature, Steadfast in faith, in meek devotion pure; Thou that didst make the home thy presence blest, Bright with the sunshine of thy gentle breast, Where peace and holy dwelling-place had found, Whence beamed her smile benignantly around; Thou that to bosoms lonely and bereft Dear, precious records of thy worth hast left, The treasured gem of sorrowing hearts to be, Till heaven recall surviving love to thee."

Death again has entered a loving family circle, and severed the silken ties, by long and intimate communion wreathed around tender hearts. A beloved wife, a gentle, affectionate mother, has faded and gone, like an Autumnal leaf; alas! her place is vacant around the social hearth; there, the light of her sweet smile is seen no more, no longer may those who loved her gaze with admiration upon the angelic loveliness of her countenance, reflecting the peace of God, which flowed within like a gentle river; for on the 4th Dec., Mrs. Blair fell asleep in Jesus, at the age of sixty-six. But though husband and children miss her society, they feel that for her, rejoicing may well mingle with their tears; she has passed beyond the troubles and storms of life; where her gentle spirit will be forever at rest. She has left the mourning ones who remain, to unite with her glorified children gone before, in singing, "Worthy is the Lamb which was slain; and hath redeemed us to God by his blood." Mrs. B. heard the voice of the good Shepherd, and was gathered into the fold of the Redeemer under the ministry of Elder James Munroe; whose memory was precious to her, till she was called home to shine another star in his celestial crown. The writer is not acquainted with her particular exercises during that period, nor are they necessary, when the daily life and conversation afford such abundant evidence of the great change. The following testimonial from one of those who knew her best, must be satisfactory to all who call to remembrance the words of Jesus, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

Mrs. B. was the mother of ten children, of whom three preceded her to the eternal world; two in infancy, while about four years ago, one in her mature and beloved womanhood died in Christ. She has left behind two sons and five daughters. Her sons she carefully and prayerfully guarded from the use of all intoxicating drinks, tobacco and profane language; the eldest of whom, far away on the hills of California, after an absence of nineteen years from his native land, still speaks in his letters home of the lessons which his mother taught him in childhood, whose blessed and restraining influences are with him still. Her last illness was of five weeks duration, during which though she suffered much she was sweetly patient, and entirely resigned to the will of God; often expressing a desire to depart, saying, "Weep not for me it will be so pleasant to be at home with Jesus." She seemed says one who watched by her continually, "like a weary child longing for her heavenly rest; yet patiently awaiting her Master's time." One striking feature of her christian character was meek humility, and while she was able to speak she said, repeatedly, to her children, I want you to remember when I am gone, that I had no merit of my own, my trust was in the atoning righteousness of Christ." At another time in speaking of the holiness required of those who enter heaven, one of her daughters, repeated the verse commencing, "These are they which come out of great tribulation," she said "I am not one of these, then after a moment's pause, she exclaimed, "but I will have my robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb." She sympathized deeply with her christian brothers and sisters in all the sufferings they were called to endure, for such, and many other friends, she left consoling and affectionate messages. During her illness, though her voice was weak and faltering, she sung the whole hymn commencing—

"I'm glad I ever saw the day,
When first I learned to sing and pray,
Of glory! glory! glory!"

while such a heavenly calm rested on her countenance it seemed to those who listened a fore-taste of heaven. She said, Tell my children and their children,—

"Peace will be the lot of the mind
That seeks it in wisdom and love,
But rapture and bliss, are confined
To the glorified spirits above."

She chose Micah ii, 10, as the passage of Holy Writ from which she wished her death to be approved; and retaining full possession of her senses till the last moment, she closed her eyes on all God's works below, on that "beautiful world," as she often expressed herself during her sickness, and which in the days of health she never wearied of admiring. She has gone to that cloudless land where they have no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.